

[English]

Import of Wheat

1494. SHRI CHANDRASHEKHAR SAHU : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Australia says sold 'some' wheat to India" appearing in the Times of India dated March 20, 1998;

(b) if so, the facts of the matters reported therein; and

(c) the quantity of wheat proposed to be imported this year, country-wise, alongwith the reasons for such import?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAM-KRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government constantly review the stock position of foodgrains in the Central Pool vis-a-vis the prescribed minimum buffer norms, production of foodgrains in the country, trend of procurement, requirement for the Public Distribution System/other welfare schemes, open market prices etc. and decision to import foodgrains is taken depending on the overall situation. Due to untimely rains during the

sowing season the Ministry of Agriculture had initially estimated that the production of wheat during the current Rabi season was likely to be 64.51 million tonnes as against the production of 69.27 million tonnes last year. Government has therefor, decided to import upto 2.0 million tonnes of wheat during 1998-99 to build up adequate reserves for keeping the prices under control. Against this authorisation, STC has contracted for import fo 1.5 million tonnes MT +/- 5% wheat from Australia.

Export of Tobacco

1495. SHRI C.P.M. GIRIYAPPA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of tobacco and tobacco products exported during each of the last three years;

(b) the foreign exchange earned therefrom; and

(c) the estimated foreign exchange likely to be earned by exporting these products the current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAM-KRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) The quantum of tobacco and tobacco products exported during the last three years and the value thereof are as follows:-

(Qty. in tonnes; Value in Rs. Crores)

Year	Unmanufactured Tobacco		Manufactured Tobacco		Total	
	Qty.	Value	Qty.	Value	Qty.	Value
1995-96	77,665	378.69	9,429	68.13	87,094	446.82
1996-97	77,093	445.98	9,850	91.83	86,943	537.81
1997-98 (Apr.-Mar.)	1,32,533	910.49	10,363	148.01	1,142,896	1058.50

Source : DGCI & S

(c) The estimated exports for 1998-99 are as follows :-

	Unmanufactured Tobacco	Manufactured Tobacco	Total
Quantity (Tons)	1,00,000	9,900	1,09,900
Value (Rs. crores)	600.00	125.00	725.00

Export of Basmati Rice

1496. SHRI SADASHIVRAO DADOBA MANDLIK: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of rice exported and the rates thereof during each of the last two years, both basmati and non-basmati, separately;

(b) the quantity of rice and wheat imported, giving details of quantity, the source of import and the expenditure incurred thereon, separately, during the above period;

(c) the actual inflow of foreign exchange as a result of export of rice and the outgo for import of wheat; and

(d) the cost per tonne in terms of CIF and FOB for these two way deals in respect of both rice and wheat?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAM-KRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) The total quantity, value and