

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

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. After legal vetting of this Bill by the Legislative Department and consultations with States and Union Territories on the Draft Bill, approval of Government at the appropriate level will be obtained.

Storage space for paddy

36. SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that due to lack of enough storage space, thousands of tonnes of paddy of the farmers were lost due to untimely rains;

(b) if so, the action initiated by Government;

(c) whether there is any proposal to augment availability of storage facilities; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) No such case has been reported from FCI.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) 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.

Due to 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).

Under the scheme, capacity of about 152.97 lakh tonnes is to be created in 19 states through private entrepreneurs and Central and State Warehousing Corporations. Out of this tenders have been finalized for creation of storage capacity of 52.32 lakh tonnes by the private entrepreneurs. CWC and SWCs are constructing 5.31 and 15.49 lakh tonnes respectively under the Scheme, out of which a capacity of about 3.5 lakh tonnes has already been completed by CWC/SWCs. Further in the Eleventh Five Year Plan an allocation of Rs. 154.82 crore has been made to FCI for construction of storage godowns. This is likely to result in the construction of about 1.2 lakh tonnes capacity.

Food inflation

37. SHRI Y.S. CHOWDARY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether food inflation is still on the rise across the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether hike in petrol, diesel and LPG prices are likely to further increase pressure on prices of household articles including food items; and

(d) if so, the steps proposed to be taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) No Sir. The WPI based primary food articles inflation rate (%) after having reached a peak of 21.85% in the month of February, 2010 had declined to 10.66% in the month of April, 2011 and further to 8.38% for the month of June, 2011.

(c) A hike in petrol, diesel and LPG prices is likely to have an indirect impact on prices of household articles including food items.