

Title: Urged the government to reduce the prices of rice and wheat to be distributed through Public Distribution System (PDS) and also to enhance the import tariff on vegetable oils.

SHRI T. GOVINDAN (KASARGODA)*: Thank you very much Sir for this belated opportunity. The commoner of the State of Kerala is crushed under the weight of the recent hike in the prices of PDS rice and wheat. This has happened at a time when the agricultural produces of our State like rubber, coconut and arecanut are fetching half its prices when compared to last year's, due to the wrong and unthoughtful import policies of this Government. Moreover, the rise in the price of petroleum products too has burdened the farmers of my State. The recent increase in the issue price of the foodgrains by the Central Government has resulted in the equalisation of market rate and the PDS rate. If good quality of rice and wheat is available for the same price in the open market, who will go for the stale foodgrains supplied through the PDS? Obviously, the off take has come down and the stock is piling up in the godowns. I even doubt a secret liaison with the traders. I feel that it is the duty of the Central Government to roll back the prices to reflect the actual commodity value. Hence, I urge upon the Government to consider the reduction of prices of rice and wheat to be distributed through PDS and also to enhance the import tariff of vegetable oils.

***English translation of the speech originally delivered in Malayalam.**