

- (b) the stock of sugar in the country at present, State-wise;
- (c) whether there is a shortage of sugar at fair price shop under the Public Distribution System and in the open market; and
- (d) the remedial measures taken by Government to meet this shortage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) The shortfall between domestic production and demand of sugar in the last 2008-09 sugar season and the current 2009-10 sugar season is the actual cause of hike in sugar prices in the country.

(b) The Central Government does not maintain stocks of sugar. Sugar stocks in the country consist of stocks with mills, wholesalers and retailers and importers of sugar in various States. As such, it is not possible to precisely estimate the stocks of sugar in the country, much less State-wise.

(c) and (d) There is adequate supply of sugar in the Public Distribution System as well as in the open market. The Central Government has already raised levy obligation on sugar factories from 10% to 20% with effect from 01.10.2009 for 2009-10 sugar season. Further, the Central Government has taken a slew of measures to augment domestic stocks of non-levy sugar and to check rise in sugar prices which, *inter-alia*, include permitting duty-free import of raw and white/refined sugar upto 31.12.2010.

Food security

959. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Prime Minister has recently admitted that there was a false sense of security that availability of food has ceased to be a concern;
- (b) if so, whether in view of failure to provide food security, the price of foodgrains have increased;
- (c) if so, the facts thereof;
- (d) whether Government proposes to ensure food security to check spiraling prices as well as its availability to each needy; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (e) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha.

Payment of interest to sugarcane farmers in Haryana

960. SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that several thousand farmers in the area of Narayanganj Sugar