

other brands of packaged drinking water bottles are permitted for sale after screening, shortlisting and approval by the Zonal Railway administrations.

(b) No, Sir. Both one litre and 500 ml bottles of Rail Neer as well as other approved brands of packaged drinking water have been allowed for sale.

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## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

### Employment in drought affected areas

†542. SHRI LAL SINH VADODIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is contemplating seriously to promote non-agricultural work in drought affected areas;

(b) if so, whether any action has been taken in this regard till now; and

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA): (a) to (c) As per sub para (2) of paragraph 4 of Schedule 1, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), District Programme Coordinator shall ensure that atleast 60% of the work to be taken up in a districts in terms of cost, shall be for creation of productive assets directly linked to agriculture and allied activities and that it is applicable for all the districts including the districts in the drought affected areas.

### Minimum living income for farmers

543. SHRI P. L. PUNIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the average monthly income of a farmer in the country, State-wise;

(b) the average agricultural debt per household;

(c) the steps taken by Government to write off the loans of farmers in the country during the last two years and the outcome thereof;

(d) whether Government intends to constitute an Income Commission that could suggest ways to ensure a minimum living income for farmers; and

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

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

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA): (a) The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) conducted a "Situation Assessment Survey (SAS) of Agricultural Households" during NSS 70th round (January 2013-December 2013) in the rural areas of the country with respect to the agricultural year July 2012-June 2013. The survey estimated the average monthly income per agricultural household for the agricultural year July 2012—June 2013 as ₹ 6426/-. The State-wise details of estimated average monthly income per agricultural household during the agricultural year July 2012—June 2013 are given in Statement-I (*See below*).

(b) The above Situation Assessment Survey (SAS) of Agricultural Households, 2013 collected information on the amount of outstanding loans of agricultural households which includes all types of outstanding loans of the agricultural households irrespective of the purpose for which they were taken at the time of the survey, but did not estimate the average agricultural debt per household. However, as per the results obtained from the survey, the average amount of outstanding loan per agricultural household at the time of the survey was ₹ 47000/- approximately. State-wise details are given in Statement-II (*See below*).

(c) No, Sir. However, Government of India announced an interest subvention scheme in 2006-07 to enable banks to provide short term credit to agriculture (crop loan) upto ₹ 3 lakh at 7% rate of interest to farmers. Further, to incentivize prompt repayment, Government of India announced in the Union Budget for 2009-10, an additional interest subvention of 1% to those farmers who repay their short term crop loans promptly and on or before the due date. This interest subvention was subsequently raised to 2% in 2010-11. The interest subvention of 3% since 2011-12 has been continued. Thus, farmers, who promptly repay their crop loans as per the repayment schedule fixed by the banks, are extended loans at an effective interest rate of 4% p.a. Government has extended the scheme to crop loans borrowed from private sector scheduled commercial banks in respect of loans given within the service area of the branch concerned.

(d) and (e) At present, there is no proposal for constituting an Income Commission. However, Government believes, that farmers welfare will improve if there is increase in net income from the farms. With this end in view, the approach is to reduce cost of cultivation, enable higher yield per unit and realize remunerative prices of farm produce. Some of the important new initiatives in this context are:

(i) Soil Health Card (SHC) Scheme by which the farmers can know the major

and minor nutrients available in their soils which will ensure judicious use of fertiliser application and thus save money of farmers. The balanced use of fertiliser will also enhance productivity and ensure higher returns to the farmers.

- (ii) Neem Coated Urea is being promoted to regulate urea use, enhance its availability to the crop and reduce cost of fertilizer application. The entire quantity of domestically manufactured urea is now neem coated.
- (iii) Parampragat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) is being implemented with a view to promoting organic farming in the country. This will improve soil health and organic matter content and increase net income of the farmer so as to realise premium prices.
- (iv) The Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) is being implemented to expand cultivated area with assured irrigation, reduce wastage of water and improve water use efficiency.

In addition, the Government is implementing several Centrally Sponsored Schemes viz. National Food Security Mission (NFSM); Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH); National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm (NMOOP); National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA); National Mission on Agricultural Extension and Technology (NMAET); Unified National Agriculture Markets; and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY).

Government has also recently approved a new Crop Insurance Scheme namely Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) to replace National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) and Modified NAIS (MNAIS) from Kharif 2016 season. PMFBY has addressed all the shortcomings in the earlier schemes and would be available to the farmers at very low rates of premium. The farmers will get full insurance cover as there will be no capping of sum insured and consequently the claim amount will not be cut or reduced. This scheme would provide insurance cover for all stages of the crop cycle including post-harvest risks in specified instances. The area coverage would be increased from 23% presently to 50% in two years.

Further the Government undertakes procurement of wheat and paddy under its 'MSP operations'. In addition, Government implements Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) for procurement of agricultural and horticultural commodities not covered under the Minimum Price Support Scheme on the request of State/UT Government. The MIS is implemented in order to protect the growers of these commodities from making distress sale in the event of bumper crop when the prices tend to fall below the economic level/cost of production.

***Statement-I***

*Estimated average monthly income (₹) per agricultural household during the agricultural year July 2012—June 2013 for different States/Group of UTs*

State	Average Monthly Income (₹)
Andhra Pradesh	5979
Arunachal Pradesh	10869
Assam	6695
Bihar	3558
Chhattisgarh	5177
Gujarat	7926
Haryana	14434
Himachal Pradesh	8777
Jammu and Kashmir	12683
Jharkhand	4721
Karnataka	8832
Kerala	11888
Madhya Pradesh	6210
Maharashtra	7386
Manipur	8842
Meghalaya	11792
Mizoram	9099
Nagaland	10048
Odisha	4976
Punjab	18059
Rajasthan	7350
Sikkim	6798
Tamil Nadu	6980
Telangana	6311
Tripura	5429
Uttarakhand	4701

State	Average Monthly Income (₹)
Uttar Pradesh	4923
West Bengal	3980
Group of UTs	8568
ALL INDIA	6426

Source: National Sample Survey Office (NSSO).

**Statement-II**

*Estimated average amount of outstanding loan (₹) per agricultural household for different States/Group of UTs*

(₹ in hundred)

State/Group of UTs*	Average Outstanding Loan
Andhra Pradesh	1234
Arunachal Pradesh	54
Assam	34
Bihar	163
Chhattisgarh	102
Gujarat	381
Haryana	790
Himachal Pradesh	280
Jammu and Kashmir	122
Jharkhand	57
Karnataka	972
Kerala	2136
Madhya Pradesh	321
Maharashtra	547
Manipur	61
Meghalaya	14
Mizoram	29
Nagaland	6
Odisha	282
Punjab	1195
Rajasthan	705

State/Group of UTs*	Average Outstanding Loan
Sikkim	99
Tamil Nadu	1159
Telangana	935
Tripura	50
Uttarakhand	356
Uttar Pradesh	273
West Bengal	178
Group of UTs	477
ALL-INDIA	470

Source: National Sample Survey Office (NSSO).

\* Loans included all kind of outstanding loans irrespective of the purpose for which loans were taken as on the date of survey.

### **Suicide by farmers in West Bengal**

544. SHRI RITABRATA BANERJEE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that a large number of peasants have committed suicides in West Bengal in the last one year;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, district-wise; and
- (c) the remedial measures taken to prevent such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA): (a) to (c) The Government of West Bengal has intimated recently (May, 2016) that there is no incidence of farmer suicide in the State.

Agriculture, including agricultural indebtedness, being a State subject, the State Governments take appropriate measures for development of agriculture in the State. However, Government of India supplements the efforts of States through appropriate policy measures and budgetary support.

The strategy of the Government is to focus on farmers' welfare by making farming viable. Farm viability is possible, when cost of cultivation is reduced, yields per unit of farm are increased and farmers get remunerative prices on their produce. The Department has been implementing various schemes to meet this objective, viz: