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Title : The Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution made a statement regarding the import of raw and white/refined sugar.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, the hon. Minister to make a Statement.

Shri Sharad Pawar.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the production of sugar in the current 2008-09 sugar season is provisionally estimated in the range of 150 to 155 lack ones as compared to about 263 lack ones of sugar produced in 2007-08 sugar season. The lower production of sugar in the current sugar season has put pressure on sugar prices. The Central Government had taken a slew of measures to augment domestic stocks of sugar and moderate sugar prices. The Government has again reviewed the position.

2. The Government had, in January, 2009, decided to allow duty free import of raw sugar by sugar factories up to 30.7.2009 under Advance Authorization Scheme. Thereafter, in April, 2009, it had opened up duty free import of raw sugar by sugar factories under OGL up to 1.7.2009. The Government has now decided to extend the terminal date for import of duty free raw sugar under Open General Licence (OGL) by sugar factories from 1.8.2009 to 31.3.2010.

3. The import of raw sugar has also been opened up to the private trade up to 31.3.2010 for being processed by domestic factories on job basis.

4. Like in the earlier case of duty free raw sugar imports under AAS and OGL by sugar factories allowed up to 30.9.2009 and 1.8.2009 respectively, the imports of raw sugar under OGL up to the extended date of 31.3.2010 by sugar factories and private trade have been kept free of levy obligations. Further, accelerated release of processed sugar made from raw sugar would be allowed but if the concerned importer does not sell the processed sugar within the prescribed period, it shall be converted into levy sugar.

5. The Government had, in April, 2009, also decided to allow duty free import of white/refined sugar under OGL up to 10 lack ones by designated agencies, namely, STC/MMTC/PEC/NAFED till 1.8.2009. This has now been extended up to 30.11.2009. Furthermore, the duty free import of white/refined sugar under OGL has been opened to other Central/State Government agencies and to private trade in addition to existing designated agencies.

6. Like in the case of existing duty free import of white/refined sugar under OGL by designated agencies up to 1.8.2009, import of white/refined sugar by such agencies up to the extended date of 30.11.2009 as well as similar imports by other Central/State Government agencies and private trade up to that date have been kept free of regulated release mechanism as well as levy obligation.

7. It is expected that with these decisions, domestic availability of sugar would get further augmented and sugar prices in the country would remain at reasonable levels.

[Placed in Library, see LT-593/15/09]

**उपाध्यक्ष महोदय :** माननीय मंत्री, श्री कपिल सिब्बल।

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY (KOLKATA UTTAR): Sir, the hon. Speaker assured us this morning that our Members would be allowed to raise their issues in the 'Zero Hour'. When is the 'Zero Hour'?

**उपाध्यक्ष महोदय :** मैं माननीय सदस्य के ध्यान में लाना चाहता हूँ कि उस दिन यह तय हो चुका है कि जनरल बिजनेस को खत्म करने के बाद, यानी शाम को 6.00 बजे के बाद विशेष उल्लेख के विषय लिए जाएंगे। अतः कृपया आप आसन ग्रहण कीजिए।

