

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2858

ANSWERED ON:27.08.2013

MONITORING PRICES OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES

Ajnala Dr. Rattan Singh;Alagiri Shri S. ;Bhagat Shri Sudarshan;Choudhary Shri Harish;Gaddigoudar Shri P.C.;Ganpatrao Shri Jadhav Prataprao;Hussain Shri Syed Shahnawaz;Karunakaran Shri P.;M.Thambidurai Dr. ;Maadam Shri Vikrambhai Arjanbhai;Mani Shri Jose K.;Pathak Shri Harin;Shivanagouda Shri Shivaramagouda;Singh Shri Bhupendra ;Singh Shri Ratan;Singh Shri Sushil Kumar;Yadav Shri M. Anjan Kumar

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

- (a) whether the Price Monitoring Cell is responsible for collection and analysis of information on price trend of essential commodities received from various sources and present the same to the Committees/ Government;
- (b) if so, the details thereof indicating the main features of the reports received during the last one year along with the action taken by the Government thereon;
- (c) whether the Government has fixed stock limit for various essential commodities and directed the States to strictly enforce various regulations to check hoarding, black marketing and supply of essential commodities;
- (d) if so, the details and the outcome thereof indicating the number of violations reported, raids conducted and various items recovered during the said period, State-wise;
- (e) whether the low rate of conviction under the said Act has contributed to the rising incidents of black marketing and hoarding; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto along with the corrective steps taken in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

(PROF. K. V. THOMAS)

(a) & (b): The Price Monitoring Cell has been set up with, inter-alia, the task of monitoring prices of select essential commodities. This monitoring is done in respect of both retail and wholesale prices on a daily basis. The Cell monitors the prices of 22 essential commodities, which include rice, wheat, pulses, sugar, edible oils and vegetables. These prices are collected from 57 reporting centres across the country by the Civil Supplies Department of States/UTs.

Based on the analysis of price data received, specific interventions are undertaken. It is on the basis of continued price monitoring and Inter-Ministerial Consultations that steps are under operation to contain price rise as well as to enhance the availability of essential items. These are mainly by way of allowing import of various items of mass consumption at zero or concessional import duties together with restriction on exports, prescribing stock holding limits under Essential Commodities Act, and allocation of foodgrains at affordable prices under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).

(c) & (f): In order to check hoarding and black-marketing of essential commodities, the Government has taken steps 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 limit by keeping in abeyance some provisions of the Central Order dated 15.02.2002. At present, stock limits exist for pulses, edible oils and edible oil seeds for a period up to 30.09.2013 and in respect of rice and paddy up to 30.11.2013.

The State Governments/UT Administrations are also empowered to detain such persons under the Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980, whose activities are found to be prejudicial to the maintenance of supplies of commodities essential to the community. The total number of detentions as reported by State Governments/UTs during the last three years and current year are enclosed at Annexure-I.

During the year 2013 (up to 30.07.2013) the details of raids conducted, value of goods confiscated and persons booked for violation of rules under Essential Commodities Act, 1955 are as enclosed at Annexure-II.