Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2001 mandates the State Governments to carry out all required action to ensure smooth functioning of TPDS. It stipulates that representatives of State Governments or their nominees and the Food Corporation of India (FCI) shall conduct joint inspection of the stocks of foodgrains intended for issue to ensure that the stocks conform to the prescribed quality specifications. It also provides that FCI shall issue sealed sample of foodgrains supplied under the Public Distribution System and that the fair price shop owner will display the samples of foodgrains being supplied through the fair price shop.

Besides, the Government has issued directions to State/UT Governments to streamline the functioning of TPDS by enforcing provisions of PDS (Control) Order, 2001 and to implement Nine-Point action plan which includes, *inter alia*, use of information technology, display of fair price shop-wise and district wise allocation of PDS commodities on web-sites for public scrutiny, creating awareness among public about PDS operations and training to Vigilance Committees on intricacies of PDS operations.

Food security and identification of poor

†592. SHRI DHIRAJ PRASAD SAHU: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a meeting of Food Secretaries of different States was held recently in New Delhi in which mechanism for food security and ways of identifying poor under food security scheme were discussed;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the outcome of this meeting;

(c) whether foodgrains are not being distributed properly under food security scheme; and

(d) if so, the corrective measures taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS) : (a) to (d) In the Conference of Food Secretaries of States and union Territories (UTs) held on 12th and 13th July, 2010, various issues relating to Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) were discussed. These issues, *inter alia*, relate to proper identification of beneficiaries, timely distribution of foodgrains, enhancing viability of Fair Price Shops (FPSs), enhancing storage capacities, use of technology based initiatives in TPDS, increasing public awareness, etc.

TPDS is implemented jointly by Government of India and State/UT Governments with sharing of responsibilities in this regard. The Central Government has taken the responsibility for procurement, storage, transportation and bulk allocation of foodgrains to the States and UTs. The responsibilities for allocation of foodgrains within State/UT, identification of eligible Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, issuance of ration cards to them, distribution of allocated

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

foodgrains to eligible ration card holders through FPSs and supervision of the functioning of FPSs, etc., rest with the State/UT Governments.

Public Distribution System (Control) Order 2001 also mandates the State and UT Governments to carry out all required action to ensure smooth functioning of TPDS.

The Evaluation studies on functioning of TPDS got done by the Department from ORG MARG and Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO) of Planning Commission had revealed certain shortcomings in the functioning of TPDS such as inclusion/exclusion errors, leakages/diversion of foodgrains, etc. To streamline the functioning of the TPDS, a Nine-Point Action Plan was evolved in 2006, which is under implementation by the State / UT Governments. As a result of implementation of this action plan, 23 State/UT Governments have reported by 30.6.2010, deletion of 174.10 lakh bogus/ineligible ration cards.

Strengthening and streamlining of TPDS is a continuous process. To improve functioning of TPDS, Government has been regularly requesting State/UT Governments for continuous review of lists of BPL and AAY families, ensuring timely availability of foodgrains at fair price shops, ensuring greater transparency in functioning of TPDS, improved monitoring and vigilance at various levels and introduction of new technologies such as Computerization of TPDS operations at various levels.

Delay in release of imported raw sugar

593. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the delay in release of imported raw sugar contributed to the overall uncertainty thereby allowing prices to rise to unacceptably high levels in the recent months;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken to avoid recurrence of such situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS) : (a) to (c) The price of non-levy sugar (free sale sugar) in the open market depends upon a number of factors such as domestic production, demand and supply of sugar, global supply, demand, shortage or surplus in the international market, international prices, market sentiments and expectations etc. Due to restrictions imposed by Government of Uttar Pradesh in the month of November, 2009, movement and processing of imported raw sugar in the state was delayed by about 4 months which partly contributed to steep rise in sugar prices. The Central Government took up the matter on a number of occasions with the Government of U.P. requesting for early lifting of the ban in view of low stocks of sugar than available in the country. The ban was lifted by the Government of Uttar Pradesh on 19.02.2010. There has been declining trend of sugar prices since mid January, 2010.