

While evolving a Master Plan for the revival of sick industries, we are considering various options to make some strategic alliances such as joint ventures, financial restructuring and synergy through holding companies, strengthening of management and a Special Revolving Fund for speedy implementation of the BIFR approved schemes. We are at it.

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI: Sir, the hon. Minister has just stated that he is considering for a comprehensive proposal and a Master Plan to revive these sick units. Is the Minister aware of the fact that several sick public sector undertaking units and public sector undertaking units which had gone to the BIFR are facing a number of sitting days in and out for an uncertain period? The BIFR itself is creating an uncertainty among the workers and the management. What will be the ray of hope of these workers and the management? Will the hon. Minister, while considering the entire package, also consider an alternative speedy disposal method? Sir, an alternative to the BIFR can be thought of to bring everything into a package instead of keeping that kind of a quasi-judicial body which is sitting over this for years together and not disposing any matter in a concrete term.

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Sir, I entirely agree with the hon. Member's views. We have to restructure the BIFR as a fast track facilitator and a quick arbitrator. That has been the policy of this Government. That has been exclusively stated in the Common Minimum Programme. Recently, the hon. Finance Minister, in his Budget speech, has announced that the BIFR would be revamped and the Sick Industries Unit Act would also be amended so that a quick disposal can be got for the sick units.

[Translation]

SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI: A National Renewal Fund has been created for reviving the sick units and is regulated through the BIFR. Just now, Shri Dasmunsi has rightly pointed out that a state of uncertainty continues. Is the Government thinking of formulating any plan for reviving these sick units within a time-frame? If we analyse the working of the National Renewal Fund during the last three years, it is revealed that in spite of the monetary provisions being made in every annual budget, the Fund is not able to utilise the entire amount. This is an anomalous position because, while on the one hand 109 units have become sick, on the other, the National Renewal Fund does not spend the full amount for which provision has been made. Will the Government, therefore, ensure that the entire amount, which itself is in fact insufficient, is utilised and is properly spent? I would also like to ask another question. The Central Government has received various proposals from different State Governments. For instance, Bihar has stated that the State Government industrial units are also sick. Do the Government propose to revive these industrial units also through this Fund even though they belong to a State? Can money be given from NRF for this purpose?

[English]

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN: Sir, I will take up the last question first. So far, there is no proposal to include sick industries of the State Governments. That is a big problem. We have to consider that aspect also.

Sir, as I have put it already, we are evolving a Master Plan which should see that sick industries are revived. But, Sir, what we are doing now is that we are waiting until an industry becomes chronically sick. We do not have an early warning system. We do not have an early stage of intervention and restructuring. With these aspects, the BIFR Act should be revamped.

Sir, the National Renewal Fund is not adequate to take care of those who have been removed from the service or who have been given the golden handshake.

That Fund, in our view, has to be revamped also. The Fund has to be increased and for that a revolving Fund should be created. That is our aim. We are creating a Plan.

#### Assistance for Handicrafts

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\*483. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA:  
DR. PRABIN CHANDRA SARMA:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the North Eastern Handicraft Development Corporation has submitted any proposal for financial assistance for works like cane, bamboo and woodcrafts;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Union Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA):  
(a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

#### STATEMENT

(a) to (c). Two proposals amounting to Rs. 2.12 lakhs were received during the year 1995-96 from North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHHOC), Shillong for training in Cane & Bamboo Crafts under training scheme of the Government. However the said proposals could not be considered by the Government as the Corporation had not submitted the audited accounts for the funds released to them during 1990-91 and 1991-92 under the same scheme. Timely submission of audited accounts by an organisation receiving grants is imperative as per the Government of India financial rules. No proposal has been received as far as Wood Craft is concerned.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the North-Eastern Region is famous for its handloom and handicraft industries. It is not only famous in India but also abroad. We shall aim to promote this Region for the development of handicraft and handloom industries. The North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation was also formed for this purpose.

The hon. Minister in his reply has stated that there were two proposals during 1995-96 for training of the youths in this region. The amount which was provided was only one or two lakh rupees.

Now, I cannot accept the proposition the hon. Minister has stated that the amount could not be released because the audited accounts for the years 1990-91 and 1991-92 were not received from the officials of that Corporation.

I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what action has been initiated from this end to get these audited accounts and to release the money so that the training programme does not suffer.

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: Sir, they sent proposals in 1995-96. We have also asked them to provide the audited balance sheets for 1990-91 and 1991-92. We have written several letters also. After all, the amount is meagre. I was talking to my officers as to why they were holding this one lakh forty-five thousand of rupees or one lakh or even two lakh of rupees, as it is not a big amount. But they said that it was stipulated that unless they provide us the accounts for the previous money drawn, we cannot release them amount under this training scheme.

As far as other things are concerned, we have already allowed them to draw money. This year also we have provided Rs. 50 lakh. I request the hon. Member to see that they send the audited balance sheet early so that we could give them money within a month.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Sir, it is already accepted by all the Members of this House that the North-Eastern Region is an industrially backward area and large industries could not be established in this region because of the communication bottleneck, the geographical isolation and because of lack of infrastructural facilities. I think, that this is the only sector where there is an ample scope to develop this sector which will create large scale employment opportunities and also it will bring a long helping hand as far as economic development of the people of North-Eastern Region is concerned.

I want to know from the hon. Minister whether any special scheme has been initiated by his Ministry to develop this sector which has also scope for establishment of export-oriented handlooms and handicrafts units in the North-Eastern Region because these handlooms and handicrafts have a great demand not only in India but also abroad for the exports.

I also want to know as to what special steps have been initiated, through his Ministry, to develop this area.

