

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. Based on the reports received from prominent States producing bidis, including MP, as also the production figures of bidis based on CESS collection, there has been no decline in the production of bidis in the country. There were certain apprehensions about the adverse effect on the bidi industry due to reduction of excise duty on mini cigarettes in 1994. However, in the subsequent budgets the excise duty on mini cigarettes has been continuously raised from the level of Rs. 60 per thousand to Rs. 100 per thousand.

(c) Bidi manufacturing is recognised as an industrial activity registerable as a small scale industry. These units are entitled for Central/State Government incentives, concessions and facilities as available to small scale sector. A number of welfare schemes in the field of health, housing, education and recreation are being implemented by Ministry of Labour for the welfare of bidi workers and their family members.

World Bank Assistance to Jalgaon Ajanta Caves Road

2676. DR. ULHAS VASUDEO PATIL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received any proposal from Maharashtra regarding World Bank assistance for construction of Jalgaon-Ajanta Caves Road in the State;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) No.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Recruitment in Income Tax Department Under Sports Quota

2677. SHRI VIJAY SINGH SOY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a 'sports quota' for the recruitment in Income Tax Department;

(b) if so, the details of the special schemes, incentives etc. provided by the department particularly to the State, National level sportsmen/sports women;

(c) the details of the sports persons of Delhi belonging to Scheduled Tribe community provided jobs in the Income Tax Department under the Sports quota; and

(d) the details of special incentives provided to the tribal sports persons of Income Tax Department?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) and (b) The policy regarding recruitment and incentives to the sports persons is formulated by Department of Personnel which is applicable to all Departments including Income Tax Department.

(c) There is only one athlete belonging to Scheduled Tribe community recruited against Sports quota namely Ms. Kanti Kapila Toppo, Stenographer.

(d) The special incentives are available to the Sports persons as a Class and there are no separate incentives, for tribal sports persons.

Closure of Jute and Cotton Mills in West Bengal

2678. SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government is aware of the fact that many jute mills and cotton mills in West Bengal are closed due to lock-out and closure;

(b) the steps taken by the Government to reopen these mills;

(c) whether any of these mills have been referred to BIFR;

(d) if so, the action taken thereon so far;

(e) whether the Government propose to intervene to reopen those mills to save thousand of workers from starvation; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) In the State of West Bengal, the operation of 4 jute mills viz. Hastings, Cheviot, Auckland and Ludlow are temporarily suspended. In respect of Cotton mills in West Bengal, 12 cotton/man-made fibre textile mills were temporarily closed mainly due to financial difficulties, lock out and strike.

(b) to (f) Reopening of these mills is a State matter being dealt with by the Labour Department of the State Govt. According to the Industrial Disputes Act, the State Governments are the conciliation authority to settle such disputes. None of the above four Jute Mills in West Bengal stand referred to BIFR. Government has set up BIFR to inquire into the working of sick industrial companies and to prepare and sanction, as appropriate, schemes for revival of such mills. As on 30.4.98, twelve textile mills were registered with BIFR.

[Translation]

Insurance of Vehicles

2679. SHRI RAM TAHAL CHAUDHARY :
SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the time taken in disposing of the cases of insurance claims relating to vehicles by the Insurance companies;