

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reported that no complaints have been received from individual units regarding denial of bank credit to tea gardens in Assam for their expansion and modernisation plans. However, the Tea Association of India had reported to RBI that banks had lost interest in financing schemes for development of tea plantations on account of stoppage of refinancing of loans for the purpose by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). Keeping in view NABARD's resources availability and comparatively comfortable resources, position of commercial banks *vis-a-vis* Cooperative Banks/Land Development Banks, NABARD have decided to extend refinance support to commercial banks only for project-based lending in thrust areas which *inter alia* include horticulture, floriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries (other than brackish water aquaculture), seed processing, sericulture and other innovative and specifically approved schemes. NABARD would, however, continue to extend refinance support to commercial banks for loans under non-farm sector, SC/ST Action Plan and Externally Aided Projects.

NABARD has further reported that for Bihar, Orissa and North-East Region, they will continue to extend refinance support to commercial banks for all eligible purposes.

RBI has also issued a circular in August, 1996 to all scheduled commercial banks classifying all short-term advances to traditional plantations (i.e. tea, coffee, rubber and spices), irrespective of the size of holdings, as direct agricultural advances under priority sector.

[Translation]

Loan Waiver Scheme in Haryana

4555. DR. ARVIND SHARMA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Haryana has sent any proposal to the Union Government for extending the benefits of agricultural and rural loan waiver scheme to the people of the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes who borrowed loans from the nationalised banks in the State;

(b) whether the Union Government propose to extend the period for repayment of loans given to the State Government under the scheme; and

(c) the details of the action taken proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has reported, after ascertaining from the Director, Institutional Finance, Government of Haryana that no such proposal has been sent.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

[English]

Export of Sport Items

4556. DR. M. JAGANNATH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the target set for the export of Sports goods and the achievements made during each of the last three years; and

(b) the steps taken by the Government to boost the export of non-traditional Sports Goods like ice hockey, camping kits and other items?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) The target set for the export of sports goods and the achievements made during each of the last three years are :

(Value in Rs. crores/US\$ M)

Years	Target		Achievement	
	(In Rs.)	(In US\$)	(In Rs.)	(In US\$)
1993-94	120.00	37.00	133.82	42.66
1994-95	165.00	52.00	179.91	57.30
1995-96	205.00	65.00	207.50	61.72

(Source : Sports Goods Export Promotion Council)

(b) Based on the recommendations of the Sub-Committee, the Sports Goods Export Promotion Council identified several non-traditional items like ice hockey, camping kits etc. for setting up joint ventures in India. This Ministry has written to our Missions in USA and Canada to explore the possibilities of setting up Joint ventures with leading sports goods manufacturers of USA. Towards this end, our Missions have circulated the profiles of Indian sports goods manufacturers to various Chambers of Commerce and Associations in USA

Exemption of Interest on Agricultural Credit

4557. DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have taken a decision to exempt agricultural credit from interest;

(b) if so, it's approximate impact on country's exchequer;

(c) whether necessary direction has been sent to different States in this regard; and