

MFN status to Pakistan

2519. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India has given most favoured nation status to Pakistan;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Pakistan has reciprocated;
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the action Government proposes to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) and (b) In accordance with the Shimla Agreement of 1972, a Protocol on Resumption of Trade was signed by India and Pakistan on 23.1.1975 which provided that the trade would be on most favoured nation (MFN) basis as provided for in General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). India has accorded MFN status to Pakistan in conformity with its general approach.

(c) to (e) As per the Press Release of Government of Pakistan dated November 2, 2011, it is understood that "the Pakistan Cabinet gave Ministry of Commerce the mandate to take the process of normalisation forward, which would culminate in the observance of Most Favoured Nation (MFN) principle in its true spirit". The issue was discussed during the Commerce Secretary level talks between India and Pakistan held in New Delhi on November 14-16, 2011. The Agreed Minutes of these talks reflect Pakistan's position for observance of MFN as follows:

"The move to full normalisation of trade shall be sequenced. In the first stage, Pakistan will transition from the current Positive List approach to a Negative List. The consultation process on devising this Negative List is almost complete. A small Negative List shall be finalised and ratified by February, 2012. Thereafter, all items other than those on the Negative List shall be freely exportable from India to Pakistan. In the second stage, the Negative List shall be phased out. The timing for this phasing out will be announced in February, 2012 at the time the List is notified and it is expected that the phasing out will be completed before the end of 2012." With the entire phasing out of the Negative List, the transition process for full grant of MFN status by Pakistan to India shall be completed.

PSKs in Andhra Pradesh

2520. SHRIMATI GUNDU SUDHARANI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of Passport Seva Kendras that have been opened/proposed to be opened under Passport Seva Project in Andhra Pradesh;