

(d) While taking into consideration the artistic nature of the items being sold by the genuine craftspersons in this bazar, the prices of various types and categories of items are determined by the market demand and supply. However, the craftspersons are advised from time to time that it would be beneficial for them to keep their prices reasonable and competitive.

### **Export of Basmati Rice**

6492. SHRI R. JEEVARATHINAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the export of basmati rice during 1993-94;

(b) the foreign exchange earned therefrom; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to increase the export of different varieties of rice from the country?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b). During 1993-94 (April 1993-January 1994), 4,55,786 tons of basmati rice valued at Rs. 879.46 crores have been exported.

(Source: DGCI&S, Calcutta)

(c) Steps taken to enhance the export competitiveness of Indian rice include (i) removal of inter-state restrictions on movement of rice and suspension of the levy on superfine non-basmati rice meant for export purposes by some State Governments, (ii) rationalisation of Minimum Export Prices, (iii) giving permission to exporters to import milling equipment at concessional duty under the Export Promotion Capital Goods

Scheme, (iv) rice exporters are also eligible for the benefits of the 100% Export Oriented Unit Scheme.

### **Economic Cooperation with France**

6493. SHRI RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the French Government have evinced keen interest in the field of economic cooperation with India;

(b) if so, the details of areas where cooperation is expected; and

(c) how far Indo-French ties are likely to enhance country's export?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHARA MURTHY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is expected that bilateral economic cooperation will cover a wide range of areas of mutual interest, with a focus on key sectors such as infrastructural development.

(c) The infusion of French technology and tie-ups will increase technological upgradation and the competitiveness of Indian Industry in international markets, thus generating additional exports.

### **Bank Profits**

6494. SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether fresh depreciation norms are likely to hit bank profits;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and