

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2791
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.08.2025**

PRICES OF ESSENTIAL FOOD ITEMS

2791. SHRI KANWAR SINGH TANWAR:

(OIH) SMT. ROOPKUMARI CHOUDHARY:

SHRI CHINTAMANI MAHARAJ:

SHRI BIDYUT BARAN MAHATO:

SHRI DINESHBHAI MAKWANA:

SHRI VISHWESHWAR HEGDE KAGERI:

SHRI DILIP SAIKIA:

SHRI DHARAMBIR SINGH:

SHRI NABA CHARAN MAJHI:

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

- (a) whether the Government monitor price trends of essential commodities;
- (b) the reasons for the increase in prices of essential food items/commodities;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to control price rise of essential food items/commodities so far;
- (d) the increase in the number of commodities covered under the Price Monitoring System and the number of Price Reporting Centres in States/UTs during the last ten years;
- (e) the manner in which the increase in coverage of monitoring of prices assists in managing price volatility;
- (f) the date of establishment of the Price Stabilization Fund (PSF) and the manner in which the same has helped in stabilizing the prices of essential commodities like pulses and onion; and
- (g) the details of coordination with States to prevent hoarding and black-marketing?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c) : Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution monitors the daily prices of 38 food commodities submitted by the 566 price monitoring centres across the country. As per the data, prices of essential food commodities are stable and under control.

Prices of food commodities tend to be volatile as they are affected by factors such as seasonality in production, adverse weather conditions, supply chain disruptions, artificial shortages created by hoarding and black marketing, rise in international prices etc. Sometimes slight disruptions in the supply chain or crop damage due to adverse weather condition etc. lead to spike in the prices of agri-horticultural commodities. Conversely, bulk arrival and logistics problems have the potential of creating a situation of glut in the market and resultant dip in prices.

Government keeps a close watch on the production and availability of essential commodities through regular reviews by the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC). The Committee reviews, 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 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 (-) 1.06% in June, 2025 which is the lowest after January 2019.

(d) & (e) : In the past ten year, coverage of commodities under the price monitoring increased from 22 to 38 items and the number of price reporting centres increased from 100 to 566 across States and UTs. The expansion of the coverage of price monitoring both in the number of commodities covered and in the number of price reporting centres across States/UTs in the past ten years is given in the table below:

Year	No. of Price Reporting Centres	No. of Commodities
2016-17	100	22
2017-18	101	22
2018-19	109	22
2019-20	114	22
2020-21	135	22
2021-22	179	22
2022-23	483	22
2023-24	550	22
2024-25	555	38
2025-26	566	38

Expansion in the number of price reporting centres helped in tracking price trends effectively across the country with greater representativeness of the all-India average daily prices data. Expansion in the number of commodities covered ensured that prices of more food commodities in the household consumption basket are captured under the daily price monitoring. Further, a more inclusive and representative daily prices data provides crucial input for predicting retail inflation.

(f) : Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) scheme was set up in 2014-15 with the basic objective of protecting the consumers from extreme volatility in prices of agri-horticultural commodities and to make essential food commodities available at affordable prices. Under the PSF scheme, strategic buffer stock of pulses and onion are maintained for calibrated and targeted release to discourage hoarding, unscrupulous speculation and for supplies to consumers at affordable prices.

(g) : The Ministry regularly coordinates with State Governments to ensure effective implementation of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. States are empowered to take action against hoarding and black marketing under this Act. During times of supply chain disruptions or natural calamities, advisories are issued to State Governments to monitor stocks, enforce stock disclosure norms, and take appropriate action under the Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980. The Ministry also reviews the availability and price situation in coordination with States to take preventive and corrective actions, including imposing stock limits on selected commodities to prevent artificial scarcity and to protect consumer interests