

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

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1646**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10.12.2024

**PROTECTION OF CONSUMER INTEREST FROM PRICE RISE**

1646. SHRI K.R.N. RAJESHKUMAR

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

- (a) whether Government is aware of the increasing concerns regarding rising prices of essential commodities, if so, what specific measures are being taken to protect consumer interests and ensure affordable prices;
- (b) the steps being taken to monitor the prices of essential commodities and identify any instances of hoarding or profiteering;
- (c) the manner in which Government is utilizing technology to track price trends and detect anomalies; and
- (d) the steps being taken to improve the efficiency of the supply chain for essential commodities and reduce transportation costs?

**ANSWER**

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

(SHRI B.L VERMA)

(a) to (d) : Department of Consumer Affairs monitors the daily retail and wholesale prices of selected essential food commodities, submitted by the 555 price monitoring centres that have been set up with Central assistance by the State Governments and UT Administrations across the country. The daily report of prices and indicative price trends are duly analysed for taking appropriate decisions such as release of stocks from the buffer, stock disclosure by stockholding entities, imposition of stock limits, changes in trade policy instruments like rationalisation of import duty, changes in import quota, restrictions on exports of the commodity etc.

The stock of pulses with various entities like traders, dealers, stockists, millers, importers and big-chain retailers are monitored through online stock disclosure portal of the Department. The retail and wholesale price trends in respect of pulses are analysed against stock positions in respect of various stockholding entities like big-chain retailers to identify possible profiteering by market players.

The price scenario and trends of food commodities such as pulses are being analysed taking into account factors influencing price behavior such as the supply situation, price seasonality, estimate production, market intelligence inputs etc. Price forecasting model to predict retail prices of pulses in major consumption centres based on price trends in benchmark mandis and import prices is one of the analytical tools adopted by the Department of Consumer Affairs. In addition, the Department has initiated mechanism to obtain inputs on market outlook, production scenario, weather condition etc. through regular weekly interaction with participant from market intelligence agency, Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Indian Metrological Department, National Cooperative Consumers' Federation (NCCF) and National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation (NAFED).

In order to tackle volatility in prices of agri-horticultural commodities, the government maintains buffer stocks of pulses and onion for market interventions through calibrated and targeted release to moderate the prices in the market. As a measure of direct intervention in the retail market, part of the stock of pulses from the buffer are converted into dals for retail sale to the consumers at affordable prices under the Bharat Dal brand. Similarly, atta and rice are distributed to retail consumers under Bharat brand at subsidized prices. Onion from the buffer are released in a calibrated and targeted manner to moderate prices in high price consuming centres at wholesale markets and through retail outlets. Onion is distributed among retail consumers at Rs.35 per kg through stationary retail outlets and mobile vans in major consumption centres. To enhance efficiency and cost-effectiveness in onion disposal, bulk transportation of onions by rail rakes have been adopted. These measures have helped in making essential food commodities such as pulses, rice, atta and onion available to consumers at affordable prices and also in stabilising the prices

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