

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5746

ANSWERED ON:28.04.2015

PRICE RISE

Owaisi Shri Asaduddin

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that prices of several products were raised in the month of March on which excise duty was enhanced during the current budget and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether consumers are reportedly being charged more than the prevailing retail prices of some products and if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether several traders and retailers charge more in the month of March every year while the taxes and duties become effective from April, if so, the details thereof and the corrective steps taken in this regard;
- (d) whether the Government has any mechanism to check hoarding and overcharging on such products immediately after presentation of budget; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken or being taken by the Government to take action against such hoarders and retailers?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN)

(a) & (b): As regards essential food items like pulses, edible oils and sugar, there has been no enhancement of excise duty in the Union Budget 2015-16. Prices of these food products have remained by and large stable during the period February- April 2015.

(c): Besides higher taxes/duties prices of commodities are also affected by several other factors such as adverse weather conditions, transportation costs and supply constraints. Control of prices remains a priority agenda of the Government and in the case of essential consumer items a number of steps have been taken on the prices front to improve availability such as 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, allocation of foodgrains at affordable prices under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) etc.

(d) & (e): To protect the consumers from the exploitation by unscrupulous traders, the Government has enacted the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and the Prevention of Black-Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980. As these Acts are implemented by the State Governments/UTs, they have been regularly advised to ensure effective implementation of both. The State Governments/UTs are required to send reports to the Union Government regarding action taken under the Essential Commodities Act. The requisite information based on the monthly reports furnished by the State Governments/UTs for the year 2014 are as follows:

No. of raids conducted 135562

No. of persons arrested 11924

No. of persons prosecuted 3185

No. of persons convicted 2073

Value of goods confiscated Rs.16174.0 lakhs