

as to minimise the scope for any kind of diversion of stocks. Alongwith this the price monitoring mechanism in the States and Union Territories need to be strengthened on a priority basis to cover the rural areas also.

- (10) Additional allocations of rice, wheat and palmolein requested by some of the State Governments were agreed to.
- (11) State Government have been flexibility to exempt any edible oil from the provisions of the Compulsory Packaging Order so that no undue hardship is caused to consumers.
- (12) A special steady group will be set up to identify measures required to meet the needs of north-east States and Island territories regarding the supply of essential commodities.

[English]

209-11

Public Distribution System

2098. SHRI MUKUL WASNIK: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "PDS doesn't work against poverty, says World Bank" appearing in the 'Times of India' New Delhi, dated February 9th, 1999;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether the Government have any plans to improve the delivery system and lower the cost incurring on the administrative machinery; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. According to the news item there may be a strong case for targetting food subsidies to reach out to the needy rather than operating a universal PSD at huge costs and little benefit to the poor.

The huge PDS network can play a more meaningful role if it ensures availability of food for the poor households. The Targeted Public Distribution System

(TPDS) with its focus on the poor is a step towards this end, PDS could reach out more meaningfully to the needy if the non-poor are excluded from access to it. The proposal to bar access to the PDS for the affluent sections of the society was discussed in the Conference of Chief Ministers on Basic Minimum Services held during 4-5 July, 1996. The Conference, however, felt that as a large section of the population, who may be above the poverty line (APL) are also at present getting the benefit of the PDS, suitable measures should be taken to ensure availability of essential commodities at reasonable prices to this section. In the Conference of Chief Ministers and State Food Ministers held on 30.9.1997 to review the implementation of TPDS the general consensus was that there should be no reduction in the allocation to the APL families. It has not been possible to exclude the non-poor from PDS because of the lack of consensus on this issue.

(c) and (d) The Government of India have brought out a Model Citizens' Charter for TPDS for adoption by the States Union Territories with the objective of providing services under PDS in a more transparent and caring manner.

With a view to lower the costs incurred on the delivery system including the administrative machinery the expenditure incurred by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) is constantly under review. Following steps are being taken to reduce the expenditure.

- (i) FCI is trying to achieve average capacity utilisation of 75% to reduce storage cost even though the procurement of grain is seasonal.
- (ii) The procurement and movement ratio is being adhered to the norm of 1:1.35 to reduce the expenditure in freight.
- (iii) Continuous efforts are being made to reduce shortages in handling of foodgrains.
- (iv) Efforts are also being made to reduce the incurrance of Railway demurrage charges.
- (v) Excess stocks are being released in the open market at prices above the Central Issue Price (CIP).
- (vi) Issue of old stocks, disposing of C&D category of stocks and introducing direct supervision on movement of foodgrains to control the incidence of transit and storage shortages.

- (vii) Machine stitching of gunnies and handling of foodgrains in 50 bags to reduce the storage and transit loss.
- (viii) Ensuring strict quality control measures during procurement storage.
- (ix) The FCI is controlling the administrative cost by following minimum re-recruitment of resultant entry level post irrespective of the increased volume of operations.

[Translation]

Tourism

Misbehaviour with Foreign Tourists

2099. DR. ASHOK PATEL:
SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI:
SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA:
SHRI BIZAY SONKAR SHASTRI:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the police personnel and touts do not behave decently with the tourists at the airports as a result of which the image of India and Indians get tarnished in the foreign countries;

(b) if so, the number of incidents of indecent behaviour with the tourists came to the notice of the Government during each of the last three years;

(c) the action taken by the Government against the persons found guilty in this regard; and

(d) the action taken to check the recurrence of such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) to (d) Some instances of mis-behaviour with foreign tourists by the police and immigration officials posted at the airports have come to notice. According to available information, 152 such cases involving immigration officials were reported at the five international airports situated in Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta, Chennai and Thiruvananthapuram, 14 officials were suspended in this connection. Besides police cases were registered against four officials.

The police personnel deployed at the airports are under the disciplinary purview of the respective State Governments. Information relating to allegations of

indecent behaviour against such personnel is not maintained at the Central level.

With a view to avoiding inconvenience to foreign tourists at the international airports, various measures have been taken. These include, *inter alia*, identification of areas where malpractices take place; steps to remove delays in clearance of tourists at the checking counters; provision of hot-line to help tourists to contact the senior most official, and providing special training on behavioural management to concerned officials.

[English]

312-14

Edible Oil Industry

2100. SHRI P.S. GADHAVI: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have reviewed the impact of Vegetable Oil Products (Regulation) Order, 1998 on edible oil industry;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the capacity used by edible oil industry is below the installed capacity;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to improve capacity utilisation of edible oil industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PAL SINGH YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In addition to reducing the areas of control and multiplicity of authorities, the new Order has helped in significantly reducing the cost of vegetable oil products particularly vanaspati.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The basic reason for the capacity utilisation of the edible oil industry being below the installed capacity is the shortage of raw-materials.

(e) Some of the steps taken/being taken by the Government to improve capacity utilisation of the edible oil industry are:—