

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI) : (a) The reasons for an export ban on cotton was that cotton exports had already crossed 92 lac bales, on all-time high, with export registrations at 120 lac bales. There was a possible risk that India may have to import cotton at higher prices.

(b) and (c) Government on March 12, 2012 notified that (a) ban on cotton export is lifted (b) the issue of new RCs for cotton exports stands suspended until further orders; (c) all existing RCs would be submitted to DGFT for scrutiny and revalidation. Government had addressed the concerns of low closing stocks and self consignments in export registrations in the informal Group of Ministers Meeting. Cotton Corporation of India was mandated to create a buffer stock of 10 lac bales, Cotton Advisory Board was mandated to review the balance sheet and self consignment registrations were to be addressed in revalidation of export registrations.

(d) The situation after March 6, 2012 was that domestic cotton prices witnessed a fall with CCI commencing MSP operations in Guntur and Warangal mandis. Trading was subdued but on March 7 and 9, 2012, prices recovered. Stable market conditions well above MSP prices are being witnessed after March 12 2012.

(e) Government's cotton export/distribution policy is based on timely announcement of export policy, determination of export surplus, transparent registration and maintenance of adequate closing stocks.

Inclusion of IWT Under Transport Subsidy Scheme

2194. SHRI SALIM ANSARI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is fact that Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) is taking steps to include Inland Water Transport (IWT) under the transport subsidy scheme;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) to what extent such a proposal of inclusion of IWT will benefit the industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) : (a) Inland Water Transport (IWT) is already included under the Transport Subsidy Scheme.

(b) In view of (a) above, the question does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

Challenges in Trade in Services

2195. SHRI HUSAIN DALWAI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

- (a) the India's position in trade in services;
- (b) whether there are plenty of opportunities and challenges in trade in services;
- (c) if so, how India propose to exploit these opportunities and challenges; and
- (d) how Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) can help to meet these challenges?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) : (a) As per the latest data available on the WTO website, India ranked as no. 6 and no. 7 in the list of exporters and importers of services, respectively.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. In order to capitalize on the opportunities available, India is engaged in bilateal and multilateral negotiations in services with various countries of the world. These negotiations focus on obtaining market access in areas of our comparative advantage. Further, to meet the challenges and to better harness the opportunities available, an Inter Ministerial Group (IMG) has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Commerce Secretary which is a recommendatory body and its terms of the references, *inter-alia*, include developing a strategy to increase and diversify our services exports.

(d) The Foreign Direct Investment helps in accelerating economic growth by means of infusion of capital, technology and modern management practices.

Protection of Heritage Structures from Natural Disasters in NE

2196. SHRI ANIL MAHADEV DAVE : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Ministry has identified heritage structures and buildings of cultural importance in North Eastern Region that are vulnerable to natural disasters such as an earthquake or heavy flood; and
- (b) if so, the State-wise details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (KUMARI SELJA) : (a) and (b) Out of 82 monuments/sites declared as of national importance under the jurisdiction of Archaeological Survey of India in North Eastern Region, three protected monuments in Sikkim namely Dubdi Monastery; Coronation Throne of Norbugang and Rabdentse site of ancient capital of Sikkim have become vulnerable to the recent earthquake.

Nomination of Majuli Island as World Heritage site

2197. SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA : Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether Government has assessed the basic reason for deferring the World Heritage status of Majuli Island of Assam for the second time;