

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY) : (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Hardships to farmers in Plantation Sector due to Import Policy

3121. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have received any submission during the last three years from State Governments regarding hardship to farmers and work in the plantation sector due to the import policy in this sector;

(b) if so, the details including the action taken on the above submission;

(c) whether the latest Indo-Sri Lankan bilateral agreements have hit the plantation sector of Kerala badly;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the import and export in the plantation sector for the last three years, year-wise, State-wise and category-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO) : (a) and (b) Yes Sir. A delegation from Government of Kerala had submitted a representation highlighting various issues concerning plantation industry in Kerala, which included a demand for suspension of import of all plantation crops for re-export. The matter was examined by the Government and it was felt that the import policy of the Government had not adversely affected the plantation sector. In the case of tea and coffee, imports are mainly for re-exports with value addition. The total import of tea is about 2% of the production of tea in the country and more than 95% of imported tea is re-exported. Import of tea is allowed for re-export in order to increase the price competitiveness of Indian tea in the international market and also to cater to the requirements of international buyers. In fact, the substantially improved performance in India's tea exports to Iraq during 2002-2003 would not have been possible without the required tea blends, which have been using a good portion of the imported teas.

Besides, Government has taken adequate steps to protect the plantation sector from any surge in imports, which includes increasing the import duty on tea and coffee to 100%. In the case of Natural Rubber (NR), duty free import of NR against advance licence and by EOU/EPZ units is banned and only two ports viz. Kolkata and Visakhapatnam are designated for all imports of NR

into the country. These commodities are also in the sensitive list of commodities, the import of which is being monitored by the Government.

(c) and (d) The Indo-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (FTA) has not had any adverse impact on the plantation sector of Kerala. In the case of tea, while the tariff rate quota under the FTA is fixed at 15 million kgs annually, the actual imports during 2000, 2001 and 2002 were only 0.46, 0.31 and 0.60 million kgs respectively. As regards coffee, there is no threat of import of coffee from Sri Lanka to India as Sri Lanka is neither a coffee exporting country nor a significant coffee producing country. Natural Rubber is not covered under the Indo-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement.

(e) The State-wise export/import figures for tea, coffee & natural rubber and category-wise import figures for tea and coffee are not maintained. Details of category-wise export of tea and coffee, total imports of tea & coffee and category-wise export and import of natural rubber during the last three years are given below :—

Exports of Tea and Coffee

TEA

(Quantity in million kg.)

Category	2000	2001	2002
Bulk Tea	131.78	131.47	162.80
Packet Tea	70.77	45.87	30.69
Tea Bags	1.81	2.52	2.12
Instant Tea	2.46	2.73	2.45
TOTAL	206.82	182.59	198.06

COFFEE

(Quantity in tonnes)

Category	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
Arabica	81,622	80,308	67,481
Robusta	1,29,809	1,22,471	1,02,645
Instant	33,509	44,129	43,460
TOTAL	2,44,940	2,46,908	2,13,586

Imports of Tea and Coffee

Year	Tea (Qty in million kg.)	Coffee (Qty. in tonnes)
1999-00	10.36	2,403
2000-01	15.23	6,241
2001-02	16.02	5,056

Exports and Imports of Natural Rubber

(Quantity in Tonnes)

Category	Export			Import		
	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
RSS Grades	5,282	12,605	6,199	11,143	3,088	27,403
ISNR Grades	657	684	714	6,012	2,647	19,516
Crepe	1	2	—	209	160	297
Latex	49	65	82	2,849	3,075	2,515
Skim	—	—	—	—	—	38
TOTAL :	5,989	13,356	6,995	20,213	8,970	49,769

Eye Bank in Safdarjung Hospital

3122. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

- whether Safdarjung Hospital, Delhi has any Eye Bank attached to it;
- if so, the details thereof including the complement of medical and para-medical staff attached to it ;