

with which talks were held in order to strengthen financial position of the Government of India in the last ten months alongwith the other details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) In order to strengthen its financial position, the Government of India held talks with various countries during the last ten months at various levels. These include discussions with France, Japan and European Community. Brief details of these discussions are as follows:

- (i) The Indo-French Bilateral Talks for finalising the Indo-French Financial Protocol for 1998 were held in Paris, France on 16.11.98-17.11.98 wherein projects commitments worth FF 68.8 million for financing under the protocol were finalised. Eventually, the Indo-French Financial Protocol for the said amount was signed on 23.11.98.
- (ii) There have been various official level dialogues between the Indian side and Japanese side since January 1999 in an effort to get cleared the six additional loan tranches for ongoing projects appraised for 1998-99.
- (iii) A meeting of the Indo-European Sub-Commission was held in January, 1999, in which it was agreed that priority should be accorded to sectoral programmes with environment as new focal area in addition to primary education and health.

Export of Floriculture

2541. SHRI PRADEEP KUMAR YADAV :
SHRI DAROGA PRASAD SAROJ :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn towards the study conducted by the Export-Import Bank of India with regard to the present position of the floriculture and its export potential; and

(b) if so, the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to remove the main obstacles coming in the way of promoting floriculture as mentioned in the report ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government has been taking various measures to boost exports of floricultural products. Some of the steps taken to overcome the difficulties faced in the exports of floricultural products include the following :-

- (i) Provision of soft loans for setting up of grading/processing centres, auction platforms, quality testing equipment;
- (ii) Providing financial assistance by APEDA, NHB, etc. to exporters/growers/Cooperative Societies for development of infrastructural facilities such as purchase of specialised transport units (reefer

containers), establishment of precooling/cold storage facilities, etc;

- (iii) Grant of financial assistance for improved packaging and strengthening of quality control;
- (iv) Arranging promotional campaigns such as buyer-seller meets and participation in important international fairs, flower shows and exhibitions;
- (v) Setting up of walk-in-type cold storages and integrated cargo handling and cold storage facilities at various International Airports for handling export of perishable items such as floriculture and horticulture products: walk-in-type cold storage facilities have been set up at Guwahati and Calcutta Airports. Integrated cold storage and cargo handling facilities have been set up at the Indira Gandhi International Airport at New Delhi and at Bangalore Airtort. Similar facilities are being established at Chennai, Hyderabad and Thiruvananthapuram Airport.
- (vi) providing technical advisory services and other support services to, trade and industry including training to farmers for export production, quality control, packaging, transport, etc.
- (vii) Grant of air freight subsidy on exports of floriculture products.
- (viii) Provision of assistance for undertaking feasibility studies, surveys, etc. UNDP assisted feasibility study for development, promotion and post harvest handling of export oriented floriculture products from the North Eastern Region was undertaken in 1995. The report has been circulated to the North Eastern States Organisations in order to disseminate the recommendations to the growers/exporters.
- (ix) Provision of financial assistance under the Central Sector Plan Scheme on Development of Commercial Floriculture for establishment of model floriculture centres and area expansion. The model floriculture centres are envisaged to serve as focal units for devevelopment of floriculture and for introduction, multiplication and distribution of quality planting material, provision of training and demonstration on production technology and post-harvest management.

[English]

WTO Meet

2542. SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA :
SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SHINDE :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :