

[17 February, 2006]

RAJYA SABHA

(b) if so, by when it is going to be abolished;

(c) whether it is also a fact that countries such as America, Canada, etc. have not taken any decision in this regard, so far; and

(d) whether in the first phase, so far, it has been decided to raise the prices of foodgrains and reducing the per unit availability under the Public Distribution System?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Developed countries such as United States, Canada and European Union continue to have large farm support schemes.

(d) Does not arise.

Cut in BPL quota

37. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:

SHRIMATI KAMLA MANHAR:

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

(a) whether Government are considering to reduce the quantity of wheat, rice, etc. to be given against ration cards to the consumers;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the quantum thereof and since when;

(c) whether it is a fact that people living below poverty line would only be affected due to such reduction; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (d) With a view to rationalise the allocation of foodgrains under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), ensure that the food subsidy remains targeted towards poor households, and keeping in view the reduced availability of foodgrains in the Central Pool, the Government took the following decisions on 6.1.2006:

- (i) For Above Poverty Line (APL) households, allocation of foodgrains to State Governments to be fixed on the basis of 20 kg. per family per month from the earlier allocation of 35 kg. per family per month, or the offtake during 2004-05, whichever is lower.
- (ii) For Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Antyodaya households, the allocation of foodgrains to States to be fixed on the basis of 30 kg. per family per month from the existing 35 kg. per family per month.

A few State Governments represented that the implementation of the decisions taken on 06.1.2006 may adversely affect the functioning of the TPDS in their States and lead to large expenditure from the State Government budgets. Representations were also received from several political parties that the decision may adversely affect the food security of poor households. Keeping in view these representations, the Government has decided to postpone the implementation of the decision.

Pollution in Ganga

†38. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that polluted water and hazardous chemicals are released into River Ganga by tanneries and textile mills;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to save polluted Ganga?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) There are 72 tanneries and 61 textile industries located along the river Ganga in the States of Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal which are likely to pollute the river Ganga. Of the 72 tanneries, 39 units are operating with effluent treatment plants, 20 units have been closed down and remaining 13 units have been found to be defaulters. Out of the 61 textile industries, 34 units have been closed down and remaining 27 units are operating with effluent treatment plants.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.