

(b) and (c) The India's merchandise export has increased by 13.43% during the last six months of the year 2017-18 (Sept.,-Feb.,) as compared to the corresponding period of previous year as per the details below:-

| Value (in million USD) |           |           |                         |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Months                 | 2016-17   | 2017-18*  | % change over last year |
| September              | 22768.35  | 28367.44  | 24.59                   |
| October                | 23360.61  | 22852.41  | -2.18                   |
| November               | 20066.26  | 26087.15  | 30.01                   |
| December               | 24056.48  | 27676.86  | 15.05                   |
| January                | 22356.32  | 24955.99  | 11.63                   |
| February               | 24726.71  | 25834.36  | 4.48                    |
| TOTAL                  | 137334.73 | 155774.21 | 13.43                   |

Source: DGCI&S, Kolkata

(d) and (e) Need based assessments are made based on sector-wise trade data from time to time in consultation with stakeholders. In order to reduce trade deficit and boost export performance, the Government announced a major relief package for exporters in October, 2017 by extending the Advance Authorization (AA)/Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG)/100% EOU schemes for sourcing inputs etc. from abroad as well as domestic suppliers. During the mid-term review of Foreign Trade Policy, export incentives under Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) have been increased by 2% for labour intensive and MSME sectors leading to additional annual incentive of ₹ 4,567 crore. This was in addition to already announced increase in MEIS incentives from 2% to 4% for Ready-made Garments and Made Ups in the labour intensive Textiles Sector with an additional annual incentive of ₹ 2,743 crore. Further, incentives under Services Exports from India Scheme (SEIS) have also been increased by 2% leading to additional annual incentive of ₹ 1,140 crore.

For reducing imports and promoting manufacturing in India, Government has taken up major initiatives under "Make in India" and improving "Ease of Doing Business".

#### **WTO restrictions on food procurement at administered prices**

3687. SHRIMATI SASIKALA PUSHPA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether WTO has imposed any restrictions on food procurement at administered prices for food security programme by Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has accepted the restrictions imposed by WTO on food procurement at administered prices for food security programme by Government; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY): (a) to (d) The relevant rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO), adopted at the end of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations in 1994, are applicable to the purchase of food under public stockholding programmes for food security purposes. As per the rules, if the food for these programmes is purchased at “administered” prices, and not at market prices, then this is considered as support to farmers. The WTO rules impose certain limits on such support. In order to ensure that these limits do not constrain public stockholding programmes for food security purposes in developing countries, a coalition of developing countries, including India, sought to amend the WTO rules. As per decisions taken at Ministerial Conferences of the WTO held in Bali (December, 2013), Nairobi (December, 2015) and in the WTO General Council in November, 2014, an interim mechanism is in place. This provides that WTO members would exercise due restraint (popularly termed as a ‘Peace Clause’) in raising disputes under the relevant provisions of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture in respect of public stockholding programmes for food security purposes even if countries exceed their permissible limits on the subsidies involved in food purchases under such programmes. It was also decided that a permanent solution would be negotiated. While a permanent solution could not be achieved at the recently concluded 11th Ministerial Conference of the WTO held in Buenos Aires, Argentina in December, 2017 due to a lack of consensus, India’s public stockholding programmes continue to be protected due to the interim mechanism, which is available in perpetuity.

#### **Decline in farm exports**

3688. SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for decline in farm exports during last year;

(b) what export restrictions are put on farm exports; and

(c) whether it is a fact that these export restrictions have disadvantaged farmers in the international market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY): (a) India’s exports of farm products (including plantation and marine products) during 2016-17 amounted to USD 33.37