

(b) whether it is also a fact that the presence of this society on the auction platforms, helped to stabilise the market; and

(c) if so, what steps are being to liquidate the stocks?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHED): (a) According to the returns submitted to the Tobacco Board by the Andhra Pradesh Tobacco Growers Cooperative Union, Ongole, as on 30.6.92 they were holding stocks of 837.65 tonnes of tobacco purchased from 1992 auctions, and they had not sold any stock during the period January-June, 1992.

(b) and (c) Auction prices are dependent upon demand and supply. The purchases made by the Union were small in quantity in comparison to the overall auctions of 132.75 million kg. However, the limited quantities purchased by the Union would have helped to stabilise prices to a marginal extent. The interest of the Union for selling their tobacco has been conveyed to the Russian authorities.

Commitment of English merchants to purchase FCV tobacco

4191. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what was the commitment of English merchants to purchase FCV tobacco during current year;

(b) the quantity of tobacco actually contracted and what is the quantity shipped, so far; and

(c) what steps have been taken to ensure that such commitment is fulfilled?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHED): (a) The U.K. merchants had given a collective estimate of export requirements of 63,000 tonnes in Green Weight (packed weight 44,000 tonnes).

(b) According to the contracts filed with the Tobacco Board, the contracted quantity is amounting to 16,500 tonnes (green weight 23500 tonnes) Against the above contracted quantities, shipment of 16,600 tonnes (15,200 tonnes green weight) has been completed.

(c) The Tobacco Board convened a meeting of the overseas merchants and requested them to import tobacco as per the estimates of requirements given by them.

India's Trade Deficit

4192. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the despite trade reforms and liberalisation, country's trade deficit has risen substantially;

(b) if so, what is the trade deficit in terms of dollars during April-May 1992 as against the corresponding period in 1990-91, India's exports in dollars terms during April-May, 1992 and India's imports in dollars during April-May, 1992 as compared to imports in April-May 1991;

(c) what are the major items of exports which have declined stating the reasons therefor; and

(d) the manner in which Government propose to bridge the trade deficit?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHED): (a) and (b) India's trade deficit in 1991-92 was dollar 1.55 billion as against 5.9 billion in 1990-91. This was the lowest deficit recorded in the last decade.

According to the provisional estimates, India's trade deficit amounted to US dollars 945 million during April-May, 1992, as compared to US dollar 643 million during the corresponding period of April-May 1990. India's exports amounted to US dollar 2667 million during April-May

1992 as compared to US dollar 2777 million during April-May 1991. India's imports amounted to US dollar 3612 million during April-May 1992 as compared to US dollar 2896 million during April-May 1991.

(c) According to provisional data, the principal commodities which registered a decline during April-May 1992 as compared to April-May 1991 include tea, tobacco, spices, iron ore, jute manufactures, etc. The reasons for decline include the fall in the commodity prices in the world market in respect of tea and spices, lower forecast of steel production and large inventory of iron ore in Japan in respect of iron ore, competition from synthetic substitutes in respect of jute manufactures, etc.

(d) Several changes in trade policy were introduced since July, 1991, aimed at strengthening export incentives eliminating a substantial volume of import licensing and rationalising the import tariff structure. Rupee has been made partially convertible to encourage generation of foreign exchange. These steps have been further consolidated in the new Export-Import Policy which, inter alia, aims to promote productivity, modernisation and competitiveness of Indian industry and thereby to enhance its export capabilities.

Introduction of Foreign Brand Names to boost tea exports

4193. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has advised the tea manufacture in the country to introduce foreign brand names to boost tea exports;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Indian brand names in tea is also catching up the World Market; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons for Government's suggestion to introduce foreign brand names?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHED): (a) to (c) While no specific advice regarding use of foreign brand names has been given, the possible use of foreign brand names is one of the elements of a strategy for boosting value added tea exports. Certain Indian brand names have become popular in some markets, however strategies will vary from market to market. It is for private exporters to decide whether foreign brand names would help them in boosting their value added exports in some of the markets where brand loyalties are already strongly established.

Action Plan to boost exports

4194. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have prepared an action plan to boost exports for the remainder of the current financial year; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the plan and the target to be achieved?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHED): (a) and (b) Since July 1991, a series of trade reforms have been initiated with the aim of boosting exports. These measures have been further consolidated in the Central Budget for 1992-93, wherein a system of partial convertibility of Rupee has been introduced. The new Export-Import Policy for 1992-97 inter alia aims to promote productivity, modernisation and competitiveness of Indian industry and thereby to enhance its export capabilities. Besides, the Government is working on formulating an action plan to boost exports in the medium and long term, based on the recommendations contained in the Report submitted to the Government in respect of the 34 Extreme Focus Product Groups. These broadly relate to (i) policy, (ii) procedures (iii) infrastructure and (iv) institutional mechanism. The export target for the