

- (vi) United Phosphorous Limited, (UPL)
- (vii) Solid State Physics Laboratory, (SSPL), DRDO.

Help to Virginia tobacco farmers

1560. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

- (a) whether Government has received representations from tobacco farmers who have huge stocks piled up in their godowns;
- (b) if so, what steps Government is taking to help the Virginia tobacco farmers to find markets;
- (c) whether Government has made any effort to invite international buyers and companies to purchase Indian Virginia tobacco in 2012; and
- (d) if so, the details of steps proposed by Government to encourage more buyers for Indian Virginia tobacco from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) to (d) Encouraging exports is a continuous process. The Tobacco Board participates in exhibitions across the world and exchanges trade delegations to promote the brand image of Virginia tobacco, its cost competitiveness among the similar tobacco produced elsewhere and builds trust among the overseas customers for product integrity and consistent supply of the same.

New Centres for purchase of Virginia tobacco in A.P. and Karnataka

1561. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Tobacco Board has opened new purchasing centers for purchase of Virginia tobacco in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka in 2011-12;
- (b) if so, where are the new auction/purchasing centres opened;
- (c) what are the steps being taken by the Tobacco Board to create conditions to increase competition among potential buyers of Indian Virginia tobacco;
- (d) whether foreign buyers have been banned from buying tobacco at the Tobacco Board sponsored auction platform; and

(e) the steps proposed by Government to help farmers obtain the best prices for their produce?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Tobacco Board has established 20 auction platforms in Andhra Pradesh and 11 auction platforms in Karnataka to create competition among the buyers with the ultimate objective of ensuring remunerative prices to the tobacco growers. Tobacco Board decided to implement e-auctions at all the auction platforms of the Board in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

(d) Oversea buyers are not directly purchasing the tobacco at the Tobacco Board sponsored Auction Platforms.

(e) The Government is taking steps to encourage exports of agro products, including tobacco through measures and incentives under Plan schemes of the Commodity Boards, Export Promotion Council and Export Development Authorities. The Government is also implementing various Schemes to extend financial assistance to the eligible exporters registered with it to boost the overall agri exports. Besides these measures, the Government has put in place various schemes including Vishesh Krishi and Gram Upaj Yojna (VKGUY), Duty Drawback Scheme, Focus Market Scheme, Town of Export Excellence, etc. to provide assistance to encourage exports. Trade delegations are also mounted to penetrate foreign markets and Buyers-Seller Meets are organized to assist the potential exports. All these measures are intended to help growers fetch remunerative prices for their produce.

Rehabilitation package for closed tea gardens

1562. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to refer to answer to Starred Question 494 given in the Rajya Sabha on 9 May, 2007 and state :

(a) whether Government has finalized the package for rehabilitation of closed/sick tea gardens;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. With the aim to enable the owner of the closed tea gardens to revive the gardens in