

from India Scheme (MEIS) which make them eligible for an incentive at the rate of two per cent of export values.

(b) The month-wise details of Natural Rubber imports into the country during 2015-16 are as under:

Month	Import (Tonnes)
April, 2015	37916
May, 2015	34772
June, 2015	34098
July, 2015	38679
August, 2015	34788
September, 2015	34645
October, 2015	41295

(c) The Price Stabilization Fund Scheme was implemented by the Central Government from the year 2003 to 2013 with a view to protect the farmers of plantation crops including rubber, from losses on account of price fluctuations with the support from the Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF). The scheme was reviewed and, in light of the experience gained from implementing the Scheme, a market-linked Revenue Insurance Scheme for Plantation Crops (RISPC) has been devised for protecting the farmers of plantation crops, including rubber plantations, against losses arising from both fluctuations in yield as well as prices.

#### **Export of granite ore**

2730. DR. R. LAKSHMANAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the export of granite ore is increasing every year inspite of notification of Granite Conservation and Development Rules, 1999;

(b) if so, the reasons for increase in granite export over the years;

(c) whether Government will come forward to formulate strict measures to control and regulate granite export; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) and (b) Details of the export of Granite in last three years and current year till September, 2015 are as follows:

(Quantity in '000 KGS, Value in Million US \$)

	2012-13		2013-14		2014-15		2015-16(Apr-Sep)	
	Qty	Val	Qty	Val	Qty	Val	Qty	Val
Granite crude or roughly trimmed	4191898.81	536.93	4623968.05	575.59	4508446.07	555.33	1848557.40	233.14
Granite merely cut into block/slabs	512452.57	64.87	587133.53	80.22	407988.10	59.79	334369.95	44.13
Granite blocks/tiles, polished	250173.32	142.10	224376.49	106.89	196649.68	85.77	72680.28	33.92
Other granite	61233.04	45.03	188840.42	108.73	132977.88	86.60	55129.90	34.61

Source: DGCI&amp;S, Kolkata.

Central Government has framed the Granite Conservation and Development Rules (GCDR), 1999 by exercising the powers conferred under section 18 of the Mines and Mineral Development and Regulation Act, 1957, for conservation and systematic development and systematic mining to conserve the Granite resources and to prescribed a uniform frame – work with regard to systematic and scientific exploration of Granite through out the country. These Rules *inter-alia* provide for prospecting and mining of Granite, prospecting operations, Mining plan, mining operations, systematic and scientific mining, employment of qualified persons, notices and returns etc. Granite is a minor mineral and its administration comes under the purview of the State Governments. As per the Foreign Trade Policy, 2015-20 the export policy for granite is free.

(c) and (d) At present, there is no proposal under consideration to regulate granite export.

### **Starvation deaths in tea gardens of West Bengal**

2731. SHRI RITABRATA BANERJEE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of starvation deaths are taking place in the tea gardens of West Bengal in the last one year;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what remedial measures are being taken to stop the starvation deaths?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) to (c) The State Government of West Bengal has reported that no starvation deaths have taken place in the tea gardens of West Bengal in the last one year. The State Government has further informed that a number of steps have been taken to address the issue of general distress of the workers. These include supply of subsidised food-grains under Antodya Ana Yojana and livelihood assistance through work under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). Assistance is also being provided through National Social Assistance Programme, SAHAY Prakaalpa (where cooked meals are provided to the destitute), Indira Awaas Yojana and Sanitation Programme. The State Government is also providing rice @ ₹ 2/- per kg. to workers in 43 tea gardens suffering from financial stress. In addition, the Central Government implements through the Tea Board, various programmes/activities for the welfare of workers in Tea Gardens.