

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:724
ANSWERED ON:05.12.2003
EXPORT OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
DR. KIRIT SOMAIYA;RAMSHETH THAKUR

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether recent sharp increase in cold storage charges by Air India has put negative impact on export of fruits and vegetables from Mumbai and other parts of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Fresh Vegetables and Fruits Exporters Association has strongly protested the same;
- (d) if so, the details of the representation received by the Government in this regard;
- (e) the viewpoint of the Government thereon;
- (f) the action taken in this regard;
- (g) whether APEDA has also supported the viewpoint of the Association; and
- (h) if so, the present status of the matter?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI S. B. MOOKHERJEE)

(a) & (b) : After operationalisation of the modern Perishable Cargo Centre at Chatrapati Shivaji International Airport, Sahar, Mumbai, on 17th September, 2003, handling charges of Rs 4/- per kg levied by Air India was passed on to the exporters by some of the Airlines. In protest against this, exports from Mumbai Airport were stopped by members of Fresh Vegetable and Fruits Exporters Association (VAFA) for a few days.

(c) & (d): Yes, Sir. Fresh Vegetables and Fruits Exporters Association represented that Airlines are insisting the exporters to offload their cargo in the event of non payment of Rs. 4 per kg. towards the additional surcharge payable for using the new cargo center, inspite of the fact that Commercial Manager, Air India had assured them that there will not be additional charges other than Rs. 0.65 per kg levied as Terminal Storage and Processing Charges. In light of this, the additional charge of Rs. 4 per kg be removed.

(e): The charge of Rs. 4 per kg that is under dispute is not a charge levied on exporters but on the Airlines by Air India as handling charges. Effort is being made to bridge the communication gap between the airlines and the exporters.

(f) : After protracted deliberations with the Airlines, it was decided that Air India would hold separate meeting with the Airlines with a view to bringing down the cost.

(g) : Yes, Sir.

(h): The problem appears to be at present with those exporters who send their cargo through Airlines that are not traditionally handled by Air India and effort is being made to sort out the problem. Air India officials are in dialogue with exporters on the issue.