

Bio-Diversity Plant

2324. SHRI RAMACHANDRAIAH RUMANDLA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state the action taken to protect India's bio-diversity plant varieties and an agriculture policy that protects farmers' rights and sets a framework for imports and exports of agro-commodities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO) : In order to protect the biodiversity of the country, the Government are formulating a legislation on biodiversity with the broad objectives of conservation and sustainable utilisation of biodiversity and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of biological resources. Protection for plant varieties based on the criteria of distinctiveness, uniformity and stability, is proposed to be given under the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Bill, 1999, which has been introduced in the Lok Sabha on 14.12.1999. Under this law, nothing will affect the farmers' traditional rights to save, use, exchange, share and sell their farm produce of the protected variety, except sale for resowing under commercial marketing arrangements. The Export—Import policy of agricultural products is governed principally by the concerns of India's food security, the maximizing of farm incomes, the need to earn foreign exchange and to augment domestic availability of agricultural products while protecting and providing avenues for rural employment.

Farmers' Service Centres in Maharashtra

2325. SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government have established Farmers' Service Centres in various parts of Maharashtra;
- (b) if so, the district-wise details and objective thereof;
- (c) whether Government have assessed its performance in the State; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?