

(e) Before entering into negotiations with its trading partners, studies are undertaken internally, as well as through the Joint Study Group (JSG) to study the feasibility of the proposed FTAs including its benefits for and impact on the domestic industry.

Assistance to Tamil Nadu for purchase of turmeric boilers

18. SHRI K. R. ARJUNAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state what is the financial assistance given to Tamil Nadu in the year 2016-2017, with regard to purchase of turmeric boilers and turmeric polishers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): Government through the Spices Board provides assistance to the turmeric growers for installing turmeric polishers under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture [MIDH]. As per the scheme, 35% of the actual cost of the turmeric polisher subject to a maximum of ₹ 87,500/-is provided as subsidy to SC, ST, small, marginal and women farmers and ₹ 62,500/-as subsidy to other farmers in the major turmeric growing States including Tamil Nadu. During 2016-17, out of ₹ 10.80 lakhs allotted for turmeric polisher under MIDH to Spices Board, an amount of ₹ 2.62 lakhs has been allotted to Tamil Nadu.

Government through Spices Board also implements the Scheme “Export Oriented Production, Export Development and Promotion of Spices”, under which *inter-alia* assistance is provided to the turmeric growers for installing turmeric boilers at the rate of 50% of the actual cost of the turmeric boilers, subject to a maximum of ₹ 1.50 lakhs. During 2016-17, no financial assistance has been provided to the farmers in the turmeric growing areas of Tamil Nadu as of now.

Assistance to Tamil Nadu for purchase of beekeeping boxes

19. SHRI K. R. ARJUNAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state what is the financial assistance given to Tamil Nadu in the year 2016-17, with regard to purchase of beekeeping boxes to promote the pollination of cardamom flowers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): Government through Spices Board implements the Scheme “Export Oriented Production, Export Development and Promotion of Spices”, under which *inter-alia*, various programmes are taken up for boosting production of small and large cardamom in the country which include assistance to cardamom growers for installing beekeeping boxes for promoting pollination of cardamom flowers. 50% of the actual cost of the bee boxes with bee hives subject to a maximum of ₹ 1880/-per bee box are provided as subsidy to

the growers in the major cardamom growing States including Tamil Nadu. During 2016-17, no financial assistance has been provided to the eligible farmers from cardamom growing areas of Tamil Nadu as of now.

Easing rules for imports under APTA

20. SHRI MAJEED MEMON: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to ease rules for import of railway locomotives, nuclear plants, fissile material and aircraft under the Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA);

(b) whether it will be a preferential treaty with six countries, including China and South Korea, in return for a promise to allow lower imports of textiles and pharma products at zero duty;

(c) which are the other items other than textiles and pharma on which India offered concessions; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) The tariff concessions being granted to Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA) member States, on Margin of Preference basis, under the fourth round of exchange of tariff concessions, includes certain tariff lines relating to railway locomotives, nuclear plants, fissile material and aircraft. The Union Cabinet, in its meeting on 12th September, 2016 has approved the exchange of these tariff concessions. The decisions of the Cabinet would be implemented at the next meeting of the Ministerial Council of APTA.

The APTA (formerly the Bangkok Agreement) is an Agreement signed since 1975. Three Rounds of tariff concessions have already been exchanged among the member countries till 2003. The current membership of APTA consists of six countries, namely, Bangladesh, China, India, Lao PDR, Republic of Korea, and Sri Lanka.

(b) Yes, APTA is a preferential treaty based on Margin of Preference. Concessions on tariff lines proposed to be offered by China and Korea, *inter-alia*, cover certain textiles and pharma products.

(c) and (d) In accordance with the agreed modalities of tariff negotiations in the Fourth Round of negotiations under APTA, India has offered 28.01% of dutiable national tariff lines (in HS2012 at 8-digit) with an average MoP of 33.45%. These, *inter-alia*, include mineral ores, rare earth elements, antiques collectors' items and works of art etc.