

(b) if so, the reasons and details thereof;

(c) whether any review was made of the works undertaken under this scheme;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the manner in which the Government propose to utilize the expertise of the 700 Scientists/employees working under this scheme after scrapping of this scheme and the measures taken at the national level to monitor the quality of the foodgrains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (e) The post harvest operation scheme is one of the schemes identified for being weeded out by the Committee constituted in the Ministry of Finance to identify schemes which are redundant and non-essential. Such schemes have been conveyed to the concerned Ministry/Departments for further action. Food Ministry is to take appropriate follow-up action as far as this scheme is concerned.

Trade with Saudi Arabia

2684. SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a huge imbalance of trade between India and Saudi Arabia;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether a two day meeting of Indo-Saudi joint commission was held recently in New Delhi;

(d) if so, the areas so identified to reduce this huge imbalance of trade; and

(e) the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) The bilateral trade between India and Saudi Arabia was Rs.11933.43 crores in 1996-97. While Imports from Saudi Arabia were Rs. 9931.35 crores, Exports were Rs. 2002.08 crores, leaving a huge trade balance in favour of Saudi Arabia. It is mainly on account of oil imports of India from that country.

(c) to (e) Yes, Sir. A Two day meeting of Indo-Saudi Joint Commission was held recently in New Delhi on 11-12th June, 1997. For further expanding the existing level of bilateral trade, the two sides identified possibilities for cooperation in the fields of transport, agricultural equipment, software, construction materials, food and agricultural products, drugs and pharmaceuticals, petro-chemicals and pharmaceuticals. Both sides agreed to encourage participation of private sector in bilateral trade and joint ventures, exchange of commercial information, exchange of commercial delegations, and participation in trade fairs, to boost the bilateral trade.

PMRY Schemes in North-east (Assam)

2685. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Lead Bank are reluctant to finance the PMRY Schemes in the North-East, particularly Assam, because of non-recovery of loan sanctioned earlier;

(b) if so, the number of schemes pending with different banks, in Assam since last three years and the steps initiated by the Ministry for its clearance;

(c) whether the entire 15 Nos. PMRY Schemes taken up for implementation during last financial year in Lakhimpur District of Assam were rejected by UBI on similar ground; and

(d) if so, the measures proposed to be taken in future so that entrepreneurs can avail this opportunity of self-employment and the required financial support of ensured through alternative arrangement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) The performance of banks in the North Eastern Region including Assam State during the last three years as furnished by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is given in the attached statement-I, II and III. RBI has further reported that in a review meeting held recently, banks inter alia pointed out lack of adequate infrastructure facilities and poor recovery performance in the State of Assam. However, the banks have sanctioned loans under PMRY at around 55% of the target in Assam State and 60% in North Eastern Region as a whole during 1996-97

(b) RBI has reported that the cases pending with the banks in the North Eastern Region including Assam State as on 31st March during the last three years are as under:

Year	No.
1994-95	1254
1995-96	3252
1996-97	3014

Bank have been advised by RBI to take up the cases pending at the close of programme year i.e. 31st March for sanction in the next programme year.

(c) and (d) United Bank of India has reported that out of 208 sponsored proposals in Lakhimpur District in 1996-97, 55 proposals were rejected, inter-alia on account of the following reasons:

- (i) Non Viability
- (ii) Delayed sponsoring
- (iii) Eligibility criteria (income/educational qualification) not fulfilled