

The information regarding the arrears of excise duty, if any, and loans advanced by the Central Bank to any of the nine companies forming part of the above Group is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

**Rehabilitation of Darjeeling Tea Gardens**

8866. SHRI BAGUN SUMBRUI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE, CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to formulate a plan for the rehabilitation of Darjeeling tea gardens;

(b) whether it is also proposed to approach the World Bank for financial help to rehabilitate the tea gardens of Darjeeling; and

(c) what long-term and short-term plan for the rehabilitation of Darjeeling tea gardens are being undertaken and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION (SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR GOYAL):

(a) and (b). The Tea Board is getting an in-depth study of the Darjeeling Tea Industry made by a Consultant. A view about financing can be taken only after the report has been received.

(c) The following schemes of assistance are available to the Tea Estates in Darjeeling:—

1. Plantation Finance Scheme for extension planting, replacement planting and replanting. The amount of loan admissible has recently been increased to Rs. 25,000/- per hectare.

2. Replantation subsidy scheme for uprooting and replanting of old and uneconomic tea areas. Subsidy at Rs. 5,000/- per hectare is admissible under the scheme.

3. Tea Area rejuvenation and consolidation subsidy scheme. Under this scheme subsidy at Rs. 3,000/- per hectare without inter planting and Rs. 4,000/- per hectare with inter planting is admissible to tea estates in hill Areas.

**Opening of new branches of Nationalised Banks in Kolhapur District Maharashtra**

8867. SHRI RAJARAM SHANKAR RAO MANE: Will the DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to open new branches of nationalised banks in the interior part of the western zone of the Kolhapur district in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, whether Here and Adkur in Chandgud Taluka, Vaibhav Wadi and Umbarde in Bavda Taluka, Bhedusgaon and Amba in Shahuwadi Taluka, Bajur Bhogav in Panhala, Vaishale in Sanghli are proposed to be considered as the locations for these branches;

(c) if so, by what time these branches will be opened; and

(d) whether the shepherds, koli and poor landless labourers will get loan for starting small traditional business?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ZULFIQUARULLAH): (a) to (c). In terms of their branch licencing policy for 1979-81, the Reserve Bank of India are at present engaged, in consultation with the Governments and the lead banks concerned, in drawing up branch expansion plans or districts in which the population per rural/semi-urban branch is in excess of 20,000. Kolhapur district, having 19,000 people per rural/semi-urban branch is not a deficit district, and hence further branch expansion in the district is at present being considered by the Reserve Bank.

(d): The banks have been advised to provide credit to the weaker sections of the community including shepherds, landless labourers etc. for undertaking productive ventures, eligible person being provided credit by the public sector banks under the Scheme of Differential Rate of Interest.

**Credit to Small and Marginal Farmers**

8868 SHRI MUKUNDA MANDAL: Will the DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the policy of Government in regard to speedy sanction of credit to small and marginal farmers;

(b) what concrete steps taken during the last two years to accelerate credit facilities to the small and marginal farmers throughout the country; and

(c) what role played by the R.B.I and the nationalised banks in connection thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ZULFIQUARULLAH): (a) to (c) The policy of the Government is to increasing the flow of credit to weaker sections of the society

Some of the important measures taken by Reserve Bank of India/ Government to accelerate the flow of commercial banks credit to the small and marginal farmers are as follows:

(i) The public sector banks have been asked to increase the share of small and marginal farmers in the total credit to agriculture to 50 per cent by the end of current plan period.

(ii) More Regional Rural Banks are being established.

(iii) Banks have been asked to lend a minimum of 1 per cent of their advances at 4 per cent rate

of interest under the scheme of Differential Rate of Interest and ensure that not less than 2/3rd of their advances under the scheme are routed through rural and semi-urban branches.

(iv) Banks have been advised to concentrate in areas where banking facilities are inadequate at present.

(v) the banks have been asked to adopt simplified application forms and lending procedure, and, in particular, not to insist on security of loan, margin money, etc in the case of loans to small and marginal farmers

**Excise Relief on Filter Cigarettes .**

8869 SHRI P. PARTHASARTHY: Will the DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) is it a fact that the Director-General of Health Services has held the Filter Cigarettes as less hazardous to health;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to encourage more production of these filter cigarettes in lower price categories for the large smoking masses;

(c) if so, what the Government propose to do to bring down the cost of filters;

(d) whether Government propose to give any excise relief; and

(e) if so, what is the quantum of relief contemplated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATISH AGARWAL): (a) The Indian Council of Medical Research has stated that health hazards of filter cigarettes are significantly less as compared to non-filter cigarettes. The Council has added that the trend in developed countries is to reduce smoking of both filter and non-filter cigarettes.