

of such options, which has also been discussed in various forums. Its implementation however depends upon readiness of States/Union Territories in terms of digitization and de-duplication of beneficiaries database, seeded with available Aadhaar and bank accounts numbers, and it can be taken up on specific request from States/UTs. For a pilot scheme, interest has been shown by UT of Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Puducherry and they are making necessary preparations. No assessment of the impact of the scheme is available.

#### **Rise in prices of pulses**

581. SHRI RAM KUMAR KASHYAP: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether prices of pulses have risen by up to 64 per cent in last one year, if so, whether Government has ascertained reasons for the same, the details thereof;

(b) the details of measures taken to rein in the prices to keep inflation down amid forecast of deficit monsoon;

(c) whether Government has maintained data as to how much the price of a particular pulse has increased during last one year, if so, the details thereof, pulse-wise; and

(d) the prevailing wholesale price of M-31 sugar in open market together with price of said sugar prevailed in market during January-June, 2015?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAMVILAS PASWAN): (a) Over the last one year, the increase in retail prices of major pulses have ranged between 12.63% to 40.73%. The main reason for the sharp increase in prices of pulses is a decline in production on account of adverse weather conditions.

(b) The requisite details are given in Statement-I (*See below*).

(c) Yes, Sir. The requisite details are given in Statement-II (*See below*).

(d) As reported by the Varanasi Center, the prevailing wholesale and retail prices of M31 sugar are ₹ 2800 per quintal and ₹ 30/- per kg respectively. The corresponding prices during January to June, 2015 was as given below:—

*Monthly Average Prices of M31 Sugar*

Month	Wholesale (₹/qtl.)	Retail (₹/kg.)
January	3500	38
February	3500	38

Month	Wholesale (₹/qtl.)	Retail (₹/kg.)
March	3500	38
April	3500	38
May	3500	38
June	3147.62	34

***Statement-I***

*Steps taken by the Government to improve the availability and to contain prices of essential food items*

- Minimum Export Price (MEP) for onion has been raised from USD 250 per M.T to USD 425 per MT *w.e.f.* 26.6.2015.
- The stock limits in respect of onion has extended by one more year *i.e.* up to 2nd July, 2016 under the Essential Commodities Act.
- Export of all pulses is banned.
- Export of all pulses banned except kabuli channa and up to 10,000 MTs in organic pulses and lentils. Zero import duty on pulses has been extended till 30th September, 2015.
- Export of edible oils in bulk is prohibited except coconut oil and other edible oil in branded consumer packs of up to 5 kgs. is permitted with a minimum export price of USD 900 per MT *w.e.f.* 6.2.2015.
- States have been advised to allow free movement of fruits and vegetables by delisting them from the APMC Act.
- A new Plan Scheme titled Price Stabilization Fund (PSF) with a corpus of ₹ 500 crores approved aimed at regulating price volatility of agricultural and horticultural commodities. Under the scheme a decision has been taken to augment the domestic supply of pulses by importing 5000 MT of Arhar.
- 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.
- 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.
- Advisory to State Governments issued to take strict 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.

- Rice and wheat is being released into the open market from the central pool stock over and above the buffer norm. The joint action plan following the consultation meeting held on 7th July, 2015 with States/UTs *inter-alia* agreed to identify vulnerable areas where supply shortages occur and ensure that stock out situation do not occur for items of common consumption and also review of APMC Act with reference to onion, potatoes and tomatoes to remove inter-State barriers to internal trade.
- The joint action plan following the consultation meeting held on 7th July, 2015 with States/UTs *inter-alia* agreed to identify vulnerable areas where supply shortages occur and ensure that stock out situation do not occur for items of common consumption and also review of APMC Act with reference to onion, potatoes and tomatoes to remove inter-State barriers to internal trade.

#### Statement-II

*All-India daily average retail prices of 5 major pulses (₹/kg.)*

Major Pulses	20.07.2015 (Latest)	18.07.2014 (1 year ago)	% Variation over 1 Year
Moong dal	98.47	87.43	12.63
Urad dal	99.03	73.69	34.39
Arhar dal	99.31	70.57	40.73
Masoor dal	82.53	67.16	22.89
Chana dal	60.29	46.19	30.53

Source: States/UTs Civil Supplies Deptts.

#### Consumer awareness programmes

582. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- the details of consumer awareness programmes sanctioned by and pending with the Central Government during the last five years, across the country, State-wise;
- the funds provided for the said programmes during the last five years, State-wise;
- whether Government has achieved the desired results; and