

Expanding the use of electronic payment system

2050. DR. K.P. RAMALINGAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is considering to give more thrust for shifting to electronic payment system;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government has felt that expanding the use of infrastructure such as ATMs, PoS Terminals, micro-ATMs and hand-held devices in smaller towns and villages are very much required; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (d) Government, with the objective of providing cost and time efficient mode of banking, has been taking a number of initiatives to promote electronic payment system, which *inter-alia* include getting interchange charges on ATM transaction reduced, advising Public Sector Banks (PSBs) to make National Electronic Fund Transfer (NEFT) transactions upto Rs. 1 lakh free of charge, issuing debit cards to all customers, etc.

Further, for extending banking facilities to the large section of hitherto uncovered population, PSBs and Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) have decided to increase the number of ATMs with emphasis on rural and semi-urban areas.

Under the Financial Inclusion campaign 'Swabhimaan', banking services have been extended to 74,194 villages with population of 2,000 and above, as per 2001 census. Greater availability of ATM, Point of Sale (PoS) terminals, etc., is intended to benefit the people, including in the rural areas, to access banking services in a convenient and efficient manner.

Taking economic reforms forward

2051. DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in its meeting held on 1st March, 2012, decided to take the economic reforms forward;

(b) if so, the details of the decisions taken; and

- (c) the proposals being finalised in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) in its meeting held on 1st March, 2012 decided to take the economic reforms forward and accordingly (i) provided Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) a third choice for investing their surplus cash in the shares of other CPSEs through Department of Disinvestment, in addition to bank deposits and/or mutual funds which were allowed by Department of Public Enterprises O.M. No. DPE/II/47/2006-Fin. dated 31st August, 2007; and (ii) enabled Department of Disinvestment to respond to the proposals of CPSEs, in case they decide to resort to buyback to restructure their capital base commensurate to the size of their operations on the pattern of private companies.

The above are only enabling provisions. The decisions are to be taken by the companies taking into consideration all aspects of the matter. The Department of Public Enterprises have already issued necessary guidelines to CPSEs based on this decision of the CCEA.

Increase the availability of credit to rural areas

2052. DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government has taken several policy measures from time to time to increase the availability of credit to the rural areas in general and farmers in particulars;
- (b) if so, the details of the schemes under implementation now; and
- (c) the impact of the schemes on the condition of the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) The Government has taken several policy measures from time to time to increase the availability of institutional credit to farmers. These, *inter-alia*, include the following:

- In terms of Reserve Bank's extant guidelines on lending to priority sector, a target of 40 percent of Adjusted Net Bank Credit (ANBC) or Credit Equivalent amount of Off-Balance Sheet Exposures (OBE), whichever is higher, as on March 31 of the previous year, has been mandated for lending to the priority sector by domestic scheduled commercial banks, both in the public and private sector. Within this, a