

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. During the month of October and November, 2005, the prices of some vegetables like onion and potato increased. The prices of onion increased on account of lower arrivals in major wholesale markets in the country in October, 2005 due to erratic and excessive rainfall particularly in major onion growing States of Maharashtra and Gujarat. The hike in the price of potatoes was caused by erratic and unprecedented rainfall which damaged the advance crop in the month of September in States like Punjab and West Bengal. This has led to decreased availability of potato in the markets leading to hike in the prices. The Government made intervention through National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India to ensure stability in the prices. Government launched National Horticulture Mission in May, 2005 for doubling of horticulture production including onion and potato by 2011-2012.

Commission for agrarian crisis

1824. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any Commission has been appointed by Government to look into the agrarian crisis in the country;

(b) if so, whether the Commission has submitted its report; and

(c) the major recommendations of the Commission?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Commission has so far submitted two Interim Reports.

(c) The First Interim Report of the National Commission on Farmers covers a wide range of recommendations dealing with integrated life saving support programme for farm families facing acute distress, productivity and livelihood enhancement in rainfed areas, a new deal for women in agriculture, strengthening and expanding the horticulture revolution, enhancing productivity, quality and global competitiveness of cotton, sustaining and expanding trade of farm commodities and its sanitary and phytosanitary dimensions, village as knowledge center and food and

nutrition security of livestock and livelihoods. The Report also covers rehabilitation and alleviation of fishermen and farm families from distress due to TSUNAMI, empowerment of community based organizations and Panchayati Raj institutions and administrative initiatives like creation of a Gram Panchayat Mahila Fund for women.

The Second Interim Report of the Commission submitted recently to the Government *inter-alia* deals with food for all, fish for all, enhancing productivity, profitability, stability and sustainability of hill and arid agro ecosystems, coastal zone agriculture, mission for the prosperity of sugarcane farmers, conservation, cultivation and marketing of medicinal plants, organic farming, bio-fuels and agricultural markets reforms.

Fisheries and aquaculture losses due to Tsunami

1825. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the FAO has assessed the Tsunami losses to fisheries and aquaculture;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the FAO had suggested any long-term strategy to deal with the crises in future; and

(d) if so, the details of budget to be allocated for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) A joint assessment team of Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations System and the World Bank assessed the impact of Tsunami.

(b) to (d) As per assessment of the team, over 5000 mechanized boats, 8000 Ferro Reinforced Plastic (FRP) boats, 25000 boats of other categories and 35000 wooden catamarans were damaged. In addition, over 2340 outboard motors were lost due to Tsunami. Tsunami has also damaged the fish landing sites, affected shrimp culture and small-scale aquaculture. However, FAO has not suggested any specific strategy to deal with the crisis in future as such.