

(b) the term of such non-official Directors and in how many cases this term has been extended;

(c) when the Government issued the revised order for appointment of non-political/non-official Director in the RRBs;

(d) when the National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development submitted such list of proposed Director to Government; and

(e) the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN) : (a) In terms of Section 9(1)(a) of the Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976, Central Government is required to nominate two non-official directors on the Board of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs). Further, in terms of the Government's instructions issued in October, 1994, National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development (NABARD) was asked to recommend to the Government the names of suitable persons for being nominated as non-official directors on the Boards of RRBs.

(b) The terms of existing non-official directors appointed by the Government on the Boards of various RRBs have already expired. However, in terms of Section 10 of Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976, a director (other than the Chairman) shall hold office for such period not exceeding two years from the date when he assumes office, and may, on the expiry of the said period continue to hold office until his successor has been nominated.

(c) to (e) In terms of recent circular instructions issued by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in November, 1997 giving enlarged role to the sponsor banks in the management of RRBs, sponsor banks have been asked to prepare suitable panels for their respective RRBs and transmit the same to the Government for appropriate consideration. The sponsor banks have been asked to ensure that while preparing such panels due weightage is given to professionals like economists, agricultural economists, scientists, chartered accountants, financial analysts, lawyers or persons drawn from specialized subject areas such as small scale industries, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture. Further, retired senior bank officers from the area could also be considered. Accordingly, the Government will exercise its jurisdiction under Section 9(1) (a) of the Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976, in the light of the recommendations made by the sponsor banks.

It would be difficult to lay down any specific time frame by which the entire exercise of finalising nominations will be completed.

Promotion in the Grade of Income Tax Officer

3460. SHRI KISHAN SINGH SANGWAN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the recent decision of CAT regarding promotion from Income Tax Inspector to the post of Income Tax Officer which mandates adoption of two-pronged policy;

(b) if so, whether the decision of the CAT has been implemented;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN) : (a) The CAT, Jabalpur bench dismissed certain petitions filed questioning validity of Recruitment Rules for promotion to the post of Income Tax Officer.

(b) to (d) does not arise.

Procurement of Cotton by CCI in Karnataka

3461. SHRI VIJAY SANKESHWAR : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Cotton Corporation of India has procured cotton from the farmers of Karnataka during 1996-97 and 1997-98;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the action proposed by the Government for the procurement of cotton from the farmers of the State?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The quantity of cotton purchased by CCI in Karnataka during the years 1996-97 (Oct.-Sept.) and 1997-98 (is on 3.7.98) is 52,123 bales and 22,632 bales, respectively.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Export of Iron Ore to Japan

3462. DR. SUGUNA KUMARI CHELLAMELLA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the export of iron ore to Japan from Visakhapatnam port has come to a standstill since June, 1988;

- (b) if so, the reasons therefore; and
 (c) the impact thereof on MMTC who are exporting the iron ore?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Export of Marine Products

3463. SHRI GEORGE EDEN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the export of marine products got setback after the Pokhran nuclear explosion;
 (b) if so, the details thereof; and
 (c) the action taken to boost the export of marine products?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Following steps have been taken by the Government to give a boost to the exports of marine products:

- (i) Implementation of various subsidy schemes through Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) for helping the fishery product processing units to produce quality fish and fishery products for exports namely schemes for the establishment of captive peeling sheds, cold storages, mini laboratories, generator sets, flake/chip/tube ice making machines, individual quick freezing (IQF) units and procurement of refrigerated trucks, equipment and machinery for modernisation and for export of value added products etc.
- (ii) A scheme has been sanctioned for subsidising a portion of interest charged by the banks/ financial institutions on loans taken by the fishery product processing units for upgradation of their facilities.
- (iii) The threshold limit for zero import duty under Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) scheme has been reduced from the earlier Rs. 20.00 crore to Rs. 1 crore for the import of essential machinery and equipment by the fishery product processing units.
- (iv) Fishery product processing units having Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) system have been made eligible for grant of an additional 5 percent Special Import Licence (SIL).

(v) The Duty Entitlement Pass Book (DEPB) rates for the export of fish and fishery products have been notified.

(vi) Production of Shrimps through aquaculture has been encouraged by MPEDA by extending subsidies for the development of new aquaculture farms and shrimp hatcheries.

(vii) Necessary guidance and training is also being provided to aquaculture farmers on scientific methods for sustainable eco-friendly aquaculture for increased production of shrimps.

(viii) Various training programmes have been conducted by the MPEDA and Export Inspection Council for the various officials connected with fishery product processing units and for the Seafood Industry, on the implementation of HACCP system and for maintaining high standards of food hygiene and safety.

Visakhapatnam Power Project

3464. SHRI K.S. RAO : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the finalisation of the Fuel Supply Agreement (FSA) of Hinduja's 1040 MW Visakhapatnam Power Projects is lying pending for a long time;

(b) if so, the details of the project and the hitches coming out in finalisation of the FSA;

(c) whether any concrete measures have been taken to remove the hurdles;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which Fuel Supply Agreement is likely to be finalised and the construction work of the Visakhapatnam Power Project would commence?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY) : (a) and (b) A Coal Supply and Transportation Agreement between Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd. (MCL) and Hinduja National Thermal Power Co. Ltd. (HNPC) has been initialled between the two parties in April, 1998, with a few outstanding issues. Inter-alia these issues relate to the bearing of the consequential risks on the transportation part of the contract as well as issues relating to termination costs. These are under discussion.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. On several occasions issues have been considered and the decisions arrived at, at the High Power Board constituted by the Government to consider matters relating to IPPs. Where necessary, decisions of the Cabinet have also been obtained.

(e) The outstanding issues are expected to be resolved within a month. As per the Agreement, the Vizag