

Control of prices of food items

1055. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has been taking steps to control the prices of food items in the country and is making them available to the States, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether in spite of the Centre's initiation, some States are not coming forward to draw their share of food items from the Central Government, if so, the reasons therefor and the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to control the hoardings by traders which is the main cause of increase of prices of food items?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAMVILAS PASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir. The requisite details are given in the Statement (*See* below).

(b) Certain States/UTs have not been able to lift their full quota of foodgrains allocated under TPDS/NFSA and Other Welfare Schemes. Following are some of the reasons for the low offtake of foodgrains by the States/UTs:

- (i) Inability of State/UT Governments or their agencies to mobilise funds;
- (iii) Shortage of sufficient intermediate storage capacity with the State Governments to store the foodgrains after lifting the same from FCI;
- (iv) Lower demand from beneficiaries in view of higher production and retention of foodgrains; and

(d) Shifting in food consumption pattern due to increase in per capita income.

(c) The steps being taken by Government to control the hoardings by traders include extension of stock limit on select essential food items like pulses, Onions, edible oils, oilseeds, etc. and issuing advisories to States for strict enforcement of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and the Prevention of Black-marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980. Further, domestic searches and surveys have been conducted on a number of importers, traders and financiers engaged in pulses trade. A Group of Officers has also been set up for regular monitoring and exchange of information on hoarding, cartelization etc. to facilitate coordinated action.

Statement

Details of steps taken by the Government to improve the availability and to contain prices of essential food items

General Measure:

1. National Consultation Meeting of the Minister of States/UTs in-charge of Consumer Affairs and Food held on 7th July, 2015 at New Delhi resolved to take steps to keep prices of essential commodities, especially Pulses and onion under control.
2. Advisory were issued to State Governments 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.
3. Regular review meeting on price and availability situation is being held at the highest level including at the level of Finance Minister, Committee of Secretaries, Inter Ministerial Committee, Price Stabilization Fund Management Committee and other Departmental level review meetings.
4. Higher MSP has been announced so as to incentivize production and thereby enhance availability of food items which may help moderate prices.
5. A new Plan Scheme titled Price Stabilization Fund (PSF) is being implemented to regulate price volatility of agricultural commodities.

Specific Measures:**Onion**

6. Export of onion were restricted through imposition of Minimum Export Price (MEP) when prices were ruling high and import is allowed at zero duty.
7. Retail sale of onion was undertaken from the stock held by SFAC and NAFED.
8. Imported 2000 MT of onion from Egypt and China through MMTC. As no demands from state were received, the onion were disposed off through tender in the open market.
9. The stock limits in respect of onion have been extended by one more year *i.e.* up to 2nd July 2016 under the Essential Commodities Act.
10. Procurement of 15000 MT of onion by SFAC and NAFED for market intervention during lean period has been approved.

Pulses

11. Export of all pulses is banned except kabuli channa and up to 10,000 MTs in organic pulses and lentils.
12. Import of pulses are allowed at zero import duty.
13. Stock limit on pulses extended till 30.9.2016.
14. Government of India Imported 5000 MT of Tur from Malawi/Mozambique and allocated it to States with a subsidy of ₹ 10 per Kg for retail sale to consumers to improve availability and to help moderate prices.
15. MSP (including bonus) raised for kharif pulses for Tur and Urad and Moong. MSP also raised for rabi pulses for Gram and Masoor.
16. Government has approved creation of buffer stock of 1.5 lakh MT of pulses for effective market intervention, and it may be augmented by import of 20,000 MT of Tur and 5,000 MT of Urad

Edible Oils

17. Export of edible oils in bulk is prohibited except coconut oil and other edible oils in branded consumer packs of up to 5 kgs is permitted with a minimum export price of USD 900 per MT.
18. MSP increased for various rabi and kharif oil seeds.

Storage capacity of foodgrains in the country

1056. SHRI MANSUKH L. MANDAVIYA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of storage capacity available *vis-a-vis* required for various foodgrains in the country, State-wise, foodgrain-wise, as on date;

(b) the storage capacity added for various foodgrains during the last five years *vis-a-vis* the targets set for the purpose, year-wise;

(c) the quantum of foodgrains along with their monetary value that got wasted due to non-availability of storage facilities during the last three years; and

(d) whether Government has chalked out a comprehensive strategy to enhance storage capacity of various foodgrains in the country, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?