

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRIMATI KRISHNA RAJ): (a) A total number of 671 boats owned by Indian fishermen were seized by neighbouring countries since 2014.

(b) and (c) Yes Sir. In order to provide relief to such fishermen, the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries (DADF), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare had formulated a scheme of Soft Loan Package for replacement of fishing vessels held captive in Pakistan. The total cost of the scheme is ₹ 19.56 crore and it envisages one time replacement of a total of 326 Indian fishing vessels held captive in Pakistan with a capital subsidy to the tune of 30% of the cost of each vessel subject to a ceiling of ₹ 6 lakh. An amount of ₹ 2.00 crore has been released under this scheme since 2014.

Besides, DADF has introduced a sub-component 'Assistance to Deep Sea Fishing' under the umbrella scheme Blue Revolution for providing financial assistance to fishermen to enable them to take up deep-sea fishing. The Central Government has already released an amount of ₹ 200 crore to the Government of Tamil Nadu towards subsidy for procurement of 500 deep sea fishing vessels under this scheme. The State Government of Tamil Nadu has been advised to give priority to fishermen whose boats are under captivity of Sri Lankan authorities.

(d) Does not arise.

Import of Chinese sprayers

2115. SHRI DEVENDER GOUD T.: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has come to the notice of the Ministry that imported Chinese sprayers, with the help of which pesticides and chemicals are sprayed on crops have taken the toll of 20 farmers, 25 farmers suffered with blindness and caused other health hazards in Maharashtra, etc.;

(b) whether Ministry is also aware that Maharashtra Government has instituted an inquiry into this entire incident; and

(c) if so, the findings thereof and steps going to be taken by the Ministry to stop import of such sprayers and also take action against fertilizer and chemical companies which are using excessive chemicals in their pesticides?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA): (a) As per the information received from the Maharashtra Government, death of 63 farm labours/farmers have been reported due to poisoning while spraying pesticide on the crops.

(b) and (c) Government of Maharashtra has appointed Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe pesticides poisoning cases and to propose proactive policies and strategies to prevent incidences in future. SIT has submitted its report to Government of Maharashtra.

The Government of Maharashtra has undertaken adequate awareness extension activities for safe handling of pesticides and spraying activities. Further, action under Insecticide Act, 1968 are being taken by the Government of Maharashtra against the violation of the Act and Rules.

To provide the subsidy to the sprayers under the various assistance programmes of Government, it is mandatory to test these sprayers as per the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) from the authorized testing centres of Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare, Government of India.

Use of hazardous pesticides

2116. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of hazardous pesticides, which are banned worldwide, are still in use in our country;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the reasons therefor; and

(c) the fresh steps taken by Government to have an exclusive legislation on pesticides management to address the issues related to unsafe use of pesticides?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA): (a) and (b) There are 66 pesticides that are banned, restricted, withdrawn in one or more countries, but continued to be registered in India. The Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare (DAC&FW) has constituted an Expert Committee in July 2013, to review them. The Expert Committee, *inter alia*, recommended 13 pesticides to be completely banned, 27 pesticides to be reviewed in 2018 after completion of certain technical studies and 6 pesticides to be phased out by 2020. The Complete list is in the Statement-I. [Refer to