

SBI Foreign Exchange Dealing

4594. DR. BIZAY SONKAR SHASTRI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether State Bank of India is moving its Foreign Exchange Dealing Operations for Calcutta to Bombay;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether this move is likely to be detrimental to the interest of West Bengal and its industry;

(d) if so, whether there is any proposal under consideration to cancel such scheme of shifting; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

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) and (b) State Bank of India has reported that with a view to enhance its competitiveness and commercial interests, it has become necessary to integrate the Foreign Exchange and the domestic treasury operations, envisaging in the process the undertaking of some dealing room functions from Mumbai instead of from Calcutta as at present.

(c) and (d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Bilateral Trade with Oman

4595. SHRIMATI SURYAKANTA PATIL : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the steps being taken to increase bilateral trade between India and Oman;

(b) whether these measures will reduce communication gap between the two countries;

(c) if so, the details thereof ;

(d) whether the Government have approved the investment by Oman in Fertilizer sectors; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) These include holding of Joint Commission Meetings, participation in trade fairs & exhibitions, exchange of commercial information, exchange of delegations both at official and business level, diversification of export basket to include non-traditional products, reviewing the trade exchanges continuously to take corrective measures where necessary.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. These measures help in reducing the communication gap between the two countries e.g. Joint Commission Meetings, exchange of delegations, provide instant information and clarifications on various issues and remove misgivings, if any, to facilitate trade promotion.

(d) and (e) A Joint Venture Project between India and Oman, in the fertilizer sector, at Sur (Oman) has been approved by Government of India on 1.12.97. The Project, involving Rashtriya Chemical Fertilizers Ltd. (RCF) and Krishak Bharati Cooperative Ltd. (KRIBHCO) from Indian side, is set to manufacture Urea to the level of 14.52 lakhs Metric Tonnes per annum. It involves an estimated investment of US\$ 69 mn. (Rs. 250 crores) each by RCF and KRIBHCO, in the equity while total project cost is estimated at US \$ 1.106 billion (Rs. 4424 crores). The entire urea production will be bought back by RCF and KRIBHCO and will be available for import into India.

[English]

Rise in Export of Textiles

4596. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether India's total textile exports have increased by 24 per cent during the first half of the current fiscal year;

(b) if so, the details of total cotton textile exports, including cotton, synthetic and woollen products;

(c) the extent to which it increased in comparison to the previous year; and

(d) the steps being taken to further improve textile exports ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) to (b) Data has so far been available only for three months (April, May & June) of current fiscal year. Hence, the question of assessment of exports during the first half does not arise.

(c) According to provisional figures available with the Ministry of Textiles, India's total textile exports (including handicrafts, Jute and Coir) during the first three months of 1998-99 i.e. April-June, 1998) are US\$ 2825.64 millions, which show a negative growth of 3% over the corresponding period last year.

(d) In order to boost the exports of textiles, Government have been taking a number of steps, which include encouraging exporters to participate in buyer-seller meets; fairs and exhibitions; enabling import of capital goods at concessional duty for export production; special arrangements for duty free import of raw materials for export production ensuring increased availability of export credit etc.