

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI DILIP RAY) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Since the matter of celebration of golden jubilee of Official Language is a national policy issue, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Department of Official Language, which is the Nodal Department, will need to take a decision in the matter. The instructions/guidelines issued in this regard by the Department of Official Language will be implemented fully by the Ministry of Coal, too.

[English]

Patent of Basmati by Texan Company

3883. SHRI M. RAJAI AH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have not yet build up its Basmati patent case against the US patent to the texan Company; and

(b) the steps proposed to be taken to file the case early in the US and subsequently to the disputes settlement body of WTO?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) and (b) The exercise is on to assess whether the grant of patent on "novel basmati rice lines" and grains granted by the United States Patent Office can be challenged. Government have set up an Inter-Ministerial Committee to examine the matter. The revocation of the patent would have to be carried out under the US Patents and Trademarks Law. Therefore, raising the matter before the WTO and other international fora does not arise.

Trade Relations with Taiwan

3884. SHRI ANNASAHEB M. K. PATIL : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received any proposal from Government to Taiwan to expand trade relation with India;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard;

(c) the volume of trade made between the two countries during the last three years;

(d) whether new areas have been indentified for expanding trade relation between both the countries; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) and (b) Government of India does not maintain official or diplomatic relations with the "Govern-

ment of Taiwan" (Republic of China). However, the Government facilitates non-official trade, economic and cultural contacts to enhance trade, investment and tourism.

(c) The volume of trade between the two countries during the last three years is given below :

	(Rupees in crores)			
	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99 (Apr.-Jan)
Exports to Taiwan	861.44	1504.11	1443.74	1073.53
Imports from Taiwan	1277.21	1504.48	1313.51	3704.71

(Source : DGCI&S)

(d) and (e) New areas for expanding trade are regularly being identified by Business Cooperation Committees of both the countries. Some of the measures of expanding the existing level of trade ties include regular exchange of delegations, participation in trade fairs and establishment of liaison officers for trade and commercial matters.

[Translation]

PAN

3885. SHRI PANKAJ CHOUDHARY :

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Persons provided Permanent Account Number (PAN) in the country so far;

(b) whether the Government have received complaints regarding non-issuance of delayed issuance of PAN;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Government have taken any action to provide PAN at the earliest; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) to (e) As against 1,70,94,507 applications for allotment of Permanent Account Number in the prescribed form received upto 28-02-1999, 1,14,75,117 Permanent Account Numbers have been allotted all over the country as on 31st March, 1999.

A substantial number of applications were received in recent months. PAN could not be allotted in a large number of cases for want of certain essential information. Deficiency letters have been issued. Allotment of PAN will be made on receipt of replies to the deficiency letters.

The work of allotment of PAN is in full swing and all out