

Special package to farmers of Maharashtra

†394.SHRI ISHWARLAL SHANKARLAL JAIN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether many farmers have committed suicide and such incidents still continue in Jalgaon, Dhule, Nashik, Nandurbar districts due to loss of crops and heavy financial loss as a result of unseasonal rain, hailstorm and storms in Maharashtra from February to May, 2014;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has given any special package as a compensation to the farmers;

(d) whether the loans given to these farmers by banks have been waived, in addition to the financial aid;

(e) if so, details thereof; and

(f) the details of suicides committed by farmers in the State during the said months, district-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN): (a), (b) and (f) State Government of Maharashtra has not, so far, reported any incidence of farmer suicide during February to March, 2014.

(c) Central Government had approved ₹ 856.06 crore from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to State Government of Maharashtra to manage the situation in the wake of hailstorm that occurs during February-March, 2014.

(d) and (e) As per standing guidelines of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) short term crop loans are rescheduled into term loans upon declaration of natural calamity.

Possibility of sub-normal monsoon

†395.SHRI DARSHAN SINGH YADAV: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the steps to be taken by Government to safeguard the interests of farmers in view of the possibility of sub-normal monsoon predicted by Met Department;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether any assessment has been made with regard to the crops likely to be affected as a result of shortfall; and

(c) if so, the details thereof, and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN): (a) to (c) As per India Meteorological Department's (IMD) second stage operational long range forecast, South-West Monsoon (June-September) rainfall during 2014 is likely to be $93\% \pm 4\%$ of country's Long Period Average (LPA) of 890 mm.

Government has taken several measures to address any situation arising due to deficiency in monsoon rainfall.

Central Research Institute of Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA), in collaboration with State Agricultural Universities has prepared contingency plans for 500 districts for implementing location specific interventions to sustain agriculture production in the eventuality of weak monsoon/deficient rainfall.

States have been advised to ensure availability of short duration and drought tolerant varieties of seeds so as to be in a position to supply them to farmers in case such a need arises. States have also been advised to keep asides 10% of funds available under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) and other schemes for undertaking appropriate interventions to mitigate any situation arising out of deficient rainfall.

States have also been requested to construct water harvesting structures, restore irrigation infrastructure by desilting canals; energising tubewells, replacing/repairing faulty pumps and arranging power to meet irrigation needs.

Field functionaries and extension workers under Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) and other schemes are educating, training and making the farmers aware of various techniques to overcome deficient rainfall. Farmers are also being advised through Farmers' SMS portal, Kisan Call Centres, Kisanvani Programme of All India Radio (AIR) and Krishi Darshan Programme of Doordarshan etc.

Farmers have been advised to adopt techniques such as *in-situ* moisture conservation, on farm water conservation, ridge furrow sowing, promoting suitable agronomic practices including mulching, inter cropping, mixed cropping, sowing of less water consuming crops etc.

Delay in onset of monsoon and its slow progress has caused delay in sowing of paddy, pulses, oilseeds and coarse cereals during Kharif-2014. However, the sowing window is available till early August and sowing coverage is expected to improve with further progress of monsoon.

Encouragement to horticulture and oilseeds crops

396. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government proposes to give preference to horticulture and oilseeds crops over other crops in the country;
- (b) whether Government proposes to encourage farmers for the above crops by giving better sale price for these crops;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the action plan of the Central Government to encourage horticulture and oilseeds crops in Odisha under various Central Plans to improve the economy of this backward region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) In order to provide better price incentive and to increase production, the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) is mandated to recommend the price policy for 23 commodities which include oilseeds also, under which Minimum Support Prices (MSP) are fixed for oilseeds.

(d) The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation has launched a Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) during the Twelfth Five Year Plan *w.e.f.* 2014-15 for the holistic development of horticulture in the country including Odisha. Under the scheme, provision exists for taking up production and productivity improvement programmes, post harvest management, marketing and human resource development. The DAC has also launched a National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm (NMOOP) during the current year to increase the production and productivity of oilseeds and oil palm. NMOOP is implemented in nineteen States including Odisha.

Warehouses under Grameen Bhandaran Yojana in West Bengal

397. SHRI VIVEK GUPTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state: