

IPL negotiates the price of MoP with the international suppliers during the beginning of financial year and it also works as a reference price for other importers of MoP in the country. After examining the price negotiated by IPL and the price of MoP prevailing in the international market Government of India decides the price of MoP to be taken for computation of concession rates as Government has to ensure that the adequate quantity of MoP should be made available to the farmers at affordable price.

(b) to (d) At an exchange rate of Rs. 46 per US dollar the impact by way of subsidy/concession payment for increase in MoP price by one dollar on Government is about Rs. 12 crore on the estimated consumption of 25 lakh MT of MoP per annum.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

MoU between IGKV and Swiss MNC

493. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Raipur based Indira Gandhi Krishi Viswavidyalaya, having a collection of rice germplasm of 22972 varieties, proposes to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with "Syngenta", the Swiss multinational corporation, to take over all the paddy varieties in the custody of the universities;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether farmers and agricultural workers have represented against the MoU and requested to assert their rights over the variety of paddy seeds; and

(d) if so, the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwa Vidyalaya (IGKV) is not proposing to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with "Syngenta" to take over all the rice germplasm/varieties. Discussions were earlier held between scientists of IGKV and Syngenta representatives to develop and market rice hybrids. IGKV did not contemplate to give or share rice germplasm accessions with Syngenta or any other multinational corporation.

(b) and (c) Question does not arise.

(d) IGKVV considers germplasm material to be the property of the nation, the University being a custodian of the germplasm. The rice germplasm, therefore, can not be handed over to any such organization for exclusive use. The germplasm, however, can be shared for research purpose as per the regulation in the country. The rice germplasm has also been deposited in the National Gene Bank of the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, New Delhi.

Reducing the agro-import for prosperity of rural economy

†494. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether, addressing a peasants' rally in Maharashtra he said that the Central Government would make an effort to reduce agro-import for the prosperity of local rural economy and Government are considering to provide 40 per cent of subsidy for promoting horticulture and extending the repaying period of loan given to the sugarcane growers; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) In the absence of the date and place of the said peasants' rally in Maharashtra, it is not possible to comment on the statement attributed to the Agriculture Minister. However, the Government has taken a number of steps for protection of domestic farmers against increased imports, promotion of horticulture and provision of credit related relief. These include, *inter alia*:—

- (i) Increase in import duties in the last five years on a number of agricultural products including cereals, edible oils, pulses, cotton, plantation crops such as tea, coffee and pepper and fruits;
- (ii) A special credit related relief package has been announced by the Government on 18.6.04. The package, provides for debt restructuring by the commercial banks, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and cooperatives in accordance with the new guidelines of RBI/NABARD;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.