

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1736
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29TH JULY, 2026

SUSPENSION OF FORTIFIED RICE DISTRIBUTION

1736 DR. RAJ KUMAR CHABBEWAL:

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

- (a) whether the Government has temporarily discontinued the universal distribution of fortified rice under welfare schemes and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the reasons for the said decision including technical, financial and administrative considerations for the same;
- (c) whether any scientific or expert committee has been constituted to examine alternative methods of addressing micronutrient deficiencies and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the details of the quantity of fortified rice presently lying in Government godowns and the action proposed for its utilisation or disposal; and
- (e) whether the Government proposes to review the policy on fortified rice distribution and if so, the details thereof along with the timeline therefor?

A N S W E R
MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS,
FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRIMATI NIMUBEN JAYANTIBHAI BAMBHANIYA)

(a) to (b): The Government has decided to temporarily discontinue the universal supply of fortified rice under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojna (PMGKAY) and Other Welfare Scheme (OWS) of the Government of India, until a more effective mechanism for delivery of nutrients to beneficiaries is identified.

This decision was necessitated by several factors, including concerns regarding the stability and shelf life of fortified rice under actual storage conditions. In 2023, a study was commissioned to the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur to assess the shelf life of Fortified Rice (FR) and Fortified Rice Kernels (FRK). The study concluded that parameters such as moisture content, storage conditions, temperature, relative humidity, and packaging material significantly influence the stability and shelf life of both FR and FRK.

The findings indicate that fortified rice is susceptible to micronutrient degradation and reduced shelf life during prolonged storage and routine handling. This degradation shortens the effective shelf life beyond initial expectations, thereby limiting the intended nutritional benefits. Given current procurement volumes and annual offtake patterns, rice stocks often remain in buffer storage for over two years, exacerbating these challenges.

(c): The Department of Food & Public Distribution has not constituted a scientific or expert committee to examine alternative methods of addressing micronutrient deficiencies.

However, the Government of India is emphasising enhancing the food basket by providing options such as Shree Anna or Millets through PDS, as millets are known to have very high nutrient contents.

(d) and (e): The quantity of fortified rice lying with central pool stock as on 01.07.2026 is 321.11 LMT. Pending receipts, if any, from KMS 2024-25 and receivables from KMS 2025-26 will also form part of the central pool. The policy of distribution of fortified rice under PMGKY and OWS continues until existing stocks are exhausted.
