

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4515
ANSWERED ON:07.12.2010
MOVEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES
Ram Shri Purnmasi

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

- (a) whether the Government has removed restrictions on the movement and fixed the stock limit for foodgrains and other agricultural commodities;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of the steps taken to check hoarding and smuggling, control prices and maintain supply of essential commodities;
- (d) the number of persons arrested, prosecuted and convicted for the same during the last three years; and
- (e) the quantum and value of such products recovered/confiscated during the said period?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K. V. THOMAS)

(a) & (b): The Central Government had issued Notifications on 15.02.2002 and 16.06.2003 under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 removing the licensing requirement, stock limits and movement restrictions on specified foodstuffs namely wheat, paddy/rice, coarse grains, sugar, edible oilseeds, edible oils, pulses, gur, wheat products (namely maida, rava, suzi, atta, resultant atta and bran) and hydrogenated vegetable oil or vanaspati. With the issue of these orders,, any dealer may freely buy, stock, sell, transport, distribute, dispose, acquire, use or consume any quantity of these commodities.

These Notifications, however, do not restrict the Central Government or the State Governments from operating the Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2001 in respect of Public Distribution System (PDS) items, operation of the rice/paddy levy orders issued by the State Governments for the purpose of procurement of rice and regulating procurement and distribution of sugar.

To enable the State Governments/UT Administration to take effective action for undertaking de-hoarding operations under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, it was decided to enable State Governments to impose stockholding limits by keeping in abeyance some provisions of the Central Order dated 15.2.2002 in respect of wheat and pulses initially for a period for six months vide Order dated 29.08.2006. Subsequently the commodities rice, paddy, edible oils, edible oilseeds and sugar were added and wheat was removed. At present these Orders are valid in respect of pulses, paddy and rice for the period upto 30.9.2011, in respect of edible oils and edible oilseeds for the period upto 31.3.2011 and for sugar upto 31.12.2010.

(c): In order to check hoarding and blackmarketing of essential commodities the Government of India has taken the following steps:-

(i) Powers have been vested with State Governments for taking action under the provisions of Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980.

(ii) The State Governments/UT Administrations are empowered to detain such persons under the Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980, whose activities are found to be prejudicial to the maintenance of supplies of commodities essential to the community.

(iii) Department of Food & PD have issued orders in respect of sugar providing for stock-holding/turnover limits which are as follows:

Stockholding: (i) in Kolkata and extended area -

(a) recognized dealers who import sugar from outside West Bengal- 10,000 quintals;

(b) other recognized dealers -2000 quintals;

(ii) in other places - 2000 quintals.

Turnover: No dealer can hold the stock of sugar for a period exceeding 30 days from the date of receipt by him of such stock.

(iv) The State Governments/Union Territory Administrations have fixed the stock limits as per their requirement. As per information furnished by the State Government/UT Administrations 27 State Governments/UTs have either issued stock limits for all the six items or for individual items or have issued only licensing requirements/ stock declaration requirements.

(v) The State Governments/UT Administrations have been repeatedly requested to strictly enforce both the Acts and also monitor such enforcements.

(d) & (e): The number of raids conducted, number of persons prosecuted, number of persons convicted and value of goods confiscated for violation of rules under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 during the year 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 (upto 30.09.2010) as reported by State Governments/UTs are as under ;-

Year	No. of raids persons arrested	No. of persons prosecuted	No. of persons convicted	No. of confiscated Rs.lakhs)	Value of goods (in	
2007	235405		6944	4872	1022	4003.96
2008	268775		8001	6425	790	6095.22
2009	209413		9012	5131	127	18805.29
2010 (Upto 30.9.10)	120273		5595	1688	91	1891.57