

Micro-Testing of Soil

4174. SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government are formulating any scheme for micro-testing of soil;

(b) if so, whether the Government of Madhya Pradesh have sought financial assistance from the Union Government for procuring equipments etc. for the said testing; and

(c) if so, the amount of financial assistance proposed to be provided to the Government of Madhya Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Government of India has been implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on balanced and Integrated Use of Fertilisers which has been continued during the IXth Plan. Soil testing including testing for micro nutrients is a component of the Scheme.

(b) and (c) During the period 1991-92 to 1996-97, an amount of Rs. 50.30 lakhs was released to the Government of Madhya Pradesh for procurement of equipments for micro-nutrient testing. Funds are made available to all States including Madhya Pradesh within the limits of budget grants.

[English]

Floriculture Products

4175. SHRI MUKUL WASNIK:
SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have prepared any plan to boost the production and enhance the quality of cut flowers and other floriculture products;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

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

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Govt. to reduce the loss?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) The Central Sector Scheme of Development of Commercial Floriculture introduced for the first time during the Eighth Five Year Plan aims at establishing Model Floriculture Centres through out the country, representing different zones suited for cultivation of different types of flowers. Of the eleven Centres sanctioned at Bangalore, Trivandrum, Hyderabad, Calcutta, Srinagar, Lucknow, Gangtok, Ooty in Tamilnadu, Rajgurnagar at Pune, Mohali in Punjab and Chail in Himachal Pradesh, four centres at Bangalore, Gangtok, Srinagar and Chail in Himachal Pradesh have already started functioning and others are in final stages of completion. The mandate of these Model Floriculture Centres is to produce, propagate and multiply elite planting material of traditional as well as cut flowers and demonstrate innovative technologies to farmers and entrepreneurs. Area expansion is also one of the important components of this scheme. An allocation of Rs. 14.29 crores under scheme was made during the Eighth Plan, Rs. 3 crores during 1997-98 and Rs. 10 crores for the current financial year.

(c) to (e) It is estimated that approximately 25% 30% of the production of fruits and vegetables are lost, due to inadequate infrastructure for post harvest handling and marketing, which is about Rs. 5,000/- crores per year. The National Horticulture Board under the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation implements the following two major programmes to address this problem, viz., (i) Integrated Project on Management of Post harvest Infrastructure of Horticulture Crops (ii) Development of Marketing of Horticultural Produce through participation in Soft Loan.

Besides, APEDA under the Ministry of Commerce provides financial assistance under various plan schemes for setting up infrastructural facilities by growers and exporters. APEDA has also set up a Perishable Cargo Complex at IGI Airport to facilitate export of fruits, vegetables and flowers. The cold chain facility is also being established at Bangalore, Bombay, Chennai, Hyderabad and Thiruvananthapuram airports. •

Termination of Nuclear Agreement

4176. SHRI NARESH PUGLIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is an international pressure on Russia to terminate the recent agreement signed with India for setting up of nuclear reactors;