

are to be delivered in October 2020 and will be fitted in Indian Air Force helicopters (as agreed by them) and will be used for aerial operations for control of desert locusts.

- Review meetings and VCs were organized with State Governments and locust control preparedness was strategized, capacity building and awareness campaigns were organized in districts, blocks and villages, advisories were issued, training programs and mock drills were conducted. When Covid-19 struck, awareness literature and videos were shared through virtual medium to orient both functionaries and farmers. Control rooms were established in Locust offices and District Headquarters, and WhatsApp groups were created in all affected States for real time exchange of information and coordination.
- Ministry of Home Affairs has included admissibility of hiring of vehicles, tractors with spray equipments for spraying of plant protection chemicals for pest control; hiring of water tankers; and purchase of plant protection chemicals for locust control under new norms of assistance under State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF). This has also facilitated the State in their locust control operations.
- Under Sub-mission on Agriculture Mechanization assistance of ₹ 2.86 crores for 800 tractors mounted spray equipments was sanctioned to Rajasthan. Under RKVY sanction of ₹ 14 crores for hiring of vehicles, tractors and for purchase of pesticides has also been issued.
- Gujarat States has been sanctioned ₹ 1.80 crores under RKVY for capacity enhancement for locust control.
- Under Sub-mission on Agriculture Mechanization assistance of 2.20 crore has been sanctioned for purchase of tractors and spray equipments for Uttar Pradesh.

#### **Promoting rural retail markets**

666. SHRI M.V. SHREYAMS KUMAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Committee on Doubling Farmers' Income has recommended that steps should be taken for promoting rural retail markets through upgrading the existing rural periodical markets as Primary Rural Agricultural Markets;

- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has taken/is taking the necessary policy initiatives in this regard; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR): (a) and (b) The Committee on doubling farmers' income has recommended that "the effectiveness of an efficient marketing system can be gained by upgrading the existing more than 20,000 rural periodical markets as Primary Rural (grameen) Agricultural Markets (GRAMs)".

(c) and (d) The Government has already taken measures for development of physical infrastructure/ basic facilities in existing rural haats under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). The Government has also approved an Agri-Market Infrastructure Fund (AMIF) with a corpus of ₹ 2000 crore with National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development (NABARD) for developing and upgrading agricultural marketing infrastructure in Gramin Agricultural Markets (GRAMs) and Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) Markets and circulated the Scheme Guidelines to the States/Union Territories (UTs) for submission of proposals/ Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) to avail assistance under AMIF. Further Government has circulated a Operational Guideline on "Operation and Management of Gramin Agricultural Market" to States/UTs for smooth operation of GRAMs.

#### **Suicide by farmers and agricultural labourers**

667. SHRI MANAS RANJAN BHUNIA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether many farmers and agricultural labourers have committed suicide in different States due to debt burden and other factors, if so, the details thereof; and
- (b) the numbers of farmers and agricultural labourers who committed suicide in 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR): (a) The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) under the Ministry of Home Affairs compiles and disseminates information on suicides in its publication titled 'Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India' (ADSI). These Reports