

crores travellers cheque fraud busted' appeared in the 'Indian Express' of 23rd July, 1984 ;

(b) if so, how were the travellers cheques issued without getting signatures in the register before issue and without entering them in the passport ;

(c) the details of the bank officials suspected of collusion with racketeers ; and

(d) the details of the action taken against such bank officials ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d). On the basis of information received, the Enforcement Directorate (Foreign Exchange Regulation Act) conducted searches at certain premises in Madras on 11-6-1984. As a result, certain malpractices relating to release of foreign exchange under the Foreign Travel Scheme/ Neighbourhood Travel Scheme have come to notice. Investigations by the Enforcement Directorate in this connection are not yet complete. On completion of the investigations, appropriate action as per law will be taken against the persons including bank employees, if any, found involved. In the interest of effective investigations, it is not expedient to disclose further details at this stage.

Directions to Commercial Banks for Providing Margin Money and Assistance to SCs for Economically Viable Programmes

3036. SHRI MANMOHAN TUDU : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that the Scheduled Caste Finance Cooperative Corporation, set up in Orissa, has been providing margin money and assisting the Scheduled Castes in respect of economically viable programmes ;

(b) whether Government are aware that the margin money which is to be routed through the commercial banks, is actually not getting equal response and cooperation

from those commercial banks set up in Orissa as most of these banks are not willing to take up the responsibility of disbursement and recovery of margin money ; and

(c) if so, the specific directives proposed to be sent by his Ministry to the various commercial banks functioning in Orissa in this regard ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JAN. ARDHANA POOJARY) : (a) Yes, Sir. Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes Development Corporations in various States are administering the margin money scheme for the benefit of the beneficiaries belonging to the SCs/STs.

(b) and (c). Reserve Bank of India has advised that it would not be desirable on its part to prescribe a specific scheme to be followed by banks for recovery of margin money to be advanced by SC/ST Corporations in different States. It may be left to the SC/ST Corporations to enter into some workable arrangements with banks after mutual consultations between the institutions/agencies involved. The suggestions of the RBI are under consideration of the Government.

Balance of Payment

3037. SHRI R.P. GAEKWAD : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the balance of payment position as on 31 March, 1984 against the corresponding year ended 31 March, 1983 ;

(b) whether the balance of payment position is deteriorating every year ; and

(c) if so, corrective measures taken or proposed to be taken in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Details of balance of payments position become available after a considerable time-lag. Based on the available data and the movement in India's foreign exchange reserves, the country's overall balance of payments

position has shown some improvement during the preceding two years.

(b) and (c). Does not arise.

Natural Gas Pipelines from Hazira to Jagdishpur

3038. SHRI DIGAMBER SINGH : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any financial package to implement the 1700 k.m. national gas pipeline from Hazira to Jagdishpur is in the offing ;

(b) if so, the financing pattern thereof ;

(c) the anticipated capital outlay involved and the estimated range of foreign exchange component ;

(d) the utility of this project ;

(e) which of the countries have shown interest in financing and executing this project ;

(f) the amount offered by each country, interest rate and repayment terms ;

(g) whether the World Bank too is being approached for a loan ; and

(h) whether any global tender has been floated for this project and whether it will be given to a consortium of companies for execution or divided into phases ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (h). The 1700 k.m. gas pipeline from Hazira to Jagdishpur will carry feedstock and fuel to the six-gas based fertilizer projects, which are to be set up in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The pipeline is estimated to cost Rs. 1700.17 crores, inclusive of a foreign exchange component of Rs. 680.35 crores.

The project will be financed from internal resources, as well as external funding as may be advisable.

The Netherlands is providing a grant of

Rs. 1.13 crores towards back-up consultancy. Japan has offered Yen 55 billion (about Rs. 250 crores) under OECF assistance (interest rate of 3.25 per cent per annum and repayable in 30 years with a grace period of 10 years) for the procurement of line pipes and pipe laying in the Hazira-Bijaipur portion. The World Bank has also been approached for assistance for this project. Other countries which have evinced interest in financing the project are FRG, Canada, France and Italy. The quantum and detailed terms and conditions of such credits will only become known when firm offers are actually received and negotiated. The decisions in this regard would also depend upon the source of imports, as determined by tender evaluation.

Global tenders have been floated for supply of line pipes and line pipe materials, and for the construction of the pipeline. The decision as to whether the project would be implemented by a consortium of companies or in segments would depend upon the bids received against the tenders.

Curbs on Oswal Woollen Mills Limited, Ludhiana

3039. SHRI R.N. RAKESH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that curbs have been placed on Oswal Woollen Mills, Ltd., Ludhiana on the involvement of this firm and its associates in illegal imports of beef tallow, if so, details thereof ;

(b) whether this follows representation from some MPs if so, details thereof ; and

(c) whether any fine has been levied on the firm and if so, details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SUPPLY (SHRI NIHAR RANJAN LASKAR) : (a) In connection with prima facie unauthorised import of beef tallow during July-August, 1983, M/s. Oswal Woollen Mills Ltd., Ludhiana was placed under abeyance on