

crops and other commercial crops for 2018-19 Season with a return of at least 50% over cost of production. This decision of the Government was a historic one as it redeemed the promise of fixing the MSPs at a level of at least 50 per cent return over the cost of production as announced in the Union Budget 2018-19.

The recently launched Umbrella Scheme 'Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA)' provides for a holistic arrangement for assurance of a remunerative and stable price environment for growers/farmers to increase agriculture production and productivity. This Umbrella Scheme comprises Price Support Scheme (PSS) for pulses and oilseeds, Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS) and Pilot of Private Procurement and Stockist Scheme (PPSS) for oilseeds to ensure MSP to the farmers.

The Government provides total interest subvention up to 5% (inclusive of 3% prompt repayment incentive) on short-term crop loans up to ₹ 3.00 lakh. Thus, loan is available to farmers at a reduced rate of 4% per annum on prompt repayment. This reduced rate helps in keeping Agri-production costs in check.

Further, Government has launched a new crop insurance scheme namely 'Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)' from Kharif 2016 season to provide better insurance coverage to crops. This scheme provides insurance cover for all stages of the crop cycle including post-harvest risks in specified instances. With a view to ensure better transparency, accountability and timely payment of claims to the farmers, the Operational Guidelines of PMFBY have recently been comprehensively revised which, *inter alia*, include the following:—

- o Provision of 12% interest rate per annum to be paid by the Insurance Company to farmers for delay in settlement claims beyond 10 days of prescribed cut off date for payment of claims.
- o State Government have to pay 12% interest rate for delay in release of State share of Subsidy beyond three months of prescribed cut off date/submission of requisition by Insurance Companies.

Protest by farmers

1318. SHRI NEERAJ SHEKHAR:

SHRI RAVI PRAKASH VERMA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether more than one lakh farmers have demonstrated in Delhi on 29th

and 30th November, 2018 against the agricultural policies of Union Government demanding MSP 1.5 times the cost of production and waiver of farm loans;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of response of Government thereto along with the measures Government would take to fulfill their specific demands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT): (a) and (b) Farmers and representatives of All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) reportedly demonstrated in Delhi on 29th and 30th November, 2018 raising various issues including increasing Minimum Support Prices (MSP) to 1.5 times the cost of production and waiver of farm loans.

(c) The Union Budget for 2018-19 had announced the pre-determined principle to keep MSP at levels of one and half times the cost of production. Accordingly, Government has increased the MSPs for all notified Kharif, Rabi and other commercial crops with a return of atleast 50 per cent of cost of production for the season 2018-19. This decision of the Government was a historic one as it fulfills the commitment to the farmers to provide 50 per cent return over cost of production for the first time for all mandated crops.

Post Agriculture Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme, 2008 no other debt waiver scheme is under consideration of Union Government. However, State Governments have been announcing debt waiver scheme, considering the condition of farmers in their respective States.

On its part, to reduce the debt burden of farmers and to increase availability of institutional credit to farmers, following major initiatives have been taken by the Union Government:—

- With a view to ensuring availability of agriculture credit at a reduced interest rate to farmers, the Government is implementing the Interest Subvention Scheme (ISS) under which reduced interest rate at the rate of 4% per annum are offered to farmers for prompt repayment of their short term crop loan.
- Government sets annual target for the flow of credit to the agriculture sector. The current year's agriculture credit flow target has been set at ₹ 11 lakh crore.
- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued Priority Sector Lending Guidelines (PSL) under which loans to distressed farmers to repay non-institutional

lenders are eligible under priority sector. Besides loans to stressed persons (other than farmers) not exceeding ₹ 1,00,000/- per borrower to repay their debt to non-institutional lender are also eligible for the purpose of priority sector lending by banks.

- Government is implementing the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme for farmers to draw cash to purchase agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilisers, pesticides as well as to meet other agricultural and consumption needs.
- To bring small, marginal, tenant farmers, oral lessees, etc. into the fold of institutional credit, Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) have been promoted by banks.
- Government is committed to farmer's welfare and towards this objective it has changed its strategy from being production centric to an income centric one. The MSP policy announced in 2018-19 season is another progressive step forward in a series of reforms that the Government has been rolling out for the last 4 years, committed as it is to doubling farmers' income by 2022 and improving the welfare substantively. In addition to that the Government has been implementing/reorienting various schemes for betterment of agriculture sector with four key elements: reducing input costs; ensuring fair price for the produce; reducing wastage; and creating alternate sources of income.

Establishment of Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund

1319. SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH:

DR. BANDA PRAKASH:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has approved a ₹ 7,552 crore fund for establishing Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that the move would help to boost annual fish production up to 20 million tonnes by 2022-23 and generate over 9.40 lakh employment opportunities; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRIMATI KRISHNA RAJ): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Union Government has recently approved a proposal for creation of Fisheries and Aquaculture