

RAJYA SABHA

Friday, 7th September, 2012/16th Bhadra, 1934 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,

MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

FAREWELL TO DR. V.K. AGNIHOTRI, SECRETARY-GENERAL, RAJYA SABHA

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, ...*(Interruptions)*... Just one minute. ...*(Interruptions)*... One minute. ...*(Interruptions)*... One minute, please.

Hon. Members, I have to inform the House that Dr. V.K. Agnihotri will be retiring from the Office of the Secretary-General, Rajya Sabha on the 30th of September, 2012.

Dr. V.K. Agnihotri joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1968 and worked in various capacities in the Administration in the State of Andhra Pradesh and the Government of India.

Dr. Agnihotri who assumed the Office of Secretary-General in October, 2007 has performed his duties with dignity, devotion and dedication, and helped in the smooth functioning of the House.

As Secretary-General, Dr. V.K. Agnihotri endeared himself to one and all and has cordial relations with Members of this House. He took several new initiatives to strengthen and improve the administration of the Secretariat.

Dr. Agnihotri is a prolific writer with over 70 publications including books, research papers, etc., to his credit. Several of these relate to parliamentary functioning and procedures and are of considerable value.

On behalf of the House and on my own behalf, I express appreciation for the services he has rendered and wish him good health and happiness.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR (Nominated): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I was deprived of Mr. Agnihotri's services as Secretary in my Ministry when he was appointed as Secretary-General here. I have to make a special appeal to you. Please extend his services. His services are invaluable. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, the House wants to give him an extension.

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 381. ...*(Interruptions)*...

Package for farmers of Vidarbha

*381. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Prime Minister had promised a package of ₹ 110 billion to help the distressed farmers of Vidarbha;

(b) if so, the details of funds disbursed to farmers to prevent them from committing suicide;

(c) the number of farmers who committed suicide in Vidarbha during the last three years; and

(d) the efforts Government is making to bring the farming community out of distress?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (d) In 2006, the Prime Minister announced a rehabilitation package comprising both immediate and medium-term measures to be implemented over a period of three years with financial outlay of Rs. 3873.26 crore, to mitigate the distress of farmers in six identified districts in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. The period for implementation of non-credit components of the rehabilitation package was extended upto September 30, 2011.

The rehabilitation package comprised *ex-gratia* assistance from Prime Minister's National Relief Fund, debt relief, institutional credit coverage, interest waiver, assured irrigation facilities, seed replacement programme, watershed development, horticulture development, extension services, and subsidiary income opportunities through livestock, dairying, fisheries, etc. A sum of Rs. 4425.87 crore has been released for implementation of the package.

Government of Maharashtra has informed that during last three years, the number of farmers who committed suicide due to agrarian reasons in the six identified districts in Vidarbha region covered under the rehabilitation package, is 273 (2009), 277 (2010) and 346 (2011).