

(b) the countries to which these stones are exported; and

(c) whether the export is mainly of raw granite or finished granite stones?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN): (a) Granite stones are mainly exported from the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

(b) The major markets to which Indian Granites are exported are Japan, Italy, Netherlands, USA, UK, China, West Germany, France, Belgium, South Korea, etc.

(c) Granites are exported both in the form of (i) rough (cut) blocks and (ii) cut and polished slabs/tiles/monuments approximately in the ratio of 4:1.

[*Translation*]

Export of Fruit

5902. DR. MAHADEEPAK SINGH SHAKYA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's policy is to boost the export of fruit; and

(b) if so, the measures taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government has taken a number of measures to boost export of fruits such as freely allowing their exports, grant of cash compensatory support and import replenishments, organising buyer-seller meets and participation in international exhibitions for developing new markets etc.

[*English*]

Foreign Visit by Government Officials

5903. SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of officers of the rank of Joint Secretaries and above and their equivalents who visited foreign countries during last two years month-wise on one count or the other depleting the foreign exchange and causing burden on meagre resources;

(b) the number of junior officers who visited abroad during the last 12 months, month-wise and grade-wise:

(c) whether Indian High Commissions/ Embassies were not competent to take up and finalise the assignments for which the officers visited the foreign countries; and

(d) if so, the steps taken to check foreign travel by these officers in order to reduce Government expenditure?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) and (b). The information is not centrally available and will have to be collected from all the Ministries/ Departments of the Government of India. Collection of this information will involve considerable time and labour and the result to be achieved will not be commensurate with the time and labour involved in collecting the information.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Government of India have issued instructions from time to time to all its Ministries/Departments advising them to restrict foreign visits of their officers to the barest minimum. Each proposal for deputation abroad is strictly scrutinised and agreed to only if the visit is considered inescapable