

(b) IDFC has reported that amongst the international investors, International Finance Corporation has agreed to subscribe upto US Dollar 20 million to the company's share capital.

(c) The mission of IDFC will be to lead private capital investments for infrastructure projects on a commercially viable basis. IDFC will be proactive on both the supply and demand side of the infrastructure sector. It will nurture and develop bankable projects as well as develop expertise in structured financing for infrastructure. In its initial phase of operations, IDFC will be active in the fields of power, telecommunications, roads & highways, ports and urban finance.

Loans/Advances to Minorities

466. SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased state:

(a) whether banks submit regularly to the Reserve Bank of India, their returns indicating loans/advances to specified minorities;

(b) the arrangements for the scrutiny of these returns and the follow up work;

(c) the annual target and the amount of loans/advances to each of the specified minorities during the last three years; and

(d) the action taken in case of banks with shortfalls and deficiencies in channelising the flow of credit to minorities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reported that the public sector banks submit details regarding priority sector advances granted to specified minority communities on half yearly basis. The returns furnished by the public sector banks are scrutinised by the RBI and consolidated statements are sent to the administrative Ministries and the National Commission for Minorities. Wherever delays are noticed, the banks are advised by the RBI for taking remedial action.

(c) and (d) RBI has further reported that under the present arrangement, no specific targets have been earmarked for the minority communities within the priority sector advances. Information regarding priority sector advances granted by public sector banks (balance amount outstanding) the minority communities in the country as of the end of March, 1994, March, 1995 and March, 1996 (latest available), as furnished by RBI are given below:—

A/cs in Lakhs)
(Amount : Rs. in Crores)

Year ended March, 1994		Year ended March, 1995		Year ended March, 1996	
No. of A/cs	Amount Outstanding	No. of A/cs	Amount Outstanding	No. of A/cs	Amount Outstanding
59.11	6351.61	61.20	6946.79	64.43	7916.23

As evaluation of credit facilities to minority communities in 18 of the 41 districts identified as having concentration of minority communities undertaken by RBI revealed, *inter-alia*, that the assistance given to the members of the minority communities by banks was normally found adequate. The banks have also been advised by the RBI to take steps to facilitate the flow of credit to the minority communities and to review the progress made regularly at the District Consultative Committee (DCC) and the State Level Bankers Committee (SLBC) meetings.

[Translation]

Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973

467. SHRI MANIBHAI RAMJIBHAI CHAUDHARY : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are contemplating to make amendment in the Coal Mines Act, 1973;

(b) if so the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to come into effect?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government have noted that the projections of coal production and of coal demand show that there will be a gap towards the end of the 9th Plan which will increase during the 10th Plan period. This gap will remain even though the investment in the 9th Plan will be more than double the investment in the 8th Plan. In 1993 the Coal Mines

(Nationalisation) Act, 1973 was amended to permit companies engaged in business of steel production, power generation and other end uses to burn coal. In view of the anticipated gap the Government are contemplating to amend the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 in order to enable any Indian company to mine coal, so that investment in mining coal may increase to facilitate increased production.

(c) The Government have not yet decided when the Bill to amend the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 will be introduced in Parliament.

[*English*]

Appreciation in the Value of Rupee

468. SHRI CHHITUBHAI GAMIT : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether in the Annual Report of Reserve Bank for 1996–1997, Reserve Bank of India has recorded that every fall in gold prices, appreciation in the value of the rupee against US dollar and a gain in the value of dollar against other currencies hurts the Central Bank badly; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) According to the Annual Report-1996–97 of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), while the quantity of gold holdings of the RBI remained unchanged, there has been a decline in the value of gold holdings during 1996–97 and in the first quarter of 1997–98 on account of the decline in international prices of gold. Similarly, the increase in foreign currency assets, in US dollar terms, during 1996–97 was moderated somewhat because of valuation loss resulting from the depreciation of non-dollar currencies vis-a-vis the US dollar.

(b) Upward or downward movements in exchange rates and gold prices in the international market are normal occurrences and the resulting valuation gain or loss in RBI's holdings of foreign exchange reserves is unavoidable. Such valuation changes, however, do not affect the quantity of gold holdings of the RBI or the amount of foreign currency asset holdings in respective foreign currencies. The Reserve Bank also maintains a Contingency Reserve to be able to absorb unexpected and unforeseen liabilities in its balance sheet arising out of valuation losses.

[*Translation*]

Loan Provided by Banks to Small and Marginal Farmers

469. SHRI RAM TAHAL CHAUDHARY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of loan given to small and marginal farmers by cooperative banks/commercial banks and

regional rural banks in Bihar during each of the last three years and current financial year, till date;

(b) whether some irregularities were noticed while sanctioning these loans;

(c) if so, the remedial measures taken in this regard;

(d) the amount of loans recovered during the above period; and

(e) the steps being taken to simplify the bank loan procedure for the farmers in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (e) The information is being collected and, to the extent available, will be laid on the Table of the House.

[*English*]

Allotment of Chambers

470. SHRI BHIMRAO VISHNUJI BADADE : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some advocates on record of the Supreme Court have sent representation/memorandum to the Government regarding allotment of chambers to them during the last nine months;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken or proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Some advocates had sent a memorandum in March, 1997 requesting the Government to allot the new chambers at Dr. Bhagwan Das Road in such a manner that all the advocates registered as Advocates-on-Record of the Supreme Court till 1996, are accommodated within the available resources of the Government.

(c) The allotment of chambers to the Advocates-on-Record of the Supreme Court is made by the Registry of the Supreme Court with the approval of the Chief Justice of India or a Committee appointed by him in this regard. Accordingly, a copy of the above memorandum was forward to the Registry of Supreme Court for necessary action.

Restructuring of HCL

471. SHRI DHARMABIKSHAM : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether final decision on the proposal for financial restructuring of Hindustan Cables Limited has been taken; and