

Damage to crops in Jharkhand due to drought

*159. SHRI SANJIV KUMAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a Central team recently visited Jharkhand to assess the extent of crop damage on account of drought, if so, the findings thereof; and

(b) the total amount proposed to be released by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH): (a) The State Government is primarily responsible for taking necessary relief measures in the wake of natural calamities. Government of India supplements efforts of State Government with financial assistance and logistic support. For undertaking relief measures, funds are available with the State Government in the form of State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF). Additional financial assistance, over and above SDRF, is considered from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) for natural calamities of severe nature and is approved on the basis of Memorandum received from State Government in accordance with established procedure.

During the year 2015-16, Government of Jharkhand submitted a Memorandum on 07.12.2015 seeking financial assistance of ₹ 2142.78 crore from National Disaster Relief Fund (NDRF) in the wake of drought. On receipt of such memorandum, Government of India constituted an Inter-Ministerial Central Team (IMCT) to visit the drought affected areas of the State for an assessment of the damage and requirement of financial assistance. IMCT visited the State from 18.12.2015 to 20.12.2015. IMCT reported that in all 24 drought affected districts, a total of 5,31,274 hectare land suffered crop loss of 33% and above and recommended ₹ 336.94 crore assistance from NDRF.

(b) Government of India considered the report of the IMCT and approved ₹ 336.94 crore from NDRF to the Government of Jharkhand subject to the adjustment of 50% of balance available in the SDRF account for the instant disaster. The total allocation under SDRF during 2015-16 to the Government of Jharkhand is ₹ 364.00 crore (comprising ₹ 273.00 crore as Central share and ₹ 91.00 crore as State share). The entire Central share of ₹ 273.00 crore has already been released to the Government of Jharkhand. Funds from NDRF will be released by the Ministry of Finance on the basis of net release recommendation of Ministry of Home Affairs.

Encouraging domestic production of bulk drugs

*160. DR. PRABHAKAR KORE: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to restrict import of bulk drugs and encourage domestic pharmaceutical manufacturers to make in India; and

(b) if so, the details of steps taken by Government to encourage the domestic pharmaceutical manufacturing sector for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) In order to provide a level playing field to the domestic pharmaceutical manufacturers, the Government had notified on 28 January, 2016, the withdrawal of exemptions granted to certain categories of drugs mentioned at list 3 and 4 of Custom Notification No. 12/2012-Customs, dated the 17th March, 2012.

(b) The Government had set up a Committee headed by Dr. Katoch, the then Secretary, Health Research to look into the issues regarding bulk drug/API industry. The mandate of the Committee was to carefully study the whole issue of APIs of critical importance by identifying important APIs and then working out a package of interventions/concessions required to build domestic production capabilities and examine the cost implications. The Committee has since submitted its recommendation which *inter-alia* mentions establishment of Mega Parks for APIs with common facilities such as common Effluent Treatment Plants (ETPs), Testing facilities, Captive Power Plants/assured power supply by State systems, Common Utilities/Services such as storage, testing laboratories, IPR management, designing, guest house/accommodation, etc., maintained by a separate Special Purpose Vehicles (SPV); a scheme for extending financial assistance to States to acquire land and also for setting up common facilities; revival of public sector units for starting the manufacturing of selected and very essential critical drugs (e.g. penicillins, paracetamol etc.); financial investment from the Government for development of clusters which may be in the form of a professionally managed dedicated equity fund for the promotion of manufacture of APIs and extending fiscal benefits to creation of the entire community cluster infrastructure and individual unit infrastructure; extension of fiscal and financial benefits to promote the bulk drugs sector; promoting stronger industry-academia interaction, synergising R&D promotion efforts by various govt. agencies; incentivising scientists, duty exemptions for capital goods imports. The recommendations are presently being examined for due approvals.

Distress sale of crops by farmers

*161. SHRI K.C. TYAGI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Food Corporation of India (FCI) directly purchases rice, wheat, etc., from the farmers of the country, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether it is a fact that farmers of many States are compelled to sell their crops at the rate below the Minimum Support Price (MSP);