

- (ii) Reimbursement of air freight charges at the rate of Rs. 20 per Kg. for export of small cardamom in consumer packs by air to middle-east destinations.
- (iii) Sponsoring trade delegations and participation in trade fairs.
- (d) Some of the reasons for decline in export of cardamom are:—
 - (i) Uncompetitive prices of Indian cardamom in the international market vis-a-vis Guatemalan cardamom.
 - (ii) Stiff price competition offered by Guatemalan cardamom on account of its large production, high productivity and absence of domestic demand.
 - (iii) shift in consumer preference in the middle-east markets towards the low priced Guatemalan cardamom.
- (e) Some of the steps taken by the Government to increase production/ productivity of cardamom include:—
 - (i) Production and supply of quality planting material.
 - (ii) Assistance for replantation of old diseased plants;
 - (iii) Subsidy for irrigation and land development; and
 - (iv) Assistance for purchase of plant protection equipment.

Quantitative Import Restrictions

907. SHRI N. THALAVASUNDARAM:
SHRI S. NIRAIKULATHAN:

Will the Minister COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India's trading partners have expressed concern over quantitative import restrictions on some consumer goods and also agricultural and textiles products;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government in the matter;

(c) whether Government have promised phasing out restrictions gradually; and

(d) the economic bearing on the Nation on account of such phasing out of restriction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) to (d) At the consultations held by the Committee on Balance-of-Payments-Restrictions of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), with India in January 1997 under Article XVIII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), 1994, major developed countries were of the view that the present balance of payments situation did not warrant a continuation of import restrictions under the cover of balance of Payments provisions of Article XVIII. They were of the view that India could protect its domestic industry through appropriate tariffs. The Indian delegation had pressed the argument that while the monetary resources position might appear to be satisfactory, more was needed for caution and that certain areas of concern had to be taken into account.

In the light of the discussions, the Committee agreed to resume the consultation in June 1997 to consider a plan, to be presented by India to eliminate the measures notified under Article XVIII and to conclude the consultations consistently with all relevant WTO balance of payments provisions.

Liberalising Import of Consumer Goods

908. SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government have liberalised the import of 161 categories of goods including a number of consumer items; and

(b) if so, the details and reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, as part of the on going process of review of the Export & Import Policy, changes in the Import Policy of a few items have recently been made as per details indicated in Ministry of