

The scheme of cash transfer of food subsidy is implemented as per provisions of the Cash Transfer of Food Subsidy Rules, 2015, notified under the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) which *inter alia* provides that the scheme can be taken up in identified areas, subject to fulfillment of certain conditions regarding preparedness for its implementation. Identified area is defined under the Rules as State or Union Territory or any specified area within the State or Union Territory for which there is a written consent of the State Government for implementation of the scheme. It is therefore optional for the States/UTs to implement the cash transfer of food subsidy scheme or continue with distribution of foodgrains as per provisions of NFSA through fair price shops.

The cash transfer of food subsidy scheme is being implemented in Union Territories of Chandigarh, Puducherry and urban areas of Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

(c) Cash Transfer of Food Subsidy Rules, 2015 have been notified under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013. NFSA does not have any provision for distribution of free rice. Therefore, question of exemption of free rice scheme under NFSA does not arise.

(d) No report of woes of female members of the family against misuse of cash under DBT (cash) scheme has been received from any of the 3 UTs where DBT (cash) is being implemented. Further, the decision to implement cash transfer of food subsidy scheme or continue with distribution of foodgrains through Fair Price Shops under NFSA rests with the State Government/UT Administration.

#### **Mandatory hallmarking of gold jewellery**

718. SHRI A. MOHAMMEDJAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government is considering to open hallmarking centres in all districts of the country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government has not received comments on the draft Quality Control Order for mandatory hallmarking of gold jewellery and artefacts that was hosted on WTO website on 10.10.2019; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that as per global trade rules of WTO, a member country has to notify Quality Control Order and that India is a part of the 164- member WTO since 1995?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DANVE RAOSAHEB DADARAO): (a) Assaying and Hallmarking (A&H) centres are set up by private entrepreneurs and setting up of centers is a market driven activity where decision to open a centre is taken by the entrepreneur based on his commercial judgment about the market for that location. At present, there are 892 Assaying and Hallmarking centres spread throughout the country.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir.

**Delay in disposing of housing project cases**

719. SHRI MAJEED MEMON: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission at New Delhi generally takes about 5-7 years in disposing of the cases relating to delay of housing projects;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government has any plan to put the cases of senior citizens of the age of above 70 years on fast track so as to ensure that there is no undue delay in delivery of justice; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor and the steps being taken to prevent undue delay in settling of property-related cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DANVE RAOSAHEB DADARAO): (a) and (b) As informed by the State Commission, Delhi, a few cases have taken 5-7 years for disposal on the ground that the parties to the cases have delayed filing of the written statement, evidence and other necessary documents. Besides, delay has also been on account of the fact that on many occasions cases disposed of by the State Commission, Delhi are remanded by the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission for further hearing.

(c) and (d) A provision already exists in the Consumer Protection Regulations, 2005 to the effect that the cases filed by or against senior citizens shall be listed and disposed of on a priority basis.