

partnered with more than 500 companies under its convergence programme. The complaints relating to the convergence companies are transferred to them online for resolution. In the event of a complaint not being resolved by a company, the consumer is advised to approach a Consumer Forum of appropriate jurisdiction established under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

Under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, a three-tier quasi-judicial mechanism, called Consumer Fora, has been set up at the district, State and National levels to provide simple, speedy and inexpensive redressal to consumer disputes. These quasi-judicial bodies have been empowered to give relief of a specific nature and to award, wherever appropriate, compensation to consumers.

#### **Payment of sugarcane arrears to farmers**

3887. SHRI G.C. CHANDRASHEKHAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether sugar mills operated by HPCL Biofuels Limited owe a huge amount as sugarcane arrears to farmers;
- (b) if so, the details thereof indicating the total amount paid by the mill to farmers and the balance of payment pending during the current crushing season;
- (c) whether the mill has submitted a payment schedule for clearing the dues; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the steps taken by Government to ensure payment of sugarcane arrears to farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DANVE RAOSAHEB DADARAO): (a) and (b) Details of cane price payable, paid and arrears during current sugar season 2018-19 as on 15.07.2019 in respect of Sugauli and Lauriya sugar mills operated by HPCL Bio-fuels Limited are as under:—

(₹ in crores.)			
Name of Unit	Payable	Paid	Dues
Sugauli	110.50	38.19	72.31
Lauriya	104.65	43.23	61.42

(c) and (d) Payment of cane price to sugarcane growing farmers by the sugar mills is a continuous process. However, on account of surplus sugar production during the previous sugar season 2017-18 and current sugar season 2018-19 the sugar prices remained depressed which adversely affected the liquidity of the sugar mills resulting in accumulation of cane price arrears of the farmers.

The Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966 stipulates payment of cane price within 14 days of supply, failing which interest at the rate of 15% per annum on amount due for the delayed period beyond 14 days is payable. The Powers to enforce the provisions of Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966 with regard to payment of cane dues of farmers is vested with the State Governments as they have necessary field formation for its implementation. Central Government from time to time issues advisory to the state Governments for ensuring clearance of cane price arrears of farmers and to take action against defaulting mills and also review the position through meetings and video conferences.

With a view to improve the liquidity position of sugar mills of the country including State of Bihar, enabling them to clear cane price arrears of farmers, the Government took following measures, in sugar seasons 2017-18 & 2018-19:—

- (i) Fixing a Minimum Selling Price (MSP) of sugar w.e.f 07.06.2018 at ₹29/kg for sale at factory gate in domestic market, below which no sugar mill can sell sugar. MSP has further been increased to ₹31/Kg. w.e.f. 14th February, 2019.
- (ii) Extending Assistance to sugar mills to offset the cost of cane in sugar seasons 2017-18 and 2018-19.
- (iii) Extending assistance to sugar mills by reimbursing carrying cost towards maintenance of buffer stock of 30 LMT of sugar.
- (iv) Extending Assistance to sugar mills for defraying expenditure towards internal transport, freight, handling and other charges to facilitate export of sugar from the country in sugar season 2018-19.
- (v) Extending soft loans to sugar mills through banks for which Government would bear interest subvention @ 7% for one year to clear cane price arrears.

Further, Government of Bihar is providing a subsidy of ₹ 12.50/qtl. to sugar mills of State of Bihar on purchase of sugarcane to clear their dues for the current sugar season 2018-19.

### **One Nation - One Ration Card Scheme**

3888. SHRI VIJAY GOEL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government proposes to introduce 'One Nation- One Ration Card' Scheme to help migrant workers access ration anywhere in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the tentative date by which the said scheme is proposed to be rolled out; and
- (d) the tentative number of persons to be benefited by the said scheme, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DANVE RAOSAHEB DADARAO): (a) to (d) To sustain the reforms brought in by scheme on 'End to End Computerization of Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) Operations' the Department of Food and Public Distribution has launched a new scheme namely "Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (IM-PDS)" for implementation during 2018-19 and 2019-20. The main objective of the scheme is to introduce nation-wide portability of ration card holders under National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA), to lift their entitlement foodgrains from any FPS in the country without the need to obtain a new ration card, by integrating the existing PDS systems/portals of States/UTs with the Central systems/portals, etc.

Keeping in view the physical progress under ongoing scheme and readiness for implementation of National Portability in few States, it has been decided to implement inter-State/National Portability on a pilot basis in few States shortly. Further, as and when any State/UT achieve the readiness it will be added on the National Portability platform, *i.e.* Public Distribution System Network (PDSN) to provide the benefit of national/inter-State portability to all ration card holders under NFSA. Presently NFSA provides the coverage for about 81.34 Crore persons across the country. State-wise statement showing coverage under NFSA is given in Statement.