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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO: 1532

ANSWERED ON: 13.03.2002

WHEAT SUPLIES TO AFGHANISTAN

DADICHILUKA VEERA GOURI SANKARA RAO

SHANKAR PRASAD JAISWAL

VILAS BABURAO MUTTEMWAR

A. VENKATESH NAIK

DALPAT SINGH PARASTE

CHADA SURESH REDDY

GADDAM GANGA REDDY

SHYAMA SINGH

CHELLAMELLA SUGUNA KUMARI

RAMSHETH THAKUR

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:-

(a) whether Pakistan has recently denied transit facilities for wheats supplied from India to Afghanistan;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government have taken up the matter with the World Food Programme Authorities and the Government of Afghanistan;

(d) if so, the reactions of the World Food Programme Authorities and Afghanistan in this regard;

(e) whether any alternative route has been decided for the transportation of the wheat; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and the additional expenditure likely to be incurred as a result thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH)

(a)-(b) As part of our commitment to ameliorate the condition of Afghan people the government has committed to offer humanitarian assistance to internally and externally displaced Afghans, and others in need, including through provision of one million tonnes of wheat. Government has been in touch with various UN agencies, including the World Food Programme and is working out the modalities for sending humanitarian assistance of wheat to the Afghan people as early as possible.

As part of Indian UN aid for Afghanistan, the government has not approached Pakistan for transit facility.

There have been reports that Pakistan has not been willing to provide transit facility for this humanitarian assistance claiming alleged infestation and disease. Government have made it clear that such claims are ill-founded and self-serving.

(c)-(d) Government has been discussing the matter of transportation of Indian wheat with the World Food Programme. We have seen statements by the WFP, indicating the Indian government has agreed to deliver wheat stocks which would meet WFP specifications.

(e)-(f) Government is examining and evaluating various parameters of all alternative options to transport Indian wheat to Afghanistan as soon as possible.