

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b) As per the industrial policy resolution dated 24th July, 1991, no license is normally required for setting up/expansion of fertilizer plants. Entrepreneurs are free to set up fertilizer projects anywhere in the country subject to environmental clearance. However, Public Sector Undertakings/ Cooperative Societies under the administrative control of the Department of Fertilizers have to obtain approval of the Government before undertaking such capital expenditure beyond their delegated powers.

At present, no proposal for setting up a new fertilizer plant in Assam has been posed to the Government by the PSUs/Cooperative Societies for investment approval. However, Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation Limited (BVFCL) Namrup Revamp Project at Namrup in Assam is currently under implementation, which is likely to be commissioned by March, 2005.

Spurious stocks of food-items

488. SHRI V. HANUMANTHARAO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have been issuing series of expensive newspaper advertisements on "Consumer Awareness Programmes and Rights of Consumers";

(b) if so, the purpose thereof;

(c) whether Government do not have adequate machinery to inspect and weed out all spurious stocks of food-items;

(d) if so, the role of a watchdog machinery dealing with expired dates and old goods, etc; and

(e) the number of such cases registered during the last three months by Governmental agencies against traders and others for stocking such goods?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN):

(a) and (b) A multi media Publicity campaign has been launched in consultation with Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to generate consumer awareness throughout the country.

(c) to (e) The quality aspect of food items, including details regarding expiry date come under the purview of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act 1954 and Rules framed thereunder which are administered by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Revival of closed sugar mills

489. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of sugar mills in different States of the country lying closed during the last three years;

(b) whether there is any proposal to provide assistance for the revival of these sugar factories; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken by Government to implement the above proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The State-wise number of closed sugar mills during the sugar season 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04 is given in the statement. (See below)

(b) and (c) It is the responsibility of the entrepreneur to take steps to reopen/revive the closed sugar mills. The sick sugar mills belonging to private and public sectors are covered under the provisions of the sick Industrial Companies (special Provisions) Act, 1985 (SICA). Such sugar mills are required to make a reference to the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) whenever their accumulated losses become equal to or more than the net-worth. If the rehabilitation schemes sanctioned by BIFR provide for any relief/concession from this Ministry, the same is considered as per the existing guidelines.

As regards the cooperative sugar mills a Committee has been constituted by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (Department of Food and Public Distribution) to consider the proposals of the potentially viable sick sugar mills of this sector.

The S.D.F. Rules has been amended on 19.8.2002, so as to provide loans for cane development and modernization to potentially viable sick sugar mills.