

#### **Excise duty collections from chewing tobacco**

1673. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) the amount of excise duty collection made from chewing tobacco in 2008-09 and 2009-10;
- (b) the amount of excise duty collections from other tobacco varieties and products like cigarettes, bidis, cigars respectively for the years 2008-09 and 2009-10;
- (c) the total excise collections from all the tobacco products in the years 2008-09 and 2009-10 respectively;
- (d) whether in view of the huge excise collected from tobacco farmers, some help will be given to them by way of cash subsidies to meet high input and labour costs; and
- (e) if so, the details of such measures proposed or under consideration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM):

- (a) The amount of excise duty collected from chewing tobacco including Kara Masala, Kimam etc. during 2008-09 and 2009-10 is Rs. 916.63 crore and Rs. 1062.05 crore respectively.
- (b) The excise duty collections from other tobacco varieties and products like cigarettes, bidis, cigars for the years 2008-09 and 2009-10 is Rs. 9798.75 crore and Rs. 10045.35 crore respectively.
- (c) The total excise collections from all the tobacco products in the years 2008-09 and 2009-10 is Rs. 13300.31 crore and Rs. 13853.29 crore respectively.
- (d) and (e) Excise duty is a levy on manufacture and tobacco farmers are not subject to this levy. There is no proposal to extend cash subsidies to growers to meet input and labour cost.

#### **Extension of banking facilities in rural areas**

†1674. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether Government is emphasizing towards extending of bank branches especially in rural areas so as to facilitate access of banking service to farmers, farm labourers and small entrepreneurs; and

(b) whether Government is taking concrete steps to provide banking services in rural areas by opening banks, business correspondents, mobile banking vans, mobile telephone service and by opening zero balance accounts?

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% of bank branches of Scheduled Commercial Banks are in rural areas and only about 40% of the country's population has bank accounts. Government of India and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have announced various measures to increase the reach of banking services to the excluded population of the country. The RBI 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.

Further, the Finance Minister in his Budget Speech 2010-11 stated that in order to reach the benefits of banking services to the 'Aam Aadmi', the Government in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), has decided to provide appropriate banking facilities to habitations having population in excess of 2000 (as per 2001 census) by March, 2012. These services will be provided using the Business Correspondent (BC) and other models with appropriate technology back up.

RBI has also advised banks to provide the facility of 'no-frills' accounts with 'nil' or very low minimum balances as well as charges that would make such accounts accessible to vast sections of population. Both public and private sector banks have been opening such accounts. RBI has reported that banking sector as a whole has opened 3.92 crore such accounts as on March 31, 2010.

Several other initiatives have also been taken by the Government of India and the RBI for furthering the reach of banking services and financial inclusion. These include easier credit facilities for the smaller customers, simpler Know Your Customer (KYC) norms, permission to use smart cards, mobile hand held electronic devices for banking transactions, liberalization of Bank Branch and ATM authorization policies and encouraging Financial Literacy / Credit Counseling. For mobile

banking transactions banks are now permitted by RBI to offer this service to their customers subject to a daily cap of Rs.50,000/- per customer for both funds transfer and transactions involving purchase of goods/services. The maximum value of such transfers shall be Rs 5000/- per transaction.

#### **Diversion of planned funds**

1675. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of planned funds allocations that have been diverted to known plan expenditure by various Government Departments, year-wise during last three years especially the Department of Pharmaceuticals;

(b) whether the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) examines such diversion of funds during audits;

(c) if so, the details of cases where such lapses have been noticed; and

(d) if not, the reasons for not examining the diversion of funds by various Government Departments?

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

(a) Data on diversion of Plan Funds to Non Plan expenditure by various Ministries/ Departments is not centrally maintained. The Department of Pharmaceutical has been created in July, 2008 from *erstwhile* Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals. Its First DDG has been approved by the Parliament from the Financial Year 2009-10. During the year (2009-10) no Plan fund allocation has been diverted to Non-Plan side.

(b) to (d) Yes. Diversion of funds as noticed during audit of transactions and performance audit of various plan schemes/programmes are reported in the Audit Reports of C&AG tabled in the Parliament every year.

#### **Sovereign Wealth Fund**

1676. SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government plans to establish a Sovereign Wealth Fund for pursuing the strategic investment opportunities abroad;