

Illicit opium Cultivation

5761. SHRINARSINGRAOSURYA-WANSHI:
SHRI P.K. THUNGNON:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether illicit cultivation of opium, cocoa-bush, etc. is being done in the various States and especially in the North Eastern States; and

(b) if so, the steps taken/proposed to be taken by Union/State Governments to check this cultivation?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) and (b). No instance of illicit cultivation of coca-bush in any part of the country has come to the notice of the Government. However, illicit cultivation of opium poppy in a few pockets of Uttar Kashi District and Chakrata Tehsil of Dehra Dun District, Uttar Pradesh and in Arunachal Pradesh and of cannabis in Kerala-Tamilnadu border have been reported.

The State and Central Enforcement agencies remain alert to check any attempt of illicit cultivation. The Narcotics Control Bureau co-ordinates survey operations to identify and eradicate illicit poppy/cannabis cultivation. In 1989, 244 acres of illicit opium poppy cultivation and 3,139 acres of illicit cannabis cultivation were identified and destroyed.

Illicit cultivation of opium poppy cannabis and coca plants are prohibited under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 which attract a mandatory mini-

mum punishment of 10 years rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1 lakh.

Export of Agricultural Commodities

5762. SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a new policy for sustain export of agricultural commodities;

(b) if so, whether any fund is proposed to be provided for this purpose;

(c) if so, whether detailed plan has been prepared in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN): (a) to (d). With the twin objectives of generating higher foreign exchange earnings on the one hand and higher level of employment and incomes in the agricultural sector on the other, Government has decided to accord high priority to export of agricultural commodities. Several measures have since been taken in this direction. These include step-up in fund allocation to the agricultural sector so as to create larger exportable surpluses of certain agricultural commodities, improvement in infrastructural facilities, fiscal incentives, improvement in packaging standards and simplification in procedures relating to agricultural exports, etc. Various organisations of the Central Government and the State Governments concerned with marketing and exports of agricultural commodities have geared themselves up for increased activity on the export front. However, there is no proposal to set up any specific Fund for the purpose.