

Smuggling of PDS items

1851. SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are rampant and unchecked anomalies and corruption in distribution of grains and other items under the Public Distribution System in various States of the North Eastern Region, particularly in Assam;

(b) whether a large chunk of such PDS items are being smuggled out to Bangladesh by unscrupulous traders; and

(c) if so, the action Government is going to take against such illegal activities to safeguard the economic interest of the people and the country as a whole?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAMVILAS PASWAN) : (a) No cases of rampant and unchecked anomalies and corruption in distribution of grains and other items under the Public Distribution System have been reported in North East States, particularly Assam.

(b) As per reports received from Ministry of Home Affairs, during the year 2014, 900 kg of rice costing about ₹ 36000/- has been seized by the Border Security Force (BSF) at Indo-Bangladesh Border in Assam. However, it cannot be confirmed whether these are PDS items or otherwise.

(c) Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State/UT Governments wherein the operational responsibilities for its implementation including supervision over and monitoring of functioning of Fair Price Shops (FPSs) within the State/UT rest with the concerned State/UT Governments. Therefore, as and when complaints regarding irregularities in implementation of TPDS such as leakage/diversion of foodgrains, etc. in various States/regions are received by the Government from individuals and organizations as well as through press reports, these are referred to the State/UT Governments concerned for inquiry and appropriate action.

Government has regularly reviewed and also has issued instructions to States/Union Territories to strengthen functioning of TPDS by improving monitoring mechanism and vigilance, increased transparency in functioning of TPDS and use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools. With a view to modernize the system, the Government has initiated a Plan Scheme on End-to-end Computerization of TPDS operations on cost sharing basis with States/U'Ts which would facilitate digitization of ration cards/beneficiary and other databases, computerization of supply-chain management, setting up of transparency portals and grievances redressal mechanism.

To prevent smuggling activities along Indo-Bangladesh Border, the Security Forces deployed at the borders maintained vigil at international borders at take required preventive action.

Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) also monitor the distribution of packed LPG cylinders under PDS by keeping vigil to prevent and take action against black-marketing, make surprise inspections, refill audit, etc. Further, to check mal-practices of diversion of domestic LPG cylinder, the Government has launched the Direct Benefit Transfer Scheme "PHAL" in the entire country. Further, the State Civil Supplies Authorities ensure that the PDS kerosene uplifted is delivered to FPSs and to intended beneficiaries .

Settlement of LSPEF claims

† 1852. SHRI NARAYAN LAL PANCHARIYA : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that claims related to LSPEF of Rajasthan State Food and Civil Supplies Corporation have not been settled by Central Government, if so, the reasons therefor and by when the settlement will be made; and

(b) whether Central Government allocates foodgrains to Aanganvadi Kendras running in the country, if so, by when allocation of foodgrains will be made for the Aanganvadi Kendras running in Rajasthan, if not, the reasons therefor and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAMVILAS PASWAN) : (a) The claims related to LSPEF are submitted by Rajasthan State Food and Civil Supplies Corporation to the Food Corporation of India (FCI) for payment. As intimated by FCI, a part payment has already been released and the remaining amount will be released in the financial year 2015-16.

(b) No Sir, The Central Government do not allocate foodgrains to Aanganvadi Kendras running in the country.

Payment of LSPEF claims to Government of Rajasthan

1853. SHRI VIJAY GOEL : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Central Government allocates funds under the Levy Sugar Price Equalization Fund (LSPEF) to State Governments, if so, the details thereof;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.