

(a) whether rules have been framed to provide loan assistance to common people, small artisans and those living below poverty line by nationalised banks;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the amount provided as loan by each nationalised bank during each of the last three years, Scheme-wise; and

(d) the number of persons benefited there from during the above period, State-wise?

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

[English]

Sale of Steel Items in the Country by SAIL

3682. SHRI MADAN PATIL : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether SAIL has launched any scheme for sale of steel items in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the incentives likely to be given for sale of the above items?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS) : (a) and (b) SAIL has recently introduced a scheme for appointment of authorised dealers for certain steel products with a view to widen the reach of its products. Steel items covered under the scheme are TMT Bars/ Tor Steel, GP/GC Sheet and BP Coil and Light Structurals.

(c) It may not be in the commercial interest of SAIL to disclose this information.

[Translation]

Loan /Grant to Weavers

3683. SHRI RAJO SINGH : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are contemplating to provide financial assistance to weavers as Loan/Grant in person during the current financial year instead of giving emphasis to constitute co-operative organisations in various States, particularly in Bihar; and

(b) if so, the details thereof State-wise and if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA) : (a) and (b) The requirement of credit for Handloom

Weavers outside the cooperative fold is taken care of by State Handloom Development Corporations. The National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has recently included State Handloom Development Corporations for financing their working capital requirements which, inter-alia, would make credit available for Weavers outside the cooperative fold. This assistance will also cover all the States including Bihar as no separate State-wise provision is made.

[English]

Merger of Banks

3684. Er. SHANKAR PANNU : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under consideration of the Government to merge Bareilly Bank Corporation of India with the Bank of Baroda; and

(b) if so, the time by which the above merger is likely to be made?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) and (b) In exercise of powers conferred under Sub Section (2) of Section 45 of B.R. Act 1949, the Central Government after considering an application made by the Reserve Bank of India, has made an order of moratorium in respect of Bareilly Corporation Bank Limited (BCBL) for a period from the close of business on 8th March, 1999 upto and inclusive of 5th June, 1999.

During the period of moratorium, RBI will prepare a draft scheme of amalgamation of BCBL with the Bank of Baroda and forward the scheme to the concerned banks and also invite objections and suggestions from the depositors, creditors, share-holders etc. after taking into account objections received, RBI will forward a scheme of amalgamation to the Central Government for consideration and notification. As such it is not possible to indicate a definite date.

Modern International Technology for Exploitation of Diamonds

3685. SHRI S.S. OWAISI : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to introduce modern international technology for exploiting large scale reserves of diamonds located in the country, particularly in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the norms fixed for awarding its mining contracts;

(d) whether the Government coordinate with Mineral Development Corporations of various States in examining the bids before awarding contract; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?