

(b) Variations in rainfall are closely linked with changes in atmospheric circulation. Such changes take place on a global basis. In some years the atmospheric circulation is more intense, while in other years it is less intense. These changes are reflected in rainfall. Research is being carried to find out why changes take place in atmospheric circulation from year to year.

(c) To investigate the possibility of increasing the rainfall over Maharashtra, the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune have conducted cloud seeding experiments in the Sirur-Baramati region of Maharashtra. The experiments have not so far revealed any conclusive results. They are being continued.

Seizure of silver by customs

*294. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to lay a statement showing:

(a) whether Government are aware of the large scale smuggling of silver

Year	Approximate Quantity (in Kgs.)	Approximate Value (Rs. in lakhs)
1980	30,665	949
1981 (upto July)	3,770	109

Requirement of steel vis-a-vis production

*295. SHRI RAM SWARUP RAM:

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO:

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the total requirement of steel during the current financial year;

out of the country and if so, what is the Government's assessment about and quantum of silver being smuggled out per annum; and

(b) what are the details of contraband silver seized by Customs and other authorities when being smuggled out during 1980 and 1981 so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SAWAI SINGH SISODIA):

(a) There is no authoritative estimate of the quantum of silver smuggled out of the country annually. However, according to reports received by Government, the international price of silver which was considerably higher than the domestic price for the metal during, 1980, has progressively decreased over the past several months, thus reducing the incentive to smuggle silver out of the country.

(b) The quantity and value of silver seized by the Customs authorities while being attempted to be smuggled out of India during 1980 and 1981 (up to July) is given below:—

(b) how much of it is expected to be produced in the country;

(c) how the balance is proposed to be met; and

(d) steps being taken to step up production further in the country?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE):

(a) About 10.5 million tonnes.

(b) About 8.9 million tonnes.

(c) Through increase in production to the extent possible, and through imports to the extent necessary.

(d) Steps to increase production in the integrated Steel Plants include import of Coking Coal, maximisation of power generation, expeditious completion of on-going schemes etc. Measures to enable ministeel plants to step up their production include duty-free imports of melting scrap, permission for expansion and diversification in certain cases and for installation of balancing facilities where necessary.

Air fare subsidy to People of North-East Region

*296. SHRI BAJU BAN RIYAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to give air fare subsidy to the people of North East Region due to lack of communication facilities; and

(b) if so, details, thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI A. P. SHARMA): a) and (b). Air fare subsidy to the people of North-Eastern Region is given in the shape of lower air fares. Indian Airlines' fares in the sectors in the North-Eastern Region are 17 per cent less than the fares charged for comparable distances elsewhere in the country. In regard to air services provided by Vayudoot in this region the fares charged by them are still lower, i.e., 30 per cent less than the fares charged by Indian Airlines in other regions. Due to cost escalation there is a proposal under consideration by Government to bring the fares charged by Vayudoot services in the North-Eastern Region on par with those charged by Indian Airlines in this region.

Recommendations of Patel Committee on gold policy

*297. SHRI K. MALLANNA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the previous Government had set up a Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. I. G. Patel, Governor, Reserve Bank of India in November 1978 to review the Government's gold policy in all its aspects and to make suitable recommendations; and

(b) if so, the details regarding its recommendations which have been accepted and which have not been accepted? 3

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SAWAI SINGH SISODIA):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) One of the recommendations of the Gold Policy Review Committee (contained in paras 6.3 and 6.4 of the Report) regarding re-introduction of 18 or 14 ct. gold jewellery by stages has been examined by the Government. After careful consideration and keeping in view the various economic, social and administrative implications of such a measure, as also the representations received from a large number of Trade Associations, the Government has decided not to accept this recommendation. The Committee in para 6.8 of the Report have observed that they are not in favour of resuming the gold auctions. The House has already been informed that Government have no intention of resuming the sale of gold (Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1454 dated 21-3-80 refers). The other recommendations of the Committee are under examination of the Government.