

(c) whether it will be very helpful for the development of Bihar if Special Economic Zone is established there; and

(d) whether Government will consider it in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) to (d) in terms of the SEZ Act, 2005 a SEZ may be set up either jointly or severally by the Central Government, State Government or any person for manufacture of goods or rendering services or for both or as a free trade warehousing zone. Such proposals duly recommended by the concerned State Government are considered by the Board of Approval for SEZs. However, no such proposal from Bihar is pending with this Department.

Decline in production of dry cells in non-SSI sector

1402. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that production of dry cells in non-SSI sector declined from 2150 million in 2008-09 to 1526 million in 2009-10;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to enhance the domestic production of dry cells and reduce the import of dry cell batteries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) to (c) The production of dry cells in the non-SSI sector declined marginally by 4.32% from 2146.57 million numbers in 2008-09 to 2053.74 million numbers in 2009-10. The decline can be attributed to rising input costs and reduced demand due to increase in prices and change in consumer preferences to more energy efficient products. For enhancement of domestic production of dry cells, the industry is de-licensed and eligible for foreign direct investment upto 100% on the automatic route. The Government has imposed anti-dumping measures to check imports of dry cell batteries.

Promotion of tea industry in North-Eastern region

1403. SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has considered promotion of tea industry in hilly areas of the North-Eastern region on the lines of Darjeeling as the flavour of tea varies with altitude;

(b) whether it is a fact that the quality of rubber found in the district of Karbi Anglong is one of the best in the country and what is the achievement of Rubber Board in Karbi Anglong for its promotion; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir. Government is promoting teas of North East region. The mark Assam orthodox has been registered as a geographical indication. Apart from this Assam logo has also been registered as copyright on the lines of Darjeeling. Moreover, India Tea Logo promoted extensively by the Board also covers teas of NE region. As far as the flavour of tea is concerned it depends on many factors like agro-climatic conditions of the area including soil and type of variety grown. Darjeeling tea which has the peculiar muscatel flavour cannot be compared with any other teas in India.

(b) and (c) The quality of rubber produced in the district of Karbi Anglong is reasonably good. Due to the efforts of the Rubber Board, an area of around 4200 hectares has so far been planted with rubber in Karbi Anglong. Out of this, around 2000 hectares is mature and the yield is around 3000 metric tonnes per annum. Rubber Board is providing necessary assistance to improve the productivity, quality and marketing of the rubber in the district.

Increase in export rate

†1404. SHRI ISHWARLAL SHANKARLAL JAIN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the commercial export of the country had been about 180 billion dollar during the last year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has taken any measure or any appropriate steps to increase this commercial export further;

(d) whether this commercial export is expected to be more than about 200 billion dollar during the current financial year; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b) The merchandise export of the country was US \$ 178.75 billion during the period 2009-10.

(c) To boost performance of the export sectors, various measures have been taken by the Government and RBI in the form of stimulus packages including the announcements made in the Budget 2009-10 and 2010-11; in the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP), 2009-14; thereafter in January/March, 2010; in the Annual Supplement to FTP released on 23rd August, 2010; and in announcements made in February, 2011. To increase our

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.