

development assistance to India and banned military exports; The Netherlands has suspended macro economic aid but has stated that ongoing projects will remain unaffected; Sweden has terminated Development Assistance Programmes of US \$ 118 million for the year 1997 to 1999 but has stated that ongoing activities in health and education would not be affected; Norway has terminated all aid excluding aid and assistance for poverty alleviation programmes; and, Denmark has frozen its Overseas Development Assistance Programmes to current levels. Germany, France, the UK and Italy have not imposed any economic restrictions against India.

(b) Government is constantly assessing and continuously monitoring the impact of the restrictive economic measures on the Indian economy as announced by various countries. Government is prepared to take all steps necessary to safeguard our economic and national interests.

(c) Yes, Sir. Government are aware of the partial lifting by the US of some economic measures against Pakistan including its decision to work towards permitting IMF support to Pakistan. Government has supported economic assistance to Pakistan and has consistently voted in favour of such assistance in the World Bank and other multilateral fora. Government does not agree with a selective and discriminatory approach in these matters.

(d) Government having harmonised India's national imperatives and security obligations and desirous of continuing to cooperate with the international community is now engaged in discussions with key interlocutors on a range of issues, including the CTBT. Government is prepared to bring these discussions to a successful conclusion so that the entry into force of the CTBT is not delayed beyond

September 1999. Government expects that other countries, as indicated in Article XIV of the CTBT, will adhere to the Treaty without conditions.

(e) Government have seen reports of the statement made by the Chief Minister of West Bengal concerning his views on the CTBT.

Nature of diplomatic status to Dalai Lama

1325. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the precise nature of diplomatic status enjoyed in our country by Dalai Lama;

(b) whether any country, with which India has diplomatic relations has objected to any special status accorded to Dalai Lama; and

(c) whether any foreign Government has requested his extradition from India on named or unnamed charges?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) The Dalai Lama is in India as a revered religious and spiritual personage.

(b) and (c) No such issues have been raised with Government.

Over staffing of Indian High Commission in London

1326. PROF. A. LAKSHMISAGAR: Will the MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian High Commission in London is heavily over staffed;

(b) if so, the existing number of staff (with categories) and the annual expenditure incurred by Government on their salaries and perks etc;

(c) whether Government have considered the desirability of reviewing the positions to scale down the staff according to the requirements in order to curtail the infructuous expenditure; and

(d) if so, what steps are contemplated by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) No, Sir.

- (b) Does not arise.
- (c) Does not arise.
- (d) Does not arise.

Remark by Indonesian Food Minister against Hindus

1327. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Hindus in the land of Bali have strongly opposed an insulting remark by Indonesian Food Minister against the Hindu minorities in the country; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken in this regards?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes. A large number of Hindus held rallies and demonstrations in Bali, protesting against Mr. A.M. Saefuddin, the Indonesian State Minister for Food and Horticulture, demanding that he should either step down or be sacked by the President. Mr. Saefuddin had earlier made a statement that he had a better chance than Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, of becoming the next President of Indonesia as Ms. Megawati was a Hindu and it was unlikely that a predominantly muslim country like Indonesia would accept her as President. Mr. Saefuddin belongs to the United Democratic Party and is known to have Presidential ambitions. Ms. Megawati, leader of a faction of Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), recently held a very successful congress in Bali in October 1998 and is being viewed as a strong contender for the post of President in the next elections

likely to be held next year. Mr. Saefuddin subsequently apologised for his statement.

(b) The Government of India is of the opinion that Mr. Saefuddin's remarks targetting Ms. Megawati were apparently made in the context of domestic politics in Indonesia and as such it does not warrant any intervention with the Indonesian government.

Commercial and Economic Department of Indian High Commission in London

1328. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian High Commission in London has a Commercial and Economic Department;

(b) if so, what are its functions; and

(c) what, according to assessment, if any, are its achievements in the matter of assisting the Indian exporters in the promotion of their trade in the British market and vice-versa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main function of the Economic and Commercial Wing of the High Commission of India, London, is to promote India's economic and commercial interest in the UK. This, *inter-alia*, includes promoting Indian exports in the British market, encouraging investments from the UK and facilitating industrial and technical collaborations between the India and British commercial "organisations. In addition, the Economic and Commercial Wing has also been attempting to build and promote an India Brand Equity, both in terms of the country and specific products.

(c) The Economic and Commercial Wing has provided assistance to Indian