

considering over linking 100 Panchayats with telephones every day from 1st September. Through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether telephone connections for which recommendations have been made earlier by the hon. Members would be sanctioned and whether the number of telephone connections sanctioned on recommendations of M.Ps would be increased in view of increased demand of telephones. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: I would like to put my problem before the august House. When hon. Members place their demands for telephones and we issue sanctions for the same from here it takes about one and a half months to reach them and thereafter OB is issued. Telephone connections are not given as quickly as it is expected on the recommendation of the hon. Members (as employees are very scared of the hon. Members). If the entire House unanimously agrees my submission will be that we can give written instructions to all the C.G. Ms that hon. Members who can recommend for 15 telephone connections on priority basis may issue sanctions for such number of telephones directly...(*Interruptions*) In this way they will be able to get help from the C.G.M. in respect of their own constituencies. Besides, the hon. Members place their requisition for 5 connections at other CGM. If the august House agrees to my proposal the CGMs will have their co-ordination internally and I will also get some relief. When I step into and leave the House I feel inconvenient. They ask me of the progress, I am unable to give a quick reply. When thousands of people come to Khurana Sahab, 15 is very small a number. The hon. Member whispers in the ears of his friends to keep quiet and assures them to let them know later on. In the process, I am put in an embarrassing position. (*Interruptions*) Mr. Speaker, Sir, if you kindly take a decision in this regard I will issue necessary orders to C.G.Ms...(*Interruptions*)

Support Price of Agricultural Produce

+

*612. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA:

SHRIDHARAM PAL SINGH MALIK:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to increase the support prices of agricultural produce in view of the increase in the prices of fertilizers and farm machinery; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) and (b). The recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices on Price Policy for Kharif Crops of 1991-92 taking into account the hike in fertilizer prices are under the consideration of the Government.

[*Translation*]

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA: Mr. Speaker, sir, I did not get a correct reply to my question. In my question I have pointed out that prices of fertilizers and farm machineries have gone up. The reply given by the hon. Minister was restricted to fertilizer prices only. I want to point out that my question remains unanswered. Please let me know why it is so. Secondly, at the time of fixing the prices of agriculture produces, all the farmers i.e. the marginal, small and big, are put on an equal footing.

The support price of agriculture produces is increased by 2 to 5 per cent only. When the prices of fertiliser have been increased by 40 to 50 per cent, will the Government issue necessary instructions to Agriculture Prices Commission to fix the support price keeping view the overall situation instead of big farmers only.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BAL RAM JAKHAR): All these aspects are taken into consideration. Please rest assured that we will take into account all these things. Perhaps you have overlooked the fact that for the medium and small farm-

ers the prices remain the same and there has been no hike.

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA: Apart from fertilizers, I have also said about farm machineries in my question. The small farmers have also been affected. You have given them concession in fertilizers only but no concession has been given to them in farm machineries. The price of farm machineries have increased.

SHRI BAL RAM JAKHAR: It is decided on the basis of commodities reaching the market.

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to point out that while fixing prices of agriculture produces, the Agriculture Prices Commission should take into accounts the market price of farm machineries and other agriculture inputs like pesticides etc. which go up by 30-40 per cent. The commission makes only 2 to 5 per cent increase in support price. The Government should take into account the differences between various prices and ensure that the farmer, at least, gets the production cost of his produces if not remunerative prices. The support price of wheat is Rs. 125 per quintal whereas its market price is Rs. 315 per quintal. Even then wheat is not available in market at this rate. It can never be said a justifiable thing.

SHRI BAL RAM JAKHAR: If you want to have the details, let me tell you the things we take into consideration.

[English]

Cost of production. Changes in input prices. Input/output price parity. Trends in market prices. Demand and supply Situation Inter-crop price parity. Effect on industrial cost structure. Effect on general price level. Effect on cost of living. International market price situation. Parity between prices received and paid by the farmers.

The cost of cultivation/production taken into account includes all paid-out costs, such

as, those incurred on account of hired human labour, bullock labour/machine labour (both hired and owned) and rent paid for leased-in land besides cash and kind expenses on use of material inputs like seeds, fertilisers, manures, irrigation charges including cost of diesel/electricity for operation of pump sets, etc. Besides, cost of production includes imputed value of family labour. The costs also cover depreciation of farm machinery and buildings. As such, the cost of production covers not only paid-out costs but also imputed value of owned assets including land and family labour for which the farmers do not incur cash expenses.

The Government revised the methodology for estimation of cost of production, after considering the recommendations of the Expert Committee; and in that the revised methodology also says valuation of labour at statutory minimum wage rate or actual wage rate whichever is higher; evaluation of managerial input as an item of cost at 10 per cent of total costs; and adjustment of support prices announced before the sowing season at the time of arrival of crops in the market in case the observed rise in input costs turns out to be higher than the anticipated rise. So, all these factors are taken into account and then we get the price.

[Translation]

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA: My question is specific as to whether they would maintain a sort of balance in the market-prices or not as the farmers are very much distressed over this great imbalance.

