

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) No powered support machines were procured by Coal India Limited for the Moonidih project of Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. during the last three years.

(b) to (d) Not applicable in view of (a) above.

Salboni Currency Note Printing Press

489. SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH:

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Salboni Currency Note Printing Press has started printing the currency notes;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with its capacity;

(c) whether there is any idle capacity; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In Phase I, one line of Machines have been commissioned with effect from 11-12-96. Till June, 1997, it has produced about 320 million pieces of Rs. 10 denomination notes. The Press has also started a second shift from July 1, 1997.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Increase in Opium Rates

490. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any demand from the opium growers for hike in the prices of the opium produced under the licensed areas; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Yes, Sir. Representations for hike in opium price are received by the Government every year.

(b) Based on such representations, periodical review and revision of the existing opium prices are conducted by the Government. The latest review was conducted during the crop year 1996-97 when the Govt. announced an increase of Rs. 100/- per kg. in the existing opium price slabs.

Bank Branches in Assam

491. SHRI KESHAB MAHANTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of bank branches opened in Assam alongwith their locations by Canara Bank, Union Bank of India, Oriental Bank of Commerce and Corporation Bank since those guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India;

(b) whether the Bank Employees Committee of Assam Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad is agitating over non-expansion of banking network in Assam, thereby defeating the very idea with which banks were nationalised; and

(c) if so, the response of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House of the extent available.

[Translation]

Indo-Dutch Project

492. SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his ministry has raised objection on the Indo-Dutch Project of Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh even after its clearance by the Ministry of Environment and Forests;

(b) if so, the details of the objections raised and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The project agreement will be signed shortly.

[English]

Production of Coal

493. SHRI RAJABHAU THAKRE: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of coal mines in Maharashtra alongwith production of coal during the each of the last three years;

(b) the quantum of coal exported from the State during the last three years and the names of the countries to whom it was exported;

(c) whether the Government propose to export coal in future also; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) The total number of working coal mines under Coal India Limited (CIL) in Maharashtra and the production from them during the last three years is as under:-

	1996-97	1995-96	1994-95
No. of Mines	49	49	44
Production (in Million Tonnes)	24.858 (Provisional)	22.82	21.07

(b) to (d) No coal has been exported by CIL from Maharashtra during the last three years and it has no plan to export coal from the State in future.

Duty on Imported Newsprint

494. SHRI SYDAIAH KOTA:

SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- whether the Government have received any proposal to withdraw 10 per cent import duty on newsprint;
- if so, the details thereof; and
- the action being taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) and (b) The Indian Newspaper Society has sought withdrawal of the duty on newsprint on the grounds, inter-alia, that:-

- newsprint constitutes a significant cost of newspapers
- the duty is a tax on knowledge and inconsistent with the need of the domestic newsprint industry to maintain certain levels of efficiency and productivity
- there is no justification for continuation of the duty in terms of the price of imported newsprint, for July to September, 1997, indicated by foreign suppliers.

(c) The Government is keeping a watch on the international prices of newsprint and when the international prices rise, the Government will review the levy, taking into account all the relevant factors.

SIDBI's Financial Scheme

495. SHRI RAMASHRAYA PRASAD SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- whether Small Industries Development Bank of India has developed a plan to market indigenous products manufactured by SIDBI's financial scheme for small sectors; and
- if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) and (b) The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has developed a plan to market indigenous products manufac-

tured by small scale industrial (SSI) units. For this purpose, SIDBI has set up a specialised department to accord focussed attention to the marketing problems of the SSI units. SIDBI has introduced a special scheme of direct assistance for financing activities relating to marketing of products manufactured by SSI units. Since introduction of the scheme in May 1996, SIDBI has sanctioned term loans aggregating Rs. 1225.5 lakhs to 21 units in the country. Besides, SIDBI has undertaken several other initiatives such as participating in sponsoring exhibitions/trade fair, conducting market studies and assisting in setting up of showrooms for marketing the products manufactured by the SSI units.

[Translation]

Share Market

496. SHRI KACHARU BHAU RAUT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- the reasons for the showing improvement in the share market;
- whether the Government propose to take any action to improve the share market;
- if so, the details thereof; and
- if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) There are various factors which affect the movement of prices of shares. Some of these factors relate to the expectations of investors regarding the performance of the corporate sector and the economy in general, perceptions of the investors about economic policies of the Government, development in international capital markets and speculative activity.

(b) to (d) The main concern of Government policy is to ensure that stock markets operate in the orderly and transparent manner in full compliance with the rules and regulations of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for protecting the rights of the investors and for maintaining the confidence of the investors in the stock market.

[English]

Directions to Non-Banking Finance Companies

497. SHRI DHIRENDRA AGARWAL:

SHRI RAM NAIK:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- whether the Reserve Bank of India has issued fresh directions asking all Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) including residuary non-banking companies to apply for registration certificate before July, 1997;
- if so, the details of directions and the reasons therefor;