Shortage of employees in FCI

2318. SHRI N. BALAGANGA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is acute shortage of employees in all cadres of FCI and if so the details therefor; and

(b) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to recruit persons according to sanctioned staff strength?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The Food Corporation of India has been allowed to fill up vacancies as per Government rules under the Annual Direct Recruitment Plan (ADRP). The Government has approved filling up of posts in the various categories (cat.) since 2002-03 as under:—

Year	Cat.I	Cat.II	Cat.III	Total
2002-03	87	153	138	378
2003-08	—	275	758	1033
2008-09	—	—	380	380

The recruitment by FCI is at different stages for the various posts approved by the Government. In view of large number of retirements in the next few years, FCI has requested for permission to appoint more staff.

Need to raise production of sugarcane

†2319. SHRI BALBIR PUNJ: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a ban was imposed on the export of sugar in 2006-07 and when this ban was lifted in 2007-08 there was a fall in the prices of sugar in international market;

(b) the reasons for not accepting the recommendation of Central Agricultural Cost and Prices Department in March, 2008 to give a price of Rs. 155 per quintal for sugarcane;

(c) during last three years there has been an increase of more than fifty per cent in the support price of paddy, wheat and cotton, why it is only Rs. 1.68 in case of sugarcane; and

(d) the steps taken to check rise in sugar prices and to promote sugarcane production?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) The Central Government, with a view to check increase in prices of non-levy sugar in the domestic market, imposed ban on export of sugar with effect from

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

22.06.2006 except for export of sugar under preferential quota. In view of expected higher production of sugar in 2006-07-sugar season, the Government relaxed ban on export of sugar against Advance Authorization Scheme with effect from 3rd January, 2007 and under Open General License (OGL) with effect from 23rd January, 2007. The price of sugar in the international market was lower in January, 2007 as compared to June, 2006.

(b) and (c) The CACP, suo moto, submitted a supplementary report on 27th March, 2009 (after the Government had announced the SMP for 2008-09 sugar season as per CACP's original recommendation of Rs 81.18 per quintal), *inter-alia*, recommending for revision of SMP for 2008-09 sugar season to Rs 125 per quintal for a basic recovery of 9%, plus a bonus of Rs. 30 per quintal subject to a premium of Rs 1.40 for every 0.1 % increase in recovery above 9%.

The ministry after examining the report concluded that it would not achieve the desired results of checking any shift in area under sugarcane to cereals in 2008-09 sugar season since the sowing of sugarcane in most of the areas, was over long back. Further, unlike wheat and paddy, the Government does not procure sugarcane; thus, payment of bonus of Rs. 30/- per quintal of cane from the Government for sugarcane purchased by sugar factories was unacceptable. As such, Government did not find the recommendation of CACP practical and justified at that stage. The increase in the support price of paddy and wheat *vis-a-vis* sugarcane was a conscious decision of the Government.

(d) The Central Government has taken a slew of measures to check the price hike as indicated below:—

(i) Stock-holding and turnover limits on sugar imposed *vide* Notification dated 09.03.2009 and 12.03.2009 for a period of four months which have been extended by another six months, *i.e.* upto 08.01.2010.

(ii) Futures trading in sugar on NCDEX has been suspended with effect from 27th May, 2009.

(iii) Permitting import of raw sugar by sugar mills under Advance Authorization Scheme (AAS) at zero duty upto 30-09-2009, and under Open General License (OGL) upto 01-08-2009 and import of white/refined sugar by STC/MMTC/PEC and NAFED upto 1 million tons at zero customs duty under Open General License (OGL)

The Central Government has taken the following steps to encourage cultivation of sugarcane in the country:—

(i) Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) of sugarcane for the sugar season 2009-10 has been increased to Rs. 107.76 per quintal, with an additional premium of Rs. 1.13 for every 0.1% point increase in the recovery above 9.5%. The SMP for the previous sugar season was Rs. 81.18 per quintal, with an additional premium of Rs. 0.90 for every 0.1% point increase in the recovery above 9%.

(ii) A Centrally sponsored scheme of Sustainable Development of Sugarcane Based Cropping System (SUB ACS) is under implementation. The main thrust of the scheme is on the transfer of improved production technology to the farmers through field demonstrations, training of farmers, supply of farm implements, enhancing production of planting materials, efficient use of water, treatment of planting materials etc. The scheme is under implementation in 22 States/Union Territories.

(iii) Concessional loans at an interest rate of 4% per annum are given to sugar factories from Sugar Development Fund (SDF) for modernization of plant and machinery, expansion of crushing capacity, utilization of by-products *viz*. baggasse for co-generation of power and molasses for production of ethanol, up gradation of technology and sugarcane development including better irrigation facilities, improved seed variety, ratoon management, etc.

Rise in prices of pulses and other food items

2320. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) what steps Government has taken, so far, to control steep rise in prices of pulses and other food items of daily use;

(b) whether Government has decided to extend the import of pulses at zero duty till end of March, 2010 and also ban export of all kinds of pulses for one more year;

(c) if so, what steps Government has taken, so far, to maintain a steady supply in the domestic market as well as distribution of imported pulses through the Public Distribution System (PDS); and

(d) whether State run trading firms would be allowed to import 1.5 million tonnes of pulses under a reimbursement scheme?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) The Government has taken a number of steps to control the price rise and to soften the impact of price rise on consumers. The important steps taken are briefly listed in the Statement. [Refer to the Statement appended to the Answer to Unstarred Question No. 2303 Part (c)]

(b) and (c) Yes Sir. Government extended zero duty on import of pulses for another one year, up to 31.3.2010. Government also extended the ban on export of pulses (except kabuli chana) for another year, up to 31.3.2010. Government has permitted 4 PSUs *viz.* PEC, STC, MMTC, NAFED to import 1.5 million tonnes of pulses under the 15% reimbursement scheme. In addition, the PSUs along with NCCF are also permitted to supply imported pulses to State Governments for distribution through the PDS. The scheme for distribution of imported pulses at subsidised rates by the State Governments through the PDS which was conceived as a one time measure has been extended up to 30.09.2009.

(d) Yes Sir.