

(b) whether Government is aware of the fact that bones and fat of animals extracted in slaughter houses are processed on hearths and mixed with food items in large quantity; and

(c) if so, the measures being taken to check this malpractice and by when these measures would be effective?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) to (c) The Prevention of Food Adulteration Act (PFA), 1954 and Rules, 1955 have been brought into force to prevent adulteration in food stuffs and to save consumers from fraud and deception. The standards of various food articles have been prescribed in Appendix 'B' of the said rules. Food articles sold in the markets are required to conform to the specifications laid down under PFA Rules, 1955. Section 7 of PFA Act, 1954 prohibits manufacture for sale or storage or distribution of any adulterated food or misbranded food.

The implementation of the PFA Act, 1954 and Rules 1955 is entrusted with the Food (Health) Authorities of the States/U.Ts. The enforcement staff of the States/U.Ts. draw random samples of various food articles from time to time to check adulteration in food commodities and action is taken against the offenders where the samples do not conform to the prescribed standards or do not conform to various provisions of the PFA Act, 1954 and Rules, 1955.

Having noticed the reports in media about production and sale of spurious ghee in some parts of the country by some unscrupulous traders using animal fat, palm oil, essence and hazardous chemicals, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare requested Health Secretaries of all States/U.Ts to undertake thorough review of the implementation of the PFA Act, 1954 in their States/U.Ts and advise their enforcement staff to be more vigilant and identify the possible elements indulging in this unwanted practice and to take strict action against such unscrupulous elements under the provisions of the PFA Act, 1954 and Rules framed thereunder.

Essential commodities to poor and middle class through PDS

*417. SHRI SHYAMAL CHAKRABORTY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has any plan to provide essential commodities to the poor and the middle class through the Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, the details of items to be provided;

(c) by when the plan would be implemented; and

(d) what are the products that would be available at subsidized rates?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) Government implements Targeted Public Distribution

System (TPDS) to provide essential commodities such as foodgrains (rice, wheat, coarse grains) and sugar to poor families in the country at subsidized issue prices. Under it, foodgrains @ 35 kg per family per month are allocated to State and UT Governments for 6.52 crore BPL families based on 1993-94 poverty estimates of Planning Commission and March, 2000 population estimates of Registrar General of India. Sugar is allocated to State and UT Governments for BPL families @ 500 grams per person except in North-Eastern States, hilly States and Island territories where allocation is made @ 700 grams per person for BPL as well as APL families.

Government also proposes to enact the National Food Security Act under which every BPL family will be entitled to receive 25 kg of foodgrains per month. Details of eligible BPL families to be covered, methodology for their identification, issuance of Targeted Identification Cards to them, food subsidy required, foodgrains required for allocations, convergence of schemes of various Ministries, etc. are being worked out in consultation with different stake holders.

Rail connectivity in Assam

*418. SHRI THOMAS SANGMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has any proposal for rail connectivity to Tikrikilla, Phulbari, Betasing, Dalu and Tura (Garo Hills) from Goalpara-Jogigopa Axis (Assam);

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): (a) to (c) Survey for construction of a new broad gauge line from Panchratna (Jogighopa) to Badarpur has been recently completed. The proposed line passes near to Tikrikila, Phulbari, Betasing and Tura (Garo Hills). As per the survey report, cost of construction of this 437 km long line has been assessed as Rs. 15894.04 crore with Rate of Return of minus 5.22%. The survey report is under examination.

Prevention of HIV-AIDS

*419. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of HIV and AIDS in the country and whether Government has got the correct statistics of HIV-AIDS affected and infected people, State-wise;

(b) what is the action plan of Government to prevent HIV and AIDS;

(c) whether Government is bringing a Special Legislation, which is drafted by NACO to protect the rights of the people living with HIV and AIDS; and

(d) the total fund spent through NACO for the prevention of HIV/AIDS?