

(c) if so, what are the specific reasons therefor and by when directions are proposed to be issued to the State Government of Jammu and Kashmir to initiate investigations into the killings of Kashmiri Pandits?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI HANSRAJ GANGARAM AHIR): (a) As per the report of State Government of Jammu and Kashmir, 174 cases of killing of Kashmiri Pandits by terrorists have been registered by the Jammu and Kashmir Police. After investigations, 30 cases have been challaned and 142 cases have been reported as untraced. There has been conviction in one case.

(b) and (c) Representations from various quarters including Kashmiri Pandits are received in the Ministry from time to time and the same are forwarded to State Government of Jammu and Kashmir for appropriate action.

Fall in prices of pepper

*50. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that prices of superior quality pepper have fallen due to increase in its production;

(b) whether it is also a fact that cheap and low quality Vietnamese pepper is finding its way into India through Sri Lanka under South Asian Free Trade Area Agreement which is severely impacting pepper growers in south Indian States, particularly Kerala and Karnataka; and

(c) what measures the Ministry propose to take to stop the unethical inflow of inferior quality pepper from Vietnam through Sri Lanka so that the prices of pepper get stabilized and its growers are protected?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SURESH PRABHU): (a) The domestic prices of pepper have fallen primarily due to decline in international prices owing to higher production and supply of pepper in the international market and also due to import of cheap pepper from other origins into India. The production and average domestic prices of pepper during the last two years and in the current year are given below:

Year	Production (Tonns)	Average Domestic Price (₹ per kg)
2015-16	48500	655.22
2016-17	57000	694.77
2017-18	64000	499.73
(April- November)		

(b) Representations have been received from traders/growers associations of pepper in the country including the States of Kerala and Karnataka regarding alleged import of low quality pepper into India from Vietnam through Sri Lanka. Since most of the pepper producing countries are in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, the stakeholders have raised apprehensions of routing the pepper produced in ASEAN countries including Vietnam, to India through Sri Lanka, by utilizing the provisions of India Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (ISLFTA) and Agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA).

(c) In order to stop the possibility of inferior quality pepper of other countries entering into India through Sri Lanka to take duty advantage and to stabilize the domestic prices of pepper, Government has fixed the CIF value of ₹ 500/- per kg as Minimum Import Price for Black Pepper *vide* DGFT Notification dated 6.12.2017.

Sri Lankan Authorities have been requested to exercise extreme care and diligence in issuing the Certificates of Origin under ISLFTA and SAFTA. Government of Sri Lanka has informed that Sri Lanka Customs along with Ministry of Primary Industries and National Quarantine Service have introduced a new procedure with the aim of preventing Sri Lankan exporters from obtaining SAFTA or ISLFTA Certificates of Origin issued by the Department for third-country black pepper shipments destined to India.

Increase in prices of Petrol and Diesel

†*51. SHRI NARESH AGRAWAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to fix the prices of petrol and diesel on a daily basis and whether it is a fact that the prices of petrol and diesel have been rising continuously since this decision was taken even as the price of crude oil is very low in the international market;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) if not, the details of total cost of production of petrol and diesel and their delivery to the market?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN): (a) to (c) The prices of petrol and diesel have been made market determined by the Government effective from 26th June, 2010 and 19th October, 2014 respectively and since then their prices are being decided by the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) in line with the changes in the international market prices.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.