

maintains a network of 16 gauges and discharge stations in the Cauvery basin. Out of these, 6 stations are located on the main stem of the Cauvery river. The discharge observation is done with the help of current meters and no new equipment is considered necessary.

(c) During the water year commencing from 1st June, 1991, the quantity of water that has been gauged at Billigundulu station on the Cauvery near the border between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu works out to be 3832 million cubic metres upto 16th August, 1991.

Relationship with ASEAN Countries

3998. SHRI MUKUL BALKRISHNA WASNIK: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to have a close and formal relationship with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN);

(b) if so, the details of the initiatives taken in this regard; and

(c) the reaction of the ASEAN thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI):

(a) India has always attached importance to close linkages with ASEAN as a grouping, in addition to the existing friendly relations between India and individual ASEAN countries.

(b) and (c) Consultations are underway on a proposal for India to start a "Sectoral Dialogue" with ASEAN.

Market Intelligence Centres

3999. SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have set up Market Intelligence Centres in various parts of the country;

(b) if so, the places where such Centres have been set-up;

(c) the objectives of setting up these Centres;

(d) whether a study has been conducted into the functioning of these Centres and their utility to the farmers; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI

MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Market Intelligence Centres are located at Lucknow, Calcutta, Patna, Bhopal, Jaipur, Bombay, Madras, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Shillong, Bangalore, New Delhi, Trivandrum and Bhubneshwar.

(c) The objectives of setting up of Market Intelligence Units were (i) to undertake regular tours of markets in their respective regions by the staff, (ii) to impart on the spot guidance to the primary reporting agencies of the State Governments about collection of market intelligence, (iii) to furnish periodical reports on current price and market situation, crop prospects and outlook, (iv) to maintain liaison with the concerned departments of the State Governments connected with crop production, food and civil supplies administration, economics and statistics bureaus, land records and agencies connected with procurement of various agricultural commodities and (v) to undertake periodical studies on various aspects of marketing.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) The study has shown that collection and reporting of price data by these Centres have enabled the Government to frame the price policy, prevented the distress sale by the farmers and enabled the farmers to get the remunerative price of their produce. Dissemination of market intelligence by mass media in the rural programmes and crop intelligence fortnightly reports at times not only helped the farmers but also Government to take corrective measures as and when needed. In addition the study has recommended that these units should be strengthened by providing more staff.

[Translation]

Speed Post Service in Rajasthan

4000. SHRI DAU DAYAL JOSHI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state the cities in Rajasthan where Speed Post Service facilities are available?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): Speed Post