

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

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.4526**  
**TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.08.2025**

**RIISING PRICES OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES**

4526. SHRI ZIA UR REHMAN:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware of key issues such as rising prices of essential commodities, misleading advertisements, increasing consumer complaints in e-commerce and foodgrain distribution gaps under Public Distribution System (PDS);
- (b) if so, the details of the steps being taken by the Government to strengthen consumer rights, improve grievance redressal mechanisms, ensure price stability, regulate online platforms and streamline schemes like One Nation One Ration Card and Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY); and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) to (c) : Government monitors daily prices of 38 essential food commodities submitted by the 566 price monitoring centres across the country and keeps a close watch on the price trends for taking necessary measures to stabilise prices. As per the data, prices of essential food commodities are stable and under control. Government has taken several steps to strengthen consumer protection and empowerment, ensure stability in prices and improve Public Distribution System (PDS).

The *Consumer Protection Act, 1986* has been replaced by the *Consumer Protection Act, 2019* to address challenges arising from globalization, new technologies, and e-commerce. The Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020 regulates e-commerce platforms and prohibit unfair trade practices. The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has issued guidelines to prevent misleading advertisements, dark patterns in e-commerce sector and unfair practices in the coaching sector. Toll-free National Consumer Helpline (NCH) No.1915 and the Integrated Grievance Redressal Mechanism (INGRAM) are operational in 17 languages to facilitate consumer grievance redressal. Under the “Convergence” programme, 1110 companies have partnered with NCH for direct resolution of consumer complaints. In a significant move to further enhance grievance redressal, NCH has introduced AI-based Speech Recognition, a translation system, and AI enabled Chatbot as part of NCH 2.0 initiative. These technology upgradations ensure that consumers from diverse linguistic backgrounds have equal access to the grievance redressal system.

The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 provides for redressal of the grievances of consumer through specialized three-tier quasi-judicial agencies, now commonly known as 'National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions (NCDRC)' at National level, 'State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (SCDRC)' at State level, and 'District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission(DCDRC)' at District level. The Act also provides for, inter-alia, simplification of the adjudication process in the Consumer Commissions; filing of a complaint by a consumer in the Consumer Commission having jurisdiction with respect to his place of work/residence irrespective of place of transaction and place of business or residence of the opposite parties, e-filing and e-payment, video conferencing for hearing, deemed admissibility of complaints if admissibility is not decided within 21 days of filing; court monitored mediation to facilitate early disposal of cases; provision of product liability. Provision for filing cases online through e-Daakhil has been introduced in NCDRC and Consumer Commissions of 35 States/UTs at the district and state level for speedy and hassle-free resolution of cases.

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 were converted to dals for retail sale to the consumers at affordable prices under the Bharat Dal brand during 2023-24 and 2024-25. 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 were distributed among retail consumers at Rs.35 per kg through stationary retail outlets and mobile vans in major consumption centres. These measures have helped in making essential food commodities available to the general consumers at affordable prices and helped in bring down the year-on-year food inflation rate to (-) 1.76% in July, 2025, lowest after January, 2019.

The Public Distribution System is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State/UT Governments. The Central Government is responsible for the procurement, allocation, and transportation of foodgrains up to the designated depots of the Food Corporation of India (FCI). As far as the operational responsibility is concerned, which includes allocation within the State/UT, identification of eligible families, issue of Ration Cards, Aadhaar Seeding in Ration Cards, distribution of foodgrains to eligible beneficiaries, and supervision of the functioning of Fair Price Shops, etc., rests with the concerned State/UT Governments. There is no gap noticed in PDS.

The nationwide portability of ration cards is popularly known as the One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) feature. Through this technology-driven reform, all PMGKAY beneficiaries are empowered to lift their entitled foodgrains 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. Currently, the ONORC feature is enabled in all 36 States/UTs, across the country, covering 100% PMGKAY beneficiaries.

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