

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:332

ANSWERED ON:06.08.2013

RISE IN PRICES

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

- (a) whether the prices of essential commodities including foodgrains, pulses, edible oils etc. have shown a rising trend during the last six months;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor indicating the extent of rise registered during the said period along with the steps taken and the achievements made in controlling the same;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any steps in collaboration with the States to check illegal activities like hoarding and black-marketing and to curb the price rise; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the success achieved therein?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K. V. THOMAS)

(a) & (b) : The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) which is an indicator of general price trend, shows that during the last six months of January to June 2013, the rate of inflation has been fluctuating. The inflation rate for Food Articles which was at 12.35% in January 2013 declined to 6.08% in April 2013, again increased in May 2013 and stood at 9.74% for June 2013. During January-June 2013, the rate of inflation for rice, pulses (except gram dal and masur dal) and eggs, meat and fish showed an increasing trend, whereas the rate of inflation for wheat, gram dal, masur dal, vegetables like potato and onion, milk, sugar and edible oils declined when compared to January 2013. The details are provided at Annexure-I.

Rise in the prices of essential food articles are due to several factors such as shortfall in domestic supply relative to demand, rising fuel cost, adverse weather conditions, improvement in income and living standards with resultant changes in dietary habits and insufficient logistics and storage facilities. Government has initiated several measures to control the prices and improve the availability of essential commodities. The steps in operation include allowing import of various items of mass consumption at zero or concessional import duties together with restrictions on exports, prescribing stock holding limits under Essential Commodities Act and allocation of food grains at affordable prices under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).

(c) & (d) : To protect the consumers from exploitation by unscrupulous traders, the Government is implementing the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and The Prevention of Black-marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980. State Governments have a major role in checking prices of essential commodities by curbing malpractices, profiteering and hoarding through a set of administrative and regulatory measures. All the State Governments have been advised from time to time to make appropriate use of both these Acts. The information received from the States/UTs on Action Taken under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 are enclosed at Annexure-II