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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2893
TO BE ANSWERED ON 05.08.2026

FOOD INFLATION VARIATION

2893. SHRI P V MIDHUN REDDY:

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

(a) whether the Government is aware that food inflation as tracked by the Consumer Food Price Index surged to 8.4 per cent during April-December, 2024, before moderating sharply to 2.69 per cent in March, 2025 and 3.87 per cent in March, 2026 and that this high degree of volatility imposes severe burdens on low-income households;

(b) if so, the details of institutional mechanisms under the Ministry including the Price Stabilisation Fund, buffer stock releases, restrictions on exports of essential commodities etc. were activated during the period April-December, 2024 and the quantum and timing of each intervention;

(c) the present price monitoring architecture under the Department of Consumer Affairs' Price Monitoring Cell including the number of commodities tracked daily, the number of market centres covered; and

(d) whether real-time price data is accessible to State Governments for timely intervention and if so, the details thereof?

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

(a) to (d): Prices of agri food commodities tend to be volatile as they are affected by factors, such as mismatch in demand and supply, seasonality, supply chain constraints, artificial shortage created by hoarding and black marketing, rise in international prices etc. Sometimes disruptions in supply chain or crop damage may also occurs due to heavy rains, leading to spike in prices of agri-horticultural commodities.

Government keeps a close watch on the production and availability of essential commodities through regular reviews by the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC). The Committee reviews, on regular basis, the scenario and the indicative trends in prices of essential agri-horticultural commodities and suggests measures to enhance availability through increased domestic production and rationalisation in export-import policies. On the recommendation of IMC, during April – December, 2024 the government rationalized onion export policy by allowing the export of onion with Minimum Export Price (MEP) of USD 550 per MT and export duty of 40% w.e.f 4th May, 2024 in order to protect domestic supply. As onion sowing improved in Kharif 2024-25 and stability in prices improved, government withdrew the MEP and reduced export duty to 20% w.e.f 13th September, 2024.

Government maintains buffer stock of pulses and onion under Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) to tackle extreme price volatility and to ensure availability of these essential food commodities to consumers at affordable prices. At present, government holds 42.40 lakh tonnes of pulses which includes 14.79 lakh tonnes are held under the PSF buffer and 27.61 lakh tonnes under the Price Support Scheme (PSS). Pulses from the buffer are released in a regulated manner to augment the availability and cool down the market prices. Market interventions through buffer stock also help in nudging the market players lower their prices. Buffer stock of pulses also acts as deterrent against manipulative hoarding and unscrupulous speculations by market players. During 2025-26, a total of 4.04 lakh tonnes of pulses were released from the PSF buffer through open market sale. In addition, pulses were also supplied to States/UTs for their welfare schemes on continuous basis, as per demand and availability. In case of onion, a total of 2.87 lakh tonnes of Rabi-2025 harvest were procured during 2025-26. The buffer stock of onion plays critical role in controlling the seasonal fluctuation in prices during the period between Rabi and Kharif onion harvests when prices tend to rise due to the depletion in stored Rabi onions.

Price Monitoring Cell of the Department of Consumer Affairs monitors the daily prices of 41 food commodities submitted by the 579 price monitoring centres across the country. Daily prices are accessible, on real time basis, to the State Government and the public through the link: https://fcainfoweb.nic.in/reports/report_menu_web.aspx.

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