

Encouraging exports is a continuous process. The Government is taking steps to encourage exports of agro products through measures and incentives under Plan schemes of the Commodity Boards and Export Promotion Councils. Besides these measures, the Ministry of Commerce & Industry has put in place various schemes namely Market Development Assistance (MDA), Market Assistance Initiative (MAI), Assistance to States for Developing Export Infrastructure and Allied Activities (ASIDE), Vishesh Krishi and Gram Upaj Yojana, Focus Product Scheme, Focus Market Scheme, Town of Export Excellence, etc. to provide assistance to encourage exports.

(c) No specific study has been conducted to improve the export share of agricultural products in recent times.

FTA with European Union

2646. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India proposes to enter into Free Trade Agreement with European Union countries, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the proposed main items of trade under the above agreement; and
- (c) how far this would help to improve our bilateral trade with the above countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN) : (a) to (c) The Government of India is presently negotiating a bilateral Broad Based Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) with the European Union (EU), covering a number of tracks ranging from Trade in Goods to Services. So far fifteen rounds of negotiations have been held, the last being in May 2013 in New Delhi. It is expected that greater trade and investment flows will result, from this Agreement.

Irregularities in STC CLI Scheme

2647. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether during 2005-06 various business firms/associates had undertaken export of gold jewellery, construction material, etc. through State Trading Corporation's Credit Linked Insurance where due diligence was not done by the officials of STC regarding the credibility of such exporting units as was revealed through investigations of CVC, pointing out financial liabilities of Rs. 725 crores;
- (b) whether the officials responsible for this huge loss were identified and pecuniary action taken against the guilty to make good the loss; and