

countries, discussions were held with the visiting US military delegations for furthering bilateral Defence relations with the USA in the field of training, exchange of visits and discussions in matters of mutual concern.

Import of Raw Silk and Silk Yarn

837. SHRI ANBARASU ERA:
DR. RAMESH CHAND
TOMAR:
SHRI DEVI BUX SINGH:
SHRIMATI BHAVNA
CHIKHALIA:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a gap between demand and supply of domestic silk yarn in the country;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard;

(c) whether raw silk and silk yarn are likely to be imported;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and the countries from which these are to be imported; and

(e) the quantity proposed to be imported and the time by which it is likely to materialise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT): (a) to (e). Due to outbreak of pebrine disease in the rearing areas of major silk producing States of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh & Tamil Nadu, there was a decline in the arrivals of cocoons in the cocoon markets which ultimately affected the availability as well as prices of raw silk in the country. The Central Silk Board and the concerned State Government have already

initiated various measures for control of the disease.

In order to stabilize the prices of raw silk and to provide raw silk to the weavers at reasonable rates, the Government of India has permitted import of 200 metric tonnes of raw silk by the Central Silk Board and designated agencies. These organisations have the choice to import silk from any source depending on their requirements. However, it is likely that most of the imports will be from China.

The organisations are taking steps to import silk as quickly as possible.

Coffee Prices in International Market

838. SHRI ANBARASU ERA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the price of Indian coffee in the international market has been pegged down to the selling price of 1951;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether it is a fact that the 'purchase tax' levied by the Government of Karnataka has compelled many coffee growers in the state to divert from coffee cultivation to other cash crops; and

(d) if so, the steps proposed to be taken by the Union Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b). There has been no artificial pegging down of the price of Indian Coffee in the international market. However, as a result of suspension of quotas under the International Coffee Agreement with effect from 4th July, 1989, the supply in