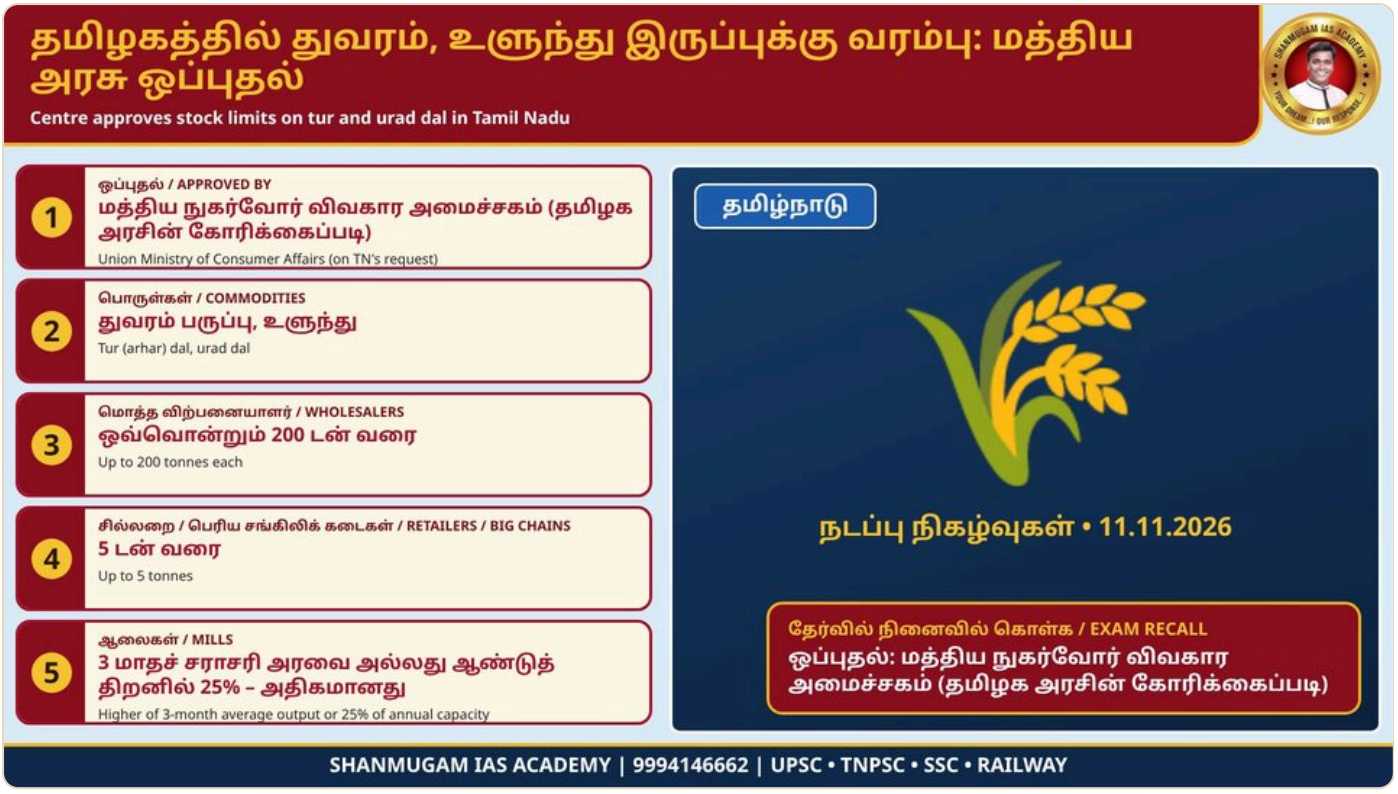
Centre approves stock limits on tur and urad dal in Tamil Nadu

