

Buffer Stock of News Print With S.T.C.

4772. SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN :
SHRI M. RAMGOPAL
REDDY :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) Whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item appeared in the 'Indian Express' of 2nd August, 1984 where in it has been stated that buffer stock of news-print with S.T.C. has touched zero level following the Finance Ministry's refusal to release additional foreign exchange resulting in acute shortage of newsprint in the country ; and

(b) if so, the action Government propose to take to meet the situation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SUPPLY (SHRI NIHAR RANJAN LASKAR) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. S.T.C.'s buffer stock of newsprint which touched a level of 4000 MT approximately in the beginning of the year 1984-85 has again gone upto over 10,000 MT in the month of July, 1984. S.T.C.'s buffer stock never touched zero level.

Release of Smugglers

4773. SHRI B.V. DESAI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether various smugglers have been released from the prison in the last week of July, 1984 ;

(b) if so, the main reasons for their release :

(c) whether these persons were known for smuggling activities ;

(d) If so, the steps taken to frame charges against them ; and

(e) the reasons why they were released without the permission of Courts ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA) : (a) Information regarding the release of persons detained under the provisions of the COFEPOSA Act in the last week of July, 1984 is not readily available. However, 26 persons who were detained under the provisions of the COFEPOSA Act were released from detention in the month of July 1984.

(b) The break-up and reasons for their release are as under :

(i) On completion of the term of detention. 14

(ii) On orders by the various Courts. 5

(iii) On recommendation of the Advisory Boards. 7

(c) These 26 persons were detained for their involvement in smuggling activities.

(d) Stringent action is taken against persons involved in smuggling activities both departmentally as well as through prosecution in a Court of Law as the facts and merits of the case warrant.

(e) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

Rate of Inflation

4774. SHRI B.V. DESAI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the rate of inflation is not showing any signs of decline ;

(b) whether the annual rate of inflation at 7.6 per cent in the current year is only slightly less than 8 per cent in June last year ;

(c) whether the Ministry has been perturbed for the last two months over the rate of increase in the wholesale price index which has been much more than in the same period last year indicating that the rate of inflation by the end of the year might be more than what it was last year :

(d) whether any enquiry in regard to the reasons for inflation has been made ;

(e) if so, the details of the same; and

(f) the steps being taken to reduce the inflation and also the prices?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : (a) to (f) The annual rate of inflation in term of wholesale price index was 8.0 percent as on 30th June 1984 compared with 7.11 per cent in the corresponding week of 1983. In the two-month period ended July 28, 1984, the general index of wholesale prices increased by 4.2 per cent (end-month basis) compared to the increase of 2.7 per cent in the corresponding period of 1983-84. The increase in prices in the months of June and July is not unusual because of seasonal pressures as may be seen from the fact that the wholesale price index increased in the correspondings period by 7.4 per cent in 1979-80, 8.0 per cent in 1980-81, 3.1 per cent in 1981-82 and 4.5 per cent in 1982-83. There is no definite correlation between the extent of price rise during this period and the behaviour of prices for the year as a whole.

From time to time, Government have taken steps, both on the demand and supply side, to contain inflation. These include, inter alia, incentives for higher production, strengthening of the public distribution system, larger releases of foodgrains, sugar and edible oils, through fair price shops, import of essential items as and when necessary, enforcement of fiscal discipline and mopping up of excess liquidity in the system.

Financial Assistance Given by Nabard to Landless and Marginal Farmers for Growing Trees

4775. DR. VASANT KUMAR PANDIT : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :]

(a) whether the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development gives financial assistance to the landless and marginal farmers for growing trees for private purposes on Government land ;

(b) if so, the details of funds which have been sanctioned and distributed in Madhya Pradesh during the years 1982-83 and 1983-84 by the said Bank under the said scheme ;

(c) whether the NABARD has obtained reports from Madhya Pradesh on the number of beneficiaries under this scheme ;

(d) if so, details of Madhya Pradesh District-wise ; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefore ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY) : (a) to (e) The refinance facility from National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is available to eligible financial institutions against loans advanced to farmers (including small and marginal farmers) for growing trees on private agricultural land subject to certain conditions such refinance is also available against loans advanced for tree farming on degraded Government land obtained on long term lease by landless people, farmers or their organisations such as Co-operative Societies. Information about yearwise sanction of funds in Madhya Pradesh, number of beneficiaries and their district-wise breakup in the manner asked for is not available. However according to latest available data, total refinance provided by NABARD for forestry during 1982-83 in Madhya Pradesh was Rs. 90 lakhs.