

prices were accepted as no discrepancies were detected in these importations.

(e) Yes, Sir. Similar checks are being carried out in respect of other items.

(f) Does not arise.

Gold Prices

319. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been marked rise in gold prices recently;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the impact of rising gold prices on the price index;

(d) the measures taken to curb the gold smuggling; and

(e) the results achieved?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b). There has not been any marked increase in the gold prices in the recent months. The price of gold has remained steady at about Rs. 3500/- per 10gms in the last few months.

(c) The Price index is independent of gold price.

(d) and (e). Anti-smuggling drive, particularly in the vulnerable areas, has been intensified throughout the country. Sophisticated anti-smuggling equipment is being utilised for prevention and detection of gold smuggling. Close co-ordination is being maintained with all agencies concerned with the prevention and detection of smuggling.

As a result of these measures, there has been a marked decrease in the gold smuggling operations as reflected by the quantity of gold seized.

Managing Directors in SBI

320. SHRI BALGOPAL MISHRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the sanctioned strength of Managing Directors in the State Bank of India under the State Bank of India Act, 1955;

(b) the present strength of the Managing Directors in the Bank;

(c) the criteria for appointment to these posts; and

(d) the competent authority for making appointment to such posts?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (d). The State Bank of India Act, 1955 provides for appointment of not more than two Managing Directors in State Bank of India (SBI). These appointments are made by the Central Government in consultation with Reserve Bank of India. At present both the Managing Directors are in position in SBI. The appointment is made in accordance with the provisions contained in the State Bank of India Act, 1955, and on the basis of professional experience, competence, expertise in the field of banking, etc.

Ban on Export of Monkeys

321. SHRI BALGOPAL MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal to lift ban on export of monkeys;