

Relaxation of rules for infrastructure financing

515. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government is considering relaxation of rules pertaining to infrastructure financing projects;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the details of the benefits and incentives that infrastructure projects are supposed to get by such relaxation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA) : (a) to (c) The Government has been taking several steps to encourage infrastructure investment and growth in the country. Infrastructure projects, given their long pay-back period, require long-term financing in order to be sustainable and cost effective. Therefore, Infrastructure Debt Funds (IDFs) have been conceptualized to provide long-term low-cost debt for infrastructure projects by tapping into source of savings like Insurance and Pension Funds which have hitherto played a comparatively limited role in financing infrastructure.

The Government has also set up the Cabinet Committee on Investments (CCI) with the Prime Minister as the Chairman to promote accelerated and time-bound grant of various licenses, permissions and approvals. This is likely to improve the investment environment in the country by bringing in transparency, efficiency and accountability in accordance of various approvals and sanctions.

Government of India have also brought out a harmonized master list of infrastructure. Different regulators have been advised to adopt the same list with the objective of creating an enabling regulatory framework which will spur investment in infrastructure sub-sectors.

Banking facilities in rural areas

516. SHRI K.C. TYAGI : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of branches of public and private sector banks, in the rural areas, State-wise and bank-wise;