

12.48 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377**(i) Need to take steps to safeguard the interests of Cardamom Growers***[English]*

SHRI K.M. MATHEW (Idukki) : With the ongoing harvest, the price of cardamom has further declined. Last year the average price was Rs. 350-400 per kg. In the previous year it was around Rs. 600 per kg. Now it is between Rs.200-250 per kg. This is most unremunerative and the present price would not even cover the actual cost of production. The growers are facing lot of difficulties.

As the prices of this export oriented commodity depend upon the global market, especially the competition of the low quality and low-priced cardamom from Guatemala, Urgent steps are required to be taken to have some arrangements with Guatemala to ensure stability in price. In addition, intensive campaign in the existing importing countries should be strengthened and new foreign markets must be explored. Steps to increase Internal consumption in a big way also require immediate attention.

I request the Union Government to act on this on a war footing to mitigate the sufferings of the cardamom growers.

12.47 hrs.

*(Mr. Deputy-Speaker in the Chair)***(ii) Need to provide better Postal Services at Palahi Town in Punjab***[Translation]*

SHRIMATI SANTOSH CHOWDHARY (Phillaur) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Palahi in Phagwara Assembly area in my parliamentary constituency Phillaur, is a historical town. Three Guru Sahibs had visited this town. Most of the people of this town are in Europe, Canada and different Arabian Countries and are helping to strengthen Indian economy by earning foreign exchange. Palahi is an ideal town, where hospital, park, school, bank, co-operative society, bio-gas plant, polytechnic and other facilities available. It is the place in Northern India where rural youths are given technical education and are made capable of self employment, in spite of this the condition of postal services is not good there. There is only one post office in the town and that too has only one employee for the delivery of 'dak', who has

first to go to Ranipur village, which is situated at a distance of 8 kms from Phagwara, to collect the dak and then he has to come back to Palahi after covering a distance of 5 kms. Due to this, the people of my constituency have to face a lot of problems in regard to the postal services. Therefore, the Central Government is requested that this post office should be upgraded to the level of fullfledged post office in order to remove difficulties being faced by the people of my parliamentary Constituency.

(iii) Need to waive loans granted to Punjab to control terrorism*[English]*

SHRI JAGMEET SINGH BRAR (Faridkot) : The State of Punjab is under heavy debt due to the borrowings it took from the Central Government as special terms loan. This was to curb terrorism and to develop the State during this period of turmoil. On 20 April, 1995 the Prime Minister announced the waiving of this loan amounting to more than seven thousand crores of rupees.

The Punjabis were appreciated for their historic role in fighting the nation's battle. Even after this announcement was made, the Central Government deducted more than Rs. 100 crore from the Punjab's financial share for the months of May and June.

I request the Central Government and especially the Prime Minister to issue clear cut instruction in this respect. The total loan of Rs.7,000 crore should be waived immediately to save the State from economic disaster because presently there is a lot of confusion prevailing in the State Government.

(iv) Need to take steps to increase the installed crushing capacity of the existing sugar mills and issue letters of intent for setting up more new sugar mills particularly in Tamil Nadu

SHRI P.P. KALIAPERUMAL (Cuddalore) : Sir, in order to ensure adequate availability of sugar through the Public Distribution System the Government are importing sugar. During the crushing season of 1994-95, 5.17 lakh tonnes sugar have been imported. Hence, it is evident that India is facing shortage of sugar.

In order to increase the production and productivity of sugar, the Government have sponsored and have been implementing a special scheme called "sustainable development of sugarcane based cropping scheme". The production of sugarcane during the 1994-95 is estimated at 259.30 million tonnes. The Government have also taken several other measures to improve the demand of sugarcane by the sugar factories.

In spite of all these steps, the sugar factories in Tamil Nadu particularly in Villupuram Ramasamy