

Government of Assam has however informed that the State Government is presently allocating 7600 MT of APL rice and 5000 MT of APL wheat per month to Tea Associations for distribution amongst the Tea Garden workers.

Gaps in cold chain infrastructure

*337. SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether about 30 per cent of fruits and vegetables grown in the country get wasted annually due to gaps in cold chain;
- (b) whether gaps in cold chain result in farmers not getting remunerative price and impoverishment resulting in farmers' frustrations and suicides;
- (c) whether Government is considering using refrigerated containers with solar photovoltaic panels fixed on their rooftops independent of power grid, to transport freshly harvested produce, strategically placed at various locations in farms across the country to close gaps in the cold chain; and
- (d) if so, details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH): (a) to (d) A study published in 2012 by Central Institute of Post Harvest Engineering and Technology (CIPHET), Ludhiana, estimated overall losses in fruits and vegetables during operations such as harvesting, cleaning, sorting/grading, packaging, transportation, storage channels, weight loss in storage etc. to be in the range of 5.8 to 18%.

To mitigate such losses and ensure that farmers get better value for their produce, Government is implementing Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) for holistic development of horticulture to incentivise pre-production, production, post harvest management, processing and marketing infrastructure including use of multi-modal refrigerated containers and renewable energy including solar photovoltaic panels in the cold chain for which credit linked assistance of the admissible cost is available at the rate of 35% in general areas and 50% in hilly and scheduled areas.

Revival of loss making textile mills

*338. SHRI ANIL DESAI: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether textile industry is one of the largest employment giving sectors for the unskilled people in the country;