

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS**Increasing MSP for paddy and relief package for sugar industry**

*46. SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government has worked out a plan to increase the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for paddy and a relief package for the beleaguered sugar industry to help tackle farm distress, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) the extent to which the MSP for paddy would be increased?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH): (a) and (b) The Minimum Support Price (MSP) of paddy (common) for 2015-16 has been increased by ₹ 50 per quintal over its MSP for 2014-15 and fixed at ₹ 1410 per quintal. The MSP of paddy Grade A has also been raised by ₹ 50 per quintal over its MSP for 2014-15 and fixed at ₹ 1450 per quintal.

Department of Food and Public Distribution has notified a scheme on 23.06.2015 envisaging soft loan worth ₹ 6000 crore to sugar mills to facilitate clearance of cane price arrears of current sugar season 2014-15 relating to the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) for the season fixed by the Central Government. The Scheme provides for Government to bear the interest subvention of ₹ 600 crore during moratorium period of one year.

In addition, Central Government scheme notified on 28.02.2014, allowing the incentive for marketing and promotion services of raw sugar production targeted for export during sugar season 2013-14 has been extended to sugar season 2014-15. The incentive amount can be used for clearance of cane price dues of cane growers.

Tatkal Special Train Service

*47. DR. CHANDAN MITRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to launch Tatkal Special Train Service;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof along with the routes identified for the purpose; and

(c) by when the new service is likely to be operational?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SURESH PRABHU): (a) and (b) Instructions have been issued for running of special trains having separate fare

structure. Since it contained some of the features of Tatkal Scheme, it was initially called Tatkal special trains, however, subsequently it was decided to call them only “special trains” instead of “Tatkal Special”. The salient features of these trains are as under :

- (i) These trains are programmed, scheduled and advertised as fully reserved trains to be run for special occasions like Summer/Holidays, festivals etc. The routes for running these trains are identified by Zonal Railways concerned based on assessed demand.
- (ii) The Advance Reservation Period of these trains varies between 10 and 60 days.
- (iii) Fare structure of these trains is on the pattern of Mail/Express trains. In addition to fare, ‘special’ charges are realised which are fixed as a percentage of fare at the rate of 10% of basic fare for second class and 30% of basic fare for all other classes subject to minimum and maximum prescribed in the scheme.
- (iv) The tickets are issued for actual distance of travel, subject to the distance restriction applicable to the train.
- (v) The minimum distance criteria for booking tickets in these trains has been prescribed in the scheme.
- (vi) In case the total run of the train is less than the distance restriction, in that case, the end to end fare *i.e.* from originating to destination station is charged.
- (vii) The decision to levy “special charges” in only one direction or both the directions is taken by zonal Railways concerned based on demand pattern.
- (viii) No concessional/pre-bought booking is allowed in these special trains.
- (ix) There is no separate Tatkal Quota in these trains.
- (x) Cluster bookings, Blank Paper Ticket (BPT) booking, block booking, current booking is allowed in these trains.
- (xi) Except for the fare, which is charged as mentioned above, general ticket rules are applicable during further transactions on tickets booked in these trains *e.g.* cancellation, modification, duplicate ticket issue/cancellation, refund of fare/difference, etc.
- (xii) Supplementary charges like reservation fee, superfast surcharges, service tax, mela surcharge etc. are levied separately.

(xiii) Booking of these trains is allowed from reservation counters as well as through internet.

(xiv) These trains are called 'Special Trains'.

(c) These services have already become operational in May, 2015.

Incentives to private sector for opening food parks

*48. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to open Food Parks to control wastage of food, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether the process has since been initiated, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether certain incentives are proposed to be given to the private sector entities, who show interest in this initiative, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRIMATI HARSIMRAT KAUR BADAL): (a) Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) has been implementing Mega Food Park Scheme (MFPS) since Eleventh Five Years Plan to create modern infrastructure facilities for the food processing along the value chain from the farm to the market with a cluster based approach based on a hub and spokes model. It includes creation of infrastructure for primary processing and storage near the farm at Primary Processing Centres (PPCs) and Collection Centres (CCs) and common facilities and enabling infrastructure like roads, electricity, water, ETP facilities etc. at Central Processing Centre (CPC). The Scheme also aims to provide a mechanism to bring together farmers, processors and retailers and link agriculture production to the market so as to ensure maximization of value addition, minimization of wastages and improving farmers' income.

(b) Ministry has so far accorded approval to 40 (Forty) Mega Food Parks (MFPs) in five phases in the country for creation of modern infrastructure for food processing industries. Out of these, 23 Mega Food Parks have been accorded final approval and are in different stages of implementation. The remaining 17 Mega Food Parks have been accorded In-principle approval and are in the process of meeting the conditions of final approval.

(c) Under the Mega Food Park Scheme, financial assistance is provided in the form of grant-in-aid @ 50 per cent of the eligible project cost in general areas and @75 per cent of eligible project cost in difficult and hilly areas *i.e.* North-East