

ensure a sustainable minimum pension delivery. The measures are as follows:—

- (i) Enhancement of the mandatory contribution by the Central Government for Tier I accounts of its employees covered under NPS from the existing 10% to 14%. The employees' contribution rate would remain at the existing 10%.
- (ii) Providing freedom of choice for selection of Pension Funds and pattern of investment to central Government employees.
- (iii) Tax exemption limit for lump sum withdrawal on exit has been enhanced to 60%. With this, the entire withdrawal will now be exempt from income tax.

Amending NDPS Act

2115. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received any recommendation from the Government of Punjab to initiate the process of amending the Narcotic Drug and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985 to provide for more deterrent punishment for the 1st time drug smugglers and peddlers and if so, the details thereof; and

(b) what action Government has taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SHIV PRATAP SHUKLA): (a) Yes Sir, Ministry of Finance has received a letter dated 04.07.2018 from Chief Minister of Punjab requesting therein for awarding of death penalty even for first time offenders under NDPS Act 1985 by making suitable amendments.

(b) A reply has been sent to Chief Minister of Punjab on 09.08.2018 intimating that NDPS Act 1985 already provides for stringent punishments including death sentence and heavy fine for violations of various provisions of the act, therefore there is no need for any further amendments to enhance the punishment/penalty at present.

59 minutes loan scheme to MSME sector

2116. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has recently announced 59 minutes loan scheme for the MSME sector and if so, the details thereof; and

(b) the number of persons who have been advanced loan under this scheme along with the loan amount sanctioned to each?