

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you wish to ...(*Interruptions*)... Read the question please.
...(*Interruptions*)...

श्री गंगा चरण : यह महंगाई का सवाल है, इसका जवाब आना चाहिए।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will you please resume your place. ...(*Interruptions*)... आप बैठ जाइए
आप बैठ जाइए।

Construction of modern godowns

*283.DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has prepared a master plan to construct modern FCI godowns on Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) basis to prevent the foodgrains from wastage to the tune of 50 metric tonnes every year;

(b) if so, whether there is any time schedule to complete the project; and

(c) if not, who will be held responsible/accountable for the loss of tax payers' money?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Government have prepared a comprehensive plan for construction of godowns for storage of foodgrains by FCI through private entrepreneurs and Central and State Warehousing Corporations. As per plan, 149.4 lakh tonnes of storage space is to be created.

(b) and (c) The time schedule prescribed for completion of godowns is 1 year from finalization of agreement with the entrepreneur. In case of godowns with railway sidings, this time limit will be 2 years from the date of agreement.

DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Sir, in the reply, it is shown that "The time schedule prescribed for completion of godowns is one year from finalization of agreement with the entrepreneur, in the case of godowns with railway sidings, this limit will be two years from the agreement". Sir, I would like to have a clarification that in the case of the first one, what is the timeframe for finalization of the agreement with the entrepreneurs? Whether it is one year more. If it is

so, Sir, in both the cases, the Supreme Court has already ordered that if the foodgrains are getting wasted like this because of non-providing the godowns, this should be distributed to the poor people. More than 14 million people will be benefited for a year. Whether that will be applied here.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Regarding the finalization of tender, as I said in the reply, we have introduced a new scheme. As per the new scheme, FCI is ready to take responsibility to hire for ten years.

We have also announced tenders in certain States. The FCI has undertaken exercise to reduce the time taken in finalising tenders. Originally, it was 92 days; now it is 62 days. Basically, we would like to expedite this work. As I said in the reply, we have kept a one-year period and for railway sidings it is a two-year period.

DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Sir, part (c) of my question is: if not, who will be held responsible/accountable for the loss of tax payers' money? No reply is given for this part of the question. There are three levels of accountability. One is implementing part. Another is middle-level management. And third is policy-making. Who will be held responsible for these damages which are to the tune of crores of rupees per year?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: There are two things in it. We have already finalised the capacity of 149 lakh tonnes of storage space. We have told the FCI that they have to complete this work in such and such period. They have already taken up this responsibility.

When question comes of damages, yes, there are certain cases of damages. We deputed teams to those places. They visited those places. They have gone into the detail of those cases. And they have taken action to suspend some of the officers also. And a detailed investigation is going on.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, in view of the criminal wastage of precious foodgrains in this country which is to the extent of millions of tonnes, the urgency of the construction of godowns cannot be overemphasised.

My question, Sir, relates to the recommendation made by the National Commission on Farmers led by Prof. M.S. Swaminathan in which he has suggested that the spread of godowns all over the country is also very much required. And one of the important issues is the lack of godowns

in the entire North-East and the Eastern region specifically. Often private entrepreneurs don't see much profit in it. The recommendation specifically is for fifty godowns built by the Government for storage of one million tonnes of foodgrains each in different parts of India.

My question to the hon. Minister is this. What is the Government's understanding of this specific recommendation which will cost the exchequer only ten thousand crore rupees with the most modern silos for the protection of foodgrains?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: There are two things. The first statement, which the hon. Member made, that millions of tonnes of foodgrains has been wasted or damaged, is not factually correct. It is quite an exaggeration.

On the question of programme which the Government of India has taken, there are two types of schemes for construction of godowns which exist today. One is that from the Agriculture Ministry we have a Bhandaran Scheme where we support cooperative societies and even individuals through small warehouses at the village level. But it is very small. That is not available for storage of foodgrains of the FCI.

The FCI has one scheme where it is directly spending and that is essentially in the North-East. We have taken up the scheme for the North-East. We have requested certain State Governments to provide land, and construction has been started in certain places. In rest of the States, we are after the State Government.

There is another scheme. That is to construct or hire 149 lakh tonnes of space capacity through private people. The FCI has announced the places where our requirement is there. After the announcement, we are expecting some response from public. The FCI will finalise a proposal and it will give a guarantee to the entrepreneurs that for the next ten years we will use these godowns for storage purposes. Suppose for this or that reason we are not in a position to keep any material in that godown, still we will take the responsibility to pay rent. That scheme has been announced. Anybody can give silos. Anybody can give different types of warehouses. FCI has appointed a committee and that committee will take a final view.

SHRI Y.S. CHOWDARY: Sir, the hon. Minister, in the answer, has mentioned "one year from finalisation of agreement with the entrepreneurs". But, what is the date for the entrepreneurs to finalise the agreement? That is not mentioned. ...*(Interruptions)*... Construction time is mentioned as one year from the date of finalisation of agreement with the entrepreneurs. But, what is the last date for finalising these agreements with the entrepreneurs?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, in fact, recently, we have issued an order that within 62 days, the FCI has to complete the entire procedure and they are already on this line.

MS. MABEL REBELLO: Sir, the Minister, in his reply, has said that space for almost 15 million tonnes capacity storage will be built over a period of one year. I would like to know from the hon. Minister: Will this capacity, which he is planning to create, be sufficient to store all our foodgrains? Will that capacity be spread all over the country so that not even a single grain of foodgrains is wasted? This is what I would like to know.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, generally, foodgrains are kept in two types of warehouses. One is covered and we keep about 40 to 41 million tonnes in them. And the other is CAP. We just construct a small platform, wooden platform, and then we covered it by tarpaulin. That caters to about 13 to 14 million tonnes. Whatever is required for that CAP, that is, for about 149 lakh tonnes, we are taking that up. Our desire is that we do not want to continue with CAP. We don't want to keep anything in open. Everything should be under cover. Whatever is the requirement as on today or whatever is the gap between availability and non-availability, that gap will be filled and that gap will be somewhat about 140 lakh tonnes. We are constructing for about 149 lakh tonnes.

लखनऊ और हरदोई के बीच लोकल रेलगाड़ी

***284. श्री नरेश चन्द्र अगवाल :** क्या रेल मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि उत्तर प्रदेश में लखनऊ और हरदोई के बीच रेल द्वारा प्रतिदिन लाखों यात्री यात्रा करते हैं;

(ख) यदि हां, तो क्या सरकार उन यात्रियों की सुविधा के लिए लखनऊ और हरदोई के बीच लोकल रेलगाड़ी चलाएगी; और

(ग) यदि नहीं, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं?