Payment through debit/credit cards

550. SHRI BHUPENDER YADAV: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that it is not very convenient to pay through debit card in purchase of higher values;

(b) whether Government is also aware that in sale of certain commodities, the buyers are discouraged to pay through credit/debit card by adding around 2 per cent to the bill in the name of service charge; and

(c) steps Government proposes to encourage payment through credit/debit card and contain the circulation of black money in the country's economy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JAYANT SINHA): (a) to (c) With a view to promote transaction through debit cards, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a circular on Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on June 28, 2012 through which MDR for transaction undertaken through debit cards has been capped as below:

(i) Not exceeding 0.75% of the transaction amount for value upto ₹ 2000/-;

(ii) Not exceeding 1 % for transaction amount for value above ₹ 2000/-.

Government has approved introduction of steps for promotion of payments through cards and digital means. Promotion of payments through cards and digital means will be instrumental in reducing tax avoidance, migration of Government payments and collections to cashless mode, discourage transactions in cash by providing access to financial payment services to the citizens to conduct transactions through card/ digital means and shifting payment ecosystem from cash dominated to non-cash/less cash payments.

The essential features of the proposals for promotion of payments through cards and digital means include steps for withdrawal of surcharge/service charge/convenience fee on card/digital payments currently imposed by various Government Departments/ organisations and introduction of appropriate acceptance infrastructure in Government Departments/organisations; rationalization of Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on card transactions and a differentiated MDR framework for some key transaction segments; mandating payments beyond a prescribed threshold only in card/ digital mode; introduction of formulae linked acceptance infrastructure by the stakeholders of certain

card products; rationalisation of telecom service charges for digital financial transactions; promotion of mobile banking; and creation of necessary assurance mechanisms for quick resolution of fraudulent transactions and review the payments ecosystem in the country.

Atal Pension Yojana

†551. SHRI PRABHAT JHA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Atal Pension Yojana started by Central Government has covered a large number of people as per its target;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether cut off period of enrolling under this scheme has been extended; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JAYANT SINHA): (a) and (b) The Atal Pension Yojana started by Central Government has covered 21.20 lakh subscribers as on 24.02.2016.

(c) and (d) The subscribers can enrol into the scheme any time. However, the cut off date for receiving co-contribution by Central Government of 50% of the total prescribed contribution up to a maximum of ₹ 1,000 per annum has been extended from 31.12.2015 to 31.03.2016.

Loans to farmers

†552. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that farmer groups and agriculture experts (CIFA) have requested the Government to provide loans upto 5 lakhs to all farmers at 4 per cent interest rate, provide higher support price for crops, increase coverage of crop insurance and formulate a sustainable export policy;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) by when necessary steps would be taken in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JAYANT SINHA): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.