

products, fresh fruits and vegetables, processed fruits and juices.

(d) Some of the steps taken/proposed to be taken to enhance exports of these products include :

1. Providing assistance for raising small and large nurseries for production of good quality planting material, upgradation of technical knowhow of farmers through demonstrations, trainings and publicity, rejuvenation of old orchards, area expansion, supply of minikits for vegetables, improving productivity and training of farmers.
2. Provision of soft loans for setting up of grading/processing centres, auction platforms, ripening/curing chambers and quality testing equipment.
3. 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).
4. Grant of financial assistance for improved packaging, strengthening of quality control and modernization of processing units.
5. Establishment of vapour heat treatment facilities for improving the acceptability of the product especially the mangoes in overseas markets.
6. Grant of Air Freight Subsidy for exports of selected fresh vegetables and fruits.
7. Arranging promotional campaigns such as buyer-seller meets and participation in important international fairs and exhibitions.
8. Setting up of integrated cargo handling and cold storage facilities at various International Airports for handling export of perishable items such as fresh fruits and vegetables.
9. Providing assistance in development of data base and dissemination of market information.

UN released World Bank Loan

4468. SHRI RAMPAL SINGH :
SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the amount of loan (in dollars) sanctioned to India by the World Bank since 1996, till-date;

(b) the amount of loan out of it has not been released by the World Bank;

(c) the reasons for not releasing the loan by the World Bank; and

(d) the extent to which it has affected the Indian Economy?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) to (c) The amount of loan sanctioned to India by the World Bank since January 1996 till 31st May 1998 is US \$ 3689 million (approx). Out of this, an amount of US \$ 3406 million is yet to be utilised. The World Bank releases the amount as and when it is utilised in the projects.

(d) As no amount has been withheld from release by the World Bank, the question does not arise.

[English]

Withdrawal of MFN Status to India by some countries

4469. SHRI MADHUKAR SIRPOTDAR :
SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state

(a) whether any country or group of countries have intimated measurers to withdraw the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) trade status to India, particularly in the wake of Pokhran-II nuclear tests;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether such action is in consonance with the obligations of WTO (World Trade Organisation); and

(d) if so, the action taken by the Government to counter such steps ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) and (b) So far no country or group of countries have denied Most Favoured National (MFN) status to India's exports. However some countries have taken steps to place restrictions on some of their exports to India. Such exports pertain basically to defence related and dual use technology items.

(c) Government is of the view that such trade restrictions, directed specifically against India, are prima-facie contrary to the MFN principle under the provisions of GATT/WTO.

(d) Government is taking necessary steps to deal with the situation, including maintaining an alert watch on further developments, and keeping the international community informed about the reasons for undertaking nuclear tests. The impact of trade related restrictions is also being monitored and assessed.

Export of Agricultural Products

4470. SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the farmers of agricultural commodities like Rubber, Tea, Coffee, Cocoa, Cardamom, Pepper, Nutmeg, Cloves and Tobacco are allowed to export their products;