

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The World Bank has offered assistance amounting to International Development Agency (IDA) credit equivalent to US \$ 92 million (Special Drawing Rights) (SDR 664 million) for the future development of rubber plantations including those in Tripura.

(b) The financial assistance from the World Bank has not been received pending signing of the final agreement between World Bank and the Government of India.

(c) The Project to be implemented by the World Bank assistance will ultimately benefit the rubber growers. It will also result in socio economic upliftment of the women and 4500 tribal families in Tripura.

(d) and (e) The grant received from the International Development Agency has to be refunded during the period 2002 to 2027. Interest on loan and repayment will be as per standard terms and conditions for World Bank Projects;

(f) and (g) At present, no proposal is being pursued for more loans from the World Bank for rubber plantations.

Committee on Trade Policy reforms

2350. DR. SANJAYA SINH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a High Level Committee on Trade Policy Reforms was recently set up by Government :

(b) if so, whether the Committee has since submitted its Report to Government;

(c) if so, the details of its recommendations; and

(d) what are the details of the recommendations which have been accepted and implemented by Government so far?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Government had constituted a High Level Committee on Trade Policy Reforms, consisting of officials from different Ministries, to work out the modalities for the progressive elimination of licensing and quantitative restrictions on the import of capital goods, raw materials and components. The members of the Committee had met from time to time and had discussions on the elimination of licensing and quantitative restrictions on imports. No formal report has been submitted by the Committee. However, the new Export and Import Policy announced on 31 March, 1992 for the 5 years period from 1st April 1992 to 31st March, 1997, has abolished licensing and quantitative restrictions on the import of capital goods, raw materials, intermediates and components. The new EXIM Policy permits the import of all goods without a licence except those that are included in the Negative List of Imports. Thus the purpose for which this Committee was set up has been substantially achieved.

Tobacco exports to Russia

2351. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA-RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total quantity of tobacco so far exported during the year 1992-93 to Russia;

(b) what is the value of such tobacco exported in cash terms; and

(c) whether there is any scope for more tobacco exports in 1992-93 to Russia?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND

PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) and (b) During 1992-93 (upto 28.2.93), a quantity of 18,431 MTs of tobacco valued at Rs. 116.41 crores has been exported to Russia.

(c) Yes, Sir.

Export of tea

2352. SHRI SHANTI TYAGI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the disintegration of the Soviet Union has adversely affected the Indian tea export trade;

(b) if BO, what remedial measures Government have taken to tide over the losses due to the above factor;

(c) what are the other countries buying Indian tea; and

(d) whether any new areas for export have been identified?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Tea Industry is facing difficulties on account of reduced purchases by the CIS countries, which were a major buyer of Indian Tea during the previous year.

(b) Government has been encouraging diversification of tea export by sponsoring industry delegation to various countries. Trade Protocols have also been entered into with some of the CIS countries including Russia. Other countries are being persuaded to buy higher quantities of Indian Tea indicating them the price competitiveness of our tea.

(c) and (d) Other major buyer of Indian Tea are U.K., Poland, Iran, Egypt, Germany, UAE, Japan etc. Efforts are made on a continuing basis to diversify exports of tea and explore new markets for Indian teas.

Medium term policy for farm exports

2353. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA-. Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated medium term policy for farm and agricultural exports;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the time by when it is likely to be formulated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI TAKMALATODIN AHMED : (a) to (c) The objective of Government is to make a policy environment for exports. The exchange rate adjustments, the introduction of a unified exchange rate, the expansion of the definition of 'manufacture' in the Exim Policy 1992-97 to include agriculture and allied activities, the lowering of customs duties, particularly those relating to agri-commodities, and the simplification of pre-shipment inspection procedures are all strategies towards facilitating export of agricultural commodities. However, exports of agricultural commodities are promoted in such a manner that domestic availability of items of mass consumption is not affected. Hence, all agricultural commodities may be exported without any restriction except to the extent that: such exports are regulated by the Negative List of exports or any other provision of the extent Exim Policy or any other law for the time being in force.

Trade with Central Asian Republic

2354. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Asian Republic of Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, have invited Indian traders to enter into trade and