

[10 August, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) The Ministry of Water Resources has informed that they have not formulated any National Action Plan for controlling the floods particularly in the State of Assam. The Ministry of Agriculture has not formulated any such Action Plan.

(c) and (c) As per information available from the Government of Assam, the damage due to floods of 1999-2000 and 2000-01 is indicated below:—

Item	1999-2000	2000-2001
Population affected (in lakhs)	8.94	15.06
Human lives lost	3	20
Cropped area affected (lakh ha.)	0.59	1.24

(d) Central share of Calamity Relief Fund for 2000-01 amounting to Rs. 15.66 crore has been released to the State.

Fall in Prices of Copra, Rubber and Tobacco etc.

2047. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN:

SHRI KORAMBAYIL AHMMED HAJI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to arrest the fall in the prices of the agricultural products like copra, rubber, tobacco, rice, etc.;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what are the steps being taken by Government to ensure remunerative prices for agricultural products; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) to (d) Yes Sir. The prices are determined by demand and supply factors and in order to arrest the decline in prices of some of the agricultural commodities, action has been taken on both these variables. In order to boost the demand the nodal agencies have been asked by the Government to procure commodities like copra,

rice, tobacco etc. which are covered under support price operations. To discourage imports so as to reduce the supply of these commodities, import duties have been levied on these commodities. In order to ensure remunerative prices to the farmers, twenty-four major agricultural commodities, including rice, copra and tobacco are covered under the Minimum Support Price (MSP) scheme. The details of action taken are as follows:—

Rice—The import duty has been increased to 80% on rice in the husk and husked brown rice. For semi-milled and wholly milled rice, the import duty has been increased to 70%. As on 31.7.2000 the total procurement by Central Pool agencies was 16.65 million tonnes.

Copra—A basic import duty of 35% has been levied on copra. Copra has also been placed in the Restricted List of imports. As on 7th August, 2000 NAFED had procured 77,329 tonnes of milling copra in copra growing States.

Tobacco—A basic import duty of 35% has been levied on tobacco. STC procured 5.73 million kgs. of tobacco as on 7th August, 2000.'

Rubber—A basic import duty of 35% has been imposed on rubber. STC has been asked to procure upto 20,000 tonnce natural rubber on Government account and supply to advance License holders on the basis of indents placed by them. The import of natural rubber has been suspended w.e.f. 20th February, 1999. In order to promote the demand of rubber, *inter alia*, excise duty on articles of rubber has been reduced from 24% to 16% CENVAT.

Contributions in P.M. Relief Fund for Drough&Famines

2048. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of contributions received in the PM's National Relief Fund following PM's appeal to the public for help to tide over the grim situations due to droughtsfamines in some States of the country;

(b) the amount released so far to each affected State; and

(c) what is the mechanism evolved to ensure that the assistance so given are properly utilised?