Topics: Tamil Nadu Administration · UPSC Prelims · TNPSC · SSC · Current Affairs



News

To curb rising pulse prices and stop traders from hoarding to create artificial shortages, the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs has approved Tamil Nadu's request to impose stock limits on just two pulses – tur (pigeon pea) and urad (black gram) (reported 10–11 November 2026). Wholesalers may hold up to 200 tonnes of each, and retailers and big retail chains up to 5 tonnes. Mills may hold the higher of their average processing capacity of the last three months or 25% of annual capacity; importers may not hold stocks beyond 45 days after the cargo reaches India. Tamil Nadu's retail inflation in September was 6.81% (the highest among States) and food inflation 10.62%. Tur dal, ₹134.23 a kg in September, is now about ₹153. The State's request for limits on rice and edible oil has not yet been approved, and the Centre said onion limits were not needed as prices are falling.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Approved by	Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs (on TN's request)
Commodities	Tur (arhar) dal, urad dal
Wholesalers	Up to 200 tonnes each
Retailers / big chains	Up to 5 tonnes
Mills	Higher of 3-month average output or 25% of annual capacity

Point	Details
Importers	No stock beyond 45 days after arrival
TN inflation (Sept 2026)	Retail 6.81%; food 10.62%
Not approved	Rice, edible oil (not yet); onion (not needed)

Background

- Law: Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 empowers the Union to control the production, supply, distribution, stocking and trade of essential commodities; part of this power is delegated to States through orders. The 2020 amendment, which allowed stock limits on farm foodstuffs only in situations such as an extraordinary price rise, was undone in 2021 along with the farm laws. Its predecessor was the Essential Supplies (Temporary Powers) Act, 1946.
- Constitution: 'Trade and commerce in, and production, supply and distribution of, foodstuffs' is Entry 33 of the Concurrent List, so both the Union and the States can legislate. The Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF), which keeps a buffer stock of pulses, began in 2015 under the Agriculture Department with ₹500 crore and has been run by the Department of Consumer Affairs since 1 April 2016.
- Economy and agriculture: India is the world's largest producer and consumer of pulses, yet imports tur, urad and others. Tur (Cajanus cajan) is a long-duration kharif crop; Rhizobium bacteria in the root nodules of pulses fix atmospheric nitrogen and enrich the soil. The 'Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses' (2025-26 to 2030-31, ₹11,440 crore), approved by the Union Cabinet on 1 October 2025, assures 100% procurement of tur, urad and masoor through NAFED and NCCF; the target is 350 lakh tonnes of output by 2030-31.

Tamil Nadu link: It was the State Government that sought the stock limits; Tamil Nadu recorded the highest retail inflation among States in September (6.81%). Under Tamil Nadu's Special Public Distribution System, ration shops supply tur dal and palm oil at subsidised prices. In the Cauvery delta, urad and green gram are sown in rice fallows on residual moisture after paddy harvest.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

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What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Approved by: Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs (on TN's request); Commodities: Tur (arhar) dal, urad dal; Wholesalers: Up to 200 tonnes each; Retailers / big chains: Up to 5 tonnes.

What is the background to this news?

Law: Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 empowers the Union to control the production, supply, distribution, stocking and trade of essential commodities; part of this power is delegated to States through orders.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. In which year was the Essential Commodities Act, which allows stock limits to stop hoarding, enacted?

A) 1946

B) 1950

C) 1955

D) 1966

Answer: C – Explanation: 1955; Section 3 gives power to control production, supply and stocks. 1946 – the earlier temporary-powers law.

2. Tur (pigeon pea) is generally sown as a crop of which season?

A) Kharif

B) Rabi

C) Zaid

D) Both rabi and zaid

Answer: A – Explanation: Kharif (south-west monsoon season) – a long-duration crop; Maharashtra and Karnataka lead. Gram (chana) is the main rabi pulse.

3. Which bacterium lives in the root nodules of pulse crops and fixes atmospheric nitrogen?

A) Azotobacter

B) Rhizobium

C) Lactobacillus

D) Nitrosomonas

Answer: B – Explanation: Rhizobium – symbiotic with legumes. Azotobacter fixes nitrogen free-living in soil; Nitrosomonas turns ammonia into nitrite.

4. Which department now runs