

sometimes the workers themselves are prepared to go. That ultimately makes the company also viable. So, it is not that the Government is not interested in resolving the problem of unemployment or the security of the job of these workers. The Government is seriously looking into this problem. I am sure that the hon. Member will agree with me that the Government has taken the approach of looking to the interest of the workers. The entire House must also take the approach that we must look to the interest of the running of the company and therefor a joint venture becomes absolutely necessary at times.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question. Question No. 107. Shri Rahasbihari Barik. Not there.

**107. [The questioners (Shri Rahasbihari Barik) was absent for answer vide page 33 infra].*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question. question No. 108. Shri Kapil Sibal. Not there. Shri Raj Mohinder Singh. Not present.

**108. [The questioners (Shri Kapil Sibal and Shri Raj Mohinder Singh) were absent for answer vide page 34 infra].*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 109. Shri Ved Prakash Goyal.

Decline in tea export

*109. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that tea export has sharply declined this year;
- (b) if so, the reasons behind this sharp decline;
- (c) whether any action plan has been prepared by Government to tackle the situation;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Yes Sir, Export of tea from India during April to September, 1999 has declined by 24.4 m.kgs as compared to the exports during the corresponding period of the previous year.

(b) Indian teas are exported to more than 80 countries of the world. There are several reasons for overall decline in exports particularly to those countries which have been making bulk purchases in the past. The reasons for decline in export to these countries are country-specific e.g. decline in tea exports to Russian Federation and certain CIS countries has been due to severe economic crisis faced by them, preference for cheaper teas from Bangladesh by Poland, paucity of foreign exchange by Iran etc.

(c) and (d) Government and Tea Board have been carrying out in depth analysis of country-wise exports of tea and taking appropriate steps in consultation with the tea industry. A delegation led by Chairman, Tea Board, visited Russia and Ukraine in July '99 with the objective of promoting tea trade and expedite implementation of trade agreement signed between the Tea Board, Calcutta and Russian Tea & Coffee Association in December '98 to lift Indian teas under Debt Repayment Route. Tea Board is also in touch with the Russian importers to expedite operation of this agreement. An international Tea Convention was held in Cochin in September'99 to promote export of South Indian teas.

In addition to the above, other measures taken to boost export of tea inter-alia include conducting promotional activities in foreign markets and lending promotional support to Indian tea exporters. The overseas offices of the Tea Board at London, New York, Hamburg, Moscow and Dubai undertake specific programmes like:

(a) Participation in international specialised fairs and exhibitions abroad.

(b) Field sampling at speciality stores and in principal markets.

(c) Media publicity.

(d) Organisation of Buyer seller meets.

(e) Lending promotional support to the marketing of Indian brands.

(f) Public Relation activities to establish closer link between importers and exporters.

(g) Exchange of tea delegations between India and Tea importing countries.

(e) Does not arise.

श्री वेद प्रकाश गोयल: सभापति महोदय, हिन्दुस्तान से एक्सपोर्ट होने वाली वस्तुओं में से चाय सब से बड़ी एक्सपोर्ट आइटम रही है। अब उसका स्थान दूसरे देश लेते जा रहे हैं। कई देशों से सस्ती किस्म की चाय, पोलैंड वगैरह से, आने लगी है। हमारे देश में जहां इतने बड़े बड़े चाय बागान हैं, उनमें हर केटेगरी की चाय पैदा होती है। मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि कोई भी दूसरा देश किसी भी केटेगरी की चाय में हमसे ज्यादा कंपीट करके क्यों अपना स्थान बना पा रहा है?

SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH: Sir, with regard to tea, I think it is safe to say that India is probably in a unique position in the world whereby tea in our country constitutes an essential commodity, and so, export of tea is very much governed by as to how much surplus we have, and our tea consumption is much higher than anywhere in the world. With increasing population, of course, our tea consumption is going up and we need that much more. The hon. Member has referred to one particular country, that is, Poland. He has stated that Poland was exporting cheaper tea. Sir, technically, that is not exactly correct. What Poland is doing is this. Poland is importing cheaper tea from Bangladesh and re-exporting it to other countries. But because of the declining demand from the major tea importing countries, even the export of tea from Poland has fallen. As a result, the demand of tea in Poland from Bangladesh has also fallen.

श्री वेद प्रकाश गोयल: सेकेंड सप्लीमेंट्री। यह जो अंत के पैरा में कहा है कि लंदन, न्यूयार्क, हैम्बर्ग, मास्को, दुबई, यहां पर हमारे टी बोर्ड की तरफ से कुछ स्पेसिफिक प्रोग्राम्स होते हैं जिनका यहां पर जिक्र किया गया है, प्रोग्राम्स का नाम दिया गया है। मैं जानना चाहता हूं कि उन प्रोग्राम्स का कोई परफार्मेंस इवैल्युएशन होता है क्या कि उन्होंने क्या किया, उन पर कितना खर्च हुआ और उस खर्च के सामने कितना वहां पर चाय का एक्सपोर्ट बढ़ा? या केवल वे एक फारमैलिटी पूरी करते हैं और अपना काम करके रिपोर्ट भेजते रहते हैं?

SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH: Sir, the hon. Member drawn the attention of the House to the fact that we have a marketing development and export promotion scheme which is carried out by the Tea Board under which the activities are broadly divided into

activities conducted by the Board and the assistance that is provided to Indian exporters. Now, under the activities that are conducted by the Board, what the Tea Board does, among other things, is it commissions market research, surveys to look at data banks, and grant positioning. We have a uni-national campaign for restoring the position of Indian tea, to build up our brands in markets which we have found; other supplies have been taken over, with U.K., Ireland, Egypt, Russia and Poland. We are in a position now to improve our campaign in countries where we have noticed that the trends with regard to the demand for Indian tea is positive. Some of the countries in this regard that we are targeting include the United States of America, Canada and Saudi Arabia. Along with this, there are a number of measures where we provide assistance to the Indian exporters. We lend support to the associations of consortium; we give up to a limit of Rs. two crores or fifty per cent to bank promotion support to Indian exporting companies on a three-year programme; we support exporting companies in independent participation in fairs and exhibitions and publicity material is also provided. As per these schemes, in 1997-98, we had spent Rs. 65 lakhs, in 1998-99, we had spent Rs. 347 lakhs, and I would say that the performance of the offices is monitored on a regular basis.

SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Is there any yardstick in today's competitive world to measure the result of their efforts?

SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH: The results of their efforts will obviously be measured by the fact that the areas of the countries, in which we are promoting, we see a positive growth in India's exports of tea to these countries, and that in itself is a sufficient yardstick for us.

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Sir, it appears that the hon. Minister has given the original reply and keeps repeating the something again and again. The main thing is that despite having all these offices, despite all our efforts, actually the exports have declined by 24.25 million kgs, as per the admission of the hon. Minister. Now, if you consider the tea industry which is an employment-oriented industry....(*Interruptions*)..

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.