

Rubber import

2096. SHRIMATI JHARNA DAS BAIDYA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) how much rubber has been imported during the last three years;
- (b) the details of the import duty levied by Government on rubber imports; and
- (c) whether the Ministry has decided to change the tariff of import duty, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) Import of Natural Rubber (NR) during the last three years is given as under:

Year	Quantity (Tonne)
2012-13	262,753
2013-14	360,263
2014-15	442,130
2015-16	365,805
(Apr-Jan.) Provisional	

(b) The bound rate for tariff on import of NR as per WTO agreement is 25% for all dry forms of NR (HS 400121, 400122 and 400129). The tariff on latex (HS 400110) is unbound. Current rate of import duty for all dry forms of NR is “25% or ₹ 30/ kg whichever is lower” and that of latex is “70% or ₹ 49 per kg whichever is lower”.

(c) As the current tariff is at the maximum of bound rate of 25% for NR, no further change in the duty rate is contemplated.

Balancing of anti-tobacco regulations by tobacco board

2097. DR. K. V. P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Tobacco Board is equipped to balance the stringent antitobacco regulations at home and abroad and the concerns of growers for remunerative prices;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) what is the response of the tobacco trade at the latest auctions; and
- (d) whether Government would assure that tobacco farmers would not be pushed into distress like last year which had forced some farmers to commit suicide?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) and (b) India is a signatory to Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) which entails demand and supply reduction strategies. The Tobacco Board, set up under an Act of Parliament "Tobacco Board Act, 1975 is regulating the production and curing of FCV tobacco having regard to the demand for tobacco in India and abroad, marketability of different types of FCV tobacco and other factors to ensure fair and remunerative prices to growers. This objective is achieved through crop planning and fixing crop size of FCV Tobacco every year and by registering tobacco growers.

Further, Tobacco Board, in collaboration with other organizations *viz.* State Government, Central Tobacco Research Institute (CTRI), National Institute of Plant Health Management (NIPHM), is implementing various extension and developmental schemes for improvement of productivity and quality of Indian FCV Tobacco to make it more competitive in the international market.

(c) and (d) The traders are active during the current auctions for sale of 2015-16 crop of FCV tobacco in the State of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The average price realized as on 09.03.2016 in Karnataka auction for crop season 2015-16 is ₹ 135.74 per kg which is higher by ₹ 28.25 per kg (26%) over the last year final average price of ₹ 107.49 per kg. Similarly, the average price realized on 09.03.2016 in Andhra Pradesh auction for 2015-16 crops season is ₹ 139.08 per kg which is higher by ₹ 18.58 (15%) per kg as against 120.50 per kg during last year for the corresponding volume marketed.

Broader definition of e-commerce

2098. SHRI A. W. RABI BERNARD: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has decided to come out with a broader definition of e-commerce after scrapping plans for defining the market place model followed by online retailers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether this has been necessitated as customs officials are demanding clear rules for the incentives declared under the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) for e-commerce exports; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) to (d) No such decision has been taken by the Government in this regard.