

(c) what are the general norms for investment in R & D in various fields under their control; and

(d) how this percentage of investment is comparable with similar undertakings and institutes of the developed countries?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA):

(a) to (d) Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas encourages initiation of Research & Development Projects by the Oil PSUs as also by other technical organizations like Centre for High Technology, Directorate of Hydrocarbons and Petroleum Conservation and Research Association.

All these organizations have their own R&D wings which are Undertaking research projects with the aim to fulfil the energy security aims of the nation. During 2006-07, the PSUs and other technical organizations of the Ministry incurred an expenditure of Rs. 412.87 crore on research and development activities. This amount is approx 0.1% of the combined turnover of these companies.

There are no prescriptive norms for investment in R&D by Oil Sector Companies. Projects for R&D activities are taken up as per perceived needs for development of new products/technologies and resolution of technical issues encountered by the Companies. Over the year, expenditure on R&D activities is on the increase and the Oil PSUs/other technical organizations under this Ministry are being provided all kinds of encouragement for taking up more & more R&D activities.

Contractual workers in national carriers

***566. SHRI PRABHAT JHA:** Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government owned Indian Airlines and Air India are hiring manpower for their works on the contractual basis;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the department where this manpower has been utilized?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The number of contractual employees in erstwhile Air India and Indian Airlines is 105 and 277 respectively. These contractual employees are now working in the National Aviation Company of India Limited (NACIL) into which erstwhile Air India and Indian Airlines have merged, in various departments namely Commercial, Finance/Audit, Security, Ground Supports etc.

Loan Waiver Scheme for farmers

***567. SHRI PRAKASH JVADEKAR:** Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether instructions have been issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for the Loan Waiver Scheme announced in the annual budget;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has taken any decision regarding inclusion of farmers in the scheme, who hold more than 2 hectares of land;