

(b) whether it is a fact that Geographical Index (GI) Registrar has recognized Madhya Pradesh as a basmati producing State ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) The National Agricultural Research System under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation has recognized the States of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Western U.P. and two districts of J&K *i.e.* Jammu and Kathua as the traditional GI area for Basmati rice cultivation. APEDA has included the said area in its application submitted to GI Registry, Chennai for registration of Basmati rice as a Geographical Indication (GI).

(b) The GI registry has passed a common order on December 31, 2013 with direction to APEDA to file an amended GI application including all uncovered areas where Basmati rice is cultivated in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and other areas of the country.

In view of the legal advice and review of the matter on the farreaching consequences of implementing the order, APEDA has filed an appeal before the Intellectual Property Appellate Board in February, 2014.

Easing of norms for exporters

2925. SHRI KALPATARU DAS: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to ease certain norms for exporters to boost bilateral trade with other countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also proposed to offer certain other incentives to such exporters to help them reduce transaction costs;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the action plan to grant loans to export companies at less rate of interest, reduce long clearance time at ports or control high domestic cargo rates, etc.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) and (b) Increasing exports in specific products and providing necessary thrust by way of strategy is a continuous process through market study initiatives. Issues relating to tariff/non-tariff barriers are actively taken up during the bilateral meetings and also under the Institutional dialogues and accordingly Foreign Trade Agreement (FTA) are signed between countries. The ongoing trade procedures and infrastructure are reviewed through Trade Policy Review regularly.

The Government is engaged in negotiating a WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation in terms of the modalities contained in the Ministerial Decision on 7th December 2013. The ongoing WTO negotiations on Trade Facilitation (TF) seek to develop a set of multilateral trade rules that aim to simplify, modernize and harmonize trade procedure with a view to ensure smooth movement of import, export and transit of goods across the international borders.

(c) and (d) The Foreign Trade Policy provides certain incentives to compensate for high transport costs and offset other disadvantages with a view to enhance exports. Various incentives are supported through the different schemes under Foreign Trade Policy like Vishesh Krishi and Gram Udyog Yojana (VKGUY), Focus Market Scheme, Market Linked Focus Product Scheme and Focus Product Scheme. Apart from above various Industry and Trade Bodies are given support for participation in Buyer Seller Meets (BSMs), Trade fairs and exhibitions in various countries under Market Access Initiative (MAI) scheme.

(e) Two per cent Interest Subvention Scheme, which was available for certain export sectors *viz.* Handicrafts, Carpet, Handlooms, SMEs, Readymade Garments, Processed Agriculture Products and Toys, was widened to include 134 tariff lines of Engineering Sector *w.e.f.* 1st January, 2013. Government also enhanced the rate of Interest Subvention under Interest Subvention Scheme from 2% to 3 % with effect from 1.8.2013.

To reduce time for clearance at ports, CBEC has started 24x7 customs clearance *w.e.f.* 1st September 2012 at Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi and Mumbai Air Cargo Complexes. Further, 24x7 customs clearance facilities are available at Chennai, JNPT, Kandla and Kolkata Seaports in respect of the following categories of imports and exports:

- (i) Bills of Entry where no examination and assessment is required and
- (ii) Factory stuffed export containers and export consignment covered by Free Shipping Bills.

This facility was further extended to Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Kolkata, Cochin, Calicut, Coimbatore, Goa, Hyderabad, Indore, Jaipur, Nasik, Vishakhapatnam, Thiruvananthapuram Air cargo complexes with effect from 1.6.2013.

Setting up of NIMZs

2926. SHRI K. C. TYAGI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has granted approval to set up the National Investment and Manufacturing Zones (NIMZs);