

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Gratuity limit has been raised to Rs. 2.50 lakhs for Government employees and the public sector employees. The date of effect of the enhanced gratuity for Government servants is from 1-4-95 and for the public sector employees it is from 24-9-97, the date on which the ordinance was issued to effect the change in the gratuity limit for the organisations covered under Payment of Gratuity Act. PSUs are covered under this Act.

[English]

### Acqua Farms

511. SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMACHANDRAN Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Marine Product Export Development Authority has made any study on Acqua Farms in the country;

(b) if so, the findings thereof alongwith the area covered by such acqua- cultural farms ; and

(c) the number of multinational companies which are involved in acqua- culture in the country?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The findings of the studies conducted directly by the Marine Product Export Development Authority or through other agencies, are as follow:

#### 1. Findings of the study of viral disease in shrimp farms

After the November, 1994 outbreak of a viral disease in shrimp farms, the MPEDA conducted a study of the shrimp farms infected with the viral disease in selected aquaculture farms in Andhra Pradesh State. Based on this, the MPEDA advised the shrimp farmers to observe a crop holiday for one complete season and advised them on the steps to be taken to destroy the virus in the soil of the aquaculture farms.

#### 2. Findings of macrolevel survey for estimating the area covered by shrimp aquaculture within the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ)

The Regional Centres of the MPEDA conducted a brief macrolevel survey covering all the maritime states in the year 1997. As per the findings of the above survey a total area of 1,35,500 hectares is under aquaculture out of which an area of 87,000 hectares is covered by non traditional aquaculture. Approximately an area of 4,000 hectares of aquaculture farms facing seafront and 16,000 hectares of creek based aquaculture farms falls within the Coastal Regulation Zone.

#### 3. Findings of the study on potential impacts of shrimp culture activity on environment by National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), Nagpur sponsored by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA)

Under this study samples were drawn from the farms located in Tuticorin, Sirkali and killai in Tamil Nadu; in Nellore, Kakinada and Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh and in Palghar in Maharashtra. As per the findings of this study no heavy metal concentration has been found in the aquaculture farm effluents and the shrimp farming has not been found to be causing any salinisation problems. The study has also pointed out that the effluents of the shrimp farming activity cause lesser pollution or harm as compared to the domestic or industrial effluents and the shrimp farming has caused no threat to the nearby drinking water wells.

#### 4. Findings of the study on shrimp viral disease management by Mangalore Fisheries College sponsored by Marine Product Export Development Authority (MPEDA)

This study was conducted in 15 shrimp farms in Kundapur and 20 shrimp farms in Kumta of Karnataka State. As per the interim findings of the study, white spot disease outbreaks are more common in areas where farms are located in large numbers and if 60% or more of the population of shrimps in a pond is found with clear white spot, it is a sure sign of impending high to total mortality of shrimps and such a pond should be got harvested immediately. It has been proved beyond doubt that there is a vertical transmission of virus from mother shrimp to their seedlings and therefore, the seedlings of shrimp have to be screened for virus disease before stocking in the aquaculture farms.

(c) Two multinational companies are involved in aquaculture in India.

[Translation]

### Promotion of Tourism in Madhya Pradesh

512. SHRI MOTILAL VORA Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Madhya Pradesh has sent any proposals to the Union Government to improve the tourist places of historical and religious importance;

(b) if so, the action taken thereon; and

(c) whether the Union Government have recognised the ancient Bharamdev Temple situated in Rajnandgaon as a tourist place?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG) : (a) and (b) The

Government of Madhya Pradesh sent 9 project proposals to the Union Government for financial assistance during 1997-98 to improve the tourist places of historical and religious importance. These projects have been approved and a sum of Rs. 119.30 lakhs has been sanctioned.

(c) The State Govts. are primarily responsible for assessing the tourism potential of a place. On the basis of the State Governments proposals, the Department of Tourism considers providing financial assistance for the development of certain places according to the schematic guidelines.

#### Development of Parshuram Dham, Deoria, U.P

513. SHRI HARI KEWAL PRASAD:  
SHRIMATI KAMAL RANI:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the tourist places including major pilgrim places, particularly Parshuram Dham in Deoria and Buddhist pilgrim places developed/renovated with the Central assistance in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the progress made during the last three years, till date, and the amount spent thereon, place-wise and year-wise;

(c) the details of above tourist places/pilgrim places proposed to be developed with Central assistance during 1998-99 alongwith financial assistance proposed to be provided to the State in this regard; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government for speedy development/renovation of tourist places and pilgrim places in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG) : (a) and (b) The Department of Tourism, Government of India has been providing financial assistance to the State Government of Uttar Pradesh for the development of tourist places in the State. The amount sanctioned and released during the last three years were as given below:

Year	Sanction	Release (Rs. in lakhs)
1995-96	31.10	25.55
1996-97	237.78	91.55
1997-98	221.10	76.13

The important places for which the projects were sanctioned. Includes Sunauli, Kapilavastu, Mathura, Haridwar and Vrindavan. No project was sanctioned for Parshuram Dham in Deoria.

In addition infrastructure development in the Buddhist Centres of Sarnath, Kushinagar, Piprawaha and Sravasti was taken up with the loan assistance of Rs. 105.96 crores from the Overseas Economic Co-Operation Fund of Japan.

(c) Financial assistance is provided each year on the basis of projects prioritised in consultation with the State Government and specific proposals received, and the progress of implementation of earlier sanctioned projects. Projects for 1998-99 have not yet been identified.

(d) Development of tourist places is a continuing process and is primarily undertaken by the State Government/UT Administrations. The Union Government has also launched a scheme for providing financial assistance for the development of pilgrim centres.

[English]

#### Priority Sector Lending

514. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:  
SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA:  
SHRI AJAY CHAKRABORTY:  
SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the bank inspection reports of various commercial banks prepared by the Reserve Bank of India do not make any mention of the concerned banks exposure to the priority sector lendings;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it has been made non-obligatory on the part of the commercial banks including foreign banks to stick to the guidelines issued by the RBI on priority lendings; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN) : (a) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have reported that their Annual Financial Inspection Reports on commercial banks contain a paragraph on policy compliance, where in the banks lending to priority sectors *vis-a-vis* the mandated norms etc. are commented upon by the RBI Inspecting Officers.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) RBI have further reported that in terms of guidelines issued to commercial banks including foreign banks operating in India, it is obligatory for them to lend to the priority sector as per the details furnished below:

*Indian commercial Banks*  
(Both public and private sector)

Total priority sector advances: 40% of net bank credit

Total agricultural advances: 18% of net bank credit

Advances to weaker sections: 10% of net bank credit