

Special Economic Zones for financial services

9. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are seriously thinking of setting up of a Special Economic Zone for the financial services in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the proposed Economic Zone would be developed into an international financial services centre;

(d) whether presently computer software is the only service eligible for tax exemption; and

(e) whether Government are thinking of giving tax benefits to the Special Economic Zone for financial services?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) and (e) At present, apart from computer software services covered under Section 10A of the Income Tax Act, Offshore Banking Units located in the Special Economic Zones are eligible for income-tax exemption as provided in Section 80 LA of the Income Tax Act.

Funds for Export Marketing and Sales Promotion

10. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to pump in Rs. 450 crores in the mid-term for export marketing and sales promotion activities;

(b) whether the Indian exporters would get any assistance for establishing warehouses and showrooms in the Indian markets;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether it is also a fact that Government are seriously thingking of phasing out popular Market Development Scheme in the light of the increased allocation; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor?

[5 July, 2004]

RAJYA SABHA

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGO VAN): (a) For export marketing and sales promotion activities a "Market Access Initiative" Scheme is operational with an outlay of Rs. 552.00 crore during the Tenth Five Year Plan Period.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The question does not arise.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) The question does not arise.

Export of basmati rice

11. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) to what extent the country has succeeded in getting preferential access for all basmati varieties of rice that are exported to various countries;

(b) the plans Government have to get support from the European Union before switching over to the new regime;

(c) whether it is a fact that India is facing a lot of problems in convincing the European Union for preferential access to our varieties; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGO VAN): (a) to (d) Under their Uruguay Round commitments on agricultural products, the Member States of the European Union (EU) agreed to extend preferential access on imports of certain varieties of rice from Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which also covered basmati rice imports from India. Since July, 1995 a duty derogation of 250 ECUs per Metric Tonne was available on all basmati varieties, notified under Seed Act of India, 1966. Effective 1st January, 2004 EU had restricted this duty derogation to only 6 Traditional Basmati Varieties. Pursuant to reform of its agriculture sector under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of 2003, the EU Member States have