

May, 2006. The average retail prices of cement were Rs. 157 per bag in March, 2004 and Rs. 205 per bag in October, 2006.

Trade agreement between India and EU

2271. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that the trade between the European Union and India during the last year grew by 20 per cent to about 40 billion *i.e.* Rs. 2.28.000 crore;

(b) whether the Indian and European Union representatives met again in October, 2006 in Helsinki and entered into broad-based bilateral trade and investment agreement, and also agreed to open the dialogue, which was halted at the Doha round of WTO talks, due to differences over farm subsidies between the United States, European and developing countries, including India; and

(c) if so, whether it is a win-win situation for Europe, as well as for India?

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

(a) to (c) The trade between European Union and India grew by 23% during the year 2005-06 to US \$ 45.79 billion. India-EU Summit was held in Helsinki on 13 October, 2006. The Summit was co-chaired by our Prime Minister and by the Prime Minister of Finland which currently holds the Presidency of the European Union. Leaders on both sides encouraged an expansion and deepening of trade and investment linkages. Recognising that stronger economic engagement is mutually advantageous and would buttress the Strategic Partnership, the leaders decided to advance their bilateral trade relations. The summit welcomed the work done by the High Level Trade Group and endorsed the case made for a future broad-based bilateral trade and investment agreement. The Summit agreed that both sides move towards negotiations for such an agreement.

The Summit reiterated the commitment of India and EU to the rules-based multilateral trading system. The Summit stated that "the successful

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outcome of the Doha Development agenda multilateral trade negotiations remains their foremost trade policy priority, and they agreed to ensure that the deepening of bilateral trade relations supports the larger multilateral trading regime."

Shifting of Tobacco Board Office

2272. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to shift Tobacco Board Office from Guntur to some other place; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the place where it is likely to be shifted?

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

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Research for development of tea

2273. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that research work for development of tea industry is facing severe financial crisis; and

(b) if so, the details of steps, the Tea Board has taken to provide sufficient funds to carry forward its research works?

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

(a) No, Sir. Sufficient funds are being provided by the Government to the Tea Board for undertaking Tea Research and developmental activities.

(b) Does not arise.