

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FARMERS WELFARE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2427
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 13/03/2026

SAFEGUARDS FOR HORTICULTURE CROPS IN THE FACE OF FTAS

2427. SHRI CHOWDRY MOHAMMAD RAMZAN:

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

the details of safeguards and support measures being taken to protect key crops such as apple, almond, saffron and walnut, in the face of India's Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and increased competition, given that horticulture and agriculture are the mainstay of the economy in Jammu & Kashmir and other hill States?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

(SHRI BHAGIRATH CHOUDHARY)

Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) are entered into with the concerned trading partner countries primarily with the aim to increase the bilateral trade by enlarging the scope of market access and build on the trade complementarities for increasing trade and investment, thereby providing enhanced export potential, generating benefits for industry, farmers, MSMEs and creating job opportunities across the country. FTAs would provide access to larger international markets for export of agricultural product and enable farmers to realise better prices. They would also encourage adoption of modern farming practices and techniques for quality production.

Further, the Government is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), for holistic growth of the horticulture sector covering fruits, vegetables, root and tuber crops, mushrooms, spices, flowers, aromatic plants, coconut, cashew and cocoa. Under MIDH, various interventions are undertaken to enhance the production and productivity of horticulture crops, including fruits and vegetables, through activities such as area expansion, quality planting material, protected cultivation, and post-harvest management.

MIDH is being implemented in all States and UTs, including in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The focus crops identified under the programme include Apple, Pear, Peach, Plum, Walnut, Almond, Mango, Litchi, Citrus, Citrus, Aonla, Guava & Pomegranate, Ginger, Garlic, Turmeric and Chilly.

To support the saffron farmers of the UT of J & K, National Saffron Mission was launched during 2010-11. On the request of the Government of J&K, one of the components, namely, “Quality Testing and Marketing [now named as Saffron Park – India International Kashmir Saffron Trading Centre (IIKSTC)]” has been established at Pulwama district of J & K.

In the Budget Speech for 2026–27, it has been announced that the Government will promote the cultivation of high-value crops, including nuts such as almonds, walnuts and pine nuts, in the hilly regions of the country.

The Government is also implementing various agricultural schemes across the country, including in J&K, to promote agricultural production, such as Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), PM KISAN etc.
