

The task force in its meeting considered cross-cutting issues. Participation from Ministries/ Departments involved in various aspects of e-commerce was requested for the task force meeting to finalise the draft recommendations emerging from the sub-group meetings. The deliberations of the task force and the sub-groups were summarized into the sub-groups reports, which further fed into the draft recommendations.

(c) The task force involved representation from the Government, Industry and experts with domain knowledge.

Misuse of South Asian FTA

323. DR. SASIKALA PUSHPA RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received any complaints from domestic manufacturers regarding misuse of South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) in importing various products from neighbouring countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of the steps taken by Government to resolve the issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. A number of references have been received by the Government, alleging import of pepper, arecanut and refined edible oil of third country origin through some neighbouring countries, utilising the provisions of the Agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) and adversely affecting the domestic prices.

(c) The Government has taken several steps to resolve the issue, which, *inter-alia*, include the following:

- (i) Minimum Import Price (MIP) of ₹ 500/- per kg. was imposed on pepper *vide* Notification dated 06.12.2017. Further, *vide* Notification dated 21.03.2018, import of pepper below ₹ 500/- per kg. was prohibited;
- (ii) MIP for arecanut was increased from ₹ 162/- per kg. to ₹ 251/- per kg. *vide* Notification dated 17.01.2017. Further, *vide* Notification dated 25.07.2018, the import of arecanut below ₹ 251/- per kg. was prohibited;
- (iii) The relevant authorities in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh have been requested to exercise extreme care and diligence in issuing the Certificates

of Origin, for export of these products to India under SAFTA and also share copies of such certificates with India;

- (iv) Instructions have been issued to the field functionaries to be vigilant during import of such products under SAFTA from neighbouring countries, so as to curb their unauthorised import, etc.

New Agricultural Export Policy

324. SHRI MD. NADIMUL HAQUE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is planning to bring on a new Agricultural Export Policy;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the exports of agricultural goods have increased *vis-a-vis* the imports of agricultural goods of similar commodities both in terms of volume and value during the last three years, if so, the details thereof;
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (e) whether the share of agriculture to total exports has remained stagnant during the last three years, if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY): (a) The Government has already brought out a comprehensive Agriculture Export Policy.

- (b) The Agriculture Export Policy has the following vision:

"Harness export potential of Indian agriculture, through suitable policy instruments, to make India a global power in agriculture, and raise farmers' income."

Inter-alia, the objectives of the Agriculture Export policy are as under:

- (i) To diversify our export basket, destinations and boost high value and value added agricultural exports, including focus on perishables.
- (ii) To promote novel, indigenous, organic, ethnic, traditional and non-traditional Agri products exports.