

Farming of Bt. Brinjal

†2480. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has given approval for farming of Bt. Brinjal;
- (b) whether some States have objected over approval of farming of Bt. Brinjal;
- (c) if so, the name of States which had given their consent and which did not give their consent; and
- (d) whether it is a fact that for production and marketing of Bt. Brinjal contract has been given to a foreign multinational company; and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH) : (a) The Government has imposed a moratorium on commercialization of Bt. Brinjal event EE-1 till such time independent scientific studies establish, to the satisfaction of both the public and professionals, the safety of the product from the point of view of its long-term impact on human health and environment, including the rich genetic wealth existing in our country.

(b) and (c) State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh have expressed apprehensions on the safety of Bt. Brinjal and have called for extreme caution as Bt. Brinjal is the first genetically modified food crop to be introduced in the country. The Governments of Kerala and Uttarakhand have informed that they have taken a decision to prohibit environmental release of all Genetically Modified (GM) seeds and keep the state totally GM free.

(d) Bt. Brinjal event EE1 contains cry 1Ac gene from *Bacillus thuringiensis* tolerant to the fruit and shoot borer. The cry1 Ac gene has been procured from M/s Monsanto, USA by M/s Mahyco, an Indian company. Bt. Brinjal has been developed by M/s Mahyco. The technology has also been transferred to Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad and Indian Institute of Vegetable Research, Varanasi free of cost.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.