

select whatever markets and network they wish to service and operate. Government has however, laid down Route Dispersal Guidelines (RDGs) with a view to achieve better connectivity of air transport services of different regions of the country. As such, the airlines are free to operate anywhere in the country subject to compliance with RDGs issued by Government.

Further, Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched Regional Connectivity Scheme -UDAN with primary objective to facilitate/stimulate regional air connectivity by making it affordable. Akbarpur, Jhansi and Lalitpur have been included in the list of unserved Airports under RCS-UDAN eligible for bidding. However, RCS-UDAN is a demand-driven scheme, where airline operators undertake assessment of demand on particular routes and bid under RCS-UDAN from time to time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 160, the questioner not present.

SHRI ANANDA BHASKAR RAPOLU: Sir, I seek a supplementary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: One man can't go on seeking supplementaries.

Any supplementary? No.

*161. [*The questioner was absent*]

Investment in Bitcoins by Indians

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

(a) whether it is a fact that despite RBI's warning, more than 2,500 Indians are investing in Bitcoins daily;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating how much money has been invested by Indians in Bitcoins in the country so far;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Bitcoins are being used widely for terror funding, money laundering, drug peddling and criminal activities after demonetisation;

(d) if so, Government's response thereto; and

(e) the details of steps being taken or proposed to be taken by Government on this front?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) The Government doesn't maintain data related to trading of Bitcoins.

(c) and (d) There is no credible inputs to indicate that Bitcoins are being used by terrorists and drug syndicates. Security agencies keep a close watch on the issues regarding funding of terrorism and narcotics as well as other illegal activities.

(e) Government has constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs to study the issues related to cryptocurrencies and to propose specific actions to be taken in the matter. The Government has issued a statement on December 29, 2017 cautioning the people against the risks of investing in virtual currencies.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Question No. 161, please. The questioner not present. The Minister has placed the reply on the Table.

*162. *[The questioner was absent]*

Promotion of digital payments by NABARD

*162. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government through NABARD is promoting digital payment infrastructure, which was supposed to deploy 2 POS machines in a village having population of less than 10,000 people and if so, the details thereof, State/UT/date-wise;

(b) the total expenses incurred in the process of issuing POS machines across the country;

(c) the details of the manufacturers of these POS machines;

(d) the details of the transactions carried through POS machines since January, 2017 till date; and

(e) the details of the incidents of malfunctioning of POS machines across the country and status of these complaints?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) Yes Sir. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) provides financial support to banks through a scheme "Support from Financial Inclusion