

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1837

TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.08.2023

RISING PRICES OF VEGETABLE

1837. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA

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

- (a) whether Government is taking measures to curb the rising prices of vegetables, including tomato, in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of progress made in this respect;
- (d) whether this is reflective of the failure of the Tomato, Onion and Potato (TOP) Scheme; and
- (e) if so, the corrective measures to be taken in this respect?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE, CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a) to (e) In order to check the current increase in prices of tomato and make it available to the consumers at affordable prices, the Government has started the procurement of tomatoes under Price Stabilisation Fund and is making it available at a highly subsidised rate to consumers. The National Cooperative Consumers Federation (NCCF) and National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation (NAFED) are continuously procuring tomato from mandis in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra and making it available at affordable prices in major consuming centres in Delhi-NCR, Bihar, Rajasthan, etc. after subsidizing the price to the consumers. The tomatoes have been disposed initially at retail price of Rs.90/kg which was reduced to Rs.80/kg from 16.07.2023 and further reduced to Rs.70/kg from 20.07.2023. Till 31.07.2023, a total of 710.20 MT of tomato had been procured by NCCF and NAFED with continuous disposal in major consumption centres of Delhi-NCR, Rajasthan, UP and Bihar.

In order to check the volatility in prices of onion, the Government maintains onion buffer under the PSF. The buffer size has been increased year after year from 1.00 LMT in 2020-21 to 2.50 LMT in 2022-23. The onions from the buffer are released in major consumption centres during the lean season from September to December in a calibrated and targeted manner to cool down prices. The onion buffer target for 2023-24 has been enhanced further to 3.00 LMT.

The Department of Consumer Affairs has launched in 2022, a grand challenge for development of technologies for primary processing, storage and valorization of onions with the overall objective of ensuring availability of onion to consumers at affordable prices. The 606 ideas submitted by various categories of participants had been evaluated by team of experts and 11 ideas have reached prototype development stage. Prototype development is in progress on ideas pertaining improved storage, pre harvesting treatment, primary processing and valorisation of onion. On a similar line, Tomato Grand Challenge has also been launched 30.06.2023, to invite ideas on comprehensive and focused area interventions in tomato value chain, from cropping and market insights for the farmers to improved packaging, transportation and storage. The Tomato Grand Challenge is open to students, research scholars, faculty members, industry individuals, Indian start-ups, professionals etc. The overall objective of the Grand Challenge is to ensure availability of highly perishable agri-horticultural commodities such as onion and tomato to consumers at affordable prices
