

(a) whether Government is working on a plan to provide special economic assistance to country's industries which use labour intensive techniques;

(b) if so, the details thereof and names of the industries chosen till now from the above category by Government;

(c) the percentage of labours finding employment therein in the country; and

(d) type of the economic relief the Government propose to provide to these industries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) to (d) Government has announced incentives to stimulate industry and the economy. The package includes Rs. 20,000 crore, additional plan expenditure, an across the board reduction of 4% excise cut, *etc.* To facilitate the flow of credit to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), RBI has announced a refinance facility of Rs. 7,000/- crore for Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) to support lending to MSMEs which account for approximately 7% of the labour force. Besides export incentives were announced for labour intensive industries namely textiles, leather, gems and jewellery, marine products and SME sector.

High level Task Force for boosting exports

1714. SHRIMATI T. RATNA BAI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has agreed to a proposal of exporters to set up a high level task force to bring about greater coordination and resolve numerous taxrelated problem;

(b) if so, the composition of the task force;

(c) whether the Federation of Indian Exports Organisation also proposed to declare gateway ports as sleepless ports, similar to the Shanghai Port in China, for expediting clearance of cargo round the clock;

(d) if so, the action taken by Government;

(e) whether the exporters also suggested to create a separate fund for greater market access and a single nodal agency for exports; and

(f) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Government on a continuous basis considers a number of issues concerning the exporting community, including taxation issues, at various levels as exports are dictated by the dynamics of global economics.

(c) and (d) Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) had made a suggestion in October 2005 that Gateway ports in India may be declared as "sleepless ports" where export

consignments can be expedited with the help of the introduction of large scale containers scanning equipment and round the clock supervision and control at check points. This suggestion was taken up for implementation by the major ports and the customs department and in Jawahar Lal Nehru Port, Nava Sheva which is the biggest container port in the country, the container scanning equipment has been installed.

(e) and (f) Department of Commerce has not received any suggestion from the exporters to create a separate fund for greater market access and a single nodal agency for exports.

Effect of global crisis as India's exports

1715. SHRI NARESH GUJRAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the present global crisis is going to adversely affect India's exports; and

(b) what fiscal steps Government is taking to protect our labour intensive export industries so that poor people employed in such industries are not rendered jobless?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes, Sir

(b) Government has announced a series of measures to arrest the deceleration in India's exports in the wake of slowdown in the Global Economy. These measures, *inter-alia*, include provision of interest subvention in pre and post-shipment export credit for labour intensive exports, provision of additional funds for full refund of Terminal Excise Duty/CST, Government back-up guarantee to ECGC to enable it to provide guarantees for exports to difficult markets/products, refund of service tax to exporters on foreign agent commissions upto 10% of FOB value of exports *etc.*

Assistance to small tea growers in Assam

1716. KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has explored the potential of Small Tea Growers in Industrial Growth in Assam;

(b) if so, the plans Government has proposed in helping them financially; and

(c) whether Government has any scheme for the small tea growers as they need more help from Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) The contribution from small tea growers to the national tea production is around 250 million kgs and it accounts for nearly 25% of the all India tea production of which 10% is accounted for by small growers in Assam. In order to harness the potential economic value of the small grower sector, the measures adopted