

in the Currency Declaration Form, in case the aggregate value of these exceeds US \$ 10,000/- or its equivalent w.e.f. 6.11.91 as against the earlier ceiling of \$ 1,000/-.

(c) Adequate powers already exist with the Government to curb economic crimes relating to foreign currency under the Foreign Exchange Regulations Act, 1973.

Amendment of Patents Act, 1970

296. DR. ASIM BALA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to extend patent of life forms by amending the Patents Act, 1970; and

(b) if so, the Government's stand in regard to joining the 'Plant Breeders Right'?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b). Government has not taken any decision on patenting of life forms by amending the Indian Patents Act. However, the Department of Biotechnology has constituted a Committee which is currently examining issues related to the scope of patentability of biotechnological inventions. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research is separately examining the issue of Plant Breeders' Rights and the question of Government's stand thereon.

Bench of Bombay High Court at Kolhapur

297. SHRI UDAYSINGRAO GAIKWAD: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a persistent demand from the public belonging to six western districts of Maharashtra for the establishment of a Bench of the Bombay High Court at Kolhapur; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) Yes, Sir. Representations have been received from time to time for establishing Benches of Bombay High Court at Amravati, Pune, Kolhapur and Sholapur in addition to the principal seat of the High Court at Bombay and its existing permanent Benches at Nagpur and Aurangabad.

(b) No decision can be taken by the Central Government unless a proposal with the recommendation of the High Court is received from the State Government in this regard. We await such proposal containing the High Court's recommendation to proceed further.

Income Tax on Interest on Bank Deposits

298. SHRI UDAYSINGRAO
GAIKWAD
SHRI P.C. THOMAS
SHRI BALRAJ PASSI
SHRI MORESHWAR SAVE
SHRI SOBHANADREES-
WARA RAO VADDE:

Will the Minister of TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been sharp decline in the bank deposits as a result of the Government's decision to deduct tax at source on interest income from bank deposits;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) the comparative figures of the bank

deposits as on 31 October during 1989, 1990 and 1991; and

(d) whether in view of decline in deposits the Union Government propose to review the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) to (d). The deposits of All Scheduled Commercial Banks have increased from Rs.199108 crores as on last Friday of June, 91 to Rs.214528 crores as on last Friday of October, 91.

The aggregate deposits of all Scheduled Commercial Banks as on last Friday of October, 89, October, 90 and October, 91 were as under:

Year	Amount (Rs. in Crores)
October, 1989	156520
October, 1990	181780
October, 1991	214528

The trends in the growth of bank deposits remain under constant review of RBI and Government, and corrective steps taken whenever called for.

Trade and Economic Relations with USSR

299. **SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR PATEL:** Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the impact of the recent development in the USSR on Indo-Soviet trade; and

(b) the steps taken or proposed to be taken towards realignment of trade and economic relations with USSR?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE

MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b). The comprehensive process of dismantling of physical and economic structure in the Soviet Union has had a negative impact on Indo-Soviet Trade. In view of this the Government is taking a number of steps to ensure that a new dynamism is imparted to bilateral trade. These steps include:

- (i) Establishing direct contacts with the Soviet Republics;
- (ii) Promotion of direct contacts at the commercial enterprise level including increased interaction between the business chambers of the two countries;
- (iii) Greater emphasis on new forms of economic cooperation like Joint Ventures; and
- (iv) As imports generate rupee funds for financing exports in the balanced trading system with the USSR, equal emphasis is being given to exports from the Soviet Union to India.

Visit of US Trade Representative

300. **SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR PATEL:**
SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES:
SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHANAN:
SHRI RABI RAY:
SMT. MALINI BHAT-TACHARYA:
PROF. SUSANTA CHAKRABORTY:
SHRI DHARMANNA MONDAYA SADUL:
SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state: