

The Minister of State of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (Shri Rajesh Pilot) : (a) to (c) The relevant information has not been furnished by some of the State Pollution Control Boards and Pollution Control Committees of Union Territories despite repeated reminders. As soon as the requisite information is received from these Boards and Committees, the same will be laid on the Table of the House.

DECONTROL OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES

1366. Shri Vijay Naval Patil : Will the Minister of Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have any proposal to decontrol the operation of many essential commodities barring a few commodities like edible oil and pulses;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have any proposal under consideration to abolish Licence-Quota system of wheat, Coarse-grain and Rice in view of Food Corporation of India releasing stocks to the dealers for exports; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution System) (Shri Venod Sharma) : (a) and (b) Under the policy of economic liberalisation, controls on the production and distribution of most of the essential commodities have been liberalised. Even the import of edible oils except coconut oil, palm oil, palm kernel oil and Red palm stearin and pulses have been put under Open General Licence at reduced duty. Their exports are, however, subject to licence in view of their short supplies in the country and rising trend in their prices during lean supply season.

(c) and (d) The policy of export and import of agricultural commodities is being constantly monitored and the export of rice, wheat and coarsegrains is being permitted subject to quantity ceiling keeping in view their sensitive nature in terms of their supplies and prices in the country. Food security of the consumer is the principal aim of the Government Export-Import Policy.

POLLUTION IN GAYA

1367. Shri Prem Chand Ram : Will the Minister of Environment and Forests be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received any representation from the Council for Renovation of Indian Cultural Heritage, Gaya and others requesting for pollution control in Gaya, Bihar;

(b) whether the Government have received any report in this regard from the Bihar State Pollution Control Board, Patna;

(c) if so, the details of the report; and

(d) if so, the action taken by the Government in this regard?

The Minister of State of the Ministry of Environment and Forest (Shri Rajesh Pilot) : (a) to (d) The Bihar State Pollution Control Board had received a representation from the Council for Renovation of Indian Cultural Heritage, Gaya, and others for control of pollution in Gaya. The Bihar State Pollution Control Board examined the complaints and a team of experts visited the location to investigate the cause of pollution. It has been reported that a number of crushers in Ram Shila Hill in the vicinity of Gaya Town emitted high levels of suspended particulated matter (SPM) which caused deterioration of the ambient air quality by adding to the natural dusty conditions. Based on the inspection report, Government of Bihar have initiated action against the stone crushers to control the pollution in the affected area.

SUBSTANDARD RICE

1368. Shrimati Chandra Prabha Urs : Will the Minister of Food be pleased to state :

(a) whether some bags of Rice are lying in Food Corporation of India godown in R.K. Puram near Bangalore owing to the poor quality;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the quantity of Rice rejected by the Government of Karnataka;

(d) whether the Food Corporation of India has replaced the rejected stock with better quality of Rice; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

The Minister of Food (Shri Ajit Singh) : (a) Yes, Sir. The name of the godown is K.R. Puram and not R.K. Puram.

(b) A quantity of 12235 Mts of rice has been found to be beyond specifications and is under quality complaint.

(c) A quantity of 30,000 Mts of rice which was fit for issue through PDS was not acceptable to the State Government of Karnataka because this stock remained in storage for a long time due to labour strike which continued for 14 months from 21.2.94 to 27.4.95. The representative of State Government inspected the stocks before cleaning and brushing of the rice bags on which cobwebs etc. had developed as no technical operations