

There has been moderation of gold import to US\$ 20.3 billion during first half of 2012-13 as compared to US\$ 29.0 billion during the corresponding period of 2011-12.

**Revision of guidelines for foreign visit by ministers and bureaucrats**

1610. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has modified guidelines for foreign visit by our leaders and IAS officers;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the expenditure incurred on such visits including by the Prime Minister and his Ministers; and
- (c) the details of stringent steps Government is taking to observe austerity measures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) The Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance has not modified any guidelines regulating foreign visits of Ministers and Government officials including IAS officers.

(b) In view of (a) above, the Question does not arise.

(c) The Ministry of Finance has been issuing instructions on expenditure management from time to time with a view to ensure availability of adequate resources for meeting objectives of critical development and priority schemes. The economy measures are intended to promote fiscal discipline. These instructions *inter-alia* provide that foreign travel is restricted to most necessary and unavoidable official engagements, with officers of the appropriate level deputed and the size and duration of the foreign visit is kept at the minimum required.

**High retail price of petroleum products**

1611. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the retail price of petroleum products in our country is among the highest in the world;
- (b) whether it is a fact that this exorbitant retail price is the result of taxation policy of Government towards petroleum sector;