

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

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.182
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18TH MARCH, 2025

FOOD STORAGE INFRASTRUCTURE

182 SMT. SUNETRA AJIT PAWAR:

Will the Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is a need for modernisation and expansion of food storage infrastructure;
- (b) if so, the initiatives being taken by Government in this regard;
- (c) the manner in which Government is addressing the problem of spoilage and loss of food grains during storage;
- (d) the strategies being adopted by Government to ensure the management of food storages and price stability; and
- (e) the manner in which Government is leveraging technology to improve food grain management and distribution?

A N S W E R
MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND
MINISTRY OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY
(SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI)

(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF THE STARRED QUESTION NO. 182 FOR ANSWER ON 18.03.2025 IN THE RAJYA SABHA.

(a) & (b): Government of India through Food Corporation of India (FCI) stores wheat & rice after procurement for Public Distribution System (PDS) operation and to maintain buffer stock. As on 01.02.2025, total covered storage capacity available with FCI and State agencies throughout the country for storage of Central Pool foodgrains stock is 806.94 Lakh MT.

The requirement of Storage capacity in FCI depends upon the level of procurement, requirement of buffer norms and PDS operations for mainly Rice and Wheat. FCI continuously assesses and monitors the storage capacity and based on the storage gap assessment, storage capacities are created/hired through following schemes:-

1. Construction of Silos under Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode
2. Private Entrepreneurs Guarantee (PEG) Scheme under PPP mode
3. Central Sector Scheme (CSS) "Storage & Godowns" focus on North East
4. Hiring of godown from Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC)/ State Warehousing Corporations (SWCs)/State Agencies
5. Private Warehousing Scheme (PWS)
6. Creation of godowns under Asset Monetization.

(c): Guidelines followed to address the problem of losses of food grains during storage are at Annexure-I.

(d): Government of India auctions surplus food grains (Wheat & Rice), beyond the public Distribution System (PDS) and Other Welfare Schemes (OWS) requirements, through open sale under Open Market Sales Scheme (Domestic) [OMMSS(D)]. This helps to increase the availability of foodgrains in the market, control inflation, ensure food security and make foodgrains more affordable for the general population. In addition, Bharat Atta and Bharat Rice were launched on 6.11.2023 and 6.02.2024, respectively, with a view to provide atta (wheat flour) and rice to general consumers at subsidized rates under Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic) [OMSS(D)] policy.

(e): In order to keep its storage infrastructure robust and updated, FCI is taking various steps of Modernization The details are at Annexure-II.

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (c) OF THE STARRED QUESTION NO. 182 FOR ANSWER ON 18.03.2025 IN THE RAJYA SABHA.

Guidelines followed by FCI to address the problem of losses of food grains during storage:

A. Periodical maintenance of Scientific Storage structure:

Dedicated Engineering wing of FCI carries out periodical maintenance of all storage structures

- a) Identifying & repairing of all the leakage points in the roof.
- b) Cleaning of drainages in the godown premises ensured.
- c) Ensuring that no seepage inside the godowns so that no clogging up of water.
- d) Ensuring all the repairing works are attended on priority before the onset of monsoon season.

B. Scientific storage and preservation of stocks:

- i. Foodgrains are stored by adopting proper scientific code of storage practices.
- ii. Adequate dunnage materials such as wooden crates, bamboo mats, polythene sheets are used to check migration of moisture from the floor to the foodgrains.
- iii. Fumigation covers, nylon ropes, nets and insecticides for control of stored grain insect pests are provided in all the godowns.
- iv. Prophylactic (spraying of insecticides) and curative treatments (fumigation) are carried out regularly and timely in godowns for the control of stored grain insect pests.
- v. Regular periodic inspections of the stocks/godowns are undertaken by qualified and trained technical staff and senior officers. The health of the foodgrains is monitored at regular intervals by a system of checks and super checks at different levels.

- vi. The principle of “First in First Out” (FIFO) is followed to the extent possible so as to avoid longer storage of foodgrains in godowns. However, stocks lying at vulnerable plinths and procured under relaxed specifications are issued on overriding priority to avoid any damage to stocks in storage.
- vii. Only covered rail wagons are used for movement of foodgrains so as to avoid damage during transit.
- viii. While movement, Polythene Sheets are spread on the floor of railway wagons to retrieve the spilled-over grains to avoid contamination to stocks.
- ix. Damage Monitoring Cells have been set up at District, Regional and Zonal levels to regularly monitor accrual of stocks and reduce damages. Each case of damage is thoroughly investigated and disciplinary action in case of negligence is invariably taken against the delinquents.

C. Capacity Building for additional modern storage structure.

Steel Silo bins are being constructed as a measure of modern capacity building which ensures better preservation of foodgrains and enhances its shelf life.

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (e) OF THE STARRED QUESTION NO. 182 FOR ANSWER ON 18.03.2025 IN THE RAJYA SABHA.

Modernization steps taken by FCI to keep its storage infrastructure robust and updated:

1. Construction of Silos under PPP Mode:

Steel Silo storage with bulk handling facility is highly mechanized and modernized way of storing food grains in bulk. It ensures better preservation of food grains and enhances its shelf life. If food grains are stored in Silos and transported in bulk, losses due to theft, pilferage and transportation would be negligible compared to food grains storage in bags in conventional warehouses. Steel Silos are constructed under Public Private Partnership Mode.

2. Third party assessment of warehouses by FCI from Quality Council of India (QCI)

Third party assessment of all warehouses operated by FCI was undertaken through QCI covering areas like Physical infrastructure, Compliance to SoPs, Safety standards and Benchmarking with best practices. Accordingly, grading of all warehouses was done in six categories namely "Excellent, 5 Star, 4 Star, 3 Star, 2 Star and 1 Star".

Based on QCI feedback, FCI has re-visited/ revised SOPs. An action plan was prepared for upgradation of warehouses. The short and medium term deficiencies were rectified by FCI. Again second round of assessment was undertaken by QCI. FCI has further upgraded the warehouses. The summary of 556 FCI owned warehouses is as under: -

No. of Depots with 5 Star and above category		
First QCI Assessment	Second QCI Assessment	After Up-gradation
102	382	479

After up-gradation 479 FCI owned depots falls in 5 star and above category which were 102 in the first assessment done by QCI.

Further Depot self-assessment portal is being developed to monitor infrastructural efficiency (Grading of the Depot) and a mobile app is also being developed for the same.

3. Mechanization of Warehouse operations:

The provision of mandatory mechanized handling has been introduced in the revised handling and transport tenders applicable w.e.f. 11.04.2023 for new contracts, to encourage innovation and modernization of operations. As per the Model Tender Form (MTF) provision the Contractor shall mandatorily bring in **modern technology for loading and unloading operations** at the same quoted price at its own cost. The contractor has to provide mandatorily mechanized loading/unloading points as under:

Capacity of Godown	Mandatorily mechanized loading/ unloading points to be provided by Contractor (minimum requirement)
Up to 20000 MT	1
20000 to 40000 MT	2
Above 40000 MT	3

In addition to above the Contractor shall have the option to bring in modern technology for all the loading and unloading points of operations in Depot at the same quoted price at its own cost. In case the contractor doesn't provide mechanized solution as per mandate given above, penalty as stipulated in the tender document shall be levied.

4. Computerization of depot operations

- i. The operation of depots was digitized through Depot Online System (DOS) making all transactions digitally verifiable and traceable. This also provides real time visibility of data and transactions happening in depots across the country.
- ii. DOS captures weight from weighbridges directly ensuring transparency and accuracy of weightment of stocks.

5. Monitoring of Depot Efficiency:

In order to improve Operational and Financial efficiency at Depot level, an initiative has been taken to develop a model for rating of the depots getting the data from Financial Accounting Package. The operational efficiency of the depots is rated based on the cost parameters viz., Storage loss in Rice, Transit loss in rice, Transit loss in Wheat, Demurrage charges, Handling cost of the depot, Establishment cost of staff, Overtime Allowances (OTA) for staff, across different types of godowns, labour type [Departmental/Direct Payment System (DPS)/ No Work No Pay (NWNP)/Contract]. A Business Analytics Tool has also been deployed to capture the information as well as to provide an interactive platform with data visualization. This can be accessed at all levels of hierarchy to assess and compare the performance of the depots.

Now, Depot efficiency grading is being integrated with Depot Self-Assessment Portal-DSAP (Depot Darpan) & a mobile app is also being developed for the same (for rating/grading infrastructural facilities and operational efficiency).
