

(c) whether the Government had to resort to selling of gold in international markets/institutions from its reserves, so far; and

(d) if so, the details thereof, year-wise and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) There have been no instances of pawning of gold by Government of India in the last three years and current year.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

#### **Possibility of plastic notes**

1305. SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to conduct field trials with one billion plastic/polymer bank notes to check the possibility of introducing plastic notes;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether circulation of these plastic currency will be area-specific due to varied geographical location and climatic conditions; and

(d) if so, the details thereof with the amount Government proposes to incur on these field trials of public notes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) It has been decided by the Government of India and Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to introduce Rs. 10 notes in polymer/plastic on a field trial basis.

(c) and (d) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has informed that field trial is proposed to be conducted at five places viz. Jaipur, Shimla, Bhubaneswar, Mysore and Cochin, keeping in view the varied geographical locations and climatic conditions. The expenditure proposed to be incurred on the field trial would be finalized in accordance with extant guidelines.

#### **Service charges on actual bills**

1306. SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that almost all the restaurants in Delhi and Mumbai are charging 10 per cent service charges on actual bills which is then distributed amongst waiters;

(b) if so, under what rule or Act such a provision exists for charging 10 per cent service charges from customers;

(c) whether it is unfair to levy service charge which is not accounted for while filing Income-tax returns by restaurants; and

(d) whether Government will come out with a policy on charging of service rendered by restaurants and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Sir, Government is not aware.

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

(c) Comments cannot be offered since levy of service charge has not come to the notice of the Government.

(d) No such policy is under consideration, since levy of service charge has not come to the notice of the Government.

#### **Reduction in custom duty**

1307. SHRI NATUJI HALAJI THAKOR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received any representation from the State Government of Gujarat to reduce the custom duty from 5 per cent to 0 per cent on import of ships for recycling;

(b) whether in view of the price rise in steel, Government is considering to boost production of secondary steel from ship recycling;

(c) whether Government is aware that high custom duty in Alang Ship recycling in comparison to duty on melting scrap is crippling the local industry; and

(d) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to save this industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) No, Sir. No such representation has been received in the current Financial Year.