

[5 July, 2004]

RAJYA SABHA

housing for economically weaker sections are being vigorously implemented with a view to ameliorate the conditions of the urban poor.

Chinese investment in infrastructure sector

1. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether China has called for expanding bilateral ties with India in the infrastructure sector, keeping in view a spurt in East Asian countries' construction industry after its accession to the World Trade Organization;

(b) if so, whether China International Construction Association (CHINCA) Vice-Chairman has pointed out that Chinese companies were keen to explore projects with Indian companies on BOT basis in the areas including railways, housing, hospitals and bridges;

(c) if so, whether Government have accepted the Chinese proposal;

(d) if so, whether any agreement has been reached; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVA): (a) to (e) Vice-Chairman, China International Construction Association (CHINCA) had recently during an interaction with Indian businessmen expressed the desire of Chinese companies to jointly explore projects on BOT basis in areas like railways, housing, hospitals, bridges, etc.

The Chinese companies have been participating in the process of award of works in the infrastructure sector.

Financial assistance to coffee growers

2. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have extended a special financial assistance to the coffee growers to tide over the economic crisis in the sector during 2003-04;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the extent of subsidy given to the coffee growers during 2003-04;

(d) whether any interest free loans were given by the Coffee Board in 2003-04; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGO VAN): (a) to (c) In order to provide relief to coffee growers, who are facing problems arising from the present low prices of coffee, the Coffee Board continued implementation of an interest relief scheme during the year 2003-04, under which 5% interest subsidy was provided to small coffee growers on their working capital loans taken by them from financial institutions. Under this scheme, interest subsidy amounting to Rs. 6.90 crores was provided to the small coffee growers during the year 2003-04.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Marine exports

3. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the marine products exports during 2003-04 and foreign exchange earnings;

(b) whether it is a fact that many countries have banned Indian marine products on the grounds of not maintaining high standards of hygiene;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to mitigate such problems?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGO VAN): (a) As per provisional export figures provided by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), the exports of our marine products during 2003-04 amounted to US\$ 1211.86 million.

(b) and (c) Only Saudi Arabia has banned import of fresh marine products from India on the ground of cholera, being present in India.