

special additional excise duty of Rs. 6 per litre. In addition, an Education Cess of 3%, on the aggregate of duties of excise is also charged on all these products. At current Delhi prices, the basic excise duty on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) works out to Rs. 2.75 per litre and that on diesel and petrol is Rs. 2.60 per litre and Rs. 6.35 per litre respectively. The basic excise duty on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) and Diesel are comparable as both these fuels are used for public transportation.

Branches of foreign banks in rural areas

2987. DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is fact that Government proposes to ask the foreign banks to open branches in the unbanked areas and rural areas; and
- (b) if so, the details of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Currently, permission for opening of branches by foreign banks in India is guided by the commitment of 12 branches in a year to WTO. In practice, however, a higher number has also been permitted on merits. Further, the liberalised policy announced in February 2005 envisages a more liberalized policy in this regard for branches to be set up in unbanked areas. Further, according to Branch Authorisation policy issued by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in September, 2005, while processing the applications for opening branches, the following aspects are also kept in view:—

- (i) The RBI will, while considering applications for opening branches give weightage to the nature and scope of banking facilities provided by banks to common persons, particularly in underbanked areas, actual credit flow to the priority sector, pricing of products and overall efforts for promoting financial inclusion, including introduction of appropriate new products and the enhanced use of technology for delivery of banking services.
- (ii) Further, in order to ensure even spread of banking in the under banked districts, it has been decided that proposals submitted by banks for opening of branches in under banked districts would be considered provided that the location of the proposed branch is not:—
 - (A) Within the municipal limits of a State Capital, a Metropolitan Centre or a District Headquarter and
 - (B) Within 100 kms from the 4 major Metropolitan Centres (Mumbai, New Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai) and 50 kms from a State Capital.

However, the above restrictions at (i) and (ii) will not be applicable in cases where the location of the proposed branch is in the State of Jammu and Kashmir or any of the 7

North Eastern States viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura.

Such an assessment will include policy on minimum balance requirements and whether depositors have access to minimum banking or “no frills” banking services, commitment to the basic banking activity viz., acceptance of deposits and provision of credit and quality of customer service as, *inter alia*, evidenced by the number of complaints received and the redressal mechanism in place in the bank for the purpose.

Incident of fire at DRI Headquarter

2988. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a fire at the Headquarter of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) on 2nd September, 2010 had destroyed sensitive electronic data on financial frauds and records pertaining to tapped conversations, including some politically sensitive cases;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a probe was ordered into the fire incident to find out the causes of the fire;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the total damage/loss suffered by the department; and

(f) whether there is a possibility of involvement of an insider as nothing of the stored intercepted data could be saved while all the computers in the so-called secret room were damaged due to the fire?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) No fire incident took place on 2nd September, 2010 in the Headquarters of Directorate of Revenue Intelligence. However, on 31.08.2010 a fire incident did take place in the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence Headquarters Office. No loss of any data or records was caused in the fire.

(b) Does not arise in view of reply to (a) above.

(c) An enquiry was conducted by the Committee of two senior officers to determine the cause of the fire.

(d) The enquiry Committee in its finding, concluded that a host of factors were possibly responsible for said fire which included old and worn out cables, old switch boards, water seepage in the ceiling walls and electric cable and heating of servers in a cramped area.

(e) Some of the old and used office equipment such as mobile phones, old telephone instruments, adapters, etc. were damaged in the fire.