

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM): (a) As per the reports received from Government of Maharashtra, 1,34,148 educated unemployed youth applied for loan for setting up their own industrial/business units during the last two years i.e. 2000-01 and 2001 -02 in Maharashtra under the Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY).

(b) As per the latest reports received from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), 14,318 applications were pending with banks as on 31.12.02 under the Scheme.

(c) As per the PMRY norms, the applications to be sponsored to the banks should be equal to 125 per cent, of the target for each State/ UT. Therefore, at the end of any financial year, there are likely to be some pending applications. As per the instructions of the Government of India and the RBI, the pending applications are to be sponsored and processed in the following year.

Low Cost Irradiation Technique

3567. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU) : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether members of the Nuclear Club and developed countries have been using lowest cost irradiation technique for preservation of the consumable foods;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have been marketing the irradiated food products originated from BARC;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A number of developed countries, have been using or have permitted the use of irradiation technique for food processing. The technique can be used for extension of shelf life, improving hygiene and health safety, and for overcoming quarantine barriers. The developed countries in question includes Australia, France, Japan, Netherlands, South Africa

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and USA. Among the developing countries, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea, Thailand and Vietnam are using irradiation technology on commercial scale. The major commodities being irradiated include meat and poultry products, spices and fruits.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. The Government have not been directly marketing the irradiated food products originating from BARC.

(e) A number of exporters and traders are radiation-processing spices and vegetables both for export and for the domestic market at the irradiation facility set up by the Department of Atomic Energy at Vashi, Navi Mumbai. The plant is being operated by the Board of Radiation and Isotope Technology (BRIT) of DAE. A women's NGO, Annapurna Mahila Mandal, has sold radiation-processed spices under the brand name 'Purnanna' through their retail outlets in and around Mumbai.

VRS in MTNL

3568. SHRI GAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd. has formulated a Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) for its employees which is expected to be rolled out in the financial year 2003-04; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) No. Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

BSNL/MTNL's arrears

3569. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA:

DR. ABRAR AHMED:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the outstanding amount against the telephone subscribers of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd. at the end of the year 2002;