

(c) to (e) Does not arise.

Shortage of Salt

5491. SHRI K.L. SHARMA : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recent cyclonic storm has totally disrupted the salt manufacturing in Gujarat;

(b) if so, whether the country is likely to face shortage of salt as a result thereof; and

(c) if so, the measures the Government propose to take to tide over the impending shortage of salt in the country?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT):

(a) No, Sir. Only 12% of the area under salt cultivation in Gujarat has been fully damaged. Another 28% of the area has been partially damaged.

(b) and (c) As sufficient buffer stock of salt was available in the beginning of the year, the available stock of salt should be adequate to meet the edible and industrial requirement of salt.

Government is providing financial assistance in the form of ex-gratia and loan to the damaged salt works due to cyclone as a measure of immediate relief for reconstruction of salt works. Apart from this, increased level of assistance from the cess proceeds for developmental works has been sanctioned for the State of Gujarat. Technical assistance for rebuilding of damaged salt works on scientific lines is being rendered by the office of the Salt Commissioner. The above measures will help restoring production of salt in affected area and ensure adequate availability.

DEPB Scheme

5492. SHRI SHANTILAL PURSHOTTAMDAS PATEL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the credit rate under Duty Entitlement Passbook Scheme has been revised recently for dyed and printed fabrics/sarees made from polyester yarn and fabrics/sarees made from mixed man-made filament yarn/spun yarn;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the exporter and their associations opposed the revised rate with value cap for DEPB entitlement;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (e) The Duty Entitlement Passbook Scheme (DEPB) was introduced in the Exim Policy w.e.f. 1.4.1997. Under this schemes duty credit is allowed on the basis of a fixed percentage of the FOB value of exports. The credit rates have been notified for over 1800 export items as of now. The Inter-Ministerial Committee known as DEPB Committee fixes the DEPB rates for various items taking into account the data

furnished by various Trade Organisations, Export Promotion Councils, Individual exporters relating to the CIF value of various input items which are imported as also the FOB value of the export items.

After the DEPB Scheme remained in operation for some months, it was decided to review some aspects of the said scheme so as to provide some safeguards against grant of excess credit through over-invoicing of export products. One of the revised parameters that was considered after the review was that in respect of DEPB rates of 15% and above the DEPB Committee shall examine the desirability of prescribing appropriate value cap which would act as a ceiling for grant to DEPB credit for various export products.

In the case of Dyed and/or Dyed and printed Fabrics/Sarees made from 100% Polyester Filament Yarn or from mixed Man Made Filament yarn/spun yarn, the DEPB Committee had fixed a rate of 17%.

The credit rates under DEPB schemes for Dyed and/or Dyed and printed Fabrics/Sarees made from 100% polyester Filament Yarn has been revised from 17% to 19% with a value cap of Rs. 190/- kg w.e.f. 15.4.98. Credit rate under DEPB scheme for Fabrics/Sarees made out of mixed Man Made Filament yarn/Spun Yarn has been revised from 17% to 16% with a value cap of Rs. 300/- kg. w.e.f. 15.4.1998.

Many exporters including Synthetic and Rayon Export Promotion Council, Mumbai had opposed the revised rate with value cap for the DEPB entitlement. These representations were duly examined by DEPB Committee and a hearing was given to the representative of the Export Promotion Council, the value cap for Dyed and/or Dyed and printing Fabrics/Sarees made from 100% Polyester Filament Yarn was revised from Rs. 190/- kg. to Rs. 300 kg.

Dearness Allowance

5493. SHRI C.P.M. GIRIYAPPA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether one more dearness allowance has fallen due to the Central Government Employees due to the steep increase in the prices of essential commodities; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) and (b) Dearness Allowance to Central Government employees is revised twice a year from 1st January and 1st July payable with the salary for the months of March and September respectively. The decision regarding another instalment of Dearness Allowance effective from 1st July, 1998 will be taken well before it becomes payable in September, 1998.

Leather Industry

5494. SHRI N. DENNIS: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether new markets are being explored for the leather industry; and