

Denial of permission to cotton exports

*115. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided not to permit further cotton exports during the current year, even as pressure is mounting from some States to allow fresh registrations; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken so far including the request received from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) and (b) There is no such decision as on date. Under the present Foreign Trade Policy, 2015-2020, cotton is freely exportable and there is no registration requirement for export of cotton as on date. No request has been received from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to allow fresh registration of exports.

**Increase in area under fire and flu
cured tobacco in A.P.**

*116. DR. K. V. P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the demand of tobacco farmers of Andhra Pradesh for an increase in the area under Fire cured tobacco and Flu cured tobacco;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) what steps are contemplated since there is a steep fall in tobacco production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): (a) and (b) The Department of Commerce has not received any specific proposal for increasing the area under Fire and Flue Cured Tobacco in Andhra Pradesh in the recent past. The Tobacco Board established under an Act of Parliament in the year 1975 regulates only Flue Cured Virginia (FCV) Tobacco as per the mandate given by the Section 8(1) (a) of the Tobacco Board Act, 1975. One of the important functions of the Tobacco Board is regulating the production and curing of Flue Cured Virginia (FCV) Tobacco having regard to various factors *inter-alia* including the demand for Virginia tobacco in India and abroad, the marketability of different types of Virginia Tobacco etc., so as to match with the demand and to avoid excess production and market glut and thereby ensure remunerative prices to the tobacco growers.

Based on the demand projected, the Board evolves the production strategy and fixes crop targets area-wise every year for different soil regions in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka taking into consideration various factors specified in clause (a) of sub section (2) of section 8 of Tobacco Board Act, 1975 like the demand for Flue Cured Virginia Tobacco in India and abroad and the marketability of different tobaccos etc.. The views of tobacco growers and growers' associations is also considered while fixing the crop size.

(c) During the last year *i.e.* crop season 2014-15, due to surplus global production including that in India, subdued demand for FCV Tobacco in the domestic and international markets, low grade crops due to bad weather etc., there was large scale distress among farmers of Andhra Pradesh requiring Government to intervene and provide one time compensation package. To avert, recurrence of such event again this year and after factoring in the overall market dynamics and the fact that India is a signatory to Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), which entails demand and supply reduction strategies, the Tobacco Board has reduced crop size from 172 million kg (2014-15) to 120 million kg for Andhra Pradesh crop season 2015-16 in the wider interest of better realisation to the growers.

Considering heat wave as a natural calamity

*117. SHRI PALVAI GOVARDHAN REDDY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that nearly 2,000 people died during the last summer due to heat wave and majority of them are from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana;

(b) if so, the State-wise details of deaths;

(c) whether it is also a fact that there have been demands to treat heat wave as natural calamity like floods, droughts, etc.; and

(d) if so, the reasons for not considering heat wave as a natural calamity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI KIREN RIJJU): (a) and (b) Ministry of Home Affairs does not maintain the information relating to the number of deaths which occur in various States of the country due to heat wave.

However, as per information received from the Government of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, loss of human lives reported due to heat wave during 2015 is 1369 and 541 respectively.

(c) and (d) The issue of inclusion of any disaster in the list of notified natural disasters has been considered by the successive Finance Commissions set up under