

## Prices had begun coming down

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The Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Shri Ram Vilas Paswan held a press conference today to brief media about the overall availability and prices of Onions across the nation along with the imported quantities so far. Shri Paswan said that the Union Government has decided to offer Onions to State Governments at the landing price in Mumbai ranging from Rs. 49 to Rs. 58 per Kilogram. The Union Minister said that imports began from mid-December and States were asked to place their firm demand in order to get the supply from the imported stock. States had initially put a demand for 33,139 MT of Onions which was later revised to 14,309 MT due to various reasons including reduction in domestic prices and improved availability.

The Union Minister stated that 1 Lakh MT of Onions was the target but since the Onion growing season had ended across the world and international prices were high, Orders were placed strategically in small lots and over a period of time to ensure international prices don't increase drastically. The Union Government had planned the imports based on the initial demand and has already contracted almost 40,000 MT of Onions which will arrive in India before the end of January. So far, 12,000 MT of Onions have arrived in the country and is ready for distribution among the State Government.

Shri Paswan further added that the main concern is to protect the interest of consumers and for ensuring that, the domestic supply is being augmented with imports so that prices are moderated and overall availability is increased. He said that there has to be a coordinated effort between the Central and State Governments and the consumers to ensure this objective is achieved. Therefore, the Union Minister exhorted all State Governments to honour the demands they had placed initially and may even go beyond their initial demand and distribute the imported Onions in their respective States to ensure that prices are moderated.

The Secretary, Consumer Affairs, Shri Avinash Srivastava informed the media that the Cabinet Secretary held a video conference this morning to persuade State Governments to buy more Onions from the imported stock for direct retailing/distribution in the State to increase overall availability and reduce prices. He said that December onwards, the prices had begun coming down which led the State Governments to also reduce their respective demands. The Cabinet Secretary in the VC with 12 States including Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Haryana, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu asked the States to honour the initial demand and pick up more from the imported stock if needed in order to curb prices.

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