SHRIDHARAMPAL SINGH MALIK: Mr. Speaker, sir, the hon. Minister has stated that the Government takes all the factors into account while fixing the support price. I would like to know about two-three things. Generally, the announcement of support price is made very late. But the small farmers who are always in need of money do not wait for the announcement and sell out their produce. They are not in a position to keep the stock. Thus they purchase the goods at higher costs but are compelled to sell their

produce at lower prices to because announcement of support price is made very late. So I would like to request the Government to make such a policy that the prices of agriculture produce may increase automatically in the ratio in which increase in the prices of other essential commodities takes place. They may get those crops....

MR. SPEAKER: Ask your question in brief it is becoming lengthy.

SHRIDHARAMPAL SINGH MALIK: My question is very specific as to whether the Government would like to announce the support price before the onset of harvesting season as the Government wants to link the support price with price index.

SHRIBAL RAM JAKHAR: I would like to assure the hon. Member that everything will be done in the manner it should be done. I think the very reason of this delay in the announcement of support price is known to him as well as to the House. First there was a change in the Government, then in the prices and lastly in the time. Now we shall take a decision beforehand. Do not worry, please. It will be announced before the onset of harvesting season. I have requested the Minister of Food also to make his announcement so that the farmers are not distressed.

[English]

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Punjab contributes over 60 per cent to the national food kitty. At a time when the coal producing States are given more royalty on coal. I would like to know from the Government whether they would consider giving bonus to the Punjab farmers for produce sent out of the State, in view of the disturbed conditions in Punjab and the difficult times that the farmers there are passing through.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: I can follow up the suggestion.

DR. K.S. SOUNDARAM: In fixing the support price the actual producers, namely the farmers should be consulted. Will the

Government come forward to do so? Comparing the inputs like fertilizer, the cost of producing paddy is much higher than wheat. So, the support price for paddy should be more than that for wheat. Will the Government consider it?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Everything relevant is considered and every factor is valued after talking into consideration each aspect of it.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI BHAVNA CHIKHLIA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has stated that the Government would decide the support prices of agriculture produce taking the rise in the prices of fertilizers and the recommendations of the Agriculture-Price Commission into its consideration. Would he be pleased to state the time limit for that so that the farmers may know the future price of their produce?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: This should have been done earlier as I have already told you.

SHRIMATI BHAVNA CHIKHLIA: The farmers are already distressed as they did not get the remunerative price of their produce.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: The hon. Member must know as I have urged earlier that first there was a change in Government, subsequently in the prices and then in the time.

SHRIMATI BHAVNA CHIKHLIA: Farmers have not got yet the amount of compensation of crop-insurances. They are very much distressed.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: I have already stated that this time all it happened because of very special circumstances. Otherwise, prices would have been announced before the month of March. I am saying the same thing. It must have been done and it has always been done. This

delay has occurred due to some special circumstances. Earlier it is done after September. So I hope that I will be able to announce the prices before 3rd September.

[English]

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that the element of risk due to floods, drought and cyclone is not covered in the scheme and while computing the cost, average consumption of fertiliser is computed and not the optimum dose of fertilisers recommended by the Department. I also want to know from the Minister whether it is a fact that transport charges for bringing the produce from the field to the market is not computed in that and the profit of margin is not being considered. I think, in the case of fertilisers, you are giving 12 per cent post tax profit. I want know as to why the profit of margin is not computed while the farmer has to work day in and day out. And because of this fact, in 1988-89, the producers of wheat or paddy had to part with nearly twice as much as they produce; as they did in 1970-71 to buy the same mix of goods. In view of this fact, will the Government take all these factors into consideration while computing the cost of production and giving a remunerative price to the farmers?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: I must assure my hon. Member, Shri V.S. Rao, that we will take into consideration all these factors and also the profit because if it is not remunerative, it is not profitable. We must compensate the farmer. That will be kept in view at the time of fixing it. I think, I gave you the full implications and the facts and also the via media by which we arrive at a decision. I assure the hon. Member that we will do whatever best possible for the farmer.

SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI: Before fixing the support price of agricultural produce, is it not necessary to find out the price of fertiliser which has been produced by the factory. There is a lot of discrepancy from factory to factory. One factory shows

profit and another factory shows loss. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether an expert committee can be constituted to find out the actual cost of fertiliser produced in this country...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: In this question, we are considering the price of agricultural produce and not fertilisers.

SHRIMATI BASAVA RAJESWARI: Now, I am coming to the question.

Before fixing the support price of agricultural produce, will the hon. Minister assure me that an expert committee will be set up to find out the actual cost of fertiliser produced...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: This does not come under this question.

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has already said that the support price will be announced sufficiently ahead before the procurement. Jute has already started coming to the market in Orissa, Bengal and in other States. But the support price for jute has not yet been announced. May I know from the hon. Minister when the support price for jute will be announced?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: It has already been announced...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Last year it was announced. For this year, it was not yet announced...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: It has been announced. But I will like it to be revised in view of the new fertiliser price increase...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI CHITTA BASU: You want to revise it...*(Interruptions)*

PROF. UMMAREDDY VENKATESWARLU: Mr. Speaker, sir, while computing the cost for determining the support price for agricultural products, several factors are

being considered. In recent times, it is the economics of the alternative cropping pattern that have been influencing the price fixation of a particular crop. For example, in most of cane growing zones, where sugarcane is being grown, the sugarcane is thrown out of the cropping pattern since the economics of paddy followed by first crop is better. So, while fixing the support price for one crop, the economics of the other cropping pattern should also be taken into consideration. In most of the cases, this is lacking. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether the economics of the alternative cropping pattern will also be taken into consideration.

Sir, the representation of farmers of all the regions on the Agricultural Price Commission is not proper. Will the Government consider having more representations from the agricultural community representing all the regions in the country?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Sir, there are already representatives of the farming community.

[Translation]

SHRI UPENDRA NATH VERMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know whether it is a fact that the farmers do not get the remunerative prices of their produce. Even the cost is not recovered. Whatever they get, they do not get in time. For example, they have not got the prices of their sugar-cane for many years. They are in arrears. Will the Government consider this question and help them get their arrears immediately? Besides this, would it issue instructions to the effect that the prices of the produce purchased from farmers be paid immediately.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: We shall try our best to give the remunerative prices to the farmers. As far as the arrears against the Sugar Mills are concerned, we shall ask these Mills to pay their arrears at the earliest. Except the prices of sugar cane farmers get prices of their other produce in time.

SHRI SURYA NARAYAN YADAV: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has just referred to the price fixation. Sir, it has been often observed that the traders do not purchase grains from the farmers at the very rates fixed by Government. Would the Government make an arrangement to purchase their produce at every district and block head quarters level at the rates fixed by Government?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: We shall do it certainly. We have had a talk with the Ministry of Food also that they should make all arrangements for purchasing the produce of the farmers.

SHRI RAJENDRA KUMAR SHARMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to tell the hon. Minister that the prices of all the commodities except those of the agricultural produce rise through out the year, yet the farmers are given low prices. Take the example of cement or any other item.

MR. SPEAKER: Come to the question please.

SHRI RAJENDRA KUMAR SHARMA: I am coming to that, Sir. The farmers do not have any union or organisation and the whole House is unanimous so far as their cause is concerned.

MR. SPEAKER: No, not this way. Put your question directly.

SHRI RAJENDRA KUMAR SHARMA: I would like to know from the Minister of Agriculture as to whether he would assure the House that Prices of the different commodities would not be raised this year in the ratio they were increased last year as there is drought in the country and the prices of the fertilizer as well as of the other commodities have already gone up.

MR. SPEAKER: I have disallowed your question. This does not form any question. You please put the question.

SHRI RAJENDRA KUMAR SHARMA: I

would like to suggest to the Hon. Minister of Agriculture that this year Price Commission's formula of raising the prices by Rs. 10-12 to 15 should not be implemented this year. The Agriculture Minister should give a serious consideration to all the aspects before taking any decision. But the decision should be in the favour of the farmers. *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Digvijay Singh.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Since you did not ask any question.

SHRI RAJENDRA KUMAR SHARMA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know the extent to which prices are proposed to be enhanced this year.

MR. SPEAKER: No, they do not fix any price.

[English]

SHRI DIGVIJAYA SINGH: Sir, I would like to tell the hon. Minister, through you, that because of the wide differences in the Agro-Climatic Zones in this country and between the productivity of Punjab and productivity of Orissa and Eastern Regions and also the wide range in the minimum wages paid in Punjab and in those areas, he cannot put them altogether at one level. Would the hon. Minister consider that while fixing the price of any produce, he should take the lower productivity of the lower regions and the higher minimum wages of those regions?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Will it be practicable?

SHRI DIGVIJAYA SINGH: Sir, the productivity of Punjab is three times more than of Orissa.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM NAGINA MISHRA: Mr.

Speaker, Sir, I have an important question regarding sugar-cane.

MR. SPEAKER: No, this question pertains to good grains and not to sugar-cane.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SATYNARAYAN JATIYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government has been assuring time and again that we would make suitable arrangement for purchasing foodgrains at support prices announced by Government. But this assurance is not fulfilled because of paucity of funds. Therefore, through you Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to whether the Government has made any scheme to provide funds in a particular period to purchase foodgrains as the F.C.I. does not have adequate funds to purchase foodgrains? Would the Government make any provision for providing funds to it?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to tell to hon. Jatiyaji that I have urged the Minister of Food to keep his paraphernalia ready for purchasing foodgrains.

[English]

Languages Recognised by Sahitya Akademi

*613. SHRIMATI DIL KUMARI BHANDARI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the languages spoken in the country;

(b) whether some of those languages have been recognised by the Sahitya Akademi;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the criteria followed for such recognition;

(d) whether any criteria have been laid