



States/UTs Food Secretaries Conference reviews various issues pertaining to Department of Food and Public Distribution

New Storage Policy envisages 131 LMT additional storage capacity

States advised to complete Vehicle Location Tracking System (VLTS) implementation by December 2026

e-KYC coverage reaches 90.64% as on 30 July 2026

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The Secretary, Department of Food & Public Distribution (DFPD), Government of India, Shri Sanjeev Chopra chaired a meeting of State Food Secretaries on 1 September 2026 in New Delhi to review key issues relating to procurement, public distribution and storage of foodgrains. Food Secretaries of various States/UTs and officers of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) attended the meeting.

Paddy Procurement and Improved Rice

Following deliberations with States/UTs, the paddy procurement estimates for the ensuing Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2026–27 was fixed at 708.64 LMT in terms of paddy.

The implementation of **Improved Rice under PMGKAY** and other welfare schemes was also reviewed. Under the approved policy, raw rice procured will contain up to 10% broken grains, replacing the existing specification of 25%. For parboiled rice, the limit will be 5% broken grains, replacing the existing specification of 16%.

Procurement of Improved Rice will commence from KMS 2026–27 and will be progressively expanded across procuring States. States were requested to assess milling capacity, plan necessary upgradation and prepare a phased roadmap for implementation.

A quantity of 18.85 LMT of coarse grains has been estimated for procurement by States during KMS 2026–27 (Kharif).

Coarse Grains, Millets and Procurement Technology

The procurement and distribution plans for coarse grains, millets and minor millets were reviewed. The Conference was informed that 16.38 LMT of coarse grains and millets were procured during 2025–26, the highest procurement recorded during the last five years.

Progress under the **Procurement Centre Smart-Assessment Portal (PCSAP)** was reviewed, including the introduction of AI-based image validation from KMS 2026–27.

The Conference also reviewed the progress of Joint Physical Verification (JPV). The proposed online physical verification of paddy at the end of the procurement season, starting from KMS 2026–27, was discussed with the States.

Successful initiatives and best practices of States were also recognised:

- Andhra Pradesh – Best Implementation of the Improved Rice Scheme
- Punjab – Best Performance in JPV and PCSAP
- Karnataka – Excellence in Procurement of Shree Anna
- Chhattisgarh – First State to implement AgriStack in paddy procurement

Storage Capacity and Depot Darpan

The Conference reviewed the **New Storage Policy**, which seeks to address the growing mismatch between procurement and offtake, regional imbalances and under-utilisation of storage capacity.

The Policy envisages creation of 131 LMT additional storage capacity, including 111 LMT by States and 20 LMT by FCI. Identified States were requested to submit time-bound action plans.

States were also advised to onboard their foodgrain storage facilities on the Depot Darpan Portal, a self-assessment tool for warehouses, undertake assessments within defined timelines and avail training and handholding support from CWC, FCI and DFPD.

Technology-enabled Foodgrain Movement

The implementation of the **Vehicle Location Tracking System (VLTS)** for GPS-based real-time tracking of vehicles transporting foodgrains under the PDS supply chain was reviewed.

States were advised to complete implementation by December 2026, with identified States targeted for completion by September 2026.

The **Procurement Optimisation Tool**, supporting both KMS and RMS, was also reviewed. The tool has been security-audited and installed in Punjab and Haryana. Remaining States were requested to prepare and update Procurement Centre, Mill and Warehouse data in the system by 15 September 2026.

The Conference further reviewed the integration of Anna Chakra with State SCMS and VLTS to eliminate manual intervention in data exchange. Integration has been completed for six States. Remaining States were advised to complete integration in a phased manner by September and December 2026 and ensure verification and updation of FPS, warehouse and commodity master data.

PDS Reforms and Technology-enabled Services

The Conference reviewed key initiatives relating to PDS reforms and technology-enabled service delivery, including onboarding and the way forward under **SMART-PDS, SARTHAK-PDS, e-KYC and mobile number seeding, as well as the Mera Ration and Anna Mitra** mobile applications.

Discussions also covered rationalisation of Fair Price Shops, CBDC, identification of silent and duplicate beneficiaries, grievance redressal, intra-State movement and FPS dealer margins, and strengthening of vigilance mechanisms.

Digital Rupee-based DBT for FPS Dealer Margins

The Digital Rupee (₹)-based Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) pilot for FPS dealer margins, already inaugurated in Gujarat, Puducherry, and Chandigarh & Dadra Nagar Haveli, will be extended to the entire Delhi State and two districts each in six more States — Andhra Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

A review workshop is scheduled at Gandhinagar, Gujarat, on 11 September 2026.

SARTHAK-PDS and Fair Price Shops

SARTHAK-PDS, the umbrella scheme for 2026–31 integrating assistance to States for intra-State movement of foodgrains and FPS dealer margins with the SMART-PDS technology layer, has seen 100% of Mother Sanction issued to States/UTs for FY 2026–27.

e-KYC and Ration Card Data

e-KYC stood at 90.64% as of 30 July 2026. A new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for e-KYC-based data replication and mobile-number seeding through ePOS was rolled out. The Department reiterated that this will facilitate easier delivery of foodgrains to beneficiaries.

New SOPs for silent ration cards and duplicate beneficiaries, issued under the amended TPDS (Control) Order, 2015, provide for temporary disablement followed by a three-month e-KYC revalidation window. The functionality will go live in SMART-PDS from 1 October 2026.

Strengthening Vigilance Mechanisms

States/UTs were advised to ensure timely constitution and regular functioning of Vigilance Committees and submit prescribed status reports in accordance with Section 29 of the NFSA, 2013.

States/UTs were also directed to operationalise Aadhaar-based authentication of foodgrain receipt at the Fair Price Shop level by Vigilance Committees and submit rollout compliance reports within four weeks.



RT/RP/ARC

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