

Withdrawal of minimum export price of onion

†4844. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that, in order to promote the export of onion in the coming summer season, Government has ended the requirement of minimum export price of onion as a part of its attempt to lifting ban on onion;

(b) if so, whether export of onion would increase due to the above decision and there would be an adverse effect on availability of onion in the country;

(c) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard; and

(d) whether it is also a fact that demand of onion in the country increases in summer season?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) The Government has permitted export of onions without any Minimum Export Price (MEP) with effect from 8th May, 2012 for the period upto 2nd July, 2012 through Notification No. 116 (RE-2010)/2009-2014 dated 8th May, 2012.

(b) and (c) The export of onion depends on demand supply situation and prices prevailing in the international market.

As the production of onion for the current year, *i.e.*, 2011-12 is estimated higher at 157 lakh MT, it seems unlikely that there would be an adverse effect on availability of onion in the country. However, there is a mechanism that closely monitors prices of essential commodities including onions.

(d) The demand for onion is reported to be more or less stable throughout the year.

Restructuring of PDS

4845. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE:

SHRI N.K. SINGH:

SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:

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

(a) whether the recent reports by international agencies including the

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International Food Policy Research Institute and the Planning Commission report based on the 66th round survey of the National Sample Survey Organisation have indicated decline in nutritional intake and prevalence of hunger, malnutrition and starvation in the country, despite the operation of various nutritional programmes;

- (b) if so, the details and the salient features of such reports/survey;
- (c) the reaction of Government thereto; and
- (d) the steps, including restructuring of Public Distribution System, taken/proposed to be taken to tackle the menace?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has brought out a Global Hunger Index (GHI) Report in October 2011. In this report, Index has been calculated for 122 countries and India ranks 67 out of 81 countries finally included in the calculation. The report states that India is among countries having highest prevalence of underweight in children younger than five. But nothing has been mentioned specially for India about decline in nutritional intake in the country. It also does not give any details regarding lack of availability of food or access to food to the people in the country.

The Government has taken note of the GHI findings. However, the GHI findings do not take into account the most recent increase in the availability and distribution of food grains to the vulnerable sections of the population at subsidised prices during the period 2009 and 2011 through the Public Distribution System. The data on proportion of under-nourished pertains to the years 2005 to 2007. Data on child under weight is for the years 2004 to 2009. Data on child mortality is for the year 2009. It is based on three closely inter-related indicators which all reflect the status of health care and that too mainly in the case of children and do not reflect the hunger or lack of access to food in the society. The data is not test checked or validated by any large scale primary field surveys.

The 66th round survey of National Sample Survey Organisation indicates that at the all India level, daily protein intake has fallen from 602g to 55g per person in the rural sector and from 57.2g to 53.5 g in the urban sector over the period 1993-94 to 2009-10. However, fat intake has shown a rising trend in the same period. At the all India level, the rise has been from 31.4g to 38.3g in rural sector while in the urban sector, it has increased from 42g to 47.9g. Other findings of the survey include, decline in share of cereal intake in total calorie intake since 1993-94 by nearly 7

percentage points in the rural sector and about 3.5 percentage points in the urban. The share of oils and fats has risen by 3 percentage points in both the sectors. The share of milk and milk products has grown by about 1.4 percentage points in the urban sector and 0.6 percentage points in the rural.

The Government has been taking several measures to strengthen the nutritional levels of the most vulnerable sections of the population, particularly, pregnant and lactating mothers and children upto the age of six years through the Supplementary Nutrition Programme under ICDS, children in the primary and upper primary levels through the Midday Meal scheme, nutritional empowerment programme of girl children in the age group of 11-18 years through the Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (Sabla). Under Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY), introduced in 2010-11 on trial basis in 52 districts from all States/UTs, cash incentives are provided to pregnant and lactating mothers for improving their health and nutritional status. Under Annapurna scheme implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development, indigent senior citizens are provided 10kg. of food grains per month, free of cost. Under the Emergency Feeding Programme (EFP) which is a food-based intervention implemented in the KBK districts of Odisha, targetted at old, infirm and destitute persons belonging to BPL households to provide them food security, cooked food is provided to EFP beneficiaries by the State Government. The allocation of food grains under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) to the Below Poverty Line (BPL) families have also been increased through adhoc additional allocations during the last two years.

The National Nutrition Policy 1993 and the National Plan of Action on Nutrition 1995 advocates a comprehensive inter- sectoral strategy, which directly or indirectly affect dietary intake and nutritional status of the population, for combating the multifaceted problem of under nutrition and improving nutritional status for all sections of the society. The Government has been taking several measures to streamline the Public Distribution System. These include the 9 Point Action Plan, action against possession of bogus ration cards, increased transparency in the functioning of TPDS, use of ICT tools such as computerization of TPDS operations, etc.

Allocation of foodgrains to Assam

4846. SHRIMATI NAZNIN FARUQUE: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that about 300 hectares of crop land has been inundated and standing crops were damaged during the last year in Assam;