

the past three years are as below :

Year	(US \$ Mn)		
	Value of Total leather Production	Value of Total leather Exports	Value of Export of Garments
1995-96	**	1752.34	413.62
1996-97		1605.82	424.37
1997-98		1589.11	417.16

** Since most of the production is in the unorganised sector, reliable estimates of leather production are not available.

(b) & (c) The overall exports of leather and leather products have declined during 1996-97 and 1997-98. However, the export of leather garment had shown an increase during 1995-96 and 1996-97 against that of the previous years. But, in 1997-98 there is a marginal decline in exports of leather garment. The reasons for such overall slow down in exports are as under :

External :

- Overall recession in Europe.
- Constant fluctuation in European currencies particularly the Deutsche Mark, and the US \$.
- Emergence of China, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam as major manufacturing and competitor countries.
- Re-emergence of production facilities in East European countries as a low cost option for Western European countries.

Internal :

- Mass closure of tanneries during 1996-97 arising out of Hon'ble Supreme Court's orders.
- Lack of modernisation efforts in the tanning sector.

(d) The Government has already taken certain measures to provide assistance to Indian Leather Garment exporters. These include :

1. The All Industry Rates of Duty Draw Back has been enhanced from 7% to 9% for leather apparels with effect from 1st June, 1997.
2. The credit rate under DEPB scheme for leather garments was enhanced from 9% to 11% with effect from 9th July, 1997. Recently, these rates for all leather products including leather garments, were increased from 11% to 13%.
3. In the Union Budget 1998-99, certain budgetary concessions in the form of reduction of duty on capital goods machineries and inputs etc., have been provided for leather sector. The import duty has been reduced from 20% to 5%.

Sound and Light Programme in Agra Fort

4522. SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the reasons for delay in starting sound and light programme in the Fort at Agra;

(b) the time by which it is proposed to be started; and

(c) the name of agency to whom given the responsibility to run and maintain the said programme ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG) : (a) and (b) The programme of the Sound and Light Show at Agra Fort is complete. This was to have been viewed and approved by the Chief Production Coordinator on 30th May, 1998 but due to his sad demise on that very day, arrangement has been made for viewing and approval by another expert Shri B.V. Karanth. The Sound and Light Show will commence after the programme is received from the executing agency and approved by the expert.

(c) The Agra Development Authority will run and maintain the show.

Handmade Matches

4523. SHRI VAIKO : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a proposal to start co-operative marketing forum for handmade matches;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government propose to extend any subsidy to this tiny and cottage industry sector; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT) : (a) No, Sir. There is no such proposal so far as the Khadi and Village Industries Commission is concerned.

(b) In view of reply at (a) above, question does not arise.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Khadi & Village Industries Commission provides 25% Margin Money for financing viable Cottage Match Projects as a part of its Margin Money Scheme.

[Translation]

Recruitment of Youths by UTI

4524. SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM :
SHRI RAMESHWAR PATIDAR :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any practice in the UTI to recruit unemployed youths for six months and then retrench them and fresh recruitments are made again.