

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1500
ANSWERED ON:07.03.2001
FISH WORKERS
M. JAGANNATH;PRABHAT KUMAR SAMANTARAY

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether fish workers in the coastal States are on warpath and on hunger strike;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the action taken by the Government on their demands to stop import of fish and issue subsidised fuel to fishermen?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN)

(a) & (b): Protest demonstrations have been held by fishermen and the National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) proposed a national strike on 18.1.2001 for pressing some of their demands. Subsequent to their meeting with the Agriculture Minister and the Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas, the proposed national strike and indefinite fast was withdrawn.

(c): The Agriculture Minister decided that the present diesel subsidy would be maintained. NFF was asked to give detailed proposals to ensure effective fuel distribution.

The Government is keeping a close watch on all imports of fish and fishery products and whatever small quantities of imports (0.09 to 0.21% of annual fish production) are taking place, are for value addition and re-export and not meant for domestic markets. Moreover, though quantitative restrictions on several items of fish and fishery products have been removed in accordance with commitments made to WTO, the basic customs duty on all such items at present is 35%.