

[English]

Abuse of Psychotropic Substances and Polydrugs

3856. SHRI R. S. GAVAL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the International Narcotic Control Board has indicated in its latest report that abuse of psychotropic substances and polydrugs has rising in South Asia;

(b) if so, the details of the report; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) UN International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) in its report for the year 1998 mentions that the analgesic buprenorphine is increasingly being abused in South Asia and has already become one of the main drugs abused in some parts of the region. Suprenorphine is reportedly abused mostly by young man who live in urban centres in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. It is also mentioned therein that other medicinal products such as hypnotics and sedatives and anxiolytics (barbiturates and benzo-diazepines) continue to be abused in most countries in South Asia. Abuse of codeine based cough medicines have also been pointed out in the INCB Report.

(b) All State Drug Controller authorities have been advised to issue suitable instructions to the Inspectorate Staff to prevent the easy availability of these drugs to retail outlets and also to ensure that these drugs marketed under different brand names are supplied against the prescription of a registered medical practitioner to control the possible misuse of these drugs. Manufacturers marketing formulations containing these drugs have been advised to have minimum stockist outlets for sale and to ensure that these drugs should be sold and used under strict medical supervisions. Export of psychotropic substances out of India is permitted on export authorisation issued after verification of original import certificate issued by the competent authority of the importing country and if the proposed import is within the estimated requirements of that country as per estimates indicated by the INCB.

[Translation]

Incentives to FPI

3857. SHRI PRABHASH CHANDRA TIWARI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have given incentives to the Food Processing Industry to promote exports during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the value of processed food exported during each of the last three years; and

(d) the investment made during the above period in the industry?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMA-KRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) and (b) The Government has been encouraging export of processed food items through various support/assistance schemes. The assistance provided in this regard include the following:-

(i) Provision of grant/loan for development and modernisation of meat processing, establishment of post harvest infrastructure and cold chain facilities for food processing, assistance for undertaking Research and Development, human resource development, Strengthening of traditional fish processing technologies and marketing;

(ii) Provision of soft loans for setting up of grading/processing centres, auction platforms, ripening/curing chambers and quality testing equipment;

(iii) 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);

(iv) Grant of financial assistance for improved packaging and strengthening of quality control including adoption of quality systems such as ISO 9000 HACCP at export units;

(v) Arranging promotional campaigns such as buyer-seller meets and participation in important international fairs and exhibitions;

(vi) Setting up of integrated cargo handling and cold storage facilities at various International Airports.

(c) The value of export of processed food items comprising of processed fruits and vegetables and other processed food items during the last three years as follows:-

Year	Value (Rs. Crores)
1996-97	2309.68
1997-98	2256.37
1998-99 (April-January 1999)	1551.38

(Source : APEDA)

(d) The foreign direct investments and technical collaboration approved during the period January 1996 to December 1998 in the food processing industries has been as follows:

No of approvals	236
Amount of FDI approval	Rs. 5944.24 crores

[English]

Financial Restructuring of State Financial Corporations

3858. SHRI UPENDRA NATH NAYAK : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether most of the State Financial Corporations in the country have been repaying the principal and interest on the money borrowed from SIDBI/IDBI regularly;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether these SFCs are also paying penal and additional interest to SIDBI and IDBI since years;

(d) if so, the SFC wise quantum of penal and additional interest received by SIDBI/IDBI during the last three years; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to ensure that the weak SFCs resources are supplemented by SIDBI/IDBI at least to the extent of penal/additional interest collected by them over years, pending a final decision on financial restructuring of SFCs?

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

Trade with China

3859. SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a fifteen member delegation from China visited India in the month of March, 1999 to have a thorough discussion with the Indian Government to improve trade between the two countries;

(b) if so, whether an agreement between the two countries have been reached; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMA-KRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) No fifteen member delegation from China has visited India in March, 1999 for discussions with the Government to improve trade between the two countries. However, trade delegations are frequently exchanged between China and India for the purpose of discussions on specific trade matters.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Employees of State Financial Corporation

3860. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA MALLICK : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to equate the status of employees of the State Financial Corporations with that of other Commercial Banks as they both discharge the same functions; and

(b) if so, the steps taken in the matter so far?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT

SINHA) : (a) No, Sir. With a view to providing greater functional autonomy and operational flexibility to the State Financial Corporations (SFCs), comprehensive amendments to the State Financial Corporations Act, 1951 however, are under consideration.

(b) Does not arise.

Trade with Pakistan

3861. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has identified eight sectors with considerable potential for trade with Pakistan, as reported in the news-item captioned "Remove trade curbs, urges FICCI" which appeared in "The Business Standard" dated February 23, 1999;

(b) if so, the details of the matter reported therein; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to start trade with Pakistan in these sectors?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMA-KRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In a study entitled "Trade and Economic Cooperation between India and Pakistan", FICCI has identified the following eight specific sectors with potential for bilateral trade; engineering industry, textile machinery, textiles, automobiles, tyres chemical items, plastic products and tea.

(c) Trade between India and Pakistan is hindered by Pakistan's restrictive Trade Policy towards India. While India has granted Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to Pakistan, they are yet to extend this facility to us. Pakistan currently allows import of 594 items from India, which includes some of the items identified in the FICCI Study and trade is already taking place in such items. However, scope for further increase in bilateral trade depends on Pakistan liberalising its Trade Policy towards India. Government has taken up with the Pakistan Government to accord MFN status to India from time to time. However, their restrictive Trade Policy towards India continues to be in force.

[Translation]

Testing of Gold Ornaments

3862. SHRI MAHESH KANODIA :

DR. ASHOK PATEL :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have formulated any scheme for testing and certification of quality of gold ornaments;