

(a) whether the RBI promised to provide a line of credit to the Unit Trust of India (UTI) if the redemption commitment of the domestic institution reaches high levels; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Import of Cigarettes

937. SHRI SOMJIBHAI DAMOR : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a huge quantity of cigarettes is being imported for the purpose of re-export;

(b) if so, the quantity imported and re-exported during each of the last three years alongwith the details of the countries/agencies to which these have been re-exported; and

(c) the norms fixed for re-export of cigarettes?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) to (c) As per the Import Policy, cigarettes (ITC HS Code 24.02) fall under Restricted List of Items. No. proposal has been received for allowing import of cigarettes for the purpose of re-export. Under the Duty Exemption Scheme, there are no norms where import of cigarettes is allowed for re-export of cigarettes.

[Translation]

Devaluation of Rouble

938. SHRI D.S. AHIRE : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether devaluation of rouble is likely to have adverse effect on India's export trade; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) and (b) The devaluation of the rouble is likely to make imports into Russia from all countries including India costlier than before for the Russian importers, which may result in decline in imports into Russia on account of fall in demand of imported goods, including Indian goods. However, the impact on Indian exports to Russia may be relatively less on account of two factors. One, under the agreement on repayment of State credits, a specified amount of debt is to be repaid every year by way of export of Indian goods denominated in rupees, thereby cushioning the Indian exports under this route to some extent. Second, Indian exports to Russia mainly comprise tea, coffee, rice, pharmaceuticals, tobacco etc., which are relatively demand inelastic. The Govt. of India has requested the Russian

authorities to fully utilize the annual debt repayment amount of for import of Indian goods as per the existing agreement.

[English]

Letters from MPs on Bank Affairs

939. SHRI K.P. NAIDU : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received complaints from the Members of Parliament regarding the affairs of the State Bank Groups;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken thereon and the directions issued by the Government to the banks; and

(d) the action proposed to be taken by the Government on violation of the directions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCE AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN) : (a) to (d) Suggestions and complaints are received from Members of Parliament from time to time regarding matters relating to the State Bank of India, its associate banks as well as nationalised banks. Wherever such complaints relate to customer service or a public grievance not relating to credit decisions, the concerned banks are requested to have the complaints examined for appropriate remedial action. In matters relating to credit and related aspects such as compromise proposal no directions are issued by the Government to the public sector banks. Therefore the question of violation of directions in operational matters does not arise.

Insurance Scheme for Handloom Weavers

940. SHRI RAJ BANSHI MAHTO : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have introduced a new insurance scheme for handloom weavers during 1997-98; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The new insurance scheme would provide coverage against loss of damage to dwelling unit, loom and/or raw materials due to natural calamity. It would also cover medical expenses and insurance against accidental death.

The annual funding pattern for coverage of a weaver under the new Insurance scheme is as follows:

-	By Central Contribution :	Rs. 60/-
-	By State Contribution :	Rs. 40/-
-	By Weavers Contribution :	Rs. 20/-