

294.95 million) in 2017-18 to 92,290 tonnes (USD 605.20 million) in 2018-19, whereas Indian exports of refined copper have declined from 378,555 tonnes (USD 2,435.57 million) in 2017-18 to 47,917 tonnes (USD 302.27 million) in 2018-19, which has resulted in net imports of 44,373 tonnes (USD 302.93) in 2018-19 from a position of net exports of 334,310 tonnes (USD 2,140.62 million) in 2017-18. During the current financial year (April- November, 2019), the imports and exports of refined copper stood at 109,324 tonnes (USD 684.02 million) and 18,300 tonnes (USD 106.35 million) respectively.

The major companies engaged in production of refined copper in India are Hindustan Copper Limited, Hindalco and Vedanta Ltd.

The domestic production and exports of refined copper have declined largely due to the closure, since May 2018, of the copper smelter plant of Vedanta Ltd. at Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu, which has an annual production capacity of 4 lakh tonnes per annum.

M/s Vedanta Limited has filed a writ petition in February, 2019 before the Madras High Court challenging the orders of the State Government of Tamil Nadu and Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB), and the matter is *sub-judice*.

**Meetings with Export Promotion Councils
regarding RCEP**

702. SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government met various Export Promotion Councils on RCEP deal;

(b) if so, the deliberations made in the meetings with the heads of various Export Promotion Councils and others;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Indian industry is still worried about RCEP deal; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL):

(a) to (d) Yes, during the course of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations, the Government has held regular stakeholders' consultations

including with Export Promotion Councils and received inputs which were taken into consideration while formulating India's position in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations. During the 3rd RCEP Leaders Summit which was held on 4 November, 2019 in Bangkok, India stated that the current structure of RCEP did not reflect the RCEP Guiding Principles or address the outstanding issues and concerns of India, in the light of which India did not join RCEP in its current form. India's position in RCEP was also aimed at protecting the interests and domestic sensitivities of its stakeholders.

Decline in tea production in Southern States

703. SHRI R. VAITHILINGAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the tea production in the Southern States, especially in the Nilgiris, has declined by 15 per cent in 2019;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that one of the reasons for the falling production of tea was due to unfavourable weather conditions in those areas?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL):

(a) to (c) The production of tea in the South Indian States (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka) declined from 224.87 million kgs.(in 2018) to 219.04 million kgs. (in 2019), thereby exhibiting a decline of 2.59%. The tea production in Nilgris exhibited a reduction of 1.99% during 2019 as compared to 2018. The decline in tea production is attributable, *inter alia*, to un-even distribution of rain and localised pest infestation.

Allocation of funds for projects under CSR

704. SHRI HARSHVARDHAN SINGH DUNGARPUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Public Sector Undertakings under the purview of the Ministry have been allocating funds for taking up projects under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) scheme;

(b) if so, the details of the total funds allocated and projects undertaken by these companies under this head during the last three years and the current year along with their present status, company and State-wise; and