

Title: Demand to ensure the procurement of wheat at the prices announced by the Central Government, open more Procurement Centres and retain subsidies in this sector.

intend to procure. It is a very serious matter. Farmers cultivated wheat through hard labour. Marriage season is on, and during season the farmer repays his loan. The farmers are victimised from all sides. The Government is deliberately harassing the farmers. I urge upon the Government to open adequate number of procurement centres and make cash payment to farmers and provide immediate protection to them.

KUNWAR AKHILESH SINGH (Maharajganj, U.P.): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have also given a notice on this subject.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Yes, he has given a notice on this subject.

[Translation]

KUNWAR AKHILESH SINGH: Sir, the Government of India declared MSP of Rs. 610 per quintal for wheat quite late. Agricultural production cost is increasing constantly because of the wrong policies of the Government. Increase in price of fertilizers, diesel, petrol and kerosene have led to increase in production cost, whereas the Government did not declare remunerative price in comparison to cost. Though the Government declared minimum support price but it has not made proper arrangements for procurement in any State of India including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh so far. Consequently the farmers are compelled to sell their wheat through middlemen at Rs. 500, 510 per quintal. In case of Kharif crop also, the Government had declared support price of paddy at Rs. 510 per quintal but the farmers were compelled to sell it at Rs. 350 per quintal through middlemen. Wrong policies of the Government caused great loss to farmers and now even in Rabi season the farmers are again suffering great losses in the absence of fixation of remunerative price of wheat. Therefore, the farmer is not only worried, but is uncertain also about his future. Agriculture is facing a new sort of crisis. Under constant pressure from WTO, every year the Government keeps reducing agriculture subsidy. The countries, under whose pressure our Government is reducing subsidy, provide maximum subsidy to their agriculture sectors. Countries like America, Canada, Japan or other European countries provide maximum subsidy to agriculture whereas the Government of India is gradually reducing subsidy thereby increasing production cost. Today, the Government do not have more than 20 per cent storage capacity in comparison to production. The Government even if it desire, cannot store the entire produce. Now, there is only one way out to

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN (Firozabad): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, untimely rain has caused great loss to farmers. Adequate number of procurement centres have not been opened by the Government. The farmer going to these centres for selling wheat is either bringing his wheat back or... (Interruptions)

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi): It would be convenient for the Members if an announcement is made about the time when there would be voting on the Budget.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Have a little patience.

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: Sir, the FCI has not opened the required number of procurement centres and I feel that it is being done deliberately to put farmers in trouble. In place of Minimum Support Price of Rs. 610 per quintal, the farmers are compelled to sell their wheat to the middlemen or commission agent at just Rs. 500, 550 or 560 per quintal. In fact, neither the Government have opened adequate procurement centres nor has it godowns for storage of grants. The Government do not

save the farmer and that is to provide additional subsidy on the price of agricultural inputs thereby reducing production cost. Until and unless the farmers are provided additional subsidy and production cost is brought down and production increased, the farmer of the country cannot face world level competitions. Therefore, today, through this House, I urge upon the Government to make arrangements, for procurement or wheat at support price to save Indian agriculture besides formulating a new agriculture policy and provide as much subsidy to our farmers as is being given in other countries.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH (*Vaishali*): Why is the Government sitting pretty on an issue concerning farmers?...(*Interruptions*) The Government is a mute spectator...(*Interruptions*) The Government expresses its opinion on other issues but does not bother about issues relating to the farmers....(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Raghuvansh Prasad ji, he is speaking on the same issues.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: If you want to ask anything, you too, would get a chance. You know, you are required to give a notice for this purpose.

...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY (*Miryalguda*): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I thank you very much for the opportunity given to me...(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY (*Chhapra*): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, what sort of words hon'ble Member is using. He speaks whatever he likes...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Rudy, you may leave it to me. I will take care of it.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I have given the floor to Shri Jaipal Reddy.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I completely agree with the views expressed by my hon. colleagues in regard to the unprecedented plight in which the farmers are finding themselves. May I further say that what they have said is not only true of wheat, but it is also equally true of paddy? I myself visited the market-yard in my own Constituency, Miryalguda. While the support price is Rs. 540 for paddy, the price getting secured by the farmer in the market is around Rs. 440 or Rs. 450. This is much less than what it was just six months back. The Rabi crop is just now arriving.

May I also tell you that the price of land in my area in the last one year has come down by more than 40 per cent? This is a very serious problem. I think, the Government should take a very serious view of this matter. As has been mentioned, the subsidy in the developed countries is getting retained, if not increased, while this Government — my friend Shri Yashwant Sinha who likes my phrase of fiscal terrorism — is out to cut down the subsidy. This year, of course, he paid it for urea. But the fact remains that the subsidies on farmers are getting reduced, while minimum support price is not being made available. When we all became Members of Parliament just one-and-a-half years ago, the price available for paddy in the market at that time was Rs. 700. Today, they are getting even much less, although the costs of diesel, fertiliser and all other inputs have gone up considerably. This is the situation which we all of us need to take note of.

I am sure that there is an agreement in the House across the spectrum, across all parties. I am sure, the Members of the ruling party will be in total agreement with me. I think, the Government must announce a package of emergency measures in regard to this.

[*Translation*]

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Shri Akhilesh ji raised a very important issue relating to the farmers. As I had said, problems of farmers have increased manifold in recent past. Therefore, the Union Government, State Government and all political parties should come together to find a way out as farmers are the backbone of our economy. I would like to draw the attention of the hon'ble Agriculture Minister, Finance Minister and the Minister for Consumer Affairs who are present in the House, and have been listening to all this, towards this issue.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Shri Shanta Kumar ji's attention also.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: I have called his name also. I would like to draw his attention also. At least Shri Jaipal Reddy liked the decision taken by the Government regarding urea and thus I am grateful to him. In case of urea once or twice our Government hiked the price but rolled back later on. But the party to which he has switched over raised price innumerable times which I am unable to count. Still he has agreed to consider it if there is a consensus.

KUNWAR AKHILESH SINGH: Sir, until and unless we provide additional subsidy to farmers, we cannot solve their problems.