

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION**  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**QUESTION NO 07.03.2011**  
**ANSWERED ON**  
**PRICE RISE OF ESSENTIAL FOOD ARTICLES .**

1105

Shri T.K. Rangarajan

Will the Minister of COALCONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :  
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- (a) whether it is a fact that prices of essential food articles have been on the rise continuously;
- (b) if so, the measures taken to control the situation;
- (c) whether Government considers the universalisation of PDS as a control measure; and
- (d) if so, details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

(PROF. K. V. THOMAS)

(a) & (b): Over the year, the retail prices of essential food articles in the case of pulses such as tur dal, moong dal, masoor dal, sugar, potato, onion are lower than last year however, that of rice, wheat, pulses such as gram dal and urad dal, edible oils such as mustard oil, groundnut oil and vanaspati increased as observed in 4 metros viz. Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai. Details at Annexure I.

The increase in prices of the rice and wheat can be attributed partly due to the increase in MSP. The rise in prices of gram dal and urad dal and edible oil has been due to the hardening of international prices and demand supply mismatch due to which import is resorted to.

Government has taken several fiscal and administrative measures to contain the food inflation as briefly listed in Annexure II.

(c) & (d): There have been demands for universalisation of Public Distribution System. However, Government is not considering to introduce Universal Public Distribution System as the focus on very poor will get diluted. It would require procurement of huge quantities of wheat and rice which would result in less availability of foodgrains in the open market. Or, if the same quantity of foodgrains is distributed equally among all, then the scale of issue will have to be reduced. Further, in order to manage the level of food subsidy, the issue prices of rice and wheat may have to be increased substantially from the present Central Issue Prices (CIPs) which have not been revised during the last eight to ten years.