

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has now agreed to provide legal entitlements of cheap foodgrains to APL households, despite objections by an expert panel appointed by the Prime Minister; and

(d) if so, the details of the corrective measures now Government proposes to take to insert the views of the expert panel?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (d) In pursuance of the announcement made by the President of India in her address to the Joint Session of Parliament on 4th June, 2009, to enact a new law - the National Food Security Act - the Government prepared a Concept Note and had consultations with the Central Ministries/Departments, States/Union Territories, experts and other stakeholders. Based on their comments/suggestions and recommendations of National Advisory Council (NAC) and Expert Committee constituted under the Chairmanship of Chairman, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, the Government have prepared a draft National Food Security Bill and placed before the Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM) on 11.07.2011. In pursuance of the directions of the EGoM, the draft Bill has been sent to the Ministry of Law and Justice for vetting. After legal vetting of this Bill and consultations with States and Union Territories, approval of Government at the appropriate level will be obtained.

#### **Shortage of storage capacity for foodgrains**

\*2. DR. K.V.P. RAMACHANDRA RAO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the existing storage capacity across the country is brimming with foodgrains with no further space for storage of more foodgrains;

(b) if so, how the rabi season grains are proposed to be stored; and

(c) to what extent the recent decision to export rice would ease the shortage of storage capacity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) Due to efforts of our farmers, foodgrains production has increased substantially over the last few years. Higher MSP over the last few years

coupled with better outreach has led to higher procurement in the last three years. This year wheat procurement during rabi has been a record. Due to high procurement, utilization percentage of storage capacity is very high. The Food Corporation of India has 332.50 lakh MTs of storage capacity including Covered and Cover and Plinth (CAP) both owned and hired with a capacity utilization of 91% as on 30.6.2011. The State Agencies also store foodgrains for the Central Pool in the storage godowns maintained by them. Apart from storing wheat in covered godowns, it is also stored in CAP which is a scientific method of storage.

Because of the increased procurement of foodgrains and to reduce the storage in Cover and Plinth (CAP) the Government formulated a Scheme for construction of storage godowns through private entrepreneurs, Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) and State Warehousing Corporations (SWCs). For the consuming areas, storage capacity is to be created to meet four months requirement of PDS and other Welfare Schemes in a State. For the procurement areas, the highest stock levels in the last three years are considered to decide the storage capacity required. Under the scheme, a capacity of about 152.97 lakh tonnes is to be created in 19 States.

To tide over the problem of shortage of storage space, FCI hires storage space from CWC/SWCs/Govt. agencies and private parties etc. Executive Directors (Zones) and General Managers (Region) of FCI have also been given full powers for hiring of private godowns for short term usage to store the procured foodgrains as per their requirement if the capacity available with FCI is not sufficient to store the foodgrains.

Government has recently allowed export of 10 lakh MTs of non-basmati rice from private account. Since the export will be from private account there will be no direct impact on Central Pool Stocks and hence on Government storage. However due to the decision to export some quantity of rice which would have otherwise come to the Government Stocks would now be exported and would ease the storage problem to that extent.

#### **Availability of sugar**

†\*3. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.