

**Reports on impact of FTAs on farmers**

3059. SHRI K. K. RAGESH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any authentic reports about impact of Free Trade Agreements the India 'Sri Lanka FTA, the India' ASEAN FTA and South Asian FTA, on Indian farmers of cash crops, are available;

(b) if so, what is the volume of loss suffered by the farmers of cash crops in India due to price fall resulted by FTAs, if any;

(c) if so, whether Government is proposing to review the FTAs; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) and (b) No Sir, the Department of Commerce has not commissioned any study on the impact of the India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the India-ASEAN Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) and the Agreement on the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) on farmers of cash crops. However, while negotiating a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the Government takes a number of steps to protect the interest of domestic stakeholders and farmers by keeping cash crops in the negative list of the trade agreements to the extent possible. The Government has largely adopted a conservative approach on cash crops in most Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) signed by India so far.

(c) and (d) Free Trade Agreements provide for a periodic review of implementation issues on the basis of mutual consent of the trading partners.

**Steps to bring down barriers to trade**

3060. SHRI DEREK O'BRIEN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry is taking steps to bring down barriers to trade and enhance the capacity of the country to engage better with the global trading network;

(b) whether the Ministry has an action plan for the ratification of World Trade Organisation's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA); and

(c) whether the Ministry is taking any steps to introduce rules for services to ensure special and differential treatment for developing and poor nations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) Yes.

(b) India has ratified and submitted instrument of acceptance of Trade Facilitation Agreement to WTO in April, 2016. The TFA has come into force on 22nd February, 2017.

(c) India has recently tabled a draft legal text on trade facilitation in services at the WTO which includes a separate section on special and differential treatment for developing countries and LDCs.

#### **India's stand on Work Visas**

3061. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government failed to properly present India's stand to the US on Work-Visas in 2015-16 and 2016-17;

(b) what were the delays and lapses on the part of Government in its interactions with the US Government on H1-Visas and Work-Visas for Indians;

(c) what would be the losses to Indian professionals due to such lapses on the part of Government; and

(d) the steps proposed to enquire and place responsibility on officers or agencies responsible for the Visa failures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) to (d) The Government of India continues to engage the US Administration for better access of its professionals in the US. H-1B and L-1 visa issues, including increase in visa processing fees, high rejection rates and other difficulties faced by the Indian services companies, have been raised with the US Government at various levels. India has also taken up the matter on US visa fee hike in the Dispute Settlement Body of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

#### **Development of special economic zones in Andhra Pradesh**

3062. SHRI T. G. VENKATESH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken up the development of Special Economic Zones in the State of Andhra Pradesh, if so, the details thereof;

(b) the details of the places identified for this purpose; and

(c) the quantum of funds allocated and being released in the present financial year, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) and (b) In addition to