

(a) whether the Government have prepared any new scheme so as to further boost the rice export;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have set up an Export Promotion Council for Rice; and

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

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b). Steps taken to enhance the export competitiveness of Indian rice include (i) removal of inter-state restrictions on movement of rice and suspension of the levy on superfine non-basmati rice meant for export purposes by some State Governments, (ii) Rationalisation of Minimum Export Prices, (iii) giving permission to exporters to import milling equipment at concessional duty under the Export Promotion Capital goods scheme, (iv) rice exporters are also eligible for the benefits of the 100% Export Oriented Unit Scheme.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) The All India Rice Exporters Association had requested the Government for forming such an export Promotion Council for Rice. Subsequently, they withdrew their request and instead, requested the Government to allow them to form an association on the lines of the Soyabean Processors Association of India with powers to register export contracts. Presently, non-basmati rice is a scheduled product of Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority.

### **Export of Cotton**

5590. SHRI D. VENKATESWARA RAO: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian cotton has been rated as one of the most contaminated cotton in the World by International agencies;

(b) whether according to experts, contamination in the Indian cotton includes coloured thread, human hair and many extraneous material thrown in the cotton after packing during transportation; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken to improve the quality of the cotton?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. There is a need for improving the quality and reduce the levels of contamination present in Indian cotton to-day. Deficiencies at various stages of post harvest management and obsolete ginning the pressing machinery lead to contamination which includes presence of non-cotton fibres such as jute/hessian, woven plastics, organic matters like leaves, feathers, leather as well as substances like grease/oil, tar, etc.

(c) Government has drawn up an Action Plan for improvement in ginning and pressing industry which includes inter-alia programme of education, training of workers, preparation of maintenance manuals for machinery.

### **Waiving of Loans**

5591. SHRI SOBHANADREE-SWARA RAO VADDE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the managers of associate Banks of State Bank of India in Calcutta and Bombay based branches are alleged to have waived loans to the tune of crores of rupees;

(b) if so, the names of these associate banks' and the amount of loans waived by them; and

(c) the action proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHARA MURTHY): (a) to (c). The information is being collected and to the extent available/ permissible will be laid on the Table of the House.

#### **Trade with Romania**

5592. SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Romania have agreed for improvement in the trade and economic cooperation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Romania is interested in importing diversified manufactured goods from India; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. A trade agreement was signed with Romania on Feb. 23, 1993 and ways to effect improvement in trade and economic cooperation are discussed periodically between the two sides.

(c) and (d). Yes, Sir. At the third meeting of the Indo-Romanian Joint Business Council held in New Delhi on 10 January, 1994, some of the potential items for export from India were identified by the two sides as drugs and pharmaceutical products, electronic components, consumer electronics goods, computer software, cosmetics, detergents, electric bulbs and tubes, kitchenware, garments and leather goods.

#### **Losses Suffered by Indian Airlines**

5593. SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA VARMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Airlines has been running in losses;

(b) if so, the manner in which the outgo of funds as a result thereof is being met;

(c) the agency which has been providing funds to the Indian Airlines to make up for these losses; and

(d) the manner in which the Indian Airlines propose to finance the purchase of aircraft during 1994-95 and thereafter particularly in view of huge loss of funds as a result of losses suffered by it?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). Indian Airlines have been meeting its outgo of funds out of internal resource generation, opening cash and bank balances, reduction in working capital, short term borrowing, and other capital receipts.