

(e) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(f) the steps taken to tide over the situation?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) and (b) Of the major European countries, the United Kingdom has on 10th July 1998 announced that it would deny the export of nuclear-related goods to India and Pakistan where they could assist their nuclear programmes. They would also consider export licence applications for military items and other dual use equipment to either country with particular vigilance. This stand by the United Kingdom is likely to affect contracts for import of such goods into the country.

(c) The US Secretary of State has neither concurred with nor denied the Union Commerce Ministry's position on sanctions imposed on India after the recent nuclear tests.

(d) and (e) Discussions of the Special Envoy of the Prime Minister with all concerned are still continuing.

(f) Government is taking necessary initiatives on its part to deal with the situation, including maintaining an alert watch on the further developments and informing the international community of the reasons for which the nuclear tests were carried out. The impact on trade of sanctions is being monitored and assessed.

Export of Tea, Coffee, Chilly and Tobacco

*446. SHRI A.F. GOLAM OSMANI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of Countries to which coffee, tea, cardamom, chilly and tobacco were exported during the last three years;

(b) the amount of foreign exchange earned therefrom during the above period, year-wise;

(c) the percentage share of India in the world exports of the above items;

(d) the States in the country which produce above mentioned items; and

(e) the steps taken to boost the exports of these items?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) and (b) The country-wise details of export of various commodities are available in the printed monthly/yearly publication "Foreign Trade Statistics of India" issued by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S), Calcutta and copies of the same are available in the Parliament House Library. The Total export

of these commodities in the last three years and foreign exchange earned are as follows :

(Qty : MTs, Value : Rs. Crores)

Item	1995-96		1996-97		1997-98	
	Qty.	Value	Qty.	Value	Qty.	Value
Coffee	170581	1524.00	181295	1467.08	172423	1640.40
Tea	167000	1244.52	169000	1301.46	211000	1953.91
Cardamom (Small)	527	12.97	228	8.70	260	8.92
Cardamom (Large)	1677	12.44	1628	12.10	1450	10.36
Chilly	56165	195.46	50051	201.45	43450	140.13
Tobacco	87084	446.82	116910	756.77	142836	1058.50

(c) The percentage share of India in the world export approximately are as follows :

Coffee	-	3.93
Tea	-	17.53
Cardamom (Small)	-	3.00
Cardamom (Large)	-	65.00
Chilly	-	70.00
Tobacco	-	6.03

(d) The main producing States in the country for the various commodities are as follows :

Coffee	-	Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu
Tea	-	Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala
Cardamom (Small)	-	Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu
Cardamom (Large)	-	Sikkim, West Bengal
Chilies	-	Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Bihar
Tobacco	-	Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh

(e) The steps taken to boost the exports of these items are as under :

Coffee

For boosting export of coffee, the Coffee Board is focussing on targeted import markets like USA, Japan, Russia, Middle-east countries, etc. The Board also

participates in selected food fairs, exhibitions abroad, release advertisements on unique features of Indian Coffee in selected overseas trade journals, sponsor trade delegations/invite delegations of roasters from all the target markets to India, arrange service of Indian Coffee abroad through our embassies, distribute gift packets of Indian Coffee through Indian Embassies on special occasions and festivals, publish and distribute literature on Indian Coffee.

Tea

The Government of India and Tea Board have been giving special attention to areas offering potential. The Tea Board also acts to remove bottlenecks in exports to Individual market wherever noticed. For boosting exports of tea, the Tea Board participates in major Trade Fairs/Exhibitions abroad and also have launched media campaign to increase consumer awareness of speciality of Indian tea. The Board has been campaigning to popularise the Tea Board marketing symbol which stands for pure Indian tea.

Cardamom, Chilly and Tobacco

Apart from general trade policy reforms, some of the steps taken to :

- (i) enhance exports of spices include abolition of cess on export of pepper (except green pepper in brine), cardamom, saffron and spice oils and oleoresins to make them price competitive in international markets; implementation of brand promotion schemes like "logo promotion"; grant of "Spice House Corporate" as a recognition of processor/exporter of quality products; setting up of laboratories for testing of products to ensure quality; technology transfer; process upgradation and product development.
- (ii) enhance exports of tobacco include improving quality and yield of Flue Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco through control of diseases in nurseries through fumigation, balanced fertilisation, sprinkler irrigation; improving curing and storing facilities through conservation of energy by roof insulation, supply of tarpaulins and coal; improving grading through community grading centres' control & monitoring of pesticides residues; development of exportable varieties; holding buyer seller meets & participation in international fairs.

Refund Claims of Assesseees

*447. SHRI SURESH CHANDEL :
SHRI MOHAN RAWALE :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that the I.T. refund claims of many of the assesseees including senior citizens all over the country have not yet been settled since 1995-96 in spite of several complaints;

(b) if so, the action proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard;

(c) the total number of citizens involved all over the country whose refund claims have not been settled;

(d) the time by which it is likely to be settled;

(e) whether PAN have been allotted to all the Income Tax Assesseees; and

(f) if not, the time by which Government propose to issue PAN to them ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE) (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN) : (a) to (f) A-Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(a) and (b) Government continues its efforts for early and prompt disposal of refund claims. It has been consistently impressing upon the Chief Commissioners of Income-tax/Commissioners of Income-tax, the need for taking effective steps for the elimination of delays in these matters. Instructions have been issued to the effect that all refund vouchers should invariably be despatched by Registered Post with acknowledgment due within 15 days of its determination irrespective of the value of such refunds. In addition, policy initiative has been taken in the Finance (No. 2) Bill, 1998 to allow adjustment of loss at the stage of deduction of tax at source, so that the claim of direct refund does not arise in a large number of cases of salaried tax payers.

(c) Details regarding claims for refund disposed of and the balance outstanding for the period 1995-96 to 31st December, 1997 are as follows :

Financial Year	No. of claims disposed of	Balance outstanding
1995-96	1,04,362	34,952
1996-97	1,07,782	49,930
*Upto 31st December, 1997	94,640	57,936

* Figures for the period 1.4.1997 to 31.12.1997 are provisional.

(d) Instructions have been given to the field authorities to issue all refunds within 15 days of the passing of the order by which they are determined. While these instructions are generally adhered to, cases of pendency arise on account of legal or procedural constraints including withholding of refund as per provisions of law.