

April-October, 2001-02 was negative at 2.88%. However, the performance of export turned positive at 0.64% for the period April-December, 2001-02 for which the latest data is available. In rupee terms exports, during April-December, 2001-02, were Rs. 154445 crores which is 5.05% higher than the value of exports during April-December,

2000-01. During April-August 2001 export growth rate in dollar term was (-) 2.30%.

(e) The lower export growth is mainly due to the global economic slowdown and the impact of the Sept. 11 events and its aftermath.

(f) Some of the recent measures taken to promote exports include reduction in the export credit rate for both pre-shipment and post-shipment, special financial package to manufacture exporters with an export contract of Rs. 100 crore or above for a period of one year, extension of normal repatriation period from 180 days to 360 days for exports for a period of one year and upward revision of duty draw back rates on a number of product groups. All this and other factors have helped to arrest the declining trend in exports experienced during the early part of the current financial year.

Further, taking Stock of the developments in the recent past and considering the current global economic environment, the Medium Term Export Strategy for the period 2002-2007 has been announced.

Disposal of Piled-up Tobacco

14. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether tobacco stocks piled-up two years back have since been disposed of;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the role of the tobacco Board in view of adverse weather conditions this year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY):

(a) and (b) Tobacco manufacturers, exporters and dealers are

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together holding 119.88 million kgs. of old stock as on 1.1.2002. It was in a bid to address the situation of over-supply in the market that a decision was taken to not register any growers in Andhra Pradesh in the 2000-2001 season or to fix any crop size in that State during that season.

(c) Following the untimely rains which caused damage to the standing FCV tobacco crop in two districts of Andhra Pradesh, the Tobacco Board has carried out a preliminary assessment of the damage sustained by the growers. The Board is engaged in an intensive campaign to educate the growers on measures to reduce the curing losses sustained as a result of this damage.

Impact of Bilateral Trade on Indian Economy

15. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the economic partnership agreements entered into with various countries for increasing bilateral trade since January, 2001; and

(b) the impact of such agreement on India's trade since signing of such agreements with various countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY):

(a) India has entered into the agreements in the fields of trade, industry and economic co-operation with Botswana, Tazikistan and Iran during the year 2001. Bilateral Investment Protection Agreements have been signed with Mongolia, Croatia, Kuwait and Ukraine.

(b) the signing of such agreements would lead to enhanced co-operation between India and these countries in various fields like trade, investment, industry, services & tourism etc.