

- To provide more options to passengers Ready to Eat (RTE) meals such as Biryani, Rajma-chawal etc. are also proposed to be introduced in trains in a phased manner.
- Indian Railways through IRCTC is also contemplating introducing Dehydrated Meal Technology similar to Airlines, wherein Upma, Poha. etc., can be eaten by adding hot water to the cup.

Agitations by farmers

*71. SHRI BASAWARAJ PATIL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) the reasons for sudden agitations of farmers in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka, etc.;
- (b) the genuine problems of agriculturists in different States; and
- (c) in what manner Central and State Governments are going to solve the problems?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH): (a) to (c) There are multifarious reasons for the sudden agitation by farmers in these States. Their main demands include debt waiver, fixation of Minimum Support Price (MSP), interest free farm loan, old age pension for farmers, regular power supply for agriculture, 100% subsidy for drip irrigation, higher price for milk and higher price for agri-commodities like onions, soyabean, etc.

Regarding waiver of loans of farmers, it is the Department of Financial Services (DFS) that is authorized to formulate Debt Waiver Scheme.

However, in case of natural calamities, Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) guidelines to banks on relief measures are pressed into service. The measures to be initiated by respective lending institutions *inter alia*, include identification of beneficiaries, extending fresh loans and restructuring of existing loans, relaxed security and margin norms, moratorium, etc. These guidelines have been designed in such a way, that the moment calamity is declared by the concerned District Authorities, they are automatically set in motion without any external intervention and this saves precious time. The benchmark for restructuring of loans has been revised by RBI from 50% to 33% crop loss in line with the National Disaster Management Framework.

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.

Generally, the problems of agriculturists in different States relate to inadequate access to institutional credit, crop loss due to natural calamities, not realizing remunerative prices on their produce and lack of availability of proper irrigation systems. In order to address these issues, the Govt. is taking several measures which are briefly as follows:

- (i) **Credit through institutional sources:** In order to bring more farmers within the institutional fold, the department is providing through institutional sources, short-term crop loans and medium/long term crop loans to the farmers. It may be mentioned that the target for agriculture credit flow was ₹ 7 lakh crore during the year 2013-14 which has been increased to a record level of ₹ 10 lakh crore during 2017-18. Short term loan of upto ₹ 3 lakh is provided to farmers at an interest rate of 7% per annum. Further, farmers who promptly repay their crop loans *i.e.*, within a period of one year get benefit of interest subvention of 3%. Thus, the effective interest rate for short term crop loan is 4% per annum.
- (ii) **Crop loss due to natural calamity:** The RBI has allowed rescheduling of loans by banks etc. if crop loss is 33% or more. In addition to this, Government has launched Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana to address the risks associated with farming. In the first year of its implementation, the coverage of Gross Cropped Area (GCA) reached about 30% and it has been targeted to reach 40% during 2017-18.
- (iii) **Schemes to transfer remunerative prices to farmers:** In order to create an efficient marketing system, Govt. launched e-NAM on 14.04.2016. It promotes online trading from across the markets, thereby enabling integration of spatially distributed markets. It is targeted to onboard 585 markets by March, 2018. As on date 455 markets spread across 13 states have been onboarded. Further, the Deptt. has rolled out a model agricultural marketing Act to resolve the constraints that exist in the current state APMC Acts. The

new Act called Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2017 when adopted will introduce multiple marketing channels, alternate electronic platforms, direct marketing and level playing field for both private and public sector markets, leading to greater competition and discovery of remunerative prices.

In order to provide the much needed price support on the farmers' produce, the Deptt. notifies minimum support price (MSP) for 23 commodities based on the recommendations of the 'Commission on Agricultural Costs and Prices'(CACP).

- (iv) **The Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayi Yojana (PMKSY):** This scheme has been launched in order to expand cultivated area with assured irrigation, reduce wastage of water and improve water use efficiency. PMKSY adopts state level planning and projectised execution that allows States to drop their own irrigation development based on District Irrigation Plans and State Irrigation Plans.

Apart from the above measures the Department is implementing schemes to reduce input costs. These include universal soil health card scheme, neem coated urea and farm mechanization.

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, therefore, been implementing various schemes to meet this objective. Schemes that promote efficiency of natural resources and help reduce cost of cultivation are Soil Health Card (SHC) scheme, Neem Coated Urea (NCU), Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) and Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY). National Agriculture Market Scheme (e-NAM) has been launched to create an efficient integrated market. Further, besides notifying MSPs Govt. undertakes procurement operations under Price Support Scheme (PSS) and Market Intervention Scheme(MIS). The later serves horticultural and plantation crops, where no MSP is notified. Under PSS, it is pulses and oilseeds which are generally procured. The Ministry of Food, Public Distribution and Consumer Affairs undertakes procurement of wheat and paddy through

FCI. As regards improving productivity to realize higher production, Government has been implementing National Food Security Mission (NFSM) for various field crops, National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil palm (NMOOP) for oilseeds and oil palm and Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) for horticultural crops.

The Government has advised the State Governments to set up inter-ministerial/departmental committees at state and district levels with a mandate to achieve coordination and convergence among different activities relating to agriculture and also monitor welfare issues relating to farmers. The district level Committees have been asked to ensure coverage of all eligible framers under various welfare schemes like old age pension, Atal Pension Yojana, insurance schemes etc.

Textile and garment exports

*72. SHRI SHANKARBHAI N. VEGAD: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state whether Government has any data regarding increase in exports of textiles and garments in the last three years, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI): Yes, Sir. As per the available data, the export of textiles and garments has shown a increase of 3.2% during the last three years. The details are as under:

Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR)
Exports (In INR Cr.)	2,47,546	2,59,712	2,63,494	3.2%

Source: Director General of Commerce Intelligence and Statistics.

Releasing of rice and wheat to Uttar Pradesh

†*73. SHRI SURENDRA SINGH NAGAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.