

Trade in Goods would undertake exploratory work on the simplification of trade procedure to assess the scope for WTO rules in this area.

- * Labour standards—It was decided to “reject the use of labour standards for protectionist purposes” and it was “agreed that the comparative advantage of countries, particularly low wage developing countries, must, in no way, be put into question.”
- * Information Technology Agreement—The SMC welcomed the initiative taken by a number of WTO Members and other States who had applied for WTO accession, who agreed to tariff elimination for trade in information technology products on an MFN basis. After extensive discussions with its Industry and its trading partners, India filed its final Schedule of Concessions with regard to information technology products on 25.3.97 in Geneva and India's schedule has been approved by consensus by the Participants of the ITA.

Geneva Ministerial Conference (GMC)

The GMC, through its Ministerial Declaration of 20th May, 1998.

- * decided to reject the use of protectionist measures and underlined that “keeping all markets open must be a key element” in the functioning of world trade;
- * stressed that “full and faithful implementation of the WTO Agreement and Ministerial Decisions is imperative for the credibility of the multilateral trading system”;
- * adopted a separate Declaration on Electronic Commerce, non-binding in nature, which agreed on the need for a work programme on this important subject, which would take into account the economic, financial and development needs of developing countries and also decided on continuation of the current standstill on import duties on electronic transmissions, to be reviewed and extended, if necessary, only on the basis of consensus, at the next Ministerial Conference;
- * culminated with a Ministerial Declaration which has established a process under the direction of the General Council to ensure full and faithful implementation of existing WTO Agreements, and to prepare for the Third Session of the Ministerial Conference. This process shall enable the General Council, through its work programme, to arrive at recommendations concerning implementation issues of existing agreements, negotiations/future work already mandated, future work as recommended in the First Ministerial Conference held at Singapore, recommendations on the follow up of the high level meeting on Least Developed Countries and recommendations arising from consideration of “other matters proposed and agreed to by Members concerning their multilateral trade relations”.

(c) As the agreements negotiated are on Most Favoured

Nations basis, the commitments undertaken by other WTO members provide increased market access opportunities for our exports of goods and services. The principles highlighted in the Ministerial Declarations aim to make the WTO system more equitable and transparent, and hence are beneficial for WTO Members in general, including India.

Carpet Industry

5572. SHRI K.L. SHARMA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the hand made carpet industry of the country is on downslide due to high cost of its raw material and stiff competition in the world market; and

(b) if so, the measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) and (b) The hand made carpet industry is facing a threat of down-slide due to reasons which may include increasing cost of its raw materials and stiff competition in the world market. The measures taken by the Government to check the high cost of raw material for the Indian Carpet Industry and make it more competitive in the international market inter-alia include: lower import duty on carpet grade wool; re-imbursalment of duty draw back; import of raw wool under Open General Licensing Scheme and import of spun silk yarn under the Advance Licensing Scheme by the exporters; sponsoring of sales-cum-study teams abroad; participation in international fairs/festivals; overseas publicity; organising the buyer-sellers meets; conducting of workshops and seminars and organising the Carpet Expo annually.

Funds for Externally Aided Projects

5573. SHRI SAMAR CHOUDHURY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government provide assistance to the N.E. States under externally aided projects with 90% grant and 10% loan component;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether assistance so arranged is treated as additionality to the State plan;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the details of projects sanctioned in the N.E. States during the last five years; State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During the current year, Assam and Manipur have so far received Rs. 6.42 crores and Rs. 4.48 crores respectively as external aid.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) A Statement is enclosed.

Statement*Details of Projects Sanctioned in NE States During 1993-98, State-wise*

Sr. No.	States	Name of Project	Amount of External AID
1	2	3	4
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	(i) Education and Capacity Building for promoting Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection.	Rs. 3.16 crores (Grant)
2.	Assam	(i) Assam Gas Turbine Power Station and Transmission (ID-P. 96) of NEEPCO. (ii) IPP IX (2630-IN) (iii) DPEP (2661-IN) (iv) DPEP-II (2876-IN) (v) Rural Infrastructural, Agricultural development project	15821 Million Yen (Loan) 87.102 Million US \$ (Loan) 251.291 Million US \$ (Loan) 403.820 Million US \$ (Loan) 112.185 Million US \$ (Loan)
3.	Manipur	(i) Sustainable development and Water Resources Management of Loktak Lake. (ii) Manipur Sericulture project (ID-P. 134) (iii) Integrated package water treatment Kiosks for high grade, drinking water (Imphal). (iv) Improvement of Imphal Ukhrul Road.	Rs. 14.39 crores (Grant) 3962 Million Yen (Loan) Rs. 4.60 crores (Loan) Rs. 4.90 crores (Loan)
4.	Meghalaya	(i) Umiam Hydro-Electric Power Station Project (ID-P 118)	1700 Million Yen (Loan).
5.	Mizoram	(i) Tuirial Hydro-Electric Power Station Project (ID-P. 119)	11695 Million Yen (Loan).
6.	Nagaland	(i) Nagaland Environment protection and Economic development	Rs. 12.60 crores (Grant)
7.	Multi-States Projects		
	(i) Arunachal Pradesh & Manipur	N. Leprosy Elimination (2528-IN)	84.679 Million US \$ (Loan).
	(ii) Assam & Manipur	T.B. Control (2936-IN)	136.105 Million US \$ (Loan)
	(iii) Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland & Tripura	Malaria Control (2964-IN)	164.800 Million US \$ (Loan)
	(iv) Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura & Arunachal Pradesh	RCHS (018-IN)	248.300 Million US \$ (Loan)
	(v) Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland & Tripura.	Optimising development of small Hydel Resources in the Hilly Regions of India.	7.5 Million US \$ (Grant)

Central Investment in Kerala

5574. SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total Central investment made in the public enterprises in Kerala during the last three years;

(b) whether the Government are aware of the miserably low level of Central investment in Kerala which ranks extremely low in comparison with the other States;

(c) whether the Union Government propose to consider substantial increase in Central investment in the State; and