

However India's share in world trade in gold jewellery is very small.

Given the vast potential in the country in terms of traditional skill and manufacturing infrastructure, gold jewellery was identified as one of the extreme focus items by the Commerce Ministry for accelerated growth. A number of innovative steps have been taken under the Exim Policy to facilitate gold jewellery export which include:

- (i) Liberalisation of import policy of gold allowing a number of banks to supply gold to the exporters which has improved the supply of raw materials considerably;
- (ii) Enhancement of competitiveness of Indian manufacturers by rationalising wastage and value addition norms;
- (iii) Simplification and streamlining of procedures with regard to personal carriage of jewellery, display of samples abroad, export of jewellery with brand names etc.

[*Translation*]

Package Tours

*557. SHRI ADITYANATH:

SHRI PANKAJ CHOUDHARY:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government have announced special packages to attract foreign tourists;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the amount of foreign exchange likely to be earned therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA): (a) to (c) Package tours are prepared and sold in overseas markets mainly by tour operators. Ashok Travels & Tours, a Unit of India Tourism Development Corporation and some State Tourism Development Corporations also offer package tours. New places and services are included in the packages from time to time make them more attractive.

Ministry of Tourism through its overseas offices provides information and runs publicity campaigns to position India; as an attractive tourist destination. At this state, it is not possible to estimate foreign exchange earnings from these efforts.

Shortage of Staff in Banks

*558. SHRI SURESH CHANDEL:

SHRI NARENDRA BUDANIA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is abundant staff in the headquarters, regional and zonal offices of nationalised banks whereas there is a shortage of staff in the branches of the banks in rural areas;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to post sufficient staff in rural areas and the other branches of the banks;

(c) whether the Government propose to consider to make it mandatory for the bank employees to work for a certain period in rural areas so as to avoid shortage of staff there; and

(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) to (d) Availability of officers and award staff in Headquarters as well as Regional and Zonal Offices has been reported to be adequate. While there is no report of a general shortage of officers or staff in semi-urban or rural areas, some branches/pockets are reported to experience shortage from time to time. Government has from time to time advised the banks that the branches located in the rural/semi-urban areas should be adequately staffed by implementation of rotational transfers as well as redeployment of manpower from the surplus pockets to deficit pockets. Banks have been advised to make it compulsory for the officers to work for minimum two/three years in the rural/semi-urban areas before they are considered for promotion to Senior Management Grade Scale-IV and above.

[*English*]

ADB Assistance

*559. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Asian Development Bank has decided to provide funds for policy reform programmes in various States;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether from now onwards 50 percent of the ADB assistance is likely to be provided to the States;
- (d) if so, the States which are likely to be benefited by this aid; and
- (e) the total ADB loan/assistance provided during 1997-98 to the State Governments, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) to (c) Under the present medium term strategy of the Bank, it intends to provide to States about 50 per cent of the total annual lending to India. The actual timing of loan assistance to States will be determined by project readiness and the strength of the reform programme.

(d) The Bank has selected Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh for loan assistance for policy reform programmes.

(e) During 1997-98, ADB has not approved loan for State level Operations.