

Schemes including rationalisation of the system of payment of commission to the agents. The report of the Committee is awaited.

- (e) There is no such proposal under consideration.
- (f) Question does not arise.

(g) and (h) The Committee referred to above in part (d) of the reply is also considering this issue. The report of the Committee is awaited.

Export Credit Guarantee on Agricultural Products

5499. SHRI RAMKRISHNA BABA PATIL : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Government are aware that the United States has stopped the export credit guarantees on agricultural products;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the steps being taken by the Government in this regard?

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

- (b) and (c) Do not arise.

NABARD Loans to A.P.

5500. SHRI S. SUDHAKAR REDDY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government of Andhra Pradesh have requested NABARD for sanction of Rs. 75 crores to APCOB as interest free loan to help the Cooperative societies which in turn will extend relief to farmers affected by pests, droughts, etc;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the decision of NABARD thereto;
- (c) whether the NABARD and Commercial banks propose to grant moratorium on the loans of small and marginal farmers affected by drought etc;
- (d) 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) National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has reported that Government of Andhra Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh State Cooperative Bank (APCOB) had requested for sanction of assistance from NABARD to extend relief to farmers affected by pests, droughts, etc. which included an amount of Rs. 75 crores as interest free loan to APCOB to meet their administrative expenses including salaries. In response to these requests, NABARD had sanctioned credit limits for an amount of Rs. 162 crores on behalf of 14 District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs) for conversion of short term crop loans into

medium term loans in respect of affected farmers. Further, NABARD has extended series of special concessions in its policy and operational norms as indicated below:

- (i) Deferment of interest payable by APCOB on Medium Term Conversion (MTC) loans and on rescheduled long term loans for a period of 2 years.
- (ii) Fixing a repayment period of 7 years including moratorium of 2 years for MTC (including rephasing) loan as against the normal policy of fixing 3 year repayment schedule;
- (iii) Sanctioning adequate short term credit limits to cooperative banks to enable them to extend fresh credit to farmers;
- (iv) Allowing fresh draws to APCOB on short term credits against bank's fresh loans disbursements, despite deficit in non-overdue cover to enable replenishment of its resources;
- (v) Relaxing the norm of restricting draws upto 50% of incremental lending to enable the cooperative banks to avail more concessional refinance from NABARD.

(c) and (d) As reported by Reserve Bank of India (RBI), banks have been instructed to grant moratorium on recovery of principal and interest in respect of loans of the affected farmers for a period of 2 years and the amount not collected during these 2 years would be rescheduled for a total period of 7 years excluding the initial moratorium period of 2 years. Further, NABARD has also agreed to consider reduction in State Governments share in the conversion from the normal level of 15% to 5% and increasing NABARD's share from normal level of 60% to 70%.

Schemes for Improving Exports

5501. DR. RAVI MALLU: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

- (a) the incentives given to the export houses in the country during the last three years, State-wise;
- (b) whether any proposals are pending with the Government regarding introduction of any new schemes for improving the exports; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) The Government recognised Export Houses are entitled to freely transferable Special Import Licences as a percentage of their exports on FOB/NFE basis. Such Houses are also eligible for LUT facility in lieu of Bank Guarantee while making duty free imports under Duty Exemption Scheme. The Export Houses are also granted some market development assistance.

(b) and (c) There is no specific proposal as such pending with the Government for introduction of any new scheme. However, several proposals/suggestions are received from trade and industry for promoting exports on a regular basis.

All these suggestions are processed and appropriate decisions are taken thereon after due consultations.

Workman Employees Directors of Banks

5502. SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of vacancies of Workman Employee Directors in various banks; and

(b) the steps taken by the Government to appoint Workman Employee Director against such vacancies?

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 position of Workman Employee Director is vacant in 5 public sector banks. Action has already been initiated to fill up these vacancies.

Rupees Exchange Rate

5503. SHRI AJIT JOGI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) Whether ADB in its annual report for 1997-98 suggested that some corrections are needed in the exchange rate of Rupee;

(b) If so, the details of suggestions; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) and (b) ADB in its Annual Report for 1997 indicated as follows:

"Apart from efforts to give a boost to economic growth, particularly industry growth, economic management in 1997 was dominated by concerns over the exchange rate and, at least by the latter part of the year, by efforts to limit contagion from the Asian Financial crisis. Monetary policy was eased further in April and October 97 to encourage credit offtake and boost industry growth. However, in November, the central bank tightened monetary policy in an effort to ease pressure on the rupee. Other than the exchange rate, the adverse impact of the crisis on the economy has been limited. Given the massive devaluation that have occurred in Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand and in order to maintain external competitiveness, some correction is possibly needed in the rupee's exchange rate."

(c) The exchange rate of the rupee in India is market determined. The RBI buys and sells foreign exchange in the foreign exchange market from time to time and suitable monetary policy measures are instituted, as and when necessary, to counter speculative pressures on the exchange rate and to ensure orderly foreign exchange market conditions.

Tourist Places of Manipur

5504. KUMARI KIM GANGTE: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have any plan under consideration to increase tourist facilities in the tourist important areas of Manipur;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the Government is considering to remove the prevailing Restricted Area Permit system to boost Tourism in Manipur?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, the Task Force on North East constituted by the Ministry of Tourism has identified a number of tourist places in Manipur for development of tourism infrastructure. Accordingly, during 97-98 four projects amounting to Rs. 186.11 lakhs were sanctioned to increase tourist facilities in the State.

(c) In order to give boost to tourism, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India has recently opened up certain areas for tourists in the State of Manipur.

Special Additional Customs Duty

5505. SHRI C.P. RADHAKRISHNAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the Revenue realised from Wind Energy Sector by way of customs duty during 1996-97 and 1997-98; and

(b) the envisaged collection by way of customs duty including newly introduced Special Additional Customs Duty for 1998-99?

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 import data is not maintained sector-wise and, therefore, the requisite information is not readily available. The information, however, is being collected.

[*Translation*]

Closure of Private Limited Companies

5506. SHRI SADASHIV RAO D. MANDLIK : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number and names of private limited companies in regard to which closure orders have been issued by the Bureau of Industrial Finance and Reconstruction (BIFR) during the last five years; and

(b) the number of companies which have filed petitions in the court against this order?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE