

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FARMERS WELFARE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1399

TO BE ANSWERED ON 28th JULY, 2026

SUBSIDIES UNDER NHB SCHEMES

1399. SHRI ABHISHEK BANERJEE:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री be pleased to state:

- (a) The eligibility criteria and approval process for sanctioning subsidies under National Horticulture Board (NHB) Schemes;
- (b) Whether the Government proposes to review the existing approval mechanism to ensure transparency and avoid any perceived conflict of interest in the grant of such subsidies;
- (c) Whether any serving Union Minister, Member of Parliament, or their immediate family members have received subsidy under schemes of the National Horticulture Board during the last five years and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) Whether any conflict-of-interest or recusal policy exists for considering applications from public functionaries or their family members, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण राज्य मंत्री (SHRI RAMNATH THAKUR)

(a) : Financial assistance under the National Horticulture Board (NHB) Schemes is provided in the form of credit-linked back-ended capital investment subsidy to eligible farmers and entrepreneurs for development of commercial horticulture, protected cultivation, post-harvest management and cold chain infrastructure. The schemes are open to all eligible applicants, including individuals, partnerships, companies, cooperatives and other eligible legal entities, subject to fulfillment of the prescribed eligibility conditions. The project land should be owned by the applicant or held on lease for a minimum period of ten years, duly reflected in the revenue records. The applications are processed through a transparent multi-tier mechanism.

The financing bank first sanctions the term loan and appraises the project. Thereafter, NHB scrutinizes the application through the Project Examination Committee (PEC) before issuing the Grant of Clearance (GoC). After completion of the project, a joint inspection is carried out by NHB, the financing bank and the State Government. The subsidy claim is thereafter considered by the Inter-Ministerial Project Approval Committee (PAC), comprising representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, ICAR, APEDA, Directorate of Marketing & Inspection (DMI), NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, before approval. The subsidy is released only to the financing bank and is adjusted against the beneficiary's loan after successful completion of the prescribed lock-in period, in accordance with the Scheme Guidelines.

(b): The National Horticulture Board (NHB) processes all applications for financial assistance under its Schemes through a transparent mechanism in accordance with the prescribed Scheme Guidelines. All eligible applicants are treated equally and applications are considered solely on the basis of the eligibility criteria and compliance with the provisions of the Scheme.

To further enhance transparency, efficiency and ease of doing business, the application processing system has been progressively digitized. The earlier hybrid system involving submission of both online and physical documents has been replaced with a completely online process. Further, the mandatory pre-inspection of certain categories of projects has been dispensed with and technology-enabled verification has been introduced. Applicants upload the geo-coordinates of the project site through the NHB mobile application, which are verified by NHB using GIS/Google Maps and other digital tools, thereby reducing physical interface while ensuring authenticity of project location.

In addition, based on the experience gained during implementation, NHB periodically reviews the Scheme Guidelines to strengthen safeguards against multiple benefit of subsidy through different legal entities or capacities, prescribe suitable exclusions wherever considered necessary, and address any potential conflict of interest.

(c): The details of serving Union Ministers, Members of Parliament and their immediate family members, who have received financial assistance under the Schemes of the National Horticulture Board during the last five years, are as under:

Shri LUMBA RAM (MP, Sirohi, Rajasthan) in 2025 and Sh. BHAGIRATH CHOUDHARY, MoS.MoA and FW (MP, Ajmer, Rajasthan) in 2026.

Shri Bhagirath Choudhary, has communicated that he has refunded the subsidy to the bank concerned under the scheme. The concerned bank has been directed to return the subsidy amount to NHB.

(d): The existing NHB Scheme Guidelines do not contain any specific provision regarding conflict of interest or recusal in respect of applications submitted by public functionaries or their family members.
