

Zulfkar launches distribution of new ration cards at Budgam.

1 Kg Extra Sugar to be supplied on Eid.

BUDGAM, June 20: In its effort to implement the National Food Security Act (NFSA), the Minister for Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali today launched the distribution of new ration cards to the beneficiaries.

The Minister commenced the programme by distributing new ration cards to beneficiaries at Sheikh Ul Alam Hall D.C. Office Budgam- The Minister was accompanied by MLC Mr. Saif Ud din Bhat and joined by several prominent citizens like Mohiuddin Muntazir, Dr. Shafi Wani of the district. Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Director CAPD Kashmir, SSP Budgam Joint Director, Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors and other senior officials of the department and District Administration were present on the occasion.

Welcoming the minister on the occasion Director CAPD, Peerzada Mushtaq and Deputy Commissioner Budgam Mir Altaf Ahmad highlighted the various features of the NFSA and the pivotal role played by CAPD department in the lives of the people. They said that the implementation of this act would not have been possible but for the dynamic leadership and citizen centric attributes of the Minister.

While addressing the gathering, Zulfkar said that this was a momentous day as after a gap of 15 years new ration cards were being distributed to beneficiaries across the state. The Minister dwelled on the importance of Ration Cards as a documentary proof. The Minister stressed upon the people to educate themselves about their rights and entitlements and be vigilant citizens and identify unfair practices. He also exhorted the people to be forthcoming in their complaints. He also informed the people that the department is in process of automation which would also leverage Adhar and that would go a long way in streamlining the supply and curb instances of pilferage and other malpractices. Providing relief to the consumers, Zulfkar said that the department has made ration cards available on the website of CAPD department with the facility of downloading ration cards and e-tickets.

The Minister expressed his gratitude to the Late C.M. Mufti Mohammad Saayed. He said that it was a result of the focused attention of the former Chief Minister that he has been able to implement this scheme. He said that keeping in view the dietary patterns of people from valley, the Government decided to implement the MMSFES that would ensure that people would get in total double the food grains as envisaged under NFSA.

The Minister said that he along with all senior officers of CAPD Department will be available to address the complaints of the people and asked them to come

forward if any dealer denies them their rightful ration. He promised to take strict immediate action against the erring officer/dealer found indulging in such activities. He urged the people to ensure that they get 5kg of rice and not 4.5kg of rice and 0.5 Kg of Atta.

Lauding the effort of District Administration Budgam, the minister said that the district has taken a lead in enabling the implementation of the scheme in the state. He exhorted the District Administration to once again take lead in fidelity check process. He also said that Deputy Commissioner will monitor the grievance redressal system. While appreciating the role of administration in implementing the scheme the Minister said that against 3 years taken elsewhere in the country, the state was able to complete the exercise within 3 months. He further said that it was out of volition that the state implemented the scheme and not out of any coercion as recently was reported by certain newspapers.

The Minister reiterating Government's commitment to provide quality ration especially to the underprivileged sections of the society said that with the implementation of NFSA, more than 20 lakh left out beneficiaries have been included under Public Distribution System (PDS) in the state, adding that the Act covers around 74.13 lakh under Priority, while as 45 lakh are covered under 'Non-Priority', making the total to 119.13 lakh soul as against 99 lakh souls included previously. The Minister said that only 3 lakh souls have been left out. He also said that against 7.11 lakh MT provided earlier, 12 lakh MT of grains will be provided to the state now.

Recognizing that there was paucity of sugar in the state due to bottlenecks of tendering process for the last few months, the Minister informed that the tender has now been finalized and 28,000 quintals of sugar would be available in a day or two. The Minister also said that on the pious occasion of Eid ul Fitr, 1 Kg extra sugar shall be provided to the beneficiaries.

The Minister said that the perception of there being a scarcity of food grains owing to implementation of NFSA is wrong and is a handiwork of vested interests that are severely affected due to transparency and accountability in the system now. He further urged the well off sections of the society to voluntarily give up their entitlement. He said that there might have been errors of inclusion and exclusion in the process but with the exercise of fidelity check that too would be addressed.

The function concluded with distribution of mementos and awards to various officers.