

Centre asks States/UTs to direct all the stockholders millers, traders, importers etc. to declare the stocks of pulses and that the same may be verified by the State/ UTs Governments

States/UTs requested to monitor the prices of pulses on weekly basis

States asked to use the provisions of Essential Commodities Act (EC Act), 1955 to ensure adequate availability of the scheduled essential commodities at fair prices to the common people

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Department of Consumer Affairs today reviewed the action taken by States/UTs for disclosure of stock of pulses by stockholders like millers, importers, traders etc. A meeting through Video Conferencing was held today with the Principal Secretaries of the Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs of the States/UTs wherein Ms. Leena Nandan, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution reviewed the availability and price situation of Pulses across the country. Secretary, Food & Public Distribution and Secretary, Agriculture, Government of India were also present in the meeting.

During the meeting, it was reiterated that Essential Commodities Act (EC Act), 1955 is aimed at ensuring adequate availability of the scheduled essential commodities at fair prices to the common people. Participants in that meeting observed that sudden spurt in prices of pulses may be due to hoarding of pulses by the Stock Holders.

Section 3(2)(h) and 3(2)(i) of the Essential Commodities Act (EC Act), 1955 makes a provision for issuance of issue orders for collecting information or statistics to the persons engaged in the production, supply or distribution of or trade and commerce in of any essential commodity and to maintain and produce for inspection such books, accounts and records relating to their business and to furnish such information relating thereto. The powers under this section have been delegated to State Governments vide Central Order GSR 800 dated 09.06.1978.

Accordingly, Department of Consumer Affairs vide letter dated 14th May, 2021 requested States/UTs to use the power under section 3(2)(h) and 3(2)(i) of the EC Act, 1955 and to direct all the Stockholders like Millers, traders, importers etc. to declare the stocks of pulses and that the same may be verified by the State/ UTs Governments.

States/UTs were also requested to monitor the prices of pulses on weekly basis. An online

datasheet was also shared with States/UTs to fill the details of millers, wholesalers, importers etc. and the stocks of pulses held by them.

The pulse producing States/UTs were also requested to facilitate procurement as sustained procurement would incentivize farmers to cultivate pulses on a long-term basis. The pulses buffer is maintained by the Department of Consumer Affairs under the Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) with pulses procured from the farmers. The buffer procurement process supports farmers on the one hand by procuring pulses at MSP, while disposal from the buffer helps in moderating moderate price volatility and thereby mitigate hardships to consumers. The procured pulses are being stored locally to ensure supply of stocks to States at minimal logistic costs and make them available at affordable prices to the consumers.

States/ UTs were requested to monitor the prices of all 22 essential Commodities, especially pulses, oilseeds, vegetables and milk and to look for early signs of any unusual price rise so that timely interventions can be made to ensure that these food items are provided at affordable prices to consumers.

States/UTs were also apprised about the notification dated 15th May, 2021 issued by Department of Commerce regarding amendment of the import policy of Tur /Pigeon Peas; Moong and Urad from “Restricted” to “Free” with immediate effect and for the period up to 31stOctober 2021.

This liberalized regime would enable seamless and timely import of pulses. In order to ensure that all regulatory clearances such as Phyto-sanitary clearances and customs clearances are issued in time, these issues were also discussed and deliberated in a meeting of the Departments of Food, Consumer Affairs, Agriculture, Customs and Commerce held today.

DJN/MS

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