

(c) if so, the details in this regard; and

(d) the steps taken to help the farmers who have been on the verge of desperation as low grade tobacco was not being lifted?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) to (d) Manufacturers, exporters and traders of FCV Tobacco agreed to purchase the balance quantities of about 26 million kgs of the authorised FCV tobacco crop of all grades of Karnataka (1998 crop) at an average price ranging from Rs. 16.50 per kg to Rs. 55 per kg. Further, efforts are also being made to ensure exports of large quantities of low grade tobacco to Russia under the Debt Repayment route which would help in liquidating the excess stocks of low grade tobacco in the country.

Financial Assistance to NEHDC

1519. SHRI NRIPEN GOSWAMI :
SHRI RAMESHWAR PATIDAR :
SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM :

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether North-Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHDC) has submitted any proposal for financial assistance for schemes for manufacturing of cane, bamboo and wooden goods;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

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

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) to (c) The North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHDC), Shillong has submitted a proposal during 1997-98 for setting up of Common Facility Centre for procurement/processing and finishing of cane and bamboo products in order to cater to the needs of artisans of North East Region. A sum of Rs. 32.00 lakhs has been sanctioned to the Corporation and Rs. 15.00 lakhs have already been released so far and balance will be released according to progress of work and audited statements.

Credit Deposit Ratio

1520. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether high level Central team visited Bihar to discuss the State's Credit Deposit Ratio;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Credit Deposit Ratio of Bihar is lowest in the country; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government 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) and (b) The State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC) meeting for Bihar held in Patna on January 7, 1999 was attended, among others, by the Union Finance Minister, senior representatives of participating Banks, Financial Institutions and State Government of Bihar. The Credit Deposit (CD) Ratio of banks in Bihar, among other issues, was also discussed in the meeting.

(c) and (d) The C.D. Ratio of public sector banks as at the end of March 1998 was 27.1 per cent for Bihar and 54.0 per cent for the country as a whole. In order to look into the reasons for low CD ratio in Bihar and suggest measures for improvement, a task force was set up comprising of senior officers of RBI, State Government, SLBC Convener Bank, and representatives of banks in the State. Action on the recommendations of the task force is an ongoing process and the progress in this regard is monitored at periodic intervals by State Level Bankers Committee.

Financial Restructuring of SAIL

1521. SHRI KAMAL NATH : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Steel Authority of India Limited has requested the Government for financial restructuring which primarily envisages adjustment of loans from Steel Development Fund and Government loans to TISCO through SAIL;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) the names of such new companies which are not contributing to Steel Development Fund; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to relieve the burden on SAIL?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS) : (a), (b) and (d) The Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) have, in their report, *inter-alia*, concluded that Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) should consider business solutions as a long-term strategy for improving operations and enhancing returns by steps such as rationalisation/divestment of idle or non-core assets, divestment of unrelated/non-core operations and of loss making units etc.

Based on IDBI's recommendations on financial restructuring, SAIL has approached the Government for its financial restructuring which primarily envisages relief from the Steel Development Fund (SDF) loan/Government of India loan towards writing down of fixed assets to the extent of interest capitalized, writing-off of loans and advances given by SAIL to IISCO, etc. The proposal is under consideration of the Government.

(c) The contribution by the main steel producers towards Steel Development Fund has been discontinued with effect from 21st April, 1994.

Commercialisation of Rubberised Bitumen

1522. SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to make rubberised bitumen commercially;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the extent to which it is likely to help road Rubberisation;

(d) whether Cochin Refineries Ltd., Ambalamedu, Kochi, Kerala, has agreed to make such product commercially; and

(e) if so, the details thereof alongwith details of the agreement signed with Rubber Board, Government of Kerala or with some other agency?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

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Iron Ore Mines & Minerals

1523. SHRI UPENDRA NATH NAYAK : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the reserves of Iron Ore Mines are being utilised for the development of the people of Keonjhar, Orissa who are mostly belonging to Scheduled Tribes by the Government;

(b) whether there is any special provision for giving employment to the native tribes in the Mines; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the number and their percentage of tribes working in the Iron Ore Mines in Keonjhar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS) : (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha.

[Translation]

Central Board of Bank Frauds

1524. SHRI DAROGA PRASAD SAROJ :
SHRI HARIBHAI CHAUDHARY :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any Central Board of Bank Fraud has been constituted,

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of cases, handed over to this Board, as on date; and

(d) the number of cases out of the above cases settled by the Board, as on April 30, 1998?

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) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has set up an "Advisory Board on Bank Frauds" (ABBF) to advise RBI on the cases referred by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) either directly or through Ministry of Finance for investigation/registration of cases against bank officers of the rank of General Manager and above. The constitution