

officers have filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court and have inter alia prayed for revision of their salaries and allowances. The matter is sub-judice.

Acquisition of Properties Under Section 296 of Income Tax Act

*352. SHRI G. NARSIMHA REDDY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that provision made in section 296 for acquisition of properties which was meant to curb the black money has failed to achieve the object due to defect in the provision of law; and

(b) if so, whether Government are thinking of amending the law ; if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) No, sir. It is not a fact that the provision made in Sections 269A to 269S (Section 296 incorrectly mentioned in the question) for acquisition of properties has failed to achieve the object due to defect in the provision of law.

(b) Does not arise. However, tax laws are periodically reviewed and should any change in the relevant provisions appear necessary, in the light of the experience of their actual working, the Government would sponsor appropriate amendments to the law.

Introduction of Airbus Service between Agartala and Calcutta

*355. SHRI AJOY BISWAS : Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have any proposal to introduce airbus between Agartala and Calcutta after the completion of the new runway at Agartala Airport ;

(b) whether Government are aware about the heavy pressure of passengers at Agartala Airport ; and

(c) if so, the steps Government are thinking to solve the problem ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Indian Airlines operates one daily B-737 service and another F-27 service between Calcutta and Agartala. The capacity provided between Calcutta and Agartala is considered adequate to meet the existing traffic between these two stations. However, additional aircraft capacity can be inducted to operate extra flights flights, as and when necessary.

Recognition of Trade Unions

*356. SHRI BABURAO PARANJPE : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that rules governing the recognition of trade Unions are no more in operation; and

(b) if so, what alternative arrangements have been made to provide requisite facilities to trade unions fulfilling the conditions of recognition ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO) : (a) and (b) No, Sir.

The rules governing recognition of Trade Unions continue to be in operation. However this Ministry had decided to keep the requests for recognition received in abeyance till the report of the Committee of the JCM becomes available. This was done to have a fresh look on the rules for recognition of Trade Unions framed in 1959.

Coverage of Villages by Nationalised Banks in Seventh Five Year Plan

*357. SHRI LAKSHMAN MALLICK : Will the Minister of FINANCE be please to state :

(a) whether Government have decided to cover all the villages by nationalised banks in the Seventh Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the number of branches of nationalised banks going to be opened in various State during the Seventh Five Year Plan; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take to improve the functioning of these banks in villages particularly keeping in view the requirements of the rural areas ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY) : (a) to (c) The current branch licensing policy covers the period April 1982 to March 1985 and aims at achieving a coverage of one bank office for an average of 17000 population on the basis of 1981 Census in the rural and semi-urban areas by the end of March 1985. For the stipulated norm of population coverage, 7540 branches are expected to be opened in rural/semi-urban centres in deficit districts while 823 branches are likely to be opened in non-deficit districts during the period April 82 March 85.

Estimates for opening additional offices during the Seventh Five Year Plan have not so far been made.

As at the end of June 1983, the commercial banks had 42027 branches functioning in the country of which 22629 are located at rural centres and 9037 at semi-urban centres. The rural and semi-urban branches are expected to cater to the banking needs of not only the centres where these are located but also of the villages in the surrounding areas. Efforts are continuing to bring increasing number of villages within the direct coverage of the banking system. Through linkages of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies and Farmers' Service Societies or LAMPS with commercial bank branches, the coverage of the banking system is being further widened. It is not, however, possible to set any time frame for universal extension of banking coverage independent of considerations of overall viability of operation as also the level of economic development, particularly in the sphere of infrastructural facilities, in different areas.

To ensure that bank branches lend increasing support to economic activities of the people of the areas where they are located, several measures have been taken

which include stipulation of lending parameters for priority sector advances as a group, for agriculture and allied activities as a separate Sector, for weaker sections within the priority sectors, for advances under DRI Scheme and for Credit: Deposit ratios for rural and semi-urban branches etc. Banks have also endeavoured to increase the operational efficiency of their branches through simplification of forms and sanctioning procedures, delegation of powers to branch managers, provision of adequate staff-particularly agricultural field staff, proper training and orientation of staff, joint efforts with district extension agencies to reach the poor through programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programmes etc.

Sale of Fire Arms Manufactured by Ordnance Factories to Public

*358. SHRI MOHAMMAD ASRAR AHMAD : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any fire arms manufactured by Ordnance Factories are available for sale to the public ;

(b) if so, the cost of different items like pistols, revolvers, singel and double barrel rifles; and

(c) at what prices they are sold to the public ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI. K.P. SINGH DEO) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The present dealers' prices and the maximum retail prices (exclusive of taxes) prescribed by OFB for sale to general public are as under :-

	Dealer Price	Retail Price
(i) 12 Bore DBBL Short Gun	Rs. 3000	Rs. 3450
(ii) .315', Sporting Rifle.	Rs. 2300	Rs. 2650
(iii) .32" Pistol	Rs. 4000	Rs. 4500