

(a) whether the Government have revived its proposal for the development of free port in the country on the lines of Dubai and Singapore and asked the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade to identify the existing Indian ports for the development of free port/suggest a new site for the same purpose;

(b) if so, the details of those States who have offered land for the development of free port in the country;

(c) whether his Ministry had also appointed a Committee for recommending free ports after studying the ports and viable sites in all the coastal States in 1990;

(d) if so, whether any final decision has been taken in this regard;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (f) The Advisory Committee set up under the Chairmanship of Shri Raunaq Singh to examine the desirability and feasibility of establishing a Free Port in India has recommended Goa as a suitable location for setting up of a Free Port. The Committee has also suggested Tuticorin as a suitable site for a second Free Port on the east coast. No Specific proposal has been received from any State Government offering land for development of Free Port.

The Report has been examined and the Government has decided to draw up an implementation model of the various steps that have to be taken to set up a Free Port, including changes in laws, simplification of procedures, introduction of differential rates of taxation etc. to enable the Government to take a decision. Since legal, constitutional, financial and policy issues concerning the Free Port are involved, it may not be possible to indicate a time frame for a final decision in this regard.

NTC Mills

6586. SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) the number of textile mills in Maharashtra run by National Textile Corporation;

(b) the number of workers working in those mills;

(c) the amount of loss incurred upto 1995-96; and

(d) what steps Government/Corporation is taking to wipe out the loss and running the mills in profit ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA) : (a) to (c) The NTC has 35 textile mills located in Maharashtra. These mills had 34513 workers as on 31.3.1997. The cash loss incurred by these 35 mills upto 1995-96 is Rs. 1101.10 crores.

(d) On account of the continuous losses and net worth erosion, the NTC (SM) and NTC (MN) controlling these mills have been referred to and declared sick by the BIFR. The Government approved a revised Turn Around Strategy for NTC mills including the mills under NTC (MN) and NTC (SM) and placed the same before the BIFR for approval. The BIFR has published draft rehabilitation schemes in respect of both these subsidiary corporations. In the statement made on the floor of this House on 3.3.1997 the reasons for non-implementation of the Turn Around Strategy for NTC mills approved by the Government in 1995 have been indicated. Since sale proceeds from surplus land are not available and the BIFR has not yet given its approval to the rehabilitation package, the NTC (HC) have submitted a report after reviewing the economic viability of each of the mills by taking into consideration the concessions approved by the Government in 1995 and the concept of net worth becoming positive as per the BIFR norms. This report is presently under consideration of the Government. No final decision has yet been taken. The salient features of the revised Turn Around Strategy would be laid on the Table of the House as and when finalised.

[Translation]

Technical Training to Entrepreneurs

6587. SHRI NITISH KUMAR :

JUSTICE GUMAN MAL LODHA :

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have formulated any scheme to provide technical assistance to the entrepreneurs for industrial development in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of entrepreneurs to whom technical assistance has been provided during 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97 under the said scheme; and

(d) the expenditure incurred on this scheme during the above period ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) and (b) For providing technical assistance to small scale entrepreneurs, Government have established