

In pursuance of the above, the Government constituted Board for Reconstruction of Public Sector Enterprises (BRPSE) in December, 2004 as an advisory body to advise the Government on strategies, measures and schemes for strengthening, modernizing, reviving, and restructuring of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs).

The administrative Ministry/Department of the concerned CPSE is responsible for preparing a comprehensive package for revival/rehabilitation, or closure of the loss making CPSE, after due consultations with all the stakeholders, and refer it to BRPSE for its recommendations. Thereafter, approval of the Competent Authority is obtained and the decisions implemented.

(c) to (e) Based on the recommendations of BRPSE, the Government approved revival of 43 CPSEs and closure of 2 CPSEs namely (i) Bharat Ophthalmic Glass Limited. (BOGL) and (ii) Bharat Yantra Nigam Ltd. (BYNL). In case of BYNL, the Government had approved a Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) to enable the employees desirous of opting for an early separation before closure of the Company. An option was also given simultaneously to the employees of the Company to join any of the subsidiaries before closure of BYNL, provided such subsidiary was willing to take them, or in the alternative, be offered VRS.

In case of BOGL, the Government approved opening of a Voluntary Separation Scheme (VSS) for all employees and made budgetary provision to settle all employees related dues including VSS benefits, salary/wages and statutory dues.

A Scheme of Counselling, Retraining and Redeployment (CRR) is being implemented since 2001-02 by Department of Public Enterprises to provide opportunities of redeployment through counseling and retraining to separated employees of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) rendered surplus as a result of modernization, technology upgradation and manpower restructuring in CPSEs. The objective is to equip them with skill/expertise enabling them to be deployed in self-employment activities mainly.

From 2001-02 to 2010-11, around 1.63 lakh VRS optees have availed the benefit of the scheme. During 2011-12, with a plan fund of Rs. 8.90 crore, the target is to cover 9000 VRS optees. During 2012-13, Rs. 9.90 crore is allocated for implementation of the Scheme.

Hitch in granting MFN status by Pakistan

*110. SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether he visited Pakistan in February, 2012 with a large delegation of Indian businessmen;

- (b) if so, the details of the visit and its outcome;
- (c) whether the Pakistan Minister of Commerce informed him that it would not be possible for Pakistan to remove their Negative List by the end of February, 2012, as the first step towards extending 'Most Favoured Nation' (MFN) treatment to India; and
- (d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ANAND SHARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) At the invitation of Commerce Minister of Pakistan, Makhdoom Mohammad Amin Fahim, I led a high powered business delegation to Pakistan from 13th to 16th February, 2012.

This was the first ever visit by the Commerce Minister of India for substantive bilateral meetings. Accompanied by more than a hundred business delegates, this visit marked a historic moment for both the countries, when the political leadership and the business communities extended unequivocal support for full normalization of bilateral trade and advancing the existing preferential trading arrangements.

The Ministers along with their official delegations, met for a bilateral meeting on February 15, 2012. Both sides reviewed the considerable progress achieved in taking forward the bilateral trade relationship. The major points of the Joint Statement issued during these discussions are as follows :

1. To systematically address the issues related to Non-Tariff Barriers and to build confidence of the business community on both sides, the two countries have initialed three Agreements *i.e.*, Customs Cooperation Agreement, Mutual Recognition Agreement and Redressal of Trade Grievances Agreement.
2. Regarding opening of new trade routes, it was agreed that opening of Munabao/Khokharapar route for trade will be explored in consultation with the stakeholders.
3. The Ministers firmly reiterated that both sides would scrupulously adhere to the roadmap drawn up by the Commerce Secretaries for full normalisation of trade relations. It had been agreed that Pakistan will move from a Positive List to a small Negative List by February, 2012. The negative list is to be phased out after it is formally notified. It is expected to complete the phasing out of the Negative List before the end of 2012. The understanding is that when the transition of MFN is effected, all items other than those in the SAFTA sensitive list, would get preferential access at peak tariff levels of 5% by the end of 2012.
4. The Commerce Secretaries had also agreed to advance the preferential trading arrangement agenda through SAFTA. This too shall be done in a

sequenced manner. When Pakistan notifies its negative list, discussions shall be launched on reducing the size of the Sensitive lists and drawing up a programme for phasing in tariff liberalisation on such items. Tariff liberalisation for up to 30% of the Sensitive List shall be considered by India within four months of the notification of the small Negative List by Pakistan. After the negative list is dismantled and trade transitions fully to MFN/SAFTA basis, the Sensitive Lists shall undergo further liberalisation.

Pakistan Federal Cabinet had unanimously approved a Negative List on 29.2.2012. The List has not yet been notified. Once the Negative List is published and becomes operational, it will significantly expand business and trade opportunities for both sides. This shall substantially improve the prospect of export from India to Pakistan.

- (c) No, Sir.
- (d) Does not arise.

Impact of avalanches on army camps and fencing

*111. SARDAR SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether recent massive avalanches have hit army camps in Kashmir, killing a number of soldiers;
- (b) whether avalanches caused heavy damage to fencing along the Line of Control (LoC) raising fears of a surge in infiltration; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY) : (a) to (c) Due to inclement weather and heavy snowfall, the avalanches struck the Army Garrison at Sonamarg and Dawar on 22nd February, 2012 at 16:45 hrs and 22:15 hrs. respectively. Immediate search and rescue efforts were launched by the formation/units which resulted in speedy extrication of the personnel trapped in the avalanche and to ensure their evacuation to medical facilities. 19 Army personnel died in these incidents.

Heavy snow accumulation tends to damage the fence along the Line of Control (LoC). An accurate assessment of damage to the fence can only be made after melting of the snow which is expected by April, 2012.

Terrorists attempt infiltration throughout the year including during the winter months when the Line of Control Fence is covered by snow or before the damaged portions are repaired. However, additional proactive measures in terms of surveillance, troop deployment and aerial sorties are undertaken to deny any opportunity to the terrorists.