

### Expansion of banking network

3433. SHRI D. RAJA:

SHRI R. C. SINGH:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than half of the villages in the country are not covered by any commercial bank branches; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and what measures are being taken to expand the banking facilities into these unbanked areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA):

(a) and (b) Financial Inclusion is an important priority of the Government as only 37.6% of bank branches of Scheduled Commercial Banks are in rural areas and approximately only 40% of the country's population has bank accounts. During the last year, the Reserve Bank of India and the Government of India have announced various measures to increase the reach of banking services to the excluded population of the country. The Reserve Bank of India has recently permitted all Scheduled Commercial Banks excluding Regional Rural Banks to open branches in Tier-III to Tier-VI Centers (with a population upto 49,999 as per 2001 census), without having to take permission from the Reserve Bank of India. The individual Kirana/Medical/Fair Price Shop owners/PCO operators, agents of small savings/insurance companies, owners of Petrol Pumps, retired teachers and authorised functionaries of well run Self Help Group linked to banks have been allowed to engage as Business Correspondents.

### Rate of increase of WPI

†3434. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

SHRI SHIVANAND TIWARI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that constant increase has been noticed in the country's rate of Wholesale Price Index during each year between 2004-05 and 2009-10 respectively;

(b) if so, the estimated annual increase in the rate of WPI during the aforesaid period; and

(c) the annual growth rate of GDP during each year of the above period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA):

(a) to (c) Movement in average Wholesale Price Index (WPI), annual rate of inflation and growth rates in gross Domestic Products (GDP) for six year are given in Table below:—

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.