

[18 December, 2001] RAJYA SABHA

intellectual property through public outreach programmes and establishing sustainable institutions and modernizing intellectual property systems using IT;

(c) whether any concrete decision in this regard has been taken; and

(d) if so, to what extent modernization of intellectual property administration has been implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN SINGH): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The modernization initiatives are inclusive of components relating to utilization of information technology both for automation of operations and development of awareness and outreach programmes. In this direction, several awareness programmes have already been organised, a website of the office launched, booklets/ pamphlets on patents, designs and trademarks prepared and released. In order to sustain these initiatives, appropriate budget provisions have also been made.

(d) Modernized Patent Offices at Delhi and Chennai have already been made operational and the work is in progress in Kolkata and Mumbai. A modernised Design Office is expected to be made operational shortly. Strengthening of infrastructure of the Trademarks Registry is also presently under implementation. A fully modernized Geographical Indications Registry has already been set up at Chennai.

Problems faced by Plantation Industry

2912. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Plantation Industry in the country is facing a serious crisis; and

(b) if so, the details of steps taken to identify their problems and to framework plan to resolve the problem, those led to crisis of one of the biggest providers of employment and a major foreign exchange earner?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI):

(a) The plantation industry in the country is primarily facing the problem of low price realization largely due to an over supply situation both in the domestic and international market and increasing cost of production.

(b) Government has taken various steps to resolve the problems of plantation industry in the country and to stabilize prices. Government through the Commodity Boards has implemented number of developmental schemes to improve productivity, quality, market development and thereby price realizations. Besides this, the other measures to provide relief to this sector, include:

Implementation of medium term export strategy to sustain and gain market share in the key markets as also to improve the competitiveness of Indian tea and coffee in the global markets over the next five years.

Procurement of Natural Rubber on Government Account through the STC from 1997 to April, 2001, to ensure a reasonable price to the rubber growers.

Fixation of minimum price for pre-dominantly traded grades of natural rubber in the domestic market.

Provision of handling charges to companies jointly promoted by the Rubber Board and Rubber Producers' Societies for trading in rubber.

Implementation of a scheme to provide 5% interest subsidy to the small growers of coffee on working capital/crop loans availed by them from financial institutions.

Reschedulement of crop loans of coffee growers by commercial banks at the behest of the Government.

Implementation of a price subsidy scheme during the year 2000, through the Tea Board for providing immediate relief to the small growers of tea, under which subsidy upto Rs. 8 per kg. was provided.

Increasing allowance under Section 33 AB of Income Tax Act from 20% to 40% in the Budget 2001-02 for the tea producers to invest

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more in the activities of rejuvenation and replantation.

Launching of a Quality Upgradation Programme in the Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu for improving quality of tea manufactured by small growers.

Increasing basic customs duty on tea and coffee from 35% to 70%.

Closure of private and public companies

2913. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of private and public sector companies which are closed in Rajasthan and out of them how many are referred to BIFR with their names; and

(b) what steps have been taken by Government for the revival of these industries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN SINGH): (a) Data on sick industrial units assisted by banks in the country is compiled by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). As per the RBI, the number (provisional) of public and private sector non-SSI (sick/weak) closed units in the State of Rajasthan as at the end of March, 2001 is 1 and 53 respectively. The names of these companies and the status of their reference to BIFR are given in the Statement (*See* below).

(b) The Government has taken number of steps for revival of sick industrial units which, *inter-alia*, include, guidelines of the RBI to banks, amalgamation of sick units with healthy units, setting up of Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) under the Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, National Equity Fund, etc.