

(b) Fair prices for producers and reasonable wages for workers are sought to be ensured by the Coir Board through its Purchase Price (Enforcement) Scheme, 1976.

Cashewnuts Industries in Kanyakumari District (Tamil Nadu)

3347. SHRI KUMARI ANANTHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a large number of industries engaged in cashewnuts have gone idle in Kanyakumari District in Tamil Nadu in recent years for want of cashewnuts; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Central Government and Tamil Nadu State Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION (SHRI ARIF BEG): (a) There are reports that due to shortage of raw cashewnuts for processing some units in Tamil Nadu and other States face periods of unemployment. The minimum requirement of the industry is around 3 lakh tonnes while the indigenous production of cashewnuts is estimated to be between 1.4 to 1.85 lakh tonnes. The gap of about 1.5 lakh tonnes between the requirement and availability is to be made up from the imports. During the period of January to October in the current year, imports of raw cashewnuts have been only 61,995 tonnes compared to 67,698 tonnes during the same period in 1976 and 1,35,815 tonnes in 1975 and 1,77,289 tonnes during the same period in 1974.

(b) The Government of India have taken up schemes both in the State Sector and Central Sector for increasing the area under cashew and also for improving productivity of the existing plantations with a view to

increase production of cashewnuts in the country. In addition, Cashew Corporation of India has agreed to make available funds upto Rs. 4 crores for state sponsored, viable and export oriented schemes of cashew plantations. It is learnt that Government of Tamil Nadu have also taken steps to develop schemes for laying out demonstration plots for improving cashew plantations by vegetative propagation, establishment of progeny orchards and making other R and D efforts to improve yield of cashew in the State.

Cashew Corporation of India have also entered into contracts for import of about 30,000 tonnes from the 1977-78 crop from East Africa and are hopeful about being able to import even larger quantities in the year 1978. It is expected that with the above measures, availability of raw cashewnuts to the processing industry may improve.

Transport Contractors in Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation

3348. SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of transport contractors operating in Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation to transport ore from various points; and

(b) the money paid to them by Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION (SHRI ARIF BEG): (a) The number of transport contractors engaged by MMTC during the current year for transport of ore from various points is six.

(b) The money paid to various contractors engaged by MMTC during the last three years is as under:—

Year	Approximate amount paid (Rupees: Crores)
1974-75 .	4.35
1975-76 .	5.63
1976-77 .	4.32
	14.30

Proposal to stop Sale of Smuggled Goods

3349. SHRI P. K. KODIYAN:
SHRI D. B. CHANDRA
GOWDA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal under consideration to stop the sale of smuggled goods in the country;

(b) whether the sale of smuggled goods through consumers cooperative societies has already been stopped; and

(c) if so, the present stock of smuggled goods with the Government warehouses and how it is going to be disposed of?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATISH AGRAWAL): (a) Government are considering the suggestion that confiscated smuggled goods should not be sold within India, but instead should be exported or destroyed.

(b) Yes, Sir. The sale of confiscated smuggled goods excepts perishable goods to National Consumer Cooperative Federation and others except Military Canteens has been recently suspended.

(c) The present stock of seized and confiscated smuggled goods in the

warehouses of customs formations is reported to be the tune of Rs. 43 crores approximately. Proposals for the disposal of smuggled goods are under Government's consideration.

Benefit of Bonus to Central Government Employees

3350. SHRI D. AMAT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the representation of Central Government and allied offices employees have been received by the Government to extend the benefit of Bonus to Central Government employees; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND REVENUE AND BANKING (SHRI H. M. PATEL): (a) Demands have been received from various Unions/Federations for extending the benefit of bonus to Central Government employees.

(b) There is no proposal under consideration of the Government to extend the benefit of bonus to Central Government employees.

Operation of "Combi" Aircraft by Air India

3351. SHRI D. AMAT: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Air India is considering operation of "Combi" aircraft; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PURUSHOTTAM KAUSHIK): (a) No, Sir.

(b) In view of (a) above question does not arise.