

[Translation]

Free Import of Equipment

3623. SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received any memorandum from the President of the Export Promotion and Infrastructural Development Panel, on behalf of U.P. Leather Industries Association;

(b) if so, the details of the requests made in the memorandum; and

(c) the reaction of the Government on the aforesaid matter?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Government receives representation from trade & industry with regard to various provisions of Exim Policy and related procedure. The suggestions of U.P. Leather Industries Association have also been received which have been examined by the Government. These suggestions basically relate to Export Promotion capital goods scheme, the Duty Exemption Scheme and the duty structure on leather products. The Association's request to allow jigs, fixture, dies and moulds under EPCG scheme without any limit is under examination in consultation with Department of Revenue. The exemption limit for payment of excise has already been enhanced from Rs. 30 lakhs to Rs. 50 lakhs in the recent budget. The Association's request with regard to refund of all duties on the basis of documents produced will have to be studied in consultation with other export promotion organisations. The request to put all items presently allowed under SIL to be put under OGL is not acceptable for the present.

[English]

OGL Policy

3624. SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of industries which are not covered under the Open General Licencing (OGL) Policy; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) The number of items covered under various industries which are in the Negative List of Imports are given in Chapter 15 of the Export and Import Policy, 1997-2002 (incorporating amendments made upto 13.4.1998).

(b) The items are in the Negative List because of the Balance of Payments as well as security, environment and social reasons. Copies of the Export and Import Policy,

1997-2002, incorporating amendments upto 13.4.1998, have already been laid on the Table of the House.

Austerity Measures

3625. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state : The austerity measures taken by the Government in view of economic sanctions imposed on India by the United States and other European Countries?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : Since the sanctions/suspensions of official loans will mostly apply to new loans, the disbursements of loans already agreed upon is likely to remain unaffected. The impact on the economy and on ongoing projects is expected to be limited. Austerity measures are a continuous process of review and adaptation and are not necessarily connected to specific events.

Tourism in Kerala

3626. SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMACHANDRAN :
SHRI S. AJAYA KUMAR :

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the steps being taken by the Government to attract more tourists, both foreign and Indian to Kerala, which is well known for its long coastal lines, evergreen forests, rivers, back-waters and places of historical importance;

(b) whether Government have initiated any special measures to familiarise the foreign tourists with the tourist destinations in Kerala;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the details of specific projects in Kerala approved for Central assistance during 1998-99; and

(e) the details thereof and the amount sanctioned and released against each of them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG) : (a) to (c) The Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India has positioned Kerala as an attractive tourist destination in the niche markets overseas by way of advertising in print and electronic media, participation in travel marts, direct mailing, organising of 'Know India' seminars and dissemination of information through pamphlets/brochures and video cassettes. The promotion of fairs and festivals of Kerala like the Great Elephant March, Onam and the Boat Races, is an integral part of the marketing strategy.

(d) and (e) The Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, offers Central financial assistance to State Govt./ Union Territories for development of tourism infrastructure