

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1634
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.08.2024

PRICE RISE OF ESSENTIAL FOOD ITEMS

1634. SHRI RAGHAV CHADHA

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

- (a) whether the prices of essential food items have increased during the last five years and the current year;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, food item-wise along with the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the role of hoarders/black-marketeers behind the increase in the price of essential food items has come to the notice of Government during the said period;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the remedial measures taken/being taken by Government to stabilise/reduce the prices of essential food items to protect the interests of the common people?

ANSWER

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

(a) & (b) : The details prices of essential food commodities being monitored by Department of Consumer Affairs as on 31.07.2024 and corresponding prices last year and last five year are given at **Annexure**. Prices of food commodities also increase with the increase in input costs, processing and distribution cost etc. Further, prices of agri-horticultural commodities tend to be volatile as they are affected by several factors, such as seasonality in production, adverse weather conditions, crop damage due to adverse weather condition etc.

(c) & (d) : In order to prevent hoarding and unscrupulous speculation, Government of India has imposed stock limits on Tur and Chana until 30th September, 2024 and also stock limits on Wheat till 31st March, 2025. Stock limits are imposed to ensure continuous release of the commodities in the market which is necessary for stability in prices.

(e) : Government took, from time to time, various measures to contain food prices. To protect consumers from excessive price volatility in agri-horticultural commodities, the Government introduced the Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) scheme in 2014-15. Under PSF, buffer stock of major pulses and onion have been maintained for market interventions and also to discourage hoarding and unscrupulous speculation. Stocks from the buffer are released in calibrated manner to augment availability in the market and stabilise prices.

To make the dals available to consumers at affordable prices, Bharat Dal was launched in July, 2023 by converting the Chana stock with the Government into Chana Dal for retail disposal. The Bharat Dal is made available to the consumers at subsidized rates of Rs.60 per kg for 1 kg pack and Rs.55 per kg for 30 kg pack. Similarly, Moong Dal and Moong Sabut are being sold at subsidized prices of Rs.107 per kg and Rs.93 per kg respectively, to the consumers, under the Bharat Dal Brand. The Bharat Dals are distributed through NCCF, NAFED, Kendriya Bhandar and state government-controlled cooperatives.

In order to make tomatoes available at affordable prices, NCCF started retail sale of tomatoes to the consumers at Rs.60 per kg from 29th July, 2024, that significantly has cooled down the price.

In order to augment domestic availability of pulses, import of Tur and Urad under 'Free' category has been allowed till 31st March 2025 and the import duty on Masur has been reduced to zero till 31st March, 2025. Import of Yellow Peas under 'Free' category with zero import duty has been allowed from 8th December, 2023 till 31st October 2024. Further, the import of desi Chana at zero duty has been allowed from 4th May, 2024 till 31st March, 2025. All the above steps have been taken to augment supply of pulses.

Government maintains onion buffer under the PSF for calibrated release during the lean availability months and check the volatility in prices. The onion buffer size has been increased year after year from 1.00 LMT in 2020-21 to 2.50 LMT in 2022-23 and further to 5.00 LMT in 2024-25. The onions from the buffer are released through retail sales, e-Nam auction and bulk sales in wholesale markets to augment the availability. Further, to ensure availability of onions at affordable prices to domestic consumers, the Government imposed restrictions on onion exports from August, 2023 through measures such as imposition of export duty, minimum export price (MEP) and export prohibition. From 4th May, 2024, onion export had been allowed with 40% duty and MEP of USD 550 per MT to maintain domestic availability of onion at affordable prices to consumers.

Price control measures taken by Government together with robust progress in sown area under kharif pulses this year (2024-25) have stabilised the market and the prices of Chana, Tur and Urad in major mandis have declined in past one month. The declining trend in mandi prices are now reflected in retail prices in recent weeks as the all-India average retail prices of pulses have either declined or stabilized in recent weeks

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) & (b) OF RAJYA SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1634 FOR 06.08.2024 REGARDING PRICE RISE OF ESSENTIAL FOOD ITEMS BY SHRI RAGHAV CHADHA.

All-India Average Retail Prices of 22 Essential Food Commodities

	Retail Prices (Rs./kg)			Percentage variation over	
	Price as on 31.07.2024	1 Year back (31.07.2023)	5 Years back (31.07.2019)	Last year	Last 5 years
Grains					
Rice	43.93	40.96	31.46	7.25	39.64
Wheat	31.08	29.6	24.36	5.00	27.59
Atta (Wheat)	35.81	34.83	26.34	2.81	35.95
Pulses					
Gram Dal	88.63	75.22	65.62	17.83	35.07
Tur/Arhar Dal	167.42	135.74	84.22	23.34	98.79
Urad Dal	126.63	114.26	74.37	10.83	70.27
Moong Dal	117.62	110.97	81.19	5.99	44.87
Masoor Dal	91.77	91.92	62.98	-0.16	45.71
Oils					
Groundnut Oil (Packed)	187.11	190.75	123.47	-1.91	51.54
Mustard Oil (Packed)	140.42	140	105.72	0.30	32.82
Vanaspati (Packed)	124.78	129.9	78.91	-3.94	58.13
Soya Oil (Packed)	121.49	130.12	91.21	-6.63	33.20
Sunflower Oil (Packed)	121.3	129.44	94.68	-6.29	28.12
Palm Oil (Packed)	99.26	103.87	72.7	-4.44	36.53
Vegetables					
Potato	37.96	24.13	18.73	57.31	102.67
Onion	43.58	27.27	21.83	59.81	99.63
Tomato	61.74	130.2	42.96	-52.58	43.72
Others					
Sugar	44.85	43.07	38.64	4.13	16.07
Gur	54.94	51.78	43.89	6.10	25.18
Milk	59.24	57.88	43.67	2.35	35.65
Tea Loose	273.03	277.65	212.3	-1.66	28.61
Salt Pack (Iodised)	22.37	21.98	15.59	1.77	43.49
