

proposed legislation are being worked out. The proposed legislation would also bring about broader systemic reforms in the Public Distribution System.

Statement

Central Vigilance Committee Report on PDS in States/UTs (Recommendations common to most States/UTs) and Report on computerisation of PDS operations

1. Income criterion for poverty be revisited. This should not be less than minimum wage for agricultural labour.
2. Poverty in urban areas to be based upon minimum wage payable to an unskilled workman in the area.
3. Above Poverty Line (APL) as a category be abolished. Alternatively, the APL category be restricted to households having annual income of Rs. 1 lakh.
4. Global Positioning System (GPS) be installed on vehicles transporting PDS foodgrains for tracking their movement.
5. Reconstitute and activate Vigilance Committees, which should meet at regular intervals.
6. Fair Price Shop (FPS) be allotted to persons or groups having kirana/grocery stores. Sale of non-PDS rice and wheat not to be allowed from such FPS.
7. Fresh licenses to be granted in a transparent manner.
8. Door step delivery of foodgrains of FPSs.
9. There is a need for rationalizing the number of beneficiaries attached to each FPS to make the shops financially viable.
10. Complaint redressal mechanism with 24 hour helping for lodging complaints by beneficiaries and follow up action.
11. Supply of PDS foodgrains in small packages of 5-10 kg in HDPE bags.
12. Facility of mobile FPS especially in remote/tribal areas to be encouraged.
13. Zero tolerance towards corruption. Strict penal action/departmental action be taken against offenders, Strengthening of enforcement and anti-hoarding machinery.
14. Independent agency to monitor working of PDS - Ombudsman/Regulator be set up.
15. Political influence in operation of PDS should be done away with.
16. Introduction of computerisation of the entire distribution chain, right from the procurement process ending with retail distribution by the FPS dealers.

Winding up of UGC and AICTE

*514. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) are being abolished;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government has the 'capability/infrastructure' to regulate the foreign universities that are likely to be set up in the country in the near future; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBBAL) : (a) and (b) Based on the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission and the committee to advise on the Renovation Rejuvenation of Higher Education under Prof. Yash Pal, the need to establish an overarching authority in higher education other than agricultural and medical education has been expressed by Government as one of its priorities, subsuming the existing regulatory bodies such as University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). Fragmentation of Knowledge over time has constrained the emergence of new knowledge at the frontiers of disciplines. It has become imperative that a holistic view of higher education is taken because of the increasingly converging nature of disciplines at the frontiers of emerging knowledge. Also, the restructuring of the Higher Education sector, in the context of a knowledge economy that thrives on innovation, the creation of new ideas and raising the consciousness of people, requires a new spirit of regulation that respects the autonomy of institutions amidst the need for accountability towards quality with opportunities for access to all.

(c) and (d) The draft legislative proposals including that for the regulation of entry and operation of foreign educational institutions, which has been finalized for introduction in Parliament, provides for an appropriate regulatory mechanism by authorities established by law.

Rise in prices of Steel

†*515. SHRI SHIVANAND TIWARI : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that prices of steel have risen in international market during the last six months;

(b) if so, the facts thereof and the rise in its prices in countries like China and USA;

(c) whether it is also a fact that prices of steel have risen in the country too; and

(d) if so, the rise in its prices from January, 2010 till date?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI VIRBHADRA SINGH) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Price of steel in the international market has increased over last six months. Ministry of Steel monitors

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.