

*[Translation]***National Water Policy**

3144. DR. PRABHA THAKUR :  
SHRI C.P.M. GIRIYAPPA :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are contemplating to formulate an effective policy by taking over the subject of various rivers of State Governments to provide relief to the States facing water crisis;

(b) if so, the outline thereof; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be implemented?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

*[English]***Fishing by Foreign Vessels**

3145. SHRI T. GOVINDAN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government are aware that foreign vessels in the name of joint venture with the Indian collaboration are sweeping the entire bottom of the sea thus adversely affecting the fish catches of the traditional and small mechanised fishermen in Kerala; and

(b) if so, the steps being taken to protect the interests of traditional fishermen?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) and (b) Under the New Deep Sea Fishing Policy of 1991, permissions were given to Indian companies for operation of deep sea fishing vessels in Indian waters under Joint Venture, Test Fishing and Leasing. However, the Deep Sea fishing Policy 1991 has now been rescinded. Presently none of the deep sea fishing vessels operating with valid permits under Joint Venture/Test Fishing/Leasing are operating from Kochin.

**Prices of Banana**

3146. DR. ULHAS VASUDEO PATIL : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the prices of banana vary from Rs. 125/- to Rs. 600/- per quintal in every season of banana;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government propose to declare minimum support price for banana on the basis of inputs required;

(d) whether the Government propose to set up banana based food processing units in banana growing areas;

(e) if so, the details of the matter likely to be considered;

(f) whether the export of banana has been initiated through National Agriculture Co-operative Markets Federation (NAFED); and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL) : (a) and (b) The prices of banana vary from season to season, place to place and variety to variety. As per the available information, the wholesale prices of banana were ruling in the range of Rs. 232 in Patna to Rs. 738 per qtl. in Shimla in December, 1997.

(c) Under the existing price policy, major agricultural commodities are covered under the Minimum Support Prices (MSP). The horticultural products including banana which have localised production or are perishable in nature, are covered under another scheme called Market Intervention Scheme (MIS), which is implemented on the request of the concerned State Govt. willing to bear 50% of the losses, if any. There is no proposal to bring banana under MSP.

(d) and (e) Government of India generally does not set up any unit directly in any State for processing of various horticultural products including banana. However, financial assistance under the Plan schemes in the form of soft loan and grant is provided to cooperatives, non-governmental organisations, public sector undertakings, private industries and research institutions etc. for the development of processed food sector.

(f) and (g) National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) is undertaking marketing of fresh fruits and vegetables in the domestic as also export markets which include items such as apple, mango, kinnow, grapes, etc. among fruits; and onion, potato and garlic among vegetables. However, NAFED has not taken up marketing and export of banana as yet. The technology for maintaining its quality in fresh form has not yet been perfected in India for export to distant destinations through sea voyage for longer durations. The production of banana ,