

Ban on Import of Indian Bidis

1142. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA:* Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that USA has banned the import of certain, brand of Indian bidis because of the use of child labour in the bidi industry;

(b) if so, the details thereof stating the annual export of Indian bidis to USA and earning in terms of foreign exchange; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Yes Sir, the US Customs has issued detention orders against import of bidis from a specific Indian exporters namely, M/s Managlore Ganesh Bidi Works on the basis of "reasonable suspicion" that forced child labour is being used by the company in manufacturing bidis.

(b) Details of Export of Bidis to USA are as under:

(Qty. Value)

Year		Quantity in tonnes Value in Rs. crores	
1996-97	(April-May)	76.65	1-794
1997-98		109.52	2.291
1998-1999		137.17	9.113
1999-2000		5.84	0.003

(c) The Government of India has taken up the matter with the appropriate US Government authorities.

Worry of Tea Exporters

†1143. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Indian tea producers are worried with regard to the tea export this year as the foreign buyers, particularly tea producers from Germany and America, have

†Original notice of the question received in Hindi.

expressed apprehensions with regard to the quality of tea from Assam;

(b) if so, whether the tea producers from Germany visited the tea gardens in Assam on this account; and

(c) if so, at what conclusion tea producers from Germany arrived at after their visit to the tea gardens?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) No Sir. The Government have not received any representation from the tea growers expressing concern about exports of tea to Germany and the United States of America. There is no serious concern on quality of Indian tea including, tea's produced in Assam and exported to USA and Germany since Indian teas for exports conform to International Standards on quality.

(b) No tea importer from Germany has visited the tea gardens of Assam recently under the auspices of the Tea Board.

(c) Does not arise.

Patenting of Indian System of Medicines

1144. SHRI MAHESH CHANDRA SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) The purpose of deletion of Section 39 of the Patents Act, 1970;

(b) how it would be possible to check taking of patents about sensitive technologies;

(c) whether it is a fact that some ex-senior scientists of CSIR have taken patents on Neem without the permission of Government; and

(d) how many cases have come to the notice of Government where patent on Indian system of medicine have been taken by Indians in foreign countries without the permission of Government?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Erstwhile Section 39 imposed constraints on Indian investors and restricted the flexibility available to them as they had to wait for six weeks before filing for a patent outside the country. In patenting, since every day counts, a person who files his application first, gets precedence over those filing subsequently. Therefore, by removing this restriction, Indian