

Government of India
Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
Department of Consumer Affairs

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 592
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22.07.2026

IRREGULARITIES IN ONION PROCUREMENT IN MAHARASHTRA

592. DR. BACHHAV SHOBHA DINESH:

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

- (a) the details of the major irregularities flagged during the last two years so far by the Economic Offences Wing, State vigilance inspections and internal audits regarding onion procurement in Maharashtra along with the estimated financial value thereof;
- (b) whether any officials of National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) or National Cooperative Consumers Federation of India (NCCF) have been identified as complicit in these irregularities and if so, the details of action taken against them;
- (c) whether ineligible cooperatives were empanelled as procurement centres in Maharashtra despite objections being raised and if so, the number of such cooperatives and reasons therefor;
- (d) whether stock discrepancies between portal records and physical inventory at NAFED/NCCF procurement centres in Maharashtra have been verified and if so, the details of outcome thereof; and
- (e) whether the Government proposes a unified NAFED-NCCF digital portal with real-time stock and payment reconciliation to prevent such mismatches and if so, the timeline for the same?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (e) : Government maintains onion buffer under the Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) by procuring through National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED) and National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India Ltd. (NCCF) for regulated release during high price months to make onions available to consumers at affordable prices. During 2025-26 a total quantity of 2.87 lakh tonnes of onions were procured, and a procurement target of 2 lakh tonnes has been fixed for 2026-27. Store-worthy onions of rabi harvest are procured by NAFED and NCCF through local agencies such as registered Cooperative Societies, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and Farmer Producer Companies, selected through transparent competitive bidding.

In order to ensure that onion procurement benefits the farmers, the verification of farmer's details are done through Mahabhumi portal of Government of Maharashtra and payments are made directly on the Aadhaar seeded bank account of the farmer. Intensive monitoring of the quantity and quality of procured onions through series of field visits by officers of Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution have been conducted to verify the reports uploaded on the digital portal by local agencies.

In the disposal of procured and stored onions, bulk transportation by railway rakes was adopted, for the first time, in 2024-25 with 14 rakes carrying about 12,000 MT. In 2025-26, the railway mode of transportation for onion dispatch was scaled up to 86 rakes carrying about 86,000 MT to 16 major consumption centres for disposal. Bulk transportation of onions by railway rakes is a major operational improvement towards cost effective transportation and impactful intervention in the destination markets. Through continuous policy and operational improvements have resulted in higher recovery rate of Grade-A onions from 63% in 2024-25 to 72% in 2025-26.

In order to further improve the onion buffer operation in current year (2026-27), the Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) has been assigned the responsibility of handling the storage of procured onions. The involvement of CWC, a reputed and professional storage organisation, in onion storage is to separate the roles of procurement and storage and also to bring about transformation in onion storage ecosystem.

Payments to farmers for their stocks procured through both NAFED and NCCF are unified through the SBI DigiGov portal which is integrated with the Public Finance Management System (PFMS).