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: There are many schemes which we have already provided to them. I quite agree with the hon. Member that it is a backward area and it requires a lot of industries to be started. When he knows that it is a backward area, it is for those Corporations to provide us the accounts for the money drawn and they can draw more and more money. We have got sufficient schemes for the improvement of that area.

DR. PRABIN CHANDRA SARMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to know from the hon. Minister, through you, whether the Ministry of Textiles is aware that the North Eastern region, particularly Assam and its adjoining States are famous for handlooms and handicrafts and that the weavers live there and more particularly Sualkuchi a place known as the Manchester of the East? I want to know whether the hon. Minister is also aware that Tripura is famous for the handicrafts of cane and bamboo. I want to know whether any specific programme had been incorporated in his Ministry for development of this cane and bamboo handicrafts in the North Eastern States and the handloom products of all the different States of the North Eastern region and whether any Government agency has been considered to export these materials to the other parts of the country and also outside the country.

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: Sir, I am aware of whatever the hon. Member has mentioned. Inside the country we are holding several exhibitions wherein the products of this region are exhibited and a lot of business is going on. About sending them to the outside countries we are at it and a lot of exports are also taking place. I agree that whatever is being done is not sufficient. But we have already implemented a few schemes there and if they come forward with many more schemes we are prepared to oblige and we are prepared to approve those schemes.

SHRI UDDHAB BARMAN: Sir, you are aware of the beauties of the handlooms and handicrafts of that area, particularly the North Eastern region which are well known. Long back Mahatma Gandhi had also praised the weavers of Assam who had woven fairy tales in their clothes. I want to request the hon. Minister to extend more money to develop that industry of handlooms and handicrafts in that areas. I also want that the beauties of the handloom and handicraft of that area should be exposed to the entire country and also to the entire world. In this connection I want to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any decision of the Corporation to wind up the emporium at Mumbai which was established in 1981. I want to know whether the hon. Minister has received a representation from the M.P.s. regarding this and requesting not to dismantle the Centre but to re-examine that issue so that like all other States in the country the North Eastern States also get some opportunity to get this exposure to the country and the world.

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: Sir, while arranging for exposure of these handicrafts this Corporation is holding several exhibitions. On 28th of this month also we are holding a bigger exhibition in Bangalore where we are expecting that about 500 foreigners will come there for purchase of these handicrafts and handloom clothes. In the last four years we provided them assistance. In 1992-93 we have given them Rs. 14.60 lakh; in 1993-94 it was Rs. 92.81 lakh and in 1994-95 it was Rs. 45.71 lakhs and in 1995-96 we have provided them ... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: His limited question is whether the Government's decision to open an emporium in Mumbai is going to be implemented.

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: Sir, the emporium is already there. Unfortunately, it is incurring losses. Secondly, where they have set up this emporium, the landlord had demanded too much of rent which they could not pay. The emporium which was in a bigger building is now in a building which is concise. They have established the emporium in a smaller area. They cannot carry on the business there also. That is why the Board has taken a decision to close down the emporium in Mumbai.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Pilot, you wanted to ask question.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: I have no question.

SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR: Mr. Speaker Sir, I am very unhappy with the reply of the hon. Minister that they have taken a decision to close down the unit in Mumbai. The very creation of the North-East Handicraft Corporation was the genuine demand of the people from the seven States and that the artisans who are working in the handloom and handicraft sector are appreciated all over the country and even outside. This is the only agency who can encourage those artisans and weavers. Since they have no other means of subsistence than the popularity of those schemes, this Corporation was created. Now in the reply, the hon. Minister has said that for two years they have not given the accounts. For that reason, they have not sanctioned an amount of Rs. two lakh.

It is a Corporation of the Central Government and it is the responsibility of the Central Government to look whether that Corporation is performing properly or not. Sir, it is a very sentimental issue. The other emporia are working and only the North-Eastern section of the emporium the Government is deciding, on the plea of its incurring losses, to close down. That will greatly hurt the sentiments of the artisans and weavers of the North-Eastern region.

May I request the hon. Minister to reconsider his decision and see that that unit properly functions? They should give responsibility to some responsible officer to look into the affairs of this Corporation so that the hopes and aspirations of the weavers and artisans of the North-Eastern region will get proper attention.

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA: Sir, I will ask my officers to go to Mumbai and find out whether we should continue that branch of the emporium... (Interruptions). I have already assured the hon. Member that this amount of Rs. two lakh will be released and they must take the responsibility of sending audited reports for those two years... (Interruptions). When they do not forward the accounts, do they expect our officers to go from here to Shillong and get the accounts? They have to submit the accounts.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Sir, when you were Minister of State for Industries and we were MPs, we in a Committee visited all these areas this is the outcome of this including Rehsums and others. There are so many public sector undertakings not complying with the loan taken from Shri Chidambaram's Finance Ministry. I do not think my good friend Shri Rajesh Pilot is wrong. With regard to Hindustan Fertilizers, there is a loss of Rs. 133 crores. There is no trace of it and the Government has not done anything. Here, for Rs. two lakh, you close down the emporium ... (Interruptions). You kindly see that this is immediately opened. The order must go today. (Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER: I think he has answered that.

#### Smuggling of Gold

486. SHRI DINSHA PATEL:  
SHRI SATYAJITSINH DULIPSINH  
GAEKWAD:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of smuggling of gold detected during each of the last two years;

(b) the number of cases in which the officials posted at airports have been found involved in abetting such activity; and

(c) the number of officials prosecuted in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c). A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

#### STATEMENT

(a) to (c). The number of cases of smuggling of gold detected 'during each of the last two years are as follows:-

	No. of cases
1994-95	632
1995-96	702

During the same period, one officer of the customs department posted at Indira Gandhi International Airport,