

purchasing of foodgrains from the farmers at minimum support price, however, the Government is considering introducing a negotiable Warehouse Receipt (WR) system in the country.

(c) The system would be introduced with a legislative back up to ensure that the benefit of this system is passed on to small and medium farmers.

Streamlining sugar prices

1876. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY:

SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for steep hike in the prices of sugar in the country, as the prices have increased by 75 per cent from that were a few months back;

(b) whether traders are responsible for creating temporary shortage, if so, the action taken by Government;

(c) whether Government are proposing to import sugar to streamline the prices in the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) There has been no steep increase of 75% in prices of sugar in the recent few months, as may be seen from the table below:

Centre	Jan. 05	Feb.05	March.05*
Delhi	19.00	20.00	20.00
Mumbai	19.50	19.50	19.50
Kolkata	20.00	20.00	21.00
Chennai	18.50	18.00	18.00

*Price as on 10.3.2005

SOURCE: Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Department of Consumer Affairs (Price Monitoring Cell), Government of India, New Delhi.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The Government does not undertake import of sugar. Sugar is on O.G.L. (Open General Licence) and is freely importable as per commercial prudence of the importers. Besides, Government have facilitated import of raw sugar by sugar factories against Advance Licence under the prevailing EXIM policy.

Black-marketing at FPSs

†1877. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the black-marketing going on at Fair Price Shops;

(b) if so, the details of the steps being taken by Government to check it; and

(c) the total number of Fair Price Shops, throughout the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) The Targeted Public Distribution System functions through a vast network of Fair Price Shops. As such the possibility of black-marketing at some of the Fair Price Shops can not be ruled out. The following measures have been taken by the Government to check black marketing of foodgrains distributed under the TPDS:—

(i) The Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2001 has been issued on 31st August, 2001 under Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 with a view to curb wilful adulteration, substitution, diversion, theft of stocks from the Central godown to Fair Price Shops and at the premises of the Fair Price Shops etc.

(ii) States/UTs have been asked to actively involve the Gram Panchayats in rural areas and local bodies in urban areas in the monitoring of Fair Price Shops as a measure of social audit.

(iii) A model Citizen's Charter has been issued to all the States/UTs for adoption.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.