

In view of the above, no delay in implementation of the Act is envisaged at this stage.

(d) and (e) No Sir, there is a special focus in the Act on nutritional support to pregnant women and lactating mothers and children upto 14 years of age.

Foodgrains in the Act are defined as rice, wheat or coarse grains or any combination thereof. While making allocation of foodgrains to States / UTs, local preferences are kept in view, subject to availability.

#### **Hoardings of Onions**

1790.. SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN SINGH:

SHRI A. A. JINNAH:

SHRIMATI GUNDU SUDHARANI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether media reports indicated that because of hoarding by middlemen, onion prices shot upto Rs. 100 per kg, whereas farmers got only Rs. 3 to Rs. 4 per kg;

(b) whether middlemen made a whopping profit of more than Rs. 800 crore per week;

(d) if so, how many onion hoarders have been raided by Government, till date, and amount recovered from them;

(d) if not, why Government is unable to book hoarders, although TV channels get easy access to them; and

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K. V. THOMAS) : (a) to (b) No official information on the matter was received by the Government.

(c) to (e) In order to check hoarding and black-marketing of essential commodities, necessary provisions have been made under the Essential Commodities

Act, 1955 and the Prevention of Black-Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980, but the responsibility for its implementation lies with the state governments/union territories. They are also periodically addressed to ensure effective implementation of these Acts.

### **New Market Policy**

1791.. DR. BHARATKUMAR RAUT: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government is aware of the reports that onion prices will come down in the month of January - February when farmers would sell their new produce at reduced rates;

(b) whether Government has formulated a new market policy to facilitate farmers to sell their produce direct to local mandies and curb involvement of middlemen and hoarders of essential commodities;

(c) if so, the details thereof ;

(d) how farmers would be benefited to get remunerative prices of their produce with the formulation of new market policy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K. V. THOMAS) : (a) Yes, Sir. With arrival of the late kharif and rabi crop of onion, the market prices are normally expected to show a declining trend.

(b) to (d) To facilitate better price realization by the farmers, reduce intermediaries and avoid exploitation by them, a model Agricultural Produce Marketing (Development and Regulation) Act, 2003 was circulated for adoption by State Governments / UTs.

The Model Act advocates several marketing channels and, *inter alia*, provides for direct sale by farmers to the consumers (Farmers Markets) to curb involvement of middlemen and also direct sale by farmers to Processors / Exporters / Retail bulk buyers etc. for remunerative prices for their produce. The Act also