

flooded as the media of purchase in North Bengal particularly in Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar and Darjeeling districts;

(b) if so, the reasons for shortage of Indian currency notes and coins in these areas;

(c) whether this job of driving out Indian currency is being done by big gangsters;

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government to check this evil;

(e) whether the Government propose to open any branch of Reserve Bank of India to ease the currency and coin situation in North Bengal; and

(f) if so, the time by which such a branch is likely to be opened?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) to (f) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

Import of News-Print

1509. SHRI AJIT JOGI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large quantity of news-print imported during the year 1996-97;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether the stock of foreign news-print in the country is more than the desired extent due to which the production of domestic news-print has also been affected;

(d) if so, the reasons for the said import of news-print to such an extent;

(e) whether the Government have conducted any enquiry in this regard; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAM-KRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) and (b) Import of newsprint was permitted freely during the period 01.05.1996 to 28.01.1997 without any restriction. The total quantity of newsprint imported during the year April 1996 to March 1997 was 494038 MTs (Source DGCIS).

(c) and (d) Import of newsprint being free, it is difficult to say whether the imports had resulted in surplus stock of foreign newsprint in the country thereby affecting the production of domestic newsprint. How-

ever, keeping in view the interests of the domestic newsprint industry, newsprint has been restricted for import by Actual Users who hold 'Registration Certificate' issued by the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting with effect from 29.01.97. The import during this year 1997-98 after this restriction came into effect was 497611 MTs (Source DGCIS).

(e) and (f) No, Sir.

Use of Hindi

1510. SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Hindi Journals and magazines being published by the Hindi Department of his Ministry; and

(b) the steps being taken to promote the use of Hindi in his Ministry ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) No Journals/magazines are being published by the Hindi Section of the Ministry. However, 7 magazines are being regularly published by the various organisations under the administrative control of the Ministry.

(b) Appropriate steps are being taken to promote the use of Hindi in the Ministry such as organising Workshops/Hindi Fortnight's, review of the progress of use of Hindi by holding quarterly meetings of Official Language Implementation Committee, nominating officials to various Hindi Training programmes, providing bilingual gadgets to employees, etc.

Investment Protection Treaty

1511. SHRI MAHESH KANODIA :

SHRI CHINMAYANAND SWAMI :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the India and Taiwan have signed Investment Protection Agreement;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which the agreement is likely to be implemented?

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

(b) and (c) Question does not arise.