

Commercial Banks (SCBs) (excluding Regional Rural Banks), to open banking outlets at any place in the country without seeking prior approval of RBI in each case, subject to at least 25 per cent of the total number of banking outlets opened during a financial year being in unbanked rural centres (Tier 5 and 6) with population less than 10,000.

For this purpose, 'Banking Outlets' opened in any Tier 3 to Tier 6 centres (centres with population less than 50,000) of North Eastern States and Sikkim as well as in any Tier 3 to 6 centre of Left-wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts as notified by the Government of India from time to time, are also considered as equivalent to opening a 'Banking Outlet', in unbanked rural centres.

Demonetised currency not yet accepted from Bhutan and Nepal

2119. SHRI KUMAR KETKAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of demonetised currency not yet accepted from Bhutan and Nepal, along with the reasons therefor; and

(b) the policy decisions in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RADHAKRISHNAN P.): (a) Nepal Rashtira Bank (NRB) on August 21, 2017 had informed RBI that they had a total of ₹ 7.8461 crore of Specified Bank Notes (SBNs) in their banking system and with the courts. Further, the NRB had informed that Nepalese people were still holding SBNs, the amount of which is not known. As regards Bhutan, the amount of SBNs still lying with them is not available with RBI.

(b) The matter relating to extending exchange facility of Specified Bank Notes (SBNs) lying in the possession of Nepal and other neighbouring countries has been examined in this department and it is decided that action may be taken only as per the provisions of Specified Bank Notes (Cessation of Liabilities), Act 2017 and rules made thereunder.

Digital transactions vis-a-vis actual cash transactions

2120. SHRI KUMAR KETKAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state the reasons for rise in the quantum of currency in the economy in spite of increased digital transactions as per claim of Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RADHAKRISHNAN P.): The quantum of currency required in the economy is generally determined by several factors, which *inter alia*, include economic growth,