

reduced to 15 percent from 25 percent in order to augment the total availability of these items. Export of onions has been banned. Some of the essential commodities like rice, wheat, palmolein and kerosene are also supplied through the outlets of public distribution system at below market prices. Stringent actions are being taken against hoarders, black marketeers and other indulging in unfair trade practices under the Essential Commodities Act and Prevention of Black-Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act by the State/UT Governments.

Delicensing of Sugar Industry

1536. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA:
SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SHINDE:
SHRI RANJIB BISWAL:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the objectives and reasons to delicense the sugar industry;

(b) the reaction of the Indian Sugar Mill Association/ National Federation of sugar mills; and

(c) the quantum of sugarcane that was uncrushed during the last three years due to non-availability of crushing and processing capacity of sugar mills?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PAL SINGH YADAV): (a) Government decided to delicense the sugar industry with the object to allow greater freedom to the entrepreneurs to take investment and technology decision in the industrial sector which would contribute to greater industrial growth.

(b) Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) and National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories (NFCSE) have not represented to the Government against the decision of the Government to delicense the sugar industry. However, National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories Ltd. (NFCSE) has opposed delicensing of sugar industry in the Presidential address at the 30th Annual Meeting of their General Body Meeting held on 23.10.98.

(c) As per the information received from the Government of Maharashtra, 13.68 lakh tonnes of cane remained uncrushed in the sugar season 1995-96 for which the State Government compensated the concerned farmers @ Rs. 5,000/- per acre. No such incidence was reported by any other State during the period 1995-96 to 1997-98.

[Translation]

Talks with Naga Leaders

1537. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a talk was held between the Naga extremist leaders and the Prime Minister in America;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the points discussed and the results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise in view of answer to (a) above.

Inquiry in Panna Mukta Mines

1538. SHRI CHINMAYANAND SWAMI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the High Court has given any directions in the case of inquiry in Mukta-Panna mines;

(b) whether the Government have violated the rules and offered the said mine to Reliance and IRCON jointly on lease for 25 years; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (c) The subject matter is presently subjudice.

[English]

Inclusion of Bhandari Communities in O.B.C. List

1539. SHRI RAVI SITARAM NAIK: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central OBC commission has recommended Bhandari and other communities to be included in the Central OBC list;

(b) whether listed Bhandari community was included in the Mandal Commission report; and