

- (a) whether it is a fact that India's exports have consistently declined;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the continuous decline of exports coupled with an increase in imports has resulted in an increasingly widening and unsustainable trade deficit; and
- (d) if so, what measures are being proposed by Government to contain the trade deficit?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (d) India's Exports grew by 4.2% during April, 2012 and again grew by 0.8% during January, 2013 over the corresponding period of last year. The global economic crisis, the sovereign debt crisis in Europe and the economic slowdown in developed economies has adversely impacted demand for our exports. The imports have also been growing both because of higher prices of importable and increased demand. The international prices of petroleum, fertilizers, gold, edible oil etc. have increased. Their demand also has increased. These lead to a higher value of imports. As a result the trade deficit has increased. To increase our exports and reduce trade deficit a strategy paper to double our exports by 2013-14 was released in May, 2011 as part of plan of action. In the wake of continuous economic slowdown which has impacted the trade, a number of measures/incentives as part of the Annual Supplement to Foreign Trade Policy were announced on 5th June, 2012. DGFT has also undertaken a midterm review with detailed discussions with all the Export Promotion Councils and other stake holders. To give further boost to Export, new measures were announced on 26th December, 2012 which includes widening of Focus Product Scheme and Focus Market Scheme. And similarly some additions have been made to MLFPS/VKGUY. Incremental Export Incentivisation Scheme has been introduced w.e.f 1.1.2013 whereby incremental exports made during the period January-March, 2013 over the period January-March, 2012 to specified countries would be eligible for the benefits. Two percent Interest Subvention Scheme has been widened to include 134 sub-sectors of Engineering Sector w.e.f 1st January, 2013. The validity of the scheme has been extended till March 31, 2014.

Tea production

314. SHRIMATI NAZNIN FARUQUE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the State-wise and year-wise details of tea production during the last three years;

(b) the actions being taken by Government to increase the production, quality and export of tea and result obtained by these actions; and

(c) what are the steps being taken by Government to extend help to tea producers of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) State-wise and year-wise production of Tea in India during the last three financial years is as under:

(Quantity in Million Kgs)			
States	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Assam	497.78	487.21	581.26
West Bengal	223.33	228.31	269.43
Others (North India)	13.27	13	14.90
Tamil Nadu	178.77	166.88	162.79
Kerala	71.74	65.87	61.62
Karnaataka	6.29	5.46	5.46
ALL INDIA	991.18	966.73	1095.46

(b) and (c) Several steps have been initiated to address the problems of the tea industry and boosting production, improving quality and export of tea. A Special Purpose Tea Fund has been set up for extending financial support on easy terms for undertaking replanting, replacement planting and rejuvenation of old aged tea bushes. With a view to improve the quality of teas produced in the country, a quality upgradation programme was launched to upgrade old tea machinery, value-addition and quality certification. A scheme to incentivize the production of orthodox and green tea was also implemented. Special attention was paid towards improving the productivity of small holdings which account for nearly 26% of the total production in India.

As far as export of tea is concerned, Tea Board is implementing promotion activities under the Market Promotion Scheme (MPS). The activities undertaken by

the Board from the Head Office and the three foreign offices primarily included generic promotion through participation in fairs and exhibitions, trade facilitation through arranging Buyer-Seller Meets, exchange of trade delegations (inbound and outbound), information dissemination through gathering of market intelligence etc.

Tea producers of the country are being extended help through Plantation Development Scheme covering (i) Replantation/replacement of old tea areas aged above 50 years; (ii) Rejuvenation and consolidation of the old tea areas in the hilly regions; (iii) Creation of irrigation facilities for combating drought; (iv) Mechanization of the field activities such as plucking, pruning, uprooting of old tea bushes, (v) Extension Planting in the cultivable areas available within the grant areas of tea gardens, (vi) Organic tea cultivation in the new areas as well as conversion of conventional tea area for organic tea production. Having regard to significant contribution from small grower sector, a separate Directorate for addressing the developmental needs of the small growers has been set up with its head quarter at Dibrugarh, Assam. Primarily, this Directorate would look into the aspects of registration of small growers in each and every tea growing state and maintain a closer interface with the growers to organize themselves into Producers' Societies. Such societies are expected to serve as focal points for the Directorate's extension activities aimed at improving quality, consistency and price realization.

Investigation into corruption charges of Walmart

315. SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state the details of finding of the investigation into corruption charges of Walmart in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. S. JAGATHRAKSHAKAN): The Government has decided to appoint one-man Committee regarding media reports concerning Walmart *vide* resolution dated 31.1.2013. The Committee has been asked to submit its report within three months from issuance of the resolution.

Launch of Government to Business (G2B) Portal

316. SHRI A. ELAVARASAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Department of Industrial Policy and promotion (DIPP) has announced the launch of eBiz, India's first Government to Business Portal developed by Infosys;