

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) India and Japan have signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) on 16th February, 2011 which has come into force from 1st August, 2011.

(b) and (c) India-EIU BITA Negotiations were launched in Brussels in 2007. No agreement has been signed till date.

(d) India and the Republic of Korea have signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) on 7th August, 2009, which has come into force from 1st January, 2010. In order to boost bilateral trade through Trade Agreement with South East Asian (ASEAN) countries the following agreements have been signed:

- (i) Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) between India and Singapore signed in June, 2005.
- (ii) Indian ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement in August, 2009.
- (iii) India Malaysia CECA in July, 2011.
- (iv) Early Harvest Scheme with Thailand in 2003.

(e) The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement and Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement covers a number of areas including trade in goods, trade in services, rules of origin, intellectual property rights, investment, etc. Such Agreements promote stronger trade and commercial ties between participating countries, and open up opportunities for exporters and investors to expand their business in the tariff lines which are opened or in which tariff is reduced.

High level meeting between Commerce Ministers of India and Pakistan

1536. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a high level meeting between the Commerce Ministers of India and Pakistan was held recently; and

(b) if so, the details of the issues discussed and agreements signed between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) and (b) The Commerce Ministers of India and Pakistan met on 18th January, 2014 on the sidelines of the 5th

SAARC Business Leaders Conclave held at New Delhi. Both Ministers reaffirmed the commitment of their Governments to expeditiously establish normal trading relations and in this context to provide Non-Discriminatory Market Access (NDMA), on a reciprocal basis. Both sides decided to intensify and accelerate the process of trade normalization, liberalization and facilitation and to implement the agreed measures of the September, 2012 roadmap signed between the Commerce Secretaries of both the countries.

Restriction on cultivation of Tobacco

1537. SHRI PARIMAL NATHWANI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of States which cultivate more tobacco in the country at the cost of growing foodgrains and vegetables, acreage-wise; and

(b) the steps Government proposes to take to curb cultivation of such crops which are health hazards when consumed by human beings?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh are the major tobacco growing States of the country. However, tobacco is usually grown on marginal lands and does not compete with food grains and vegetable crops for acreage.

(b) The Government is regulating the FCV tobacco crop by several means including:

- (i) Imposing stringent restrictions on area planted, quantity of FCV tobacco produced, cured and marketed.
- (ii) Imposing heavy penalties on violators.
- (iii) Ban on new registrations for new growers.
- (iv) Ban on Horizontal expansion of FCV tobacco cultivation.
- (v) Tobacco Board, an autonomous body under the Government of India, is encouraging farmers to go for alternative crops/cropping systems.

Trade from Nathu La border in Sikkim

1538. SHRI BALWINDER SINGH BHUNDER: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state: