

(a) the number of new branches of nationalised banks proposed to be opened in rural areas of Meghalaya State during 2000-2001, district-wise;

(b) the details of proposals under consideration for opening new branches in Meghalaya during the above period; and

(c) the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) to (c) Under the Extant Policy of Reserve Bank of India (RBI), it is left to the judgment of the individual banks to assess the need for opening additional branches within their Service Areas subject to the availability of infrastructure and viability of the branch. RBI have reported that out of 179 branches of scheduled commercial banks in Meghalaya as on 31.12.1999, there are 131 branches in rural areas. RBI have further reported that there are no authorizations pending for opening of branches in rural areas nor any fresh applications received, from Commercial banks, for opening of branches in rural areas in Meghalaya.

**Inadequate staff strength in customs office at Bangalore**

5415. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the staff strength in Customs Office at Bangalore is inadequate to meet the demand and no customs escorts are available in Bangalore to be on Hyderabad-Muscat flight *via* Bangalore and Kochi; and

(b) if so, the action taken or proposed to be taken to post required number of staff to customs office at Bangalore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Proposal for sanction of separate staff for Bangalore Airport is under active consideration by the Government.

**Assam Government request for financial assistance on account of pay revision**

5416. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state: