

Monitoring of prices of essential commodities

*72. SHRI A. MOHAMMEDJAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government is keeping a close watch on the prices of all essential commodities;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether it is also a fact that Government would take action at appropriate time when the prices of essential items go up?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) The Price Monitoring Division (PMD) in the Department monitors retail and wholesale prices of 22 essential food commodities from 114 price reporting centres across the country. The items covered include rice, wheat, atta, gram dal, arhar dal, moong dal, urad dal, masoor dal, tea, sugar, salt, vanaspati, groundnut oil, mustard oil, milk, soya oil, palm oil, sunflower oil, gur, potato, onion and tomato. Based on the information provided by the reporting centres, prices of these items are brought out daily by the PMD. These commodity prices are available on the website of the Department which is updated daily.

These prices and availability situation of essential commodities is regularly reviewed at the highest level including at the level of Ministers, Committee of Secretaries, Inter Ministerial Committee, Price Stabilization Fund Management Committee and other Departmental level review meetings. Based on the deliberations, Government takes various measures from time to time to stabilize prices of essential food items which, inter-alia, include appropriately utilizing trade and fiscal policy instruments like import duty, Minimum Export Price, export restrictions, imposition of stock limits and advising States for effective action against hoarders & black marketers etc. to regulate domestic availability and moderate prices. Besides, Government also utilises the buffer agricultural commodities like pulses, onion, etc. built under Price Stabilization Fund (PSF) to help moderate the volatility in prices.

SHRI A. MOHAMMEDJAN: Sir, market intervention by the Government is always required, but we should see to it that it is not harmed in any way. For example, the Government purchased 14,000 tonnes of onion recently from abroad when domestic prices skyrocketed. But the reality was that no State was willing to lift the imported onion.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please be brief. Time is almost over.

SHRI A. MOHAMMEDJAN: Due to this, several tonnes of onion rotted and a lot more are lying at ports.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please be brief.

SHRI A. MOHAMMEDJAN: Therefore, is the Government considering factoring in this aspect in future before ordering any item for the purpose of market intervention?

श्री रामविलास पासवान: माननीय उपसभापति जी, हमारे सामने दिक्कत यह है कि जब प्याज का दाम बढ़ने लगता है कि तो उस पर हल्ला होता है। कल दूसरे सदन में माननीय सदस्यों ने कहा कि नासिक में प्याज 4 रुपये, 5 रुपये किलो बिक रहा है। जब दाम बढ़ने लगे तो हम बहुत इम्पोर्ट करना चाहते थे, लेकिन यह संयोग से बाहर भी नहीं था तो भी हम लोगों ने इम्पोर्ट किया। बड़ी मात्रा में यहाँ प्याज पहुँच चुका है, लेकिन दिक्कत इस बात की है कि सपोज़ वह प्याज हमने 4 हजार टन निर्यात किया, इस पर स्टेट्स से जो बातचीत हुई तो स्टेट्स कुल मिलाकर 16 सौ टन प्याज लेने के लिए तैयार हुई हैं। एक तरफ डर लगता है कि प्याज नहीं है तो मार्केट में हल्ला होता है और यदि प्याज एक्स्ट्रा हो जाए तो यह कोई गेहूँ या चावल तो है नहीं कि उसे ज्यादा दिन तक स्टोर में या गोदामों में रखा जा सके, इसके सड़ने का डर भी रहता है। हमारे यहाँ प्याज की कमी नहीं है। जब समय आता है तो हम एक्सपोर्ट बैं कर देते हैं। जब किसान को दाम कम मिलने लगता है, तो फिर हम उसको वापस भी लेते हैं। इस तरह से यह हमारा विकेट और रन का मामला चलता रहता है।

SHRI A. MOHAMMEDJAN: Sir, ...*(Interruptions)*...

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Gauge conversion at Nirmali-Sarayagarh rail line

†*71. SHRI RAM NATH THAKUR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.