

Cultivation of Jute Eastern Region

416. SHRI DINESH CHANDRA GOSWAMI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether due to unremunerative prices, cultivators in the Eastern region have shown disinclination towards cultivation of jute; and

(b) if so, what steps Government are taking to remedy the situation?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH):

(a) There has been a decline in the area under jute cultivation in the recent past due to two factors viz. (i) weather condition and (ii) competing crops being more remunerative.

(b) Government has been fixing statutory minimum support price for raw jute every year on the basis of the APC's recommendations. The Jute Corporation of India has been conducting purchase and price support operation for maintaining the prices at or above the prices fixed, so as to ensure fair returns to the jute cultivators. Intensive Jute District Programme has been taken up in all the major jute growing States as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for boosting jute production. The emphasis, however, is on higher yield per hectare rather than on increase in the area under jute so that the cultivator gets a better return.

Trade with Bangladesh

417. SHRI SHYAM SUNDAR MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether trade between India Bangladesh is normal; and

(b) whether a new trade agreement has been signed to further the scope of trade and commerce?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH):

(a) and (b). Trade between India and Bangladesh is proceeding according to the trade Protocol signed between the two countries on 17th December, 1974. This trade Protocol flows from the Trade Agreement signed between India and Bangladesh in September, 1973. Trade talks for 1976 are being held from the 7th to 12th January, 1976.

Value of Rupee

418. SHRI P. M. SAYEED: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the exchange value of Indian rupee has appreciated after the de-linking of rupee from the British sterling; and

(b) if so, to what extent and what further steps Government propose to take to strengthen the rupee in the international market?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI-MATI SUSHILA ROHATGI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The average of RBI's buying and selling rates before delinking of rupee from Pound Sterling was Rs. 18.60 and after the change-over on 25th September, 1975 it was Rs. 18.3084 to a Pound Sterling. Since 5th December, 1975 the rate is Rs. 18.1284 to a Pound Sterling.

After the proclamation of Emergency and with the coming into force of the Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act, smuggling and illegal remittances have come down considerably and there has been a substantial increase in inward remittances through official channels. Inflation has been brought under check and there is a downward trend in the

prices of a number of commodities. All these are expected to have a stabilising effect on the exchange value of the rupee.

Export of Tea

419. DR. RANEN SEN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether export of tea is increasing since last few years;

(b) the steps taken to increase production of tea and improve its quality;

(c) whether any step has been taken to take over sick tea gardens; and

(d) if so, the main features thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Tea Board's Development Schemes viz. Tea Plantation Finance Scheme and Replantation Subsidy Scheme provide Financial Assistance for extending new areas and/or Replanting/Replacing old areas. The Tea Machinery Hire Purchase Scheme assists modernisation of factories or expanding existing factories. These Schemes collectively help in increasing not only production but also quality of Tea. Recently the replanting subsidy scheme has been amended to cover rejuvenation pruning with or without infilling. This Scheme will assist in improving production of quality teas in hill areas. The Tea Board provides assistance in ensuring availability of various inputs like fertilizers, coal, furnace oil, weedicides, pesticides, etc.

(c) and (d). Measures including take over of management to rehabili-

tate the gardens which can be revived back to normalcy have been settled by Government, and the proposals for introducing legislation to amend the Tea Act, 1953 to provide for taking over management of such gardens have been finalised.

मिख को वस्तुओं का निर्यात

420. डा० लक्ष्मीनारायण पांडेय :
क्या बाणिज्य मंत्री दृढ़ बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) भारत-मिख करार के अन्तर्गत भारत मिख को किन वस्तुओं का निर्यात करेगा ;

(ख) इस निर्यात से भारत को कितनी आय होगी ; और

(ग) मिख से आयात किये जाने वाले अप्रोधित तेल का कितना मूल्य दिया जायेगा ?

बाणिज्य मंत्रालय में उपमंत्री (श्री विश्वनाथ प्रताप सिंह) : (क) से (ग). मिख के अरब गणराज्य के साथ 1-1-1976 से 31-12-1976 के लिए एक व्यापार प्रबन्ध संपन्न किया गया है। इस व्यापार प्रबन्ध में यह व्यवस्था है कि भारत से 60 करोड़ रुपये मूल्य के कोक कर कोयला, लोह अयस्क, लोहा तथा इस्पात, चाय, पटसन, माल, इंजीनियरी सामान औषधियां, भेषजीय पदार्थ तथा रासायनिक पदार्थ, चीनी, तम्बाकू, प्लाईवुड आदि के निर्यात किये जायेंगे तथा मिख से उतने ही मूल्य के कच्चे तेल तथा अन्य वस्तुओं के आयात किये जायेंगे।