

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY): (a) to (c) Yes Sir, The Government of Andhra Pradesh has reported that due to Titley and Phethai cyclone, Paddy crop has been affected in three districts namely Srikakulam, Guntur and Krishna. The State has requested Government of India to relax the specifications for procurement of Paddy and Rice in respect of damage, discolour, sprouted and weevilled. Government of India has accorded relaxation as per norms to the State Govt. of Andhra Pradesh.

**Mandatory testing of purity of gold**

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

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a ban on the sale of gold/jewellery which do not bear Hallmark;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, whether Government would make the use of test-machine mandatory in jewellery shops for testing the purity of Gold?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISRTY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY): (a) to (c) Presently sale of both hallmarked as well as non-hallmarked gold and silver jewellery is permitted in the country. However, the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016 has enabling provisions for making hallmarking of precious metal articles mandatory by the Central Government.

**Direct transfer of subsidy under PDS**

673. SHRI RAJMANI PATEL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to launch a scheme for direct transfer of subsidy provided under the Public Distribution System (PDS) into the bank accounts of the beneficiaries, if so, the details thereof and the benefits likely to accrue therefrom;

(b) whether any guidelines have been issued to the States in this regard, if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the said subsidy would be indexed against inflation, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.