

in these matters. There is no time-limit because the demands arise from time to time. Since there is no time-limit for the demands to arise, it is difficult to put a time-limit on the solutions to these demands but once the solutions are arrived at, the decisions are conveyed to the interested parties.

[Translation]

SHRI VIJAY GOEL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to request the hon. Finance Minister to extend the date of SAMADHAN because there has been a shortage of time due to strike and festivals. If you extend the time beyond 31st December the Govt. will get more tax...*(Interruptions)* Let the Finance Minister assure that he would consider this..*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN: What the hon. Member has said is very important and urgent..*(Interruptions)*

SHRI VIJAY GOEL: This is the demand of traders. This will benefit the Govt. It would be very good if the hon. Minister gives some assurance..*(Interruptions)*. The whole House is unanimous..*(Interruptions)*. Please get it done..*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: It is a suggestion for action and I will certainly take note of the feelings of the hon. Members.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH: If the date is extended, nobody will deposit any amount till 31st of the month.

[English]

Insurance Scheme for Sick SSIs

*285. DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA:
SHRI RAM TAHAL CHAUDHARY:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to launch Comprehensive Insurance Scheme for the sick and unviable SSI units in the country, particularly in Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Sick SSI units are declared unviable only after all possible efforts for their revival have failed. Therefore, question of launching an insurance scheme for revival of such unviable sick units does not arise. Further, commercial risks of industrial units turning sick or unprofitable are not considered as pure risks for insurance. In view of this, Government has no plan to launch any insurance scheme for revival of even potentially viable sick SSI units.

As regards revival of potentially viable sick units, Government has taken various measures for their revival. These include reduced rate of interest for rehabilitation, prompt viability studies/nursing programmes of identified sick units, setting up of cells at important regional centres and Head Offices of Banks to deal with sick industrial units and provision of expert staff, including technical personnel to look into technical aspects. State Level Inter-Institutional Committees (SLIICs) exist under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Industries) of the State Governments for revival of sick units.

[Translation]

DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this question came up before the House because of the inroads of the multinational companies which recently entered into this country due to the policy of globalisation. In last five years nearabout 2 lakhs units of SSI (Small Scale Industry) have been closed. Will the Minister of Industries confirm it that nearabout 2 lakh units of small scale industries have been closed in last five years? Will he also mention the number of workers got unemployed because of the closure of these industries and also the steps taken by the Government for their revival?

SHRI SIKANDAR BAKHT: Hon'ble Member has very rightly said that the number of sick units of SSI till March, 1998, was 2,20,594, but in 1997 this number was a bit higher at 2,35,042. He is very much right in saying this also that workers are going through unemployment, but we are making efforts to help the revival of the sick units as much as possible.

DR. VALLABHBHAI KATHIRIA: Hon'ble Minister has correctly stated it that the number of sick units is 2,35,000, but some more units are on the verge of closure because

of the entry of the multi-national companies and the relaxation they are granted. So, some concrete steps should be taken in this direction. It seems Government have yet not taken any decision on it. I want to know what steps will be taken by Government to promote the revival of sick units.

SHRI SIKANDAR BAKHT: I am in a fix to reply this question as multinational companies are coming in the area of infrastructure and high technology, and they have not entered into the area in which SSI are operating. On the other hand multinational companies are helpful to small scale industry because of their vendor activities.

SHRI RAM TAHAL CHAUDHARY: Speaker Sir, question was asked regarding the sickness of large number of units of SSI. I want to know the total number of sick units in the country as well as in Gujarat, Bihar and other states and also the number of workers got unemployed because of this closure?

SHRI SIKANDAR BAKHT: I repeat answer of the first part of your question and for other I see whether I have the relevant information or not. As I have replied till March, 1998 the total number of sick units of SSI was 2,20,594 and in March, 1997 it was 2,35,042. Now I take out the number of sick SSI units in Bihar. It is little bit problematic.

[English]

The total number of sick SSI units in Bihar is 22,782.

SHRI MURLI DEORA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, earlier the products which the SSI units were manufacturing were reserved only for them. Now, due to dereservation of products for SSI units, they are not able to compete. This is one reason for the SSI units becoming sick. Will the Government do something to see that such products, which were reserved for the SSI units, continue to remain with them?

