

Goa National Highway during the year 1991-92; and

(b) the progress made so far in the repair work of the Highway and the time by which it will be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) During 1991-92, an amount of Rs. 230 lakhs has been allocated for the maintenance and repairs of Bombay-Goa National Highway No. 17 to the concerned states of Maharashtra and Goa against ordinary repairs, periodical renewals, flood damage repairs, etc.

(b) Maintenance and repairs is a continuous process and these activities are pursued throughout the year as per actual needs to keep National Highways in traffic-worthy condition.

[Translation]

Irregularities in advancing loans by Vijaya Bank

4082. SHRI HARPAL PANWAR: Will the minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the names of companies manufacturing floppy discs provided loans by Vijaya Bank during the year 1990 and the details of loan provided to them;

(b) whether any complaints have been received by the Government in regard to irregularities committed in granting loans by the bank; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) Vijaya Bank has reported that it has not financed any company engaged in the manufacture of floppy discs during the year 1990.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

[English]

Export of Iron Ore

4083. SHRI GOPI NATH GAJAPATHI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the rate at which the export of iron ore is made at present;

(b) whether there is a vast scope for the export as the demand for iron ore is fast increasing in several countries;

(c) if so, the steps taken by the Government to increase the export of iron ore; and

(d) the target set for the Eighth Five Year Plans period, if any?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) The rate at which iron ore is being exported at present ranges between US \$ 12.95 and US \$ 25.99 fob per tonne depending upon the type (Lumps or fines) and the quality of ore as also the shipping conditions, ocean freight etc.

(b) The demand for iron ore depends on the increase in steel production internationally. The projections of demand for iron ore vary considerably but the demand for iron ore from India is expected to be maintained at least at current levels. The

export potential of iron ore is also limited due to infrastructural constraints in India.

(c) Apart from facilitating long-term contracts and market diversification, Government has extended Exim Scrips benefit to all exports including iron ore and the benefit under Section 80 HHC of the Income Tax Act to exports of processed minerals. Further, iron ore of Redi origin has been de-canalised and iron ore of Goan origin can now be exported directly by Goan exporters to China and Europe in addition to their traditional markets of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and West Europe.

(d) Exports of iron ore during the Eighth Plan period are estimated to range between 33 million to 36 million tonnes per year.

Outstanding Excise Duty against Industrialists

4084. SHRI RAM NIHOR RAI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the outstanding dues on account of excise duty against the top twenty Indian industrialists;

(b) the number of cases in respect of excise duty pending in Courts against these industrialists;

(c) the action being taken by the Government for recovery of excise duty from these industrialists; and

(d) the penal rules applied against these industrialists for recovery of outstanding excise duty?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR) :
(a) Rs. 260.39 Crores approximately.

(b) 288

(c) The outstanding amounts are generally linked with court cases and cases before Customs Excise and Gold Control Appellate Tribunal and in most of the cases recoveries have been stayed. The Courts/CEGAT are moved from time to time for early hearings and vacation of stays against recovery. Competent special counsels are engaged to defend Government's interests in cases involving important issues and heavy stakes.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Rise in prices of commodities of common use

4085. SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR SHASTRI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the prices of most of the commodities of general use have increased after the presentation of the Budget;

(b) if so, the details of the pre-budget and post-budget prices of these commodities; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to check the rise in the prices of the commodities of common use?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (RAMESHWAR THAKUR) : (a) and (b) Details of the Wholesale Price Indices (Base : 1981-82=100) of commodities of general use before and after presentation of the Budget are given in the enclosed statement.

(c) The steps taken/being taken by the Government to contain the rate of inflation include strict fiscal discipline, check on expansion of money