

**Scrapping of DEPB credit**

**1028. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY:** Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry of Finance has mooted a proposal to scrap the existing Duty Entitlement Pass Book (DEPB) credit for certain sectors;

(b) if so, the reasons for scrapping DEPB;

(c) whether this move is going to hit hard the exporters who have already entered into agreements with foreign buyers after factoring in the existing DEPB credit; and

(d) the reaction of Government in this regard?

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA):** (a) and (b) Ministry of Finance had forwarded a proposal to delete the Duty Entitlement Pass Book (DEPB) Scheme for the textile sector. However, this was not agreed to by the Department of Commerce. The New Foreign Trade Policy announced by the Department of Commerce proposes that the DEPB Scheme will continue to be operative until it is replaced by a new WTO compatible Scheme which will be drawn up in consultation with exporters.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

**Free Trade Agreements**

**1029. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN:**

**SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI:**

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are many Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and a few are in advance stage of negotiation;

(b) if so, details thereof including the country and group of countries associated with the above as on date;

(c) whether there is any proposal to set up a cell to monitor Free Trade Agreements, if so, the details including the proposed functions of the cell; and