[Translation]

SHRI SIKANDAR BAKHT: Statement of the Prime Minister has already come in this regard denying any dereservation at the moment.

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: Sir, is it a fact that a large number of small-scale units have fallen sick because

of various reasons? One such reason is the delay in payments. We have passed a Bill in regard to the delayed payments. But in spite of that, it is not being implemented. The small-scale manufacturers suffer because of delays in payment of their bills.

May I know from the hon. Minister the measures that the Government propose to take in order to expedite the payment of bills to the entrepreneurs of small-scale units?

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: The hon. member has already included the reply to his question in his own question. He has said that the Government has already taken a number of measures to ensure that the delayed payments are not made to small-scale industries. It is being implemented.

[Translation]

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to know the number of SSI units have gone sick because of militancy in Jammu and Kashmir during last nine years. I also want to know whether Government is considering to scrap the toll tax as it is charged Rs. 18 per quintal for carrying goods or sending them away from the state keeping in view this situation that all industries operating in J&K take in raw material from different parts of the country and again supplying finished goods for sale in whole of the nation. I also want to know the reply of the Government in regard of the special package that has been asked by the Government of J&K for the revival of the small scale industries.

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: Answer of first question is that 761 SSI units have fallen sick. Whereas it is the question of scrapping toll tax, this is related to other Ministries. And for this last question it would be very kind of him if he repeats it once more.

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA: Jammu and Kashmir Government have asked for a package for the revival of small scale industries in the State. Whether Union Government is ready to endorse it?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Shri S. Sudhakar Reddy.

..(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No, no; I have called Shri Sudhakar Reddy.

SHRI S. SUDHAKAR REDDY: Sir, it is understandable that insurance cannot be given for sick units. But a sick unit should have security after its revival. So, is there any possibility of giving an insurance cover by the Government to those units which are not sick and to those units which are revived after sickness?

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: It is not a question of whether the Government is prepared or not. I tried to explain the mechanism of insurance. There are four subsidiary companies of the General Insurance Corporation of India which offer several insurance covers covering the industrial units against loss and damage to their property due to operation of insurance perils, such as, fire, explosion, earthquake, floods, etc., that is, natural calamities. However, no insurance cover is available at present to cover commercial risks of industrial units turning sick or unprofitable since any such contingencies are not considered as pure risks for insurance.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO: Sir, most of the small-scale industries become sick because they are mainly ancillary industries which depend upon the big industries or the consumption of consumers. So, those industries, which have become sick, depend upon ancillary industries.

MR. SPEAKER: Unless you put a brief supplementary question, you will not get an answer.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO: Can the Government come up with a plan to give protection to the industries which are dependent on big industries?

SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT: It is the question of relationship of the smaller industries with the bigger industries. I think, this relationship should continue for the benefit of the small-scale industries themselves.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[Translation]

Opening of Insurance Sector for Infrastructural Sector

*282. SHRI NARENDRA BUDANIA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to open up the insurance sector for financing infrastructural sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time by which the financing of infrastructural sector is likely to be started; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Bill to this effect has been introduced in Lok Sabha on 15.12.98.

(c) Financing can take place only after the passing of the Bill and the coming into business of new companies.

(d) Does not arise.

[English]

Accidents in Coal Mines

*286. SHRI BIJOY KUMAR BIJOY:
PROF. AJIT KUMAR MEHTA:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether adverse geo-mining conditions cause frequent accidents in coal mines;

(b) whether inadequate study of geo-engineering characteristics of coal measures authenticated by geologists is mainly responsible for these accidents;

(c) if so, whether the Government intends to conduct the intensive geological study of coal measures;

(d) if so, the time by which study is likely to be conducted; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. The design of the roof support system for strata control is based on adequate study of geo-engineering characteristics of coal measures strata of a mine. In spite of adequate study of the characteristics of coal measures rock, at times it is not possible to anticipate and guard against small faults, hidden slips and other minor geological disturbances.

(c) to (e) Does not arise in view of the above.