

To cool down the prices of wheat and atta, Centre decides to offload 30 lakh metric tons of wheat under Open Market Disposal Scheme (OMSS) and sales to State Governments, KendriyaBhandar, National Consumer Cooperative Federation (NCCF), National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED), State Cooperatives/ Federations etc.

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The Union Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Ms. Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha today informed, that the Government takes various steps from time to time to augment domestic availability and control increasing food prices. These steps, *inter-alia*, include releases from the buffer to cool down prices, imposition of stock limits, monitoring of stocks declared by entities to prevent hoarding as also requisite changes in trade policy instruments like rationalization of import duty, changes in import quota, restrictions on exports of the commodity etc.

In order to manage the overall food security of the country and control the increasing prices of foodgrains the Government amended the export policy of wheat from free to prohibited category on 13th May 2022 for restricting export of Indian Durum Wheat, and from 12th July, 2022 the export of atta (wheat) is subjected to the recommendation of Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on export of wheat. Further, the export of broken rice has been banned and export duty of 20% imposed on non-Basmati rice except for parboiled rice w.e.f. 9th September, 2022. The Government has also decided to offload 30 lakh metric tons of wheat under Open Market Disposal Scheme (OMSS) and sales to State Governments, KendriyaBhandar, National Consumer Cooperative Federation (NCCF), National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED), State Cooperatives/ Federations etc. to cool down the prices of wheat and atta.

To augment domestic availability and moderate the prices of pulses, import of tur and urad have been kept under 'Free Category' till 31.03.2024 and import duty on masur has been reduced to zero till 31.03.2024. To prevent hoarding and restrictive trade practices in respect of tur the Government has issued a directive to all the States and UTs to enforce stock disclosure by stockholders of tur under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and to also monitor and verify the stocks. Stocks of chana and moong from the Price Support Scheme (PSS) and Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) buffer are continuously released in the market to moderate the prices and also supplied to the States for welfare schemes.

In order to stabilise the volatility in prices of onion, the Government procured a record 2.51 lakh metric tonnes from Rabi-2022 crop under Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) and released in major consumption centres during September, 2022 and January, 2023.

To control the prices of edible oil, the Government reduced the basic import duty on crude palm oil, crude soyabean oil and crude sunflower oil to zero and Agri-cess on these oils has been brought down to 5%. The basic duty on refined soyabean oil and refined sunflower oil has been reduced to

17.5% from the previous rate of 32.5% and the basic duty on refined palm oils has been reduced from 17.5% to 12.5%. The Government has also kept the import of refined palm oils under 'Free' category.

AD/NS

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