

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) Government have after meeting the representatives of the sugar industry taken appropriate decisions on their suggestions for promoting the sugar industry which *inter-alia* include expediting settlement of subsidy claim, softening of terms of financial assistance from the Sugar Development Fund and taking up industry related matters with other concerned Ministries etc.

Buffer stock of sugar

†109. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided on the 18th May, 2004 not to keep the buffer stock of sugar;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that in the middle of June, 2004, Government have taken another decision to keep two million tonnes of buffer stock of sugar;

(d) if so, the facts in this regard and the reasons for a sudden change in the need for keeping the buffer stock of sugar now; and

(e) the amount to be paid by Government to sugar mills for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (e) On 19.12.2003 Government decided to extend the period of maintenance of buffer stock of sugar by one year from 18.12.2003. Subsequently Government decided on 12.5.2004 to terminate the extended period w.e.f. 18.5.2004. However, on representations from the apex bodies of the sugar industry in this regard, Government reviewed the matter and decided on 27.5.2004 to withdraw the order regarding termination of buffer stock. It is estimated that the holding of buffer stock for one year w.e.f. 18.12.2003 would involve an expenditure of Rs. 403 crores.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.