

(c) and (d) The Government of India is working closely with Export Promotion Councils and other Apex Organizations to promote exports to the USA.

Trade treaties with neighbouring countries

165. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to review the trade treaties with neighbouring countries;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the details of steps taken so far or proposed to be taken to improve trade relation with neighbouring countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) and (b) The Government of India in the Department of Commerce has proposals to review the Trade Treaties/Trade Agreements with Nepal and Bangladesh. The India-Nepal Treaty of Trade due for renewal of December 5, 2001, is under review so as to provide for safeguards to protect Indian industry. The India-Bangladesh Trade Agreement was also due for renewal from October 4, 2001. Bangladesh has proposed extension of its terms for 6 months from October 4, 2001.

(c) The Government of India has taken various steps to improve trade relations with all neighbouring countries, which include participation in trade fairs & exhibitions, exchange of trade delegations, holding of JBC meetings, exchange of commercial information apart from improvement in infrastructure and technology etc.

The bilateral trade between India and Myanmar is reviewed regularly through national and sectoral meetings being held under the aegis of Ministry of Home Affairs.

Import of agricultural products

†166. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the import of agricultural commodities is permissible under Open General Licence;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) the details of commodities imported and their quantity during the current financial year till 31st October, 2001; and

(c) the effect of such import on domestic price of agricultural commodities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) to (c) Import restrictions on items including agricultural products are being removed as a part of economic liberalization programme of the Government and also in terms of our International obligations. At present, all the items on which import restrictions were maintained on account of balance of payment reasons are freely importable.

A statement showing import of major agricultural commodities during April- July, 2001, for which data is available, compared with April-July, 2000 is enclosed (*See below*). The removal of restrictions has not altered the overall rate of growth of imports of the country. The growth rate of imports was 15.3% in 1993-94, 23.1% in 1994-95, 36.4% in 1995-96, 13.2% in 1996-97, 11% in 1997-98, 14.2% in 1998-99 and 13.6% 1999-2000 (in rupee terms). The import growth rate during the year 2000-2001 was only 5.59% in rupee terms and 0.27% in US dollar terms. If non oil imports are taken into consideration the picture of imports is all the more reassuring. Such non oil imports, have in fact, registered a negative growth rate of 14.66% during 2000-2001. The import data for 714 items, QRs on which were removed on 31.03.2000, for the year 2000-2001, indicates a growth in import of these items by less than 6%. Similarly, the import of 300 sensitive items, which is being monitored by a Standing Group of Secretaries, has also not indicated any unusual surge in the first half of this financial year. However the Government is determined to ensure through appropriate use of tariff and other mechanisms that imports do not cause any serious detriment or injury to the domestic farmers.

Statement

*Import of major agricultural commodities during April-July, 2000
and April- July, 2001*

(Value in Rs. Crore)

S. No.	Items	Apr.-July 00	Apr.-July 01
1.	Wheat	1.49	0.84
2.	Rice	0.35	0.06
3.	Other cereal	14.63	1.97

S. No.	Items	Apr.-July 00	Apr.-July 01
4.	Pulses	175.83	871.60
5.	Tea	8.07	15.48
6.	Cashew nuts	362.44	100.74
7.	Fruits & nuts excl. Cashew nuts	199.69	167.92
8.	Spices	81.54	124.74
9.	Sugar	20.52	26.60
10.	Oil Seeds	2.46	0.29
11.	Natural rubber	14.61	15.80
12.	Jute, raw	37.17	30.99
13.	Silk, raw	122.22	165.48
14.	Cotton raw: comb./uncomb./waste	623.61	824.94
TOTAL:		1664.61	2347.43

Setback in WTO discussions

167. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has suffered a setback in its attempt to prevent the WTO from widening its mandate and the meeting at Doha from November, 9th-13th is all set to authorise the launch of negotiation covering an expanded agenda covering the entire range of new issues;

(b) whether the Indian industry is upset at this as it will adversely affect their business; and

(c) if so, what is Government's strategy to counter this?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) to (c) The Fourth Ministerial Conference of WTO was held from November 9th-14th 2001 at Doha, Qatar. The Conference adopted the Ministerial Declaration on 14th Nov. 2001 containing decisions on a number of issues. The Ministerial Declaration highlights the Work Programme of WTO, which includes significant number of issues of interest to India. These include important issues like greater market access for agricultural products for developing countries through reduction