

Title: Need to monitor the functioning of Public Distribution System in Bihar.

SHRI NIKHIL KUMAR (AURANGABAD, BIHAR): The high prices of essential food items like pulses, gram, rice, sugar, mustard oil and turmeric are a matter of serious concern. Even after a fall in the prices of chana and moong dal they are still high while that of masoor, arhar and rajma dal, rice, dhania, jeera and 'golki' have risen. Also, availability of Kerosene oil at fair price is a problem. There is widespread feeling that all this is because of hoarding followed by sale in the black market and the inefficient functioning of the Public Distribution System. There is also the perception that the Central Government is not doing enough to compel the state governments to ensure proper functioning of their retail outlets.

The centre should evolve a system to monitor the working of the Public Distribution System in the states-particularly in Bihar. The concerned Ministry should organize meetings in the state capitals with the State Government officials dealing with the system and, to make a meaningful assessment, should tally the quantum of essential commodities and food items supplied to each district and actually sold in them. This will show if allegations of hoarding are correct or the supply of these items has been inadequate. Corrective action, as the case may be, should then be taken and stringent legal action against hoarders, if any, must follow. This alone will set matters right.

Also, 'kharif' sowing will begin by next June. Adequate timely and availability of genuine fertilizers-DAP, to begin with, and then Urea must be ensured.