

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY  
(DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE)

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 3241**  
ANSWERED ON 28/03/2025

**SUSPENSION OF SIKKIM'S ORGANIC CERTIFICATION BODY**

3241. SHRI DORJEE TSHERING LEPCHA:

Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Sikkim's Organic Certification Body suspension over controversial White Rice exports is a major blow to Sikkim's organic agriculture sector;
- (b) whether the Agriculture and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has suspended Sikkim's organic certification body over a scandal;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the action taken by Government in this regard?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY  
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

**(a) to (d)** Accreditation of the Sikkim State Organic Certification Agency (SSOCA) under National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) was suspended by the National Accreditation Body (NAB) of the NPOP on finding of lack of oversight of SSOCA over its certified operations and major lapses in its certification process, impacting the integrity of the organic products certified by it.

Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is the designated secretariat for implementation of NPOP. On the basis of complaints regarding export of organic rice and certification of organic cotton by SSOCA, it conducted a detailed investigation of the supply chain of the concerned operators in the supply chain. Based on the investigation reports of the evaluation Committees constituted by APEDA for this purpose, a show cause notice was issued to SSOCA which was followed by in-person hearing. After detailed examination of the non-compliances which established the lack of oversight of SSOCA and serious lapses in their certification processes, the accreditation of the Sikkim State Organic Certification Agency (SSOCA) was suspended for a year, with effect from 01.10.2024.

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