

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

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 3568
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24.03.2026

MEASURES TO STABILISE PRICES OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES

3568. SMT. REKHA SHARMA

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

- (a) the measures taken to stabilise prices of essential commodities such as pulses, rice, wheat and edible oils;
- (b) the role of buffer stock management in controlling inflation;
- (c) the objectives of launching 'Bharat Atta' and 'Bharat Rice'; and
- (d) the impact of these initiatives on retail prices for consumers?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE, CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRI B.L VERMA)

(a) : Department of Consumer Affairs monitors the daily prices of 40 essential food commodities submitted by the 578 price monitoring centres across the country. As per the data, prices of food commodities are stable and under control.

Government keeps a close watch on the production and availability of essential commodities, including pulses, rice, wheat and edible oils, through regular reviews by the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC). The Committee reviews, on regular basis, the scenario and the indicative trends in prices of essential agri-horticultural commodities and suggests measures to enhance availability through increased domestic production and rationalisation in export-import policies.

In order to control the volatility in prices of pulses, government maintains buffer stock of major pulses, viz., Chana, Tur, Urad, Masoor and Moong for strategic market intervention to make pulses available to consumers at affordable prices. Import policy and duties on pulses are rationalized, from time to time, to augment the domestic production and moderate prices.

Government sells 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 in stabilising the price of wheat and rice in the market by increasing the availability of foodgrains in the market, controlling inflation, ensuring food security and making foodgrains more affordable for the general population.

To control the rise in the edible oil prices, government has cut Basic Custom Duty (BCD) for Crude Edible oils (Crude Soybean Oil, Crude Palm Oil and Crude Sunflower Oil) from 20% to 10% w.e.f. 30th May, 2025. By lowering the import duty on crude oils, the government aims to reduce the landed cost and retail prices of edible oils, providing relief to consumers and helping to cool overall inflation. The reduced duty also encourages domestic refining and maintains fair compensation for farmers.

(b) : Government maintains buffer stock of pulses and onion under Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) to tackle extreme volatility in the prices and in ensuring the availability of these essential food commodities to consumers at affordable prices. Fluctuations in domestic production, seasonal variations in demand and speculative activities of market players often leads to volatility in the prices of pulses. Regulated release of pulses from the buffer to augment the availability helps in cooling down the market prices, and retail sale to consumers at discounted prices ensures availability of dals at affordable prices. Market interventions through buffer stock also helps in nudging the market players lower their prices. Further, buffer stock of pulses with the government acts as deterrent against manipulative hoarding and unscrupulous speculations by market players. In case of onion, the buffer stock plays critical role in controlling the seasonal fluctuation in prices. The period between Rabi and Kharif onion harvests is associated with rise in prices due to the depletion in stored Rabi onions. Onions from the government buffer are released during this lean season in regulated and targeted manner to augment the market availability and stabilise the prices.

(c) & (d) : Bharat Atta and Bharat Rice were launched on 06.11.2023 and 06.02.2024, respectively to provide atta (wheat flour) and rice to general consumers at subsidized rates under Open Market Sales Scheme (Domestic) [OMSS (D)] policy. The objective of launching 'Bharat Atta' and 'Bharat Rice' is to make available atta (wheat flour) and rice to general consumers at an affordable rate. The scheme helps in increasing the availability of these commodities in the market to have a moderating influence on the market prices.
