

**MMTC Gold Plundered by Exporters**

6692. SHRI NARAYAN ATHAWALAY : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "1300 kg. gold plundered by exporters the Great MMTC RIPOFF-1" appeared in the 'Pioneer' dated March 12, 1997;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein; and

(c) the action taken by the Government to curb such activities prevailed in MMTC and recovered the gold amount from the exporters or from the official found their direct involvement in such cases ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) MMTC supplied gold to jewellery units in EOUs/EPZs and in Domestic Tariff Area under the schemes of the Chapter VIII of the Exim Policy 1992-97. It has been reported by MMTC that out of 77355 kgs of gold supplied to the jewellery exporters since 1988-89 upto 15.11.96, 19 exporters in BOUs/EPZs have defaulted for 265 kgs and 4 exporters in DTA have defaulted for 36 kgs of gold under the schemes. The report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ending 31st March'96 has also reported that Foreign Exchange amounting to Rs. 57.65 crores remained unrealised in respect of Gem & Jewellery exports. Government has initiated action for verification of facts and for remedial measures. All these cases have also been referred to various investigating agencies including CBI, DRI and DGFT. MMTC has also initiated steps to take action against lapses by its officials, if any. To prevent reoccurrence of such incidents, the Government had appointed a high level committee in August '95 and the relevant recommendations made by this committee have also been implemented. Government had also appointed an Inter-Ministerial Group on 22.3.96 to oversee and take action against the exporters of gold jewellery who have committed irregularities. In order to further reduce the possibilities of misuse of facility under the schemes of Exim Policy, the Government has made a number of changes in the new Exim Policy (1997-2002) including furnishing of bank guarantee of 100% value of gold obligatory for exporters of gold jewellery.

**Equity Participation of MMTC in KSSCL**

6693. SHRI P.C. CHACKO : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Kerala has sent any request to the Union Government for equity participation of Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation with Kerala State Salicylates and Chemicals Limited;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Union Government thereto; and

(c) the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. In 1995, Ministry of Commerce had received a proposal from State Government of Kerala regarding equity participation by MMTC with M/s. Kerala State Salicylates and Chemicals Ltd. (KSSCL) and marketing assistance to it for export of Salicylic Acid. The matter was taken up with MMTC who advised that they were in touch with M/s. KSSCL for export of Aspirin. MMTC had explored possibilities for exporting this product through its foreign offices which reported that as of now there was not adequate scope for export of Aspirin. MMTC do not consider this to be a commercially viable proposal.

**Chief Justices of High Courts**

6694. SHRI PARASRAM BHARDWAJ : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of High Courts which have Chief Justices belonging to outside from their respective States as on date; and

(b) whether the Government propose to implement this policy in all the High Courts ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) As on date, the High Courts of Allahabad, Andhra Pradesh, Bombay, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab & Haryana and Rajasthan are having Chief Justices from outside High Courts. The remaining 7 High Courts of Calcutta, Delhi, Gauhati, Gujarat, Madras, Patna and Sikkim are having acting Chief Justices at present.

(b) Yes, Sir.