

(c) The major requirement of levy sugar was met from indigenous sugar during April to July, 1985. Free sale requirement for April & May, 1985 was met entirely from indigenous sugar. For June and July, 1985 imported sugar was released for freesale to the extent of 1.25 lakh tonnes and 1.75 lakh tonnes respectively. Certain quantity of imported sugar has been allocated to the State Governments for distribution through controlled channels at less than Rs. 6 per kg. whereas some quantity has been ear-marked for sale by Food Corporation of India against tender/auction. Initial infrastructure deficiencies and logistic problems had led to reduced off-take by the States and FCI in June, 1985. However, these problems have since been sorted out leading to larger off-take by the States and FCI in the month of July, 1985. With this streamlining it is expected that availability would improve as programmed resulting in reasonable prices to the consumers.

Disease Resistant Varieties of Rice

1889. SHRIMATI KISHORI SINHA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether IR-8 variety of rice has become vulnerable to diseases ;

(b) whether this is a general weakness of all hybrid varieties of grains ; and

(c) whether any steps are being taken to evolve more disease resistant varieties of rice using local strains ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR) : (a) No, Sir. There has not been any authentic report on the breakdown of resistance of variety IR-8 which has retained its reaction to different diseases.

(b) Not necessarily.

(c) Yes, Sir. Development of disease resistant varieties which is a continuous process is one of the most important programmes of rice improvement work in India. A number of disease resistant/tolerant varieties to some of the major diseases has been developed and released in India in recent years. Thus for Blast—Jaya, Vani, Improved Sona Rasi, IR-36, Swarnadhan ; for Bacterial leaf blight—IR—20, IR—36, Sasyasree ; for tungro virus—IR—20 ; for Sheath blight—Pankaj, Swarnadhan ; and for Brown spot—Rasi, IR—36 have been developed and released.

[Translation]

Increase in Prices of Food Articles

1890. PROF. CHANDRA BHANU DEVI : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state :

(a) the reasons for which the prices of food articles have gone up considerably in the country during the last few months ;

(b) whether Government propose to take any concrete steps to bring down the prices of food articles ; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (RAO BIRENDRA SINGH) :

(a) The prices of some food articles have gone up during the last few months mainly because of the seasonality factor, production constraints and increase in freight rates.

(b) and (c) The main thrust of the Government policy is to increase the production of essential commodities particularly the ones which are in short supply. The public distribution system is being expanded and improved. Some commodities are imported to supplement domestic supplies. The export of essential commodities is regulated. Measures are being taken to enforce fiscal discipline and for keeping the aggregate liquidity

under control. State Governments and Union Territory Administrations are enforcing the provisions of the Essential Commodities and similar legislations to curb the activities of hoarders and black-marketeers and other anti-social elements.

Agricultural Production in Hilly Areas

1891. SHRI HARISH RAWAT : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether per acre agricultural production in hilly areas in the country has increased as a result of various researches undertaken during the last two decades in the field of agriculture ;

(b) if so, to what extent ;

(c) whether this increase is satisfactory ; and

(d) if not, whether Government propose to consider the question of opening of separate research and extension centres in various hill regions of the country ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR) (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There has been definite impact of improved agricultural technology on the agricultural production in hill regions. The increase in yield per hectare in hilly areas for major crops during the year 1983-84 over the base year 1960-61 is as under :

Crop	State	% increase during 1983-84 over base year 1960-61
Rice	Jammu & Kashmir	66.3
Wheat	Himachal Pradesh	74.2
Maize	Himachal Pradesh	89.6
	Jammu & Kashmir	10.5
Pulses as a whole	Himachal Pradesh	7.4
	Jammu & Kashmir	61.1

In the North East Hill Region percentage increase in agricultural production taking 1972 as base year is as follows :—

Cereals as a whole	Meghalaya	110.0
	Nagaland	174.0
	Tripura	178.0
	Manipur	136.0
	Arunachal Pradesh	144.0
Potato	Mizoram	208.0
Oilseeds as a whole	Meghalaya	103.0
	Nagaland	108.0

(c) Yes, Sir. However, there is scope for further improvement.

(d) Does not arise.