

regulations of their home country. This agreement provides that an employed or self employed person, other than detached workers, shall be subject only to the legislation of the host country. The agreement provides for portability of the benefits in case of relocation to home country or a third country. It also provides for totalization of contributions period under legislation of both countries in order to protect the worker from loss of contributions on account of minimum insurance period criterion under the national legislation. This bilateral Social Security Agreement is expected to enhance trade and investment between the countries on account of reduction of corporate expenses on social security and to ensure social protection of migrant professionals.

Increase in exports

†164. SHRI Y. P. TRIVEDI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the exports of India in December of this year have been more compared to last 15 months; and

(b) if so, the details of steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) : (a) Yes Sir. India's merchandise exports in dollar terms in December, 2009 have been the highest in comparison to the month-wise exports during the 15 months period from October, 2008 to December, 2009.

(b) The Government and RBI closely monitor, the economic developments in the country and internationally on a continuous basis, and need based measures are taken, from time to time, keeping in view the financial and overall economic implications. To arrest the decline in exports, the Government/RBI announced stimulus packages including the announcements made in the Budget 2009-10 and in the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2009-14 to provide support. Government extended additional support in January 2010. Some of the steps taken by Government and RBI are given in Statement.

[Refer to the Statement appended to answer to USR. No. 156.]

Exploring new trade zones

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

(a) whether Government has explored new trade zones in the countries which have recently been visited by the PM, Vice President and other dignitaries;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the initiatives being taken by Government in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) : (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Increase in exports

166. SHRIMATI T. RANA BAI : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :