

(b) Yes, Sir. High Level Committee chaired by Shri Shanta Kumar has recommended that open storage be gradually phased out. Foodgrains are stored in a scientific manner in the Cover and Plinth (CAP) which is a short-term arrangement for storage of foodgrains when the covered capacity is fully utilized. Covered storage is being progressively augmented with an objective to limit storage under CAP. However, FCI has decided to continue to use suitable CAP structures in such a manner that stock is lifted from there within 6-8 months.

Rise in prices of food items

2633. SHRI A.U. SINGH DEO:

SHRIMATI SASIKALA PUSHPA:

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

(a) whether prices of most food items have been inching up relentlessly throughout the past year despite several reforms in management of food supply chains, if so, the details of food items whose prices have increased and the reasons therefor;

(b) if not, the details of food items whose prices have dropped during the said period; and

(c) the steps undertaken by Government to curb increase in prices of basic food items like winter vegetables, onions and pulses like masoor, arhar, etc.?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAMVILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b) Based on the price details received from 68 centres across the country, over the past year (*i.e.* Jan. to Dec., 2014) the monthly average retail prices of rice, pulses (except gram dal), Vanaspati and vegetables like potato, tomato and onion showed a rise, while that of gram dal and edible oils (except Vanaspati) declined and prices of wheat and sugar remained stable as per details given in Statement-I (*See below*).

Prices of essential commodities are affected by several factors such as adverse weather conditions, rise in transportation costs, supply constraints and artificial shortages due to hoarding and black-marketing.

(c) The specific steps initiated by the Government to contain price rise of essential food items are given in Statement-II (*See below*).

Statement-I*All india monthly average retail prices (₹/Kg)*

Commodity	Jan. 2014	Apr. 2014	July 2014	Dec. 2014	Variation (in ₹) Dec. 14 Over Jan. 2014
Rice	27	27	28	28	1
Wheat	22	21	21	22	0
Gram dal	50	49	46	45	-5
Arhar dal	70	70	70	76	6
Moong dal	79	88	87	96	17
Masur dal	59	63	66	72	13
Urad dal	64	67	73	76	12
Potato	18	18	24	24	6
Onion	22	17	28	25	3
Tomato	20	17	35	23	3
Sugar	35	36	36	35	0
Vanaspati (packed)	75	77	77	76	1
Groundnut oil (packed)	122	122	122	118	-4
Palm oil (packed)	71	72	71	66	- 5
Mustard & rapeseed oil (packed)	99	98	97	98	-1
Soyabean oil (packed)	85	85	84	83	-2
Sunflower oil (packed)	97	96	96	94	-3

Source: State Civil Supplies Depts.

Statement-II

*Specific steps taken by the Government to improve the availability
and to contain prices of essential food items:*

- Minimum Export Price (MEP) fixed for potatoes at USD 450 per M.T. *w.e.f.* 26.06.2014 (now withdrawn with improved availability and fall in prices *w.e.f.* 20.2.2015) and of onions at USD 300 per M.T. *w.e.f.* 21.08.2014 respectively.
- States have been advised to allow free movement of fruits and vegetables by delisting them from the APMC Act.
- A Plan Scheme titled Price Stabilization Fund (PSF) with a corpus of ₹ 500 crores has been approved for implementation aimed at regulating price volatility of agricultural and horticultural commodities both when there is price rise or *vice-versa* through procurement of farm produce, maintenance of buffer stocks and regulated release into the market. Initially the support is for procurement of onion and potato only.
- States have been advised to exempt levy of market fee on fruits and vegetables and to allow establishment of “Kisan Mandis”/Farmers markets where producers and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) can directly market their produce to wholesalers, organized retailers and ordinary consumers. Such alternative marketing channels promoted to reduce intermediaries and to contain marketing costs, are intended to benefit both farmers and consumers.
- Government is also encouraging production of horticultural crops through a Centrally Sponsored scheme, namely Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture *w.e.f.* 2014-15.
- Authorized States/UTs to impose stock limits in respect of onion and potato for a period of one year with effect from 3rd July, 2014 under the Essential Commodities Act.
- Government has approved the release of additional five million tonnes of rice to BPL and APL families in States pending implementation of National Food Security Act (NFSA).
- Advisory to State Governments issued to take action against hoarding and black marketing and effectively enforce the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and the Prevention of Black-marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980.

- Authorized States/UTs to impose stock limits from time to time in the case of select essential commodities such as pulses, edible oil, and edible oilseeds for a period up to 30.9.2015.
- Based on interaction with the State Governments/UTs on 4th July, 2014, a decision has been taken to amend the Essential Commodities Act to make hoarding and black marketing a non bailable offence and increase the period of detention to one year from existing six months.
- The Government has approved for the current year *i.e.* 2014-15 Open Market Sale of ten million tonnes of wheat in the domestic market.

Implementation of NFSA

2634. SHRI P. BHATTACHARYA:

SHRIMATI RAJANI PATIL:

SHRI K.C. TYAGI:

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:

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

(a) whether any apprehensions have been raised about the successful implementation of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) in view of the present level of agricultural productivity/production and procurement of foodgrains;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of Government thereto along with the remedial steps taken in this regard; and

(c) whether Government has received any suggestions to follow the pattern of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme for deciding the entitlements under NFSA?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAMVILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b) Various aspects of the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA), including requirement of foodgrains/funds for implementation of the Act have been discussed in different forums and suggestions have been made. However, at the current levels of production and procurement of foodgrains, the requirements under NFSA are likely to be met adequately.

(c) The entitlements under NFSA are different from the entitlements under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. The coverage and entitlements prescribed in the NFSA are keeping in view the recent trends in production and procurement of foodgrains.