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Title: Need to instruct the F.C.I. to start procurement of paddy in rural areas of West Bengal as per the target fixed.

SHRI PRABODH PANDA(MIDNAPORE): The harvesting period of khariff paddy crops is mostly going to be over across the country. But the market price of paddy is declining day to day. This year it was the expectation that the Agriculture Ministry of Union Government would declare minimum support price, which will be remunerative to the farmers. The declared minimum support price of paddy for this year is Rs. 580/- per quintal. This is neither remunerative nor supportive. In comparison to the last year the increase is only Rs. 10/- per quintal. In terms of percentage it is 1.9 while inflation is more than 5%. The price of agricultural inputs goes up around 50%. In addition to the minimum support price Government has declared additional Rs. 50/- per quintal as bonus. So far West Bengal is concerned the target of paddy procurement for this year has been fixed 19 lakh metric tons. Out of that 12 lakh metric tons is assigned to the FCI. Last year FCI could not meet the target. It is expected that to procure the aforesaid quantity from the farmers in rural areas, FCI would set up necessary network. But till the date no initiative is being taken up by the FCI so far. In such a situation distress sale by the poor and marginal farmers is taking place largely. I urge upon the Union Government and concerned ministry in particular to take necessary steps expeditiously so that distress sale can be arrested and the poor farmers' interest would be protected.