

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH & EDUCATION

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 826
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22/12/2017

OUTBREAK OF WHEAT BLAST DISEASE

826. SHRI NARAYAN LAL PANCHARIYA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has conducted any study into the possibility of wheat blast disease outbreak prevailing in Bangladesh coming to India, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether there have been any incidents of wheat blast disease outbreak in any part of the country, if so, the details thereof along with the steps taken to contain it; and
- (c) the pre-emptive steps being taken to prevent spread of the disease in the eastern part of the country?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

- (a) Yes, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research through the Indian Institute of Wheat & Barley Research and AICRP Centres on wheat & barley have conducted studies and concluded that wheat blast spreads to clean areas through infected seeds, plant parts and air contaminated with fungal spores. Unless pre-emptive measures, including disease resistant seed varieties, strict quarantine, and wheat free corridor along the international border is maintained there could be threat of the disease into the country.
- (b) No, the wheat blast disease has not been reported from any part of India. Surveys and surveillances were conducted in West Bengal, Assam, and Jharkhand near international borders with Bangladesh during 2015-16, 2016-17 and during November, 2017 that revealed non occurrence of disease in the bordering states of India.

During 2016-17 blast like disease/symptoms were reported in Murshidabad, Nadia and Malda districts of West Bengal. National advisories, awareness programmes, national meetings and workshops were organized in the disease prone areas.

(c) The State Agriculture Department has been advised to sensitize and educate stake holders and to take precautionary measures. The wheat blast disease monitoring nurseries (Trap Plot Nurseries) were planted at eight locations near Bangladesh borders in West Bengal to detect the disease infection in case it crosses borders. Strict quarantine measures are imposed to stop entry of wheat seeds and grains in India from Bangladesh. BSF officials were sensitized about the threat, to not to allow movement of grains and wheat seeds across the international border.
