

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to prevent the circulation of foreign currency on Indian soil?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Flow of Narcotics

961. SHRI K.P. MOHAN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has sought the help of the Defence Services Headquarters to check the flow of narcotics coming to India; and

(b) if so, the reasons and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCE AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Export of Agricultural Products

962. SHRI CHETAN CHAUHAN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to bring out any policy paper on the export of agricultural products;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to boost the export of agricultural and processed food products?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMA-KRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) and (b) Policy of exports of agricultural products forms an integral part of the Export Import Policy of the country. The Policy regarding exports of agricultural products is governed principally by the concerns of India's food security, maximising farm incomes and earning foreign exchange. Review of export performance of agricultural products is an ongoing process and accordingly policy interventions are made, as and when considered necessary with a view to making agricultural exports increasingly viable.

(c) Some of the steps taken/proposed to be taken to enhance exports of agricultural and processed food products include:

1. Providing assistance for raising small and large nurseries for production of good quality planting material, upgradation of technical knowhow of farmers through demonstrations, trainings and publicity, rejuvenation of old orchards, are expansion, supply of minikits for vegetables, improving productivity and training of farmers.

2. Provision of soft loans for setting up of grading/processing centres auction platforms, ripening/curing chambers and quality testing equipment.

3. Providing financial assistance to exporters/growers/Cooperative Societies for development of infrastructural facilities such as purchase of specialised transport units, establishment of pre-cooling/cold storage facilities, integrated post-harvest handling systems (pack houses).

4. Grant of financial assistance for improved packaging, strengthening of quality control and modernization of processing units.

5. Establishment of vapour heat treatment facilities for improving the acceptability of the product especially the mangoes in overseas markets.

6. Grant of Air Freight Subsidy for exports of floricultural items and selected fresh fruits and vegetables.

7. Arranging promotional campaigns such as buyer-seller meets and participation in important international fairs and exhibitions.

8. Setting up of integrated cargo handling and cold storage facilities at various international Airports for handling export of perishable items such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

9. Providing assistance in development of data base and dissemination of market information.

10. Providing assistance for setting up of laboratories for testing of products to ensure quality, technology transfer, process upgradation and product development.

Foreign Visits

963. DR. CHINTA MOHAN :

PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA :

SHRI VIJAY GOEL :

SHRI PRAMOTHES MUKHERJEE :

SHRI MADAN PATIL :

SHRI AJAY CHAKRABORTY :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister has expressed unhappiness at the unwarranted increase in foreign travel by his Cabinet Ministers;

(b) if so, the details of foreign visits conducted by Union Ministers and other senior functionaries of Government during the past eight months and the purpose of their visit;