

The deficit incurred by all the banks during 1997-98 was Rs.13.16 crore. The intake of candidates by the banks has been reduced over a period of time.

BSRB Chandigarh has allotted 182,460 and 615 candidates during 1996, 1997 and 1998 respectively to various banks.

An eminent person of good standing and integrity is appointed as Chairman by the co-ordinating bank with the approval of the Government of India.

The annual budget of the Boards is subjected to the same financial and other audits as the Co-ordinating bank has in respect of its own finances and administration.

(c) and (d) The review of the working of the BSRBs and recruitment procedure is a continuous process and in the light of day to day experience, necessary changes are made to make the recruitment procedure simple, transparent and impartial.

[English]

Regional Office of NHB at Chennai

2250. SHRI K.P. MOHAN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the National Housing Bank (NHB) is considering to open its regional office at Chennai, Tamil Nadu; and

(b) if so, by when this proposed regional office at Chennai will be made functional?

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) National Housing Bank (NHB) have reported that as of date there is no proposal to open its Regional Office at Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

(b) Does not arise.

Closing Down of Taj Mahal due to Pollution

2251. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether as per media reports Taj Mahal has been badly affected by pollution;

(b) if so, whether there is any move to close down Taj to visitors; and

(c) if so, the amount of loss likely to be suffered annually by the Department of Tourism thereby?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG): (a) Though Media reports mention that the monument is affected by pollution, no actual damage has been observed.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Visit of Indian Delegation Abroad

2252. SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN : Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether his Ministry sponsored or sent any delegation abroad during the tenure of the present Lok Sabha (i.e. 10.3.98 till date) consisting of any Member of Parliament; and

(b) if so, the names of the members delegation and countries they visited with the expenditure met on them by the Government?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) One Delegation of Members of Parliament was sent to Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand during 20-29 September, 1998. The delegation was led by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs & Tourism and consisted of the following Members of Parliament:

1. Capt. Jagatvir Singh Drona, MP(LS)
2. Shri Ram Narain Meena, MP(LS)
3. Shri Rupchand Pal, MP(LS)
4. Shri Mohan Singh, MP (LS)
5. Shri Kanchi Paneerselvam, MP(LS)
6. Shri Surender Prasad Yadav (Jhanjharpur), MP(LS)
7. Smt. Chandresh Kumari, MP(RS)
8. Shri Nilotpal Basu, MP(RS)
9. Shri K.M. Saifulla, MP(RS)

The total expenditure incurred on the visit of this Delegation was Rs.8,44,689/-. Bills relating to expenditure borne by Indian Missions abroad are yet to be received.

[Translation]

Economic Sanctions

2253. SHRI VIJAY GOEL :
SHRI CHANDRASHEKHAR SAHU :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the areas where USA had imposed economic sanctions after India's nuclear tests;

(b) whether United States of America have taken decision to withdraw some economic sanctions against India;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the withdrawal of some economic sanctions is result of Indo-America talks or some other reasons are behind this; and

(e) the opinion of India in regard to remaining economic sanctions?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) Following the Nuclear test explosions by India in the month of May, 1998, the U.S. Government announced sanctions on India which include the following:

- 1) termination of assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, except for humanitarian assistance or food or other agricultural commodities;
- 2) termination of sales of defence articles, defence services, or design and construction services under the Arms Export Control Act, and termination or licenses for the export of any item on the United States Munitions list;
- 3) termination of all foreign military financing under the Arms Export Control Act;
- 4) denial by US Government of any credit, credit guarantees, or other financial assistance by any department, agency or instrumentality of the U.S. Government;
- 5) the US opposition to extension of any loan or financial or technical assistance by any international financial institution;
- 6) prohibiting US Banks from making any loan or providing any credit to the GOI, except for purposes of purchasing food or other agricultural commodities;
- 7) prohibiting the EXIM Bank from giving approval to guarantee, insure or extend credit, or participate in the extension of credit and support of US exports to India; and
- 8) prohibiting the exports to India of specific goods and technologies subject to export licenses by the Commerce Department.

(b) and (c) The US President was recently provided authority by the US Congress to waive for a period of one year some restrictive measures imposed on India. In partial exercise of this authority, the US Government has decided to waive measures relating to:

- i) Restrictions on assistance through the EXIM Bank, Overseas Private Investment Cooperation (OPIC) and the Trade Development Authority.
- ii) Restrictions on US Banks and
- iii) Resumption of International Military Education and Training (IMET) programme to facilitate limited education and training cooperation between the uniformed forces of the US and India.

These waivers are in addition to removal of restrictions on finance and credit guarantees for agricultural commodities, medicines and fertilisers, which were exempted earlier in July 1998.

(d) India has been engaged in an intensive dialogue on a range of issues relating to disarmament and non-proliferation with the United States. These discussions have led to a narrowing of gaps of perceptions. It appears it is in recognition of this that the United States has lifted some of the measures.

(e) India has always maintained that unilateral and restrictive economic measures are unjustified and counter productive and therefore should be fully lifted.

[English]

F.E.M.A.

2254. SHRI K.P. NAIDU : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether some drawback have been pointed out in F.E.M.A. (New Act replacing FERA) by the experts with particular reference to its clause 49,

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to rectify the deficiencies in the Act?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) and (b) Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and the Money Changers Association of India have represented to the Government regarding Clause 49(3) of Foreign Exchange Management Bill, 1998. Both these Associations have suggested that the Government may provide that all offences under FERA, 1973 which may be inconsistent with the new Act, should be compounded under the new Act within a period of six months by either adjudicating authorities or by the RBI. Similarly, APEX Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Punjab, have represented that all cases of foreign exchange contravention pending under FERA, 1973 should be dealt with according to the provisions of Foreign Exchange Management Bill, 1998.

(c) The Foreign Exchange Management Bill, 1998, is presently under examination of Standing Committee on Finance. On receipt of the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Finance, Government will take a view in the matter.

Purchase of Drilling Machine

2255. SHRI MAHBOOB ZAHEDI : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Eastern Coalfields Limited, a subsidiary of Coal India Limited procured a Drilling Machine from Germany.