

(b) if so, whether Prime Minister had already held the meeting with the Chief Ministers on food prices; and

(c) if so, to what extent State Governments have agreed to implement the suggestion and to what extent it has helped in checking the price rise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS):
(a) and (b) A conference of Chief Ministers was held on 6th February, 2010 to discuss, *inter alia*, the issues relating to prices of essential commodities, the various taxes imposed on sugar etc. The Conference was attended by Prime Minister and Union Finance Minister and Agriculture Minister.

(c) The Gujarat, Karnataka, Delhi, West Bengal and Bihar have abolished VAT on imported sugar. Chhattisgarh has abolished the entry tax on sugar. Prices are influenced by a number of factors, including taxes. The rationalization of taxes also helps in reducing the prices.

Use of agricultural land for other purposes

3847. SARDAR TARLOCHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) how much area under agriculture has been taken in Punjab and Haryana for SEZ, Government projects, industries and housing colonies; and

(b) whether there is any policy to further ban on the use of agricultural land for such purposes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS):
(a) As per available data, the extent of agricultural land has marginally declined from 4.25 million ha. in 2005-06 to 4.24 million ha. in 2007-08 in the State of Punjab. Similarly, during the same period in the State of Haryana agricultural land has declined from 3.78 million ha to 3.75 million ha. This decline in extent of agricultural land in both the States indicate that agricultural land has been utilized for non-agricultural purposes. However, Government of India does not maintain data in respect of diversion of agricultural land for other uses *viz.* Special Economic Zones, Government projects, industries and housing colonies, etc.

(b) As per the Constitution of India, land falls under the purview of the State Governments, and therefore, it is for the State Governments to bring in suitable policies/legislation to check the diversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes. Governments of Punjab and Haryana have no specific policy to ban the utilization of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes.

The steps taken by Government of India for prevention of diversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes are enclosed as a Statement.

Statement

The steps taken by Government of India for prevention of use of agricultural land for non-agricultural uses:-

- (a) **National Policy for Farmers 2007 (NPF, 2007)** : The National Policy for Farmers 2007 envisages that Prime farmland must be conserved for agriculture except under exceptional circumstances, provided that the agencies that are provided with agricultural land for non-agricultural projects should compensate for treatment and full development of equivalent degraded/wastelands elsewhere. State governments have been advised to earmark lands with low biological potential such as uncultivable land, land affected by salinity, acidity, etc., for non-agricultural development activities, including industrial and construction activities.
- (b) **National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007 (NRRP, 2007)** : A National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007 has been formulated by Ministry of Rural Development, Department of Land Resources which came into effect on 31.10.2007. The policy provides that only the minimum area of land commensurate with the purpose of a project may be acquired. Also, as far as possible, projects may be set up on wasteland, degraded land or un-irrigated land. Acquisition of agricultural land for non-agricultural use in the project may be kept to the minimum; multi-cropped land may be avoided to the extent possible for such purposes and acquisition of irrigated land, if unavoidable, may be kept to the minimum. The Policy has been sent to the States/UTs for implementation.
- (c) **Policy in case of SEZ** : Government of India, Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) have constituted an Empowered Group of Ministers (EGOM) under the Chairmanship of Shri Pranab Mukherjee, the then Hon'ble Minister of Defence to consider the issues related to SEZs and the EGOM at its meeting held on 5th April, 2007 recommended that:
- In respect of pending applications for SEZs, there may be processed for in-principle, formal approval and, notifications subject to the conditions that the State Government would not undertake any compulsory acquisition of land for such SEZs.
 - Upper limit of the area required for multi product SEZs to be fixed at 5000 ha. However, State Governments may prescribe a lower limit.
 - A comprehensive Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy be worked out ensuring livelihood from the project to at least one person from each displaced family.

Based on the above recommendations, Governments of India has decided that Board of approval (BoA) will not approve any SEZs where the State Governments have carried out or propose to carry out compulsory acquisition of land for such SEZs after 5th April, 2007. However, cases in which all persons interested in the land either have not submitted any objection under Section-5A or have withdrawn the objections submitted and have thus acquiesced in the proposed acquisition of land may be considered. In other cases, where there are objections under Section-5A, the Collector/Acquiring Authority may not proceed with the acquisition for the purpose of SEZ and such cases, if any, brought before the Board of Approval may not be considered.

Micro irrigation projects in Jharkhand

3848. SHRI PARIMAL NATHWANI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the per cent of net sown area dependent on monsoon in Jharkhand;
- (b) the reasons for poor irrigation facilities in Jharkhand;
- (c) the steps taken by Government to enhance net irrigation area in Jharkhand;
- (d) whether dry land farming and micro irrigation projects have been put into operation in Jharkhand; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS):

(a) About 82% of net sown area in Jharkhand is dependent on monsoon.

(b) The reason for poor irrigation facilities in Jharkhand is as under :

- (i) Undulating topography.
- (ii) Hilly region.
- (iii) Small land holding where big water storage structures can not be created.

(c) Government of India has launched a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Micro irrigation during January, 2006 in the country including the state of Jharkhand. An amount of Rs.229.92 lakh has been released as Central subsidy to Jharkhand for implementation of Micro Irrigation system since inception of the Scheme.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir.

Shortfall in production of rice

3849. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY:

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state: