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Hindustan Herald

TIMES OF INDIA MARCH 23RD 1981

time in the light of the prevailing interest rates.

The rate of interest allowed to subscribers should provide for a reasonable return taking into account the erosion in the value of the rupee on the one hand and the rate of interest on investments in deposits with the public-sector undertakings and on long term deposits with banks on the other.

As on March 31, 1980, the organisation covered 93,094 establishments with 1,046.6 million subscribers. Their total contributions amounted to Rs. 6,433.72 crores and investments Rs. 5,847.37 crores till March 31, 1980.

About 70 per cent of the subscribers were contributing eight per cent and the rest 6.25 per cent. Amounts paid on account of settlement of claims and advances up to March 31, 1980 totalled Rs. 3,003.71 crores.

Originally the organisation had to invest all the collection in government securities under the direction of the Central government. The percentage of investment in government securities had been brought down over the years but the interest earn-

Political links with dacoits under study

KANPUR, March 22 (UNI): For the first time, the antecedents of prominent political leaders in the dacoit-infested areas of Uttar Pradesh are being scrutinised by the police as part of the anti-dacoity drive, according to reliable sources.

Already, evidence suggesting possible links with dacoits of about half-a-dozen legislators had been found, they said.

It has been widely suspected that several politicians in the Chambal and Yamuna ravines as well as other affected regions cultivated and protected dacoit gangs, but nothing had been done in this direction so far.

It was recently disclosed that a

Flouting of asbestos safeguards alleged

LONDON, March 22 (UNI).

TWO large Indian asbestos firms and multi-nationals collaborating with them are allegedly flouting safeguards against hazards of asbestos exposure.

It has been established that asbestos exposure causes cancer of the lining of the lung and stringent safeguards are being enforced in asbestos factories in the United States.

A U.S. multinational collaborates with a factory in Ahmedabad and a British multinational with a Bombay firm.

A report in the "New Scientist" here says that the road to the factory in Ahmedabad is lined on both sides by asbestos cement waste. Outside, untreated waste water is emptied into a trench piled with solid asbestos waste. Solid wastes from the plant litter the neighbourhood houses. Children play on the wastes.

The asbestos products of this factory carry no warning labels, telling people how to avoid creating dust when they use the pipes and sheets.

The Asbestos International Association — an international group of asbestos companies — requires asbestos companies to carry warning labels.

The U.S. collaborator of this firm was sued by thousands of American workers for not putting warning labels on the asbestos products it sold in the U.S. until 1964, the report says.

The collaborator, which supplied the Ahmedabad firm with technical know-how and engineering assistance, owns shares in the company of which it is the sole selling agent in West Asia and Africa.

The British company owns 74 per cent of the Bombay company. Inside this plant, only workers in the fluffing and carding areas are issued with respirators. Workers are not told about the hazards of asbestos and often do not wear respirators. They receive no inconvenience allowance for working in this section.

The report says even simple "housekeeping" measures are not employed in the plant. The floors are dry-swept, creating dust. The same lockers hold overalls and the workers own clothes, which are thus contaminated.

Workers undergo regular medical examinations but are not told the results. Day labourers who carry away the waste dust that the ventilation system traps have no protection. They are covered with dust.

The report concludes: "These two examples illustrate a fundamental point. The life-saving medical and engineering technology that should be exported along with dangerous technologies is often left behind.

"It is time for responsible members of the business world to step forward and make a commitment not to profit by such abuses."

Excess