

augmenting domestic availability through imports of commodities in short supply, increasing production, more efficient management of infrastructure, curbing anti-social activities and restraining undue expansion in supply of bank credit.

Quantum of foreign exchange reserves

98. PROF. RAMLAL PARIKH:
SHRIMATI RATAN KUMARI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what was the quantum of foreign exchange with the Reserve Bank in 1976-1977, 1977-1978, 1978-1979 and upto 31st December, 1979;

(b) what is the quantum on 1st June, 1980; and

(c) whether the foreign exchange reserves have declined in last three years; if so, during which period and what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN): (a) and (b) The foreign exchange reserves (excluding Gold and Special Drawing Rights) held by the Reserve Bank of India for the requisite periods are given below:—

End of Financial Year Period	Foreign Exchange Reserves (excluding Gold & SDRs)
	Rs. Crores
1976-77	2862.99
1977-78	4499.75
1978-79	5219.86
April, 1979	5496.75
May, 1979	5406.79
June, 1979	5346.21
July, 1979	5333.89
August, 1979	5485.72
September, 1979	5635.90
October, 1979	5560.78
November, 1979	5362.00
December, 1979	5395.02
1st June, 1980	4890.21

(c) while the foreign exchange reserves (excluding Gold and Special Drawing Rights) increased by Rs. 1636.76 crores in 1977-78 and by Rs. 720.11 crores in 1978-79, they showed a decline of Rs. 56.20 crores during 1979-80.

The changes in foreign exchange reserves are the net outcome of India's transactions with other countries, the details of which would become available only with the compilation of balance of payments statistics by the Reserve Bank of India.

The broad indications, however, are that the decline in foreign exchange reserves (excluding Gold and SDRs) during 1979-80 was due mainly to the larger trade deficit brought about, on the one hand, by the sluggish growth in exports and, on the other, by the substantial increase in the import bill as a result of large imports of intermediates and raw materials, items of mass consumption like edible oils and increase in the international prices of crude oil and petroleum products, fertilizer, ferrous and non-ferrous metals, etc.

Central assistance to States for payment of unemployment allowance

99. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:
SHRI HARI SHANKAR BHABHRA:
SHRI SONGDOPAL LEP-CHA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some State Governments have approached the Central Government for financial assistance to meet expenditure on payment of unemployment allowance;

(b) if so, what are the amounts demanded by each State Government; and

(c) what are the amounts which the concerned States propose to meet from their own resources?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN): (a) Requests were received from the Governments of Punjab and West Bengal for financial assistance to meet expenditure on payment of unemployment allowance.

(b) and (c) The Governments of Punjab and West Bengal asked the Central Government to bear 50 per cent of the expenditure on payment of unemployment allowance, which worked out to Rs. 9 lacs and Rs. 9 crores per year respectively. The remaining half of the expenditure was proposed to be met by these State Governments from their own resources.

Opening of a regional Tea Board office in Assam

100. **SHRI ROBIN KAKATI:** Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Tea Board has taken a decision for opening a regional Tea Board Office in Assam; and

(b) if so, when the decision was communicated to the Government of India and what action has been taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND STEEL AND MINES (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Tea Board has already set up three regional offices in Assam at Jorhat, Tezpur and Silchar.

(b) Does not arise.

Mohanbari airport

101. **SHRI ROBIN KAKATI:** Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to abandon the Mohanbari airport; and

(b) if the answer to part (a) above be in the negative, what are the reasons for not using it for Civil Aviation purpose for such a long time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The runway was in a damaged condition and not suitable for aircrafts operated by Indian Airlines and therefore, operation had to be shifted to Chabua. An estimate amounting to Rs. 1.53 crores for extension and strengthening of runway, widening and strengthening of taxi-track and strengthening of apron at Mohanbari (Dibrugarh) has been sanctioned to make it suitable for Boeing 737 operations.

Direct air service between Delhi-Gauhati

102. **SHRI ROBIN KAKATI:** Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to run a direct air service between Delhi and Gauhati via Lucknow and Patna?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR): At present urgent works are in progress at Gauhati airport and because of this all Indian airline jet operations stop at 11.30 A.M. This is likely to continue till 1981.

We are providing a service DELCAL-Gauhati with immediate connection. On the return flight the passengers can also connect with the Boeing stopping service on Calcutta-Ranchi-Patna-Delhi service in the afternoon and Calcutta/Delhi evening Airbus Service.

Salient features of the special Refinance Facility

103. **SHRI PILOO MODY:**

SHRI R. R. MORARKA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the salient features of the special Refinance Facility extending