

(b) if so, the total quantity exported to Russia during each of the last three years;

(c) whether the Government have received any request from the Kerala State Cashew Development Corporation to export cashew to Russia;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether there is any possibility to export additional quantity of cashew to that country;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The total quantity of cashew kernels exported to Russia during each of the last three years has been as under :-

Year	Quantity (Tonnes)	Value (In Rs. Lakhs)
1993-94	5533	9231.73
1994-95	5516	9183.49
1995-96	13860	26205.35

(Source : DGCI&S, Calcutta)

(c) and (d). A request has been received from Government of Kerala that a portion of Russian orders for import of cashew kernels from India during 1996-97 be entrusted to the Kerala State Cashew Development Corporation at a mutually agreed terms and conditions.

(e) to (g). Cashew kernels are freely exportable to all countries including Russia against freely convertible currencies. However, following certain complaints, no ceiling has been fixed during 1996-97 for export of cashew kernels to Russia under the ESCROW Account/ Rupee Debt Repayment Mechanism. This issue will be taken up for discussion with the Government of Russia.

#### Decline in Export to U.K. and European Markets

1162. SHRI SOUMYA RANJAN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the export of Indian goods to U.K. and European markets has reduced;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action proposed to be taken by the Government to increase the export of Indian goods to foreign markets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Fifteen products have been identified for undertaking special export promotion efforts so as to increase export of Indian goods to foreign markets. Some of the other supporting measures in this direction include participation in international trade fairs, intensified exchange of business delegations, supply of necessary information and extending necessary facilities to commercial organisations, setting up of warehousing facilities, promotion of joint ventures etc.

#### Opening of New Route for Export to Bangladesh

1163. SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether his Ministry has received any request for opening of a new route for export of Indian goods to Bangladesh via Haldibari;

(b) if so, the action taken by the Government in this regard; and

(c) the time by which the proposed route is likely to be opened in the interest of export of Indian goods to Bangladesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). The Land Customs Station at Haldibari Railway Station is non-functional as there is no rail traffic on the Haldibari-Chilahati route on account of the absence of railway track for about 1.5 Km. on the Indian side and 5 Km. on the Bangladesh side. Government are considering the merits of the proposal to restore the missing rail link. Government are also examining the merits of the proposal to allow trade with Bangladesh through the Haldibari-Chilahati route, by road. It is however not possible to fix a definite time frame for opening the rail and road routes, at this stage.

#### Vacant Posts of C.M.D. in Banks

1164. SHRI SHANTILAL PARSOTAMDAS PATEL : SHRI DINSHA PATEL :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether a large number of Banks do not have their Chairmen-cum-Managing Directors;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the dates since when these posts have been lying vacant, bank-wise;

(c) the reasons for delay in appointing Chairman-cum-Managing Directors of these banks; and

(d) the time by which all such posts are likely to be filled up?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (d). The posts of Chairman and Managing Director are lying vacant in two

nationalised banks, as per details below :—

S.No.	Name of the Bank	Date from which lying vacant
1.	Canara Bank	1.9.1996
2.	UCO Bank	23.10.1996

Necessary steps for filling up these vacancies have been initiated.

#### Insurance Cover Against Natural Calamities

1165. SHRI DINSHA PATEL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any insurance cover is provided to the poor people under which their houses that are burnt or washed away by natural calamities like fire, flood, cyclone, earthquake etc. are reconstructed;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, whether the Government propose to formulate such a scheme for the benefit of the poor people; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (d). 'Hut Insurance Scheme' provides immediate relief to the poor families in rural areas, whose annual income from all sources does not exceed Rs. 4,800/-, when their huts and belongings get destroyed by fire. A master policy covering all eligible population in the country is issued by the general insurance industry for which the entire premium is borne by the Central Government. This Scheme is not intended to cover perils like floods, cyclones, earthquakes etc. for which a separate 'Calamity Relief Fund Scheme' already exists in the States. Therefore, it is not considered necessary to cover these risks under the 'Hut Insurance Scheme'.

[Translation]

#### Performance of Banks in Haryana

1166. SHRI O.P. JINDAL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the performance of each of the public sector banks in the matter of their deposits, loan distribution etc. during the last three years in Haryana; and

(b) the target fixed and loans granted in Agricultural and Industrial sectors and also under self employment scheme by each of the banks during the above period?

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

#### Visit of US Trade Representatives

1167. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the US Trade representatives, during their recent visit to New Delhi, made some suggestions regarding reduction or elimination of tariff duties on telecommunications, hardware and software;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (c). Yes, Sir. The US has made a proposal for an agreement under the World Trade Organisation to reduce/eliminate tariff on information technology related goods by the year 2000. The Government is examining the merits of the proposal.

#### Child Marriage

1168. SHRI PRADIP BHATTACHARYA : Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Karnataka High Court has recently recommended to the Union Government that penalty prescribed for underage marriages be drastically increased to punish the guilty; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) No such recommendation has so far been received

(b) Does not arise.

#### Imposition of Duty on Indian Floriculture by EU

1169. SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI :  
DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the European Union has imposed a duty of 15 to 20 percent on Indian floriculture whereas most other developing countries are exempted from this levy;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government have taken up this matter with the European Union; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b). There is no separate country specific duty regime imposed by the European Union (EU) as the duties are