

**Government of India
Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
Department of Consumer Affairs**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3177 (OIH)
TO BE ANSWERED ON 19.03.2025**

PRICES OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES

3177. DR. LATA WANKHEDE:
(OIH)

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

- (a) the steps taken by the Government to stabilize the prices of essential commodities and prevent hoarding;
- (b) the extent to which these efforts have directly benefited the general public;
- (c) whether it is a fact that 'One Nation, One Ration Card' scheme has proved to be a major achievement for migrant workers and the poor, making ration available to them easily anywhere;
- (d) the number of beneficiaries who have been benefited from this scheme so far; and
- (e) the steps being taken to make it more effective?

ANSWER

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

(a) & (b) : Department of Consumer Affairs monitors the daily retail and wholesale prices of selected essential food commodities, submitted by the 555 price monitoring centers 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. Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) reviews and deliberates, on regular basis, the situation of prices and price trends of essential agri-horticulture commodities and suggests measures to enhance availability through increased domestic production and through imports.

In order to tackle the volatility in prices, government maintains buffer stocks of pulses and onion for market interventions through calibrated and targeted release to moderate the prices in the market. Part of the stock of pulses from the buffer are converted to 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 had been released during September to December, 2024 in a calibrated and targeted manner to moderate prices in high price consuming centres at wholesale markets and through retail outlets. Onions from the buffer were distributed among retail consumers at Rs.35 per kg through stationary retail outlets and mobile vans in major consumption centres. The government is closely monitoring the prices of edible oils and takes necessary measures to make it affordable to the consumers.

To monitor the stock of pulses, the Department of Consumer Affairs advised State Governments to ensure disclosure of stocks by various entities like traders, dealers, importers, millers, stockists and big chain retailers under the Essential Commodities Act, 1995 through online stock disclosure portal. Powers to control hoarding under these Act have been delegated to States/ UTs. State/UT Governments are advised/sensitized from time to time to take appropriate action against hoarding and enforce the Act, effectively.

These measures have helped in making essential food commodities available to the general consumers at affordable prices and also in stabilising the prices. The overall food inflation rate had declined to 3.75% in February, 2025 from 10.87% in October, 2024.

(c) to (e) : The nation-wide portability of ration cards has been enabled in all 36 States/UTs under One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) feature, which ensures the food security of around 80 Crore National Food Security Act 2013 (NFSA) beneficiaries in the country. ONORC feature is proving to be very beneficial to the NFSA population who frequently change their place of dwelling in search of temporary employments, migrant labours, internally displaced persons (IDPs) etc. Under the feature, the NFSA beneficiaries are empowered to lift their entitled foodgrain from any Fair Price Shop (FPS) of their choice, anywhere in the country, by using their existing ration card with biometric authentication on an electronic Point of Sale (ePoS) device. The family back home can also lift the part of the PMGKAY foodgrains in the home State/UT on the same ration card. Since its inception, more than 168.5 crore portability transactions have been recorded under ONORC.
