

(b) The fear that the import of fish will adversely effect the local fishing industry is misplaced. The total import duty on fish, Crustaceans etc. has been raised from 21.16% to 44.04% w.e.f. 1.4.2000 and this in itself acts as a deterrent on large scale imports. Currently, the import of fish is limited, and is generally meant for processing for re-export. The processing infrastructure available in the country is utilized to the extent of about 20 per cent only, and hence the current import of fish encourages employment generation, and higher export earnings.

Profit to farmers

†1246. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the farmers do not get sufficient profit for their produce even now;

(b) if so, whether Government are going to implement some new agriculture policy to help the farmers get proper profit for their produce;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) National Agriculture Policy has been placed on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 28th July, 2000.

(d) Does not arise.

Modernisation in vegetable production

1247. SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Maharashtra State is facing shortage of vegetables resulting in its high cost, if so, what steps Government propose to take to modernise the methods of production of vegetables at lesser cost;

(b) whether Government plan to bring such production activities under agro industries to take up production in large scale in Maharashtra; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

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(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) to (c) There is no report of shortage of vegetables in any part of Maharashtra. However, for modernisation of vegetable production Government of India is implementing Centrally Sponsored scheme on Integrated development of vegetables including root and tuber crops. The Scheme envisages production of quality planting material of vegetables including onion and potato, seed village concept, transfer of advance technology through laying out frontline demonstration plots at farmers fields and training to the farmers, on-farm post harvest handling etc., under which assistance may be availed by Government of Maharashtra.

Illegal prawn fishing

1248. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether illegal prawn fishing in Orissa's coastal Kendrapara district threatens existing mangrove forests; and

(b) if so, the action taken or proposed to demolish such "gherries" to protect ecological balance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A special campaign has been launched by the State Revenue and Forests Departments for demolition of prawn "gherries" which were unauthorisedly constructed for prawn fishing. The State Government has reported that so far, 728 acres of gherries have been demolished.

National Policy for Drought Proofing

1249. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to formulate comprehensive action plan for eradication/mitigation of drought in the areas of rainfall of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of evaluation of programme designed for drought proofing in all these years; and