

Banks in "Essential Services"

627. SHRI RAM NAIK :
SHRI MOHAN RAWALE :
PROF. P.J. KURIEN :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that there is a general demand to declare the banking industry as "essential service" to check the increasing threats of strike;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to declare the banking industry as "essential service"; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c) The banking industry is notified as a "Public Utility Service" under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 from time to time.

Vacant Post in KVIC, Ahmedabad

628. SHRI SANAT MEHTA : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the post of Deputy Director of Khadi and Village Industries Commission at Ahmedabad has been vacant since last five years;

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

(c) the steps taken by the Government to fill up the said post?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Smuggling of Cardamom and Clove

629. SHRI P.C. THOMAS :
PROF. P.J. KURIEN :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that cardamom and cloves are being smuggled to India in large scale;

(b) whether the Government has booked any such case during the last one year;

(c) if so, the details of cases booked, persons or companies involved, quantity and items seized;

(d) the action taken in each case;

(e) whether the Government are aware that Nepal is importing more than ten times of their domestic need of Cardamom;

(f) if so, the quantity of import and through which port this import takes place; and

(g) the steps taken by the Government to check smuggling of cardamom and cloves?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Available reports indicate that cardamom and cloves are being smuggled into India.

(b) to (d) Information is being collected.

(e) Available reports suggest that Nepal is importing cardamom in excess of its domestic needs. However, it is difficult to estimate whether the imports of cardamom made by Nepal are ten times more than their domestic need.

(f) Imports of cardamom by Nepal from third countries through the port of Calcutta is furnished below;

Year	Qty (in tonnes)
1995-96	33.975
1996-97	3609.986
1997-98 (Upto July 97)	809.240

(g) Anti Smuggling agencies are alert to detect & prevent smuggling including smuggling of cardamom and cloves. Specific measures taken include intensified surveillance and targetting of intelligence on the areas sensitive to smuggling especially on the Indo-Nepal border. Matter is also being taken up under the existing provision of the Indo-nepal treaty with HMG Nepal to put an end to the abuse of privileges by the unscrupulous Nepalese importers indulging in smuggling of these third country goods into India.

NABARD Help for Orissa

630. SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the NABARD has taken any step to help the farmers in the drought hit areas of Orissa during the current financial year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the regional rural banks and the co-operative banks in the rural as well as urban areas in the State are also helping the farmers of the drought hit areas; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has reported that it has provided necessary

financial support to the credit agencies operating in the drought hit districts of Orissa during 1996-97 to enable them to provide conversion facilities to the affected farmers. Based on the "annewari" declared by the State Government. Orissa State Co-operative Bank (OSCB) had processed applications for conversion of short term agricultural loans availed by about 1.45 lakh farmers for sums aggregating Rs. 46.88 crore. NABARD has sanctioned a sum of Rs. 28.10 crores to the OSCB on behalf of 16 District Central Co-operative Banks (DCCBs), being 60% of the total conversion effected at the ground level.

NABARD had also increased the refinance allocation from Rs. 116 crore to Rs. 136 crore in favour of OSCB for financing Seasonal Agricultural Operations (SAO) during the year 1996-97 to meet the additional demand for fresh finance on account of drought in the State. This allocation was fully availed by OSCB. For the year 1997-98 also, an allocation of Rs. 165 crore has been made to facilitate the bank to maintain the growth in agricultural advances.

(c) and (d) As per the instructions issued by Reserve Bank of India (RBI)/NABARD, the co-operative banks and Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) are required to provide relief to the borrowers affected by natural calamities by way of conversion of crop loan dues of the affected borrowers into medium term loans repayable over a period of three years. Such borrowers are also provided fresh finance to carry on the agricultural operations. As reported by NABARD co-operatives in Orissa have already converted crop loans aggregating Rs. 46.88 crores into medium term loans and provided fresh finance of Rs. 46.38 crores during Rabi 1996-97. RRBs have also taken steps to convert the loans of borrowers affected by natural calamity to enable them to avail fresh finance from the banks for their agricultural activity.

Establishment of Steel Plants by MMTC

631. SHRI NAVEEN PATNAIK : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Mineral and Metal Trading Corporation (MMTC) has diversified its activities;

(b) if so, whether the establishment of Steel Plants in some parts of the country is a part of its diversification programme;

(c) if so, the States where Steel Plants are proposed to be set up by MMTC;

(d) the locations identified for the establishment of those steel plants;

(e) whether any such site has been selected in Orissa; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. As a part of its diversification programme, MMTC is setting up joint ventures in the State of Orissa for manufacture of iron and steel products and metallurgical grade coke.

(c) to (f) The steel plant is being set up by MMTC in the State of Orissa. The steel plant is located at Kalinga Nagar, in Duburi, Distt. Jaipur, State of Orissa.

Legal Reforms

632. SHRI ANANT GUDHE : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of various legal reforms measures undertaken so far, expenditure incurred thereon, practical utility thereof and future course of action to be taken in this regard;

(b) whether the Government have decided to set up an Expert Committee on legal reforms;

(c) if so, the composition, terms and conditions of this Committee;

(d) the issues that have been referred to this Committee; and

(e) the time by which the Committee has been asked to submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) to (e) Legal Reform measures are undertaken by different Ministries/Departments which are administratively concerned with different laws. However, Government has recently reconstituted the Law Commission of India with a specific mandate regarding review/repeal of obsolete laws. The terms of reference of the reconstituted Law Commission in this regard include, among other things:—

(i) To identify laws which are no longer needed or relevant and can be immediately repealed;

(ii) To identify laws which are in harmony with the existing climate of economic liberalization which need no change;

(iii) To identify laws which require changes or amendments and to make suggestions for their amendment;