

(c) and (d) After the announcement of the monetary and credit policy of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for the 1st half of 1998-99 on April 29, 1998 Prime Lending Rates (PLRs) of scheduled commercial banks have declined responding to various policy measures introduced by the RBI and mainly to the changes made in the bank rate from 12 per cent before April, 1997 to 9 percent on April, 29, 1998.

(e) The existing prescriptions of RBI for flow of credit for housing are as under:

- (i) all housing loans upto Rs. 5 lacs are included under the priority sector advances;
- (ii) the target of advances under economically weaker sections including for housing is prescribed at 10 per cent.
- (iii) requirement that banks allocate a minimum 1.5 per cent of the incremental deposits of the previous year for housing sector.

NHB has recently formulated the Swarana Jayanti Housing Finance Scheme under which a target of financing one lakh houses in rural areas during 1998-99 has been adopted.

Cotton Technology Mission

5595. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Textile Ministry has decided to contribute 25% of the total outlay for the proposed Cotton Technology Mission that seeks to improve cotton output productivity;

(b) if so, whether the Ministry's role comes in preventing cotton contamination;

(c) the total amount provided by the Ministry in this regard; and

(d) the main tasks that will be made to set up cotton technology body?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) to (d) The Government in the Ministry of Agriculture proposes to set up a Technology Mission on Cotton Development to address problems related to production and productivity of cotton, as well as issues pertaining to marketing and ginning & pressing of cotton, in a coordinated and focussed manner in the cotton growing States. It is, inter alia, proposed to facilitate modernisation of cotton ginning and pressing factories with a view to preventing contamination of cotton. Details of the Mission are being worked out.

Subsidy to Cultivators and

Exporters of Fruits and Vegetables

5596. SHRI ASHOK NAMDEORAO MOHOL :

SHRI D.S. AHIRE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of subsidy provided by the APEDA to the cultivators and exporters of fruits and vegetables during each of the last three years, State-wise;

(b) whether the subsidy provided to them have ever been investigated in the actual operation in the field;

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps being taken by the Government for the proper utilisation of the subsidy?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (d) The total amount of financial assistance provided by APEDA to the growers and exporters of fruits and vegetables in the country under various schemes of APEDA during the last three years are as follows:

Year	Amount of assistance (Rs. Lakhs)
1995-96	592.62
1996-97	1008.36
1997-98	2068.07

The details of subsidy paid state-wise are not maintained. APEDA's financial assistance schemes are reimbursement schemes. APEDA verifies the eligibility of beneficiaries, ascertains the claim of expenditure incurred by beneficiaries through its field officers and then sanctions assistance under the appropriate scheme at the prescribed scale. The above procedure ensures that the assistance provided to the growers and exporters are properly utilised.

EXIM Policy

5597. SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have made assessment of the impact of New Export and Import Policy recently announced by the Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have reviewed the various components of New EXIM Policy in the context of post-Pokharan developments;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether European Union countries have planned to impose restrictions on imports/exports from India; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) The Export Promotion Councils and apex chambers of Commerce and Industry have generally welcomed the recently announced changes in the EXIM Policy like lowering of the threshold limit for zero duty EPCG Scheme for certain sectors, inclusion of Special customs duty

in calculation of DEPB rate, decentralisation of licensing requirement and automaticity in grant of licences.

(c) and (d) The post Pokhran developments have not effected the country's international trade in any significant way.

(e) and (f) The European Union has not imposed any restrictions on imports/exports from India in the post-Pokhran context. However, the European Union has initiated Anti-Dumping/Anti Subsidy investigations against some of the products exported from India.

[Translation]

Rate of Interest on Foreign/Domestic Loans

5598. PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA:

SHRI CHINTA MOHAN:

SHRI SADASHIVRAO D. MANDLIK:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have to pay different rates of interest on both foreign and domestic loans;

(b) if so, the rate of interest paid by the Government on both loans, separately, during 1996-97 and 1997-98;

(c) whether India has also advanced loans to other countries; and

(d) if so, the rate of interest of charged therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA):
(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The interest on foreign loans from multilateral sources in the year 1996-97 ranged between 6% and 6.05%. In the year 1997-98 it ranged between 6.54% and 6.98%. The loans from bilateral sources ranged between 0.75% and 4% in both the years. The weighted average rate of interest on domestic market loans raised by the Government was 13.69% and 12.01% during the years 1996-97 and 1997-98 respectively. Interest rates on external loans and interest on rupee debt are not strictly comparable because of exchange risk involved in the former.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The rate of interest charged during the years 1996-97 and 1997-98 was as applicable to six months LIBOR, except in the case of Vietnam where it was 5% per annum.

[English]

Cases Registered by CBI

5599. DR. BIZAY SONKAR SHASTRI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the C.B.I. has registered a case against a senior member of the income tax appellated tribunal for allegedly amassing assets of crores of rupees disproportionate to the, known sources of income;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken in the matter;

(c) the number of other persons found amassing wealth disproportionate to their known sources of income in the service of Government, Central and State or autonomous bodies including cooperative sector;

(d) whether the Government have any proposal to concentrate on netting such persons; 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) Yes, Sir.

(b) During the period 1990-97, the accused person, Shri Tukaram A. Bukte, Member, Income Tax Appellate Tribunal, had allegedly amassed huge assets disproportionate to his known sources of income in his and his family members' names. Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has taken up investigations in the matter.

(c) During the last three years, upto May 31, 1998 CBI has registered cases against 243 persons belonging to Central and State Governments, and Public Sector Undertakings, for allegedly possessing assets disproportionate to their known sources of income.

(d) and (e) The Government, in its fight against corruption, always keeps a vigil on public servants amassing assets disproportionate to their known sources of income. Appropriate action is taken as and when any such case is detected.

Settlement Commission

(Income Tax & Wealth Tax) New Delhi

5600. SHRI AMAR ROY PRADHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications of assesseees in Settlement Commission (Income Tax & Wealth Tax), New Delhi in which provisions contained in Sub-Section (2A), (2C), (2D) of Section 245D of Income Tax Act, 1961, were violated during 1.1.91 to 31.12.94, while dealing with them; and

(b) the loss of Government revenue suffered on account of such violation and action Government propose to take against the guilty official of the Commission found responsible for loss of Government revenue by such violations?

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) No violation of any provision of the law by any officer of the Settlement Commission has come to the notice of the Government.

(b) Does not arise in view of the reply to (a) above.