

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) No, Sir.

- (b) Does not arise.
- (c) In order to safeguard the interest of coconut farmers, following steps are taken:-
- (i) Minimum Support Price (MSP) for copra is fixed to ensure remunerative prices to the farmers. The MSP fixed for 1999 Season at Rs. 3100/- per quintal for milling copra and Rs. 3325/- per quintal for ball copra are Rs. 200/- per quintal higher than for the previous year.
- (ii) In order to fetch higher prices the farmers are provided financial assistance limited to 10,000/- or 50% the cost for installation of modern copra dryers for production of quality copra.
- (iii) For promoting product diversification, the Coconut Development Board has developed technologies for various coconut products.
- (iv) For control of pests and diseases, assistance is provided to farmers @ Rs. 200/- per palm for cutting and removal of diseased/senile palms; Rs. 8/- per palm for promoting use of plant protection chemicals and fertilizers; and Rs. 200/- per ha. for adoption of multi-species cropping under the project "Integrated farming in coconut holdings for productivity improvement."
- (v) Parasite breeding laboratories are established/maintained for biological control of leaf eating caterpillar in coconut;
- (vi) Assistance is provided @ Rs. 6,000/- per ha. in 3 annual instalments for area expansion with package of practices.
- (vii) Farmers are supported to the extent of Rs. 25,000/- per ha. for installations of drip irrigation units.

China, India and Russia Axis

313. SHRI BHARTRAHARI MAHTAB :

SHRI C.P.M. GIRIYAPPA :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government subscribe to the idea propagated by Prime Minister of Russian Federation, Mr. Primakov to form an axis between China, India and Russia;
- (b) if so, the specific points made by the Government and the Russian counterpart's reaction to it;
- (c) whether the Government is aware about the reaction of Chinese Government to it;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the follow up steps taken for the confidence building measures vis-a-vis Russia and China?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : (a) No such formal proposal was made by the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Mr. Y.M. Primakov during his official visit to India on 20-22 December 1998. However, while responding to the media on 21 December 1998, Mr. Primakov referred in general to the idea of such trilateral cooperation, nothing that "much in the region depends on the policies pursued by Russia, India and China", and adding that "it will be good for security and stability in the region."

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) During his visit to Egypt on January 3-5, 1999, the Chinese Foreign Minister Mr. Tang Jiaxuan, reportedly stated in response to a press query from Al Ahram, a prominent Egyptian daily - on the reference to an India-China-Russia strategic alliance by Russian Prime Minister Primakov in New Delhi - that Russia had not consulted China beforehand on this "proposal", nor was it necessary for China to enter any alliances.

(e) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Bansagar Irrigation Project

314. SHRI CHANDRAMANI TRIPATHI :

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be please to state:

- (a) when the construction work on Bansagar Inter-State Irrigation Project was started;
- (b) the estimated cost at the inception of the project and total expenditure incurred thereon till date;
- (c) the latest position of the project at present and measures being taken by the Government for its expeditious completion; and
- (d) the time by which the project is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) The construction work on Bansagar Inter-State Irrigation Project was started in the year 1978.

(b) The estimated cost at the inception of the project in the year 1978 was Rs. 91.3 crores and the total expenditure was Rs. 556.10 crores on Bansagar Dam Project upto December 1998 including for land acquisition and rehabilitation.

(c) The masonry work is 97.6% complete and concreting is 78% complete.

This is an Inter-State Irrigation Project being funded by Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, However, the Union Government has also provided Central Loan Assistance for this project for early completion under Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme. The year-wise releases are Rs. 23.25 crores in 1996-97; Rs. 65.50 crores in 1997-98 and Rs. 37.50 crores in 1998-99 respectively.

(d) The completion date for project is dependent on the priority fixed for this project by the party States and the funds provided by them.

[English]

Indo-Japan Relations

315. SHRI A. GANESHAMURTHI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be please to state:

(a) the steps the Government propose to take to normalise bilateral relations between India and Japan;

(b) the conditions put forth by Japan to ease the restrictions on loans for ongoing projects;

(c) when the last Official talks between India and Japan took place;

(d) whether the ongoing projects funded by Japan are at halt; and

(e) if so, from when and further steps the Government proposed to take to carry on these projects?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRONICS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : (a) to (e) We value our relations with Japan. We believe that a composite dialogue encompassing various aspects of our multifaceted relations is to mutual benefit. Since the beginning of this year, a series of official level meetings have been held. This include : Foreign Secretary level talks (January 17-21, 1999). Trade talks (at Commerce Secretary level, February 5-6, 1999) and MEA-MITI dialogue (at Secretary level, February 22, 1999). Other meetings are being scheduled.

In regard to loans for on-going projects, Japan has said that it would review such projects case by case. Japan would like India to take some "positive" steps on the nuclear non-proliferation issue in order to enable positive consideration.

The Japanese Government have frozen Yen-loan programme and grant aid for new projects except grant aid for emergency, humanitarian and grossroot projects. Disbursements for the ongoing projects (both loans and grants) continue. During 1998-99, there will be no impact on disbursements. They will, however, be affected from 1999-2000, if these restrictive measures continue unaltered. Second and subsequent tranches for the ongoing projects are to be committed by the Government of Japan on a case by case basis.

[Translation]

Development of Horticulture and Floriculture

316. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE :

SHRI K. PARYMOHAN :

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK :

SHRI CHINMAYANAND SWAMI :

SHRI C.P.M. GIRIYAPPA :

SHRI RAMPAL UPADHYAY :

SHRI MADAN PATIL :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have prepared any action plan for the development of horticulture and floriculture in the country;

(b) if so, the financial allocation made for the development of horticulture and floriculture during the last three years and also for the current years, State-wise;

(c) whether there is any system to record output to the above crops;

(d) whether the Government have estimated the annual loss of revenue from fruits, vegetables and flowers which perish or suffer during the post harvest handling;

(e) whether the Government sought help to boost the production from other countries like Israel;

(f) if so, the details of the assistance sought;

(g) whether any pilot project for the development of horticulture and floriculture in backward areas of the country is under the consideration of the Government; and

(h) the steps taken by the Government to promote horticulture and floriculture in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) Horticulture development has received focus since VIII Plan and strategies for achieving accelerated growth in area expansion, production and productivity, through central sector/centrally sponsored horticulture schemes have been finalised. These schemes cover horticulture crops of fruits, vegetables, root and tuber crops, mushrooms, flowers, spices, cashew, coconut, cocoa, medicinal and aromatic plants, bee keeping, use of plastics in agriculture and programmes of National Horticulture Board.

(b) The States have been provided assistance to the tune of Rs. 504.51 crores under various horticulture schemes of the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation including floriculture during the period from 1995-96 to 1998-99. (Details furnished in the statement enclosed).