

**Status of developing look east policy with ASEAN**

1714. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the status of developing Look East Policy with Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to fast track trade and commerce with these countries;

(b) what is the action plan to develop country's North-East region under this project;

(c) whether certain Chief Ministers of NE States have made a proposal for providing better attention to NE States; and

(d) if so, the details thereof along with action plan to fast develop this sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) To fast-track trade and Commerce with Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, India has signed Agreement on Trade in Goods under the broader framework of Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) between India and the ASEAN on 13.08.2009. India and the ASEAN have also concluded negotiations on Agreement on Trade in Services and Agreement on Investment in December, 2012. India has also entered into Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreements with Singapore and Malaysia which came into effect on 01.08.2005 and 01.07.2011 respectively. India and Thailand signed a Framework Agreement (Early Harvest Scheme) on 09.10.2003. India and Thailand are presently negotiating a Comprehensive India-Thailand Free Trade Agreement. India and Indonesia have also agreed for negotiating a CECA.

(b) With a view to open up North-East region as a part of Look East Policy, the focus is on connectivity with the region including land, sea and air connectivity. With a view to promote exports from the North-East region, a North East Cell has been set up in the Department of Commerce. An Export Development Fund (EDF) has been set up with the objective of promoting exports from the region. Activities which have a linkage with exports from the region are eligible for assistance from the EDF such as setting up of pioneering/pilot projects aimed at exports, provision of equipment and machinery for the pioneering pilot projects

aimed at export, creation of common facilities for boosting exports, facility for developing testing and standardization as well as quality improvement of export products.

(c) Proposals are received from State Governments of North-East States from time to time for providing better assistance to North-East States.

(d) 72 proposals have been approved for final assistance under Export Development Fund for North-East Region.

**Promotion of SEZS in backward regions**

1715. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken note of the backwardness of few regions in terms of industrialization;

(b) the details of such regions identified by Government;

(c) whether Government has taken any steps to promote new Special Economic Zones in such areas;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (e) While backward regions are not defined under Special Economic Zones (SEZs) Act, 2005 and Rules framed there under, however, Rule 5(2) of the SEZ Rules, 2006 prescribes a lower minimum land area requirement for setting up of a multi-product and a specific sector SEZ in Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir, Goa or in a Union Territory. Further, the said Rules prescribe a lower minimum built up area requirement in respect of the SEZs located in B1 and B2 category cities as per classification indicated in Annexure IV of the SEZ Rules given in Statement (*See below*).

The Government, on the basis of inputs/suggestions invited from stakeholders has reviewed the policy and operational framework governed by the Rules of the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) scheme and is presently engaged in inter-ministerial