

The total amount spent by the CSB on R&D, Seed Support and the developmental schemes is indicated below.

(Rs. in crores)

| Year | Tasar | Eri | Muga |
|---------|-------|------|------|
| 1995-96 | 4.05 | 0.57 | 5.03 |
| 1996-97 | 5.32 | 0.28 | 2.60 |
| 1997-98 | 5.79 | 0.27 | 2.81 |

The production of tasar in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa was respectively 144, 97 and 47 tonnes in 1997-98. The production of Muga and Eri in Assam was respectively 60 and 407 tonnes in 1997-98.

(g) The production of Muga silk has been fluctuating due to outdoor rearing, exposure to adverse climate and predators, need for adequate systematical plantation, inadequate supply of seed due to poor infrastructure facilities in the States for multiplication and lack of organised market support systems in the States. Muga silk is produced only in India.

(h) No, Sir. Eri silk production has steadily increased from 704 tonnes at the start of the 8th Plan to 814 tonnes in 1997-98.

Fall in Foreign Exchange Reserves

2140. SHRI TEJVEER SINGH :
SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the present position of foreign exchange reserves of the country;

(b) whether there is a sharp decline in the foreign exchange reserves of the country recently;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the action proposed to be taken by the Government to check the decline in foreign exchange reserves?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) The foreign exchange reserves (excluding gold and SDRs), as on November 27, 1998 amounted to US \$ 26491 million.

(b) No, Sir. The foreign exchange reserves, in fact, have increased by US \$ 516 million over their level at end March 1998.

(c) and (d) Does not arise.

[English]

Disinvestment Commission

2141. SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred question No 2523 dated June 12, 1998 and state :

(a) whether the recommendation of the Disinvestment Commission to set up the Disinvestment Fund and to delink disinvestment from the annual budgetary exercise has since been examined by the Government;

(b) if so, whether the Government have accepted the recommendation; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) to (c) The recommendations of the Disinvestment Commission are being examined by the Government.

[Translation]

Smuggling of Gold/Goods

2142. SHRI K.D. SULTANPURI :
SHRI N. DENNIS :
SHRI DINSHAW PATEL :
SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT :
SHRI D.S. AHIRE :
SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the cases of smuggling of foreign/domestic, consumer goods, contrabands, such as gold, silver heroin, foreign exchange etc. and narcotic drugs are increasing throughout the country;

(b) if so, the cases detected and quantity of goods seized in each case during the last three years, till September, 1998;

(c) the number of persons arrested in each case and the action taken against them; and

(d) the steps being taken by the Government to prevent the smuggling of above goods especially narcotics through the country?

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) The reports/intelligence available as well as available information on seizures effected do not indicate that the cases of smuggling of foreign/domestic consumer goods, such as gold, silver, heroin, foreign currency or narcotic drugs are increasing through out the country.

(b) and (c) The number of seizures effected, quantity/ value of goods seized and the number of persons arrested in each case during last three years, till September, 1998, are shown in the Statement-I, II. The persons arrested in the aforesaid categories of cases, except Heroin/Narcotic Drugs, besides being prosecuted under the Customs Act, 1962, in the appropriate Court of law, are also issued Show-Cause Notices under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962, for