

Inland Container Depot at ICP, Attari, Amritsar

*36. SHRI SHWAIT MALIK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry is in the process of opening an Inland Container Depot (ICD) at Integrated Check Post (ICP), Attari, Amritsar; and

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

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SURESH PRABHU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) ICDs are essentially for facilitating import/export traffic in containers. Attari is at the Indo-Pak border and is already having an Integrated Check Post of The Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) for facilitating border trade with Pakistan. However, specific to border trade with Pakistan in Containers, at present, there is no agreement with Pakistan Railways for movement of Containers by Rail between the two countries. Therefore, the question of having an Inland Container Depot at Attari, Amritsar does not arise for the present.

Increasing production of pulses

*37. SHRI SAMBHAJI CHHATRAPATI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has projected to raise the production of pulses by 4 million tonnes by 2016-17, over and above the highest production during Eleventh Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, the details thereof and whether there is a proportionate trend of increase in production of pulses irrespective of inhospitable climatic conditions; and

(c) the additional steps taken by Government to achieve the target fixed?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH): (a) and (b) National Food Security Mission (NFSM) was launched in 2007-08 with the objective to increase pulses production by 2 million tonnes by the end of the Eleventh Plan. Consequently, the pulse production increased from 14.20 million tonnes in 2006-07 to 17.09 million tonnes by 2011-12, *i.e.* 2.89 million tonnes. NFSM is continued in Twelfth Plan with new target of 4 million tonnes of pulse production. The pulse production increased upto 19.25 million tonnes in the year 2013-14. However, the pulse production came down to 17.15 and 16.47 million tonnes in the year 2014-15 and 2015-16, respectively. The decline in pulse production is due to continuous drought in Kharif seasons of two years and moisture stress at sowing time as well as occurrence of hailstorm and unseasonal rains at maturity stage of Rabi pulses. The production of Kharif pulses in 2016-17 is expected about

8.70 million tonnes (as per 1st Advance Estimates) that is much higher than previous Kharif seasons. The area coverage under Rabi pulses as on 11.11.2016 is 49.64 lakh ha. which is 12.01 lakh ha. higher than corresponding week area coverage of 2015-16 (37.23 lakh ha). The sowing of Rabi pulses is in progress and expected significantly higher area coverage of Rabi pulses in current year.

(c) Besides ongoing NFSM interventions, new initiatives like distribution of seed minikits, subsidy on production of quality seed, creation of seed hubs, strengthening breeder seed production programme and establishing production units of bio-fertilizers and bio-control agents at Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) institutes and State Agriculture Universities (SAUs), cluster frontline demonstrations through Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) have been undertaken under NFSM with an additional allocation of ₹ 500.00 crores for pulses during 2016-17. Government of India has also undertaken procurement of pulses from 2015-16, increased buffer stock limit upto 2 million tonnes and enhanced Minimum Support Price (MSP) of pulses.

Internet access in villages

*38. SHRI SHAMSHER SINGH DULLO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that people's access to internet in rural areas of the country is very limited, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether Government is formulating new plans/strategies to provide internet facility to the people in rural parts of the country at cheaper rates?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) As per "The Indian Telecom Services Performance Indicators" report published by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on 5th August, 2016, there were 111.94 million internet subscribers in rural area and 230.71 million subscribers in urban area as on 31st March, 2016 in the country. There were 12.80 rural internet subscribers per 100 population and 58.28 urban internet subscribers per 100 population. Service Area-wise details of such subscribers as on 31st March, 2016 is given in the Statement-I (*See below*).

(b) BharatNet project is planned to establish a network infrastructure to bridge the connectivity gap between Gram Panchayats (GPs) and Blocks for providing broadband connectivity by connecting all Gram Panchayats (approx. 2.5 lakh) in the country by using an optimal mix of underground fibre, fibre over power lines, radio and satellite media which will be shared to all categories of service providers on non-discriminatory basis.