

(b) whether the talks for FTA have been resumed now when the two countries are seeking to provide fresh momentum to their economic cooperation;

(c) whether India and Israel's annual trade will double once the FTA is signed; and

(d) if so, the factual details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) and (b) The Trade and Economic Relations Committee (TERC), in its meeting held on 22.1.2010, approved commencement of negotiating Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Israel. Eight rounds of negotiations have been held so far between the two countries, with the last round of negotiations held in November, 2013. The next round of negotiations is not yet scheduled.

(c) and (d) The exact increase in trade pursuant to an FTA with a country can be assessed after the FTA has been in force for some time. India is aiming to achieve a mutually beneficial FTA with Israel.

Extending zero per cent import duty on pulses

1895. KUMARI SELJA:

DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is planning to extend for further period the zero per cent import duty on pulses; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) and (b) The zero import duty on pulses has been extended by the Government up to 30.09.2015 *vide* Notification No.15/2015-Customs, dated 31.03.2015. The decision relating to change in import duty on any agriculture commodity is taken by the Government after extensive inter-ministerial/stakeholder consultations factoring in various parameters like domestic production and prices demand and supply situation, need to maintain balance between interest of consumers and the growing community etc.

Tea gardens in Assam

1896. SHRI SANTIUSE KUJUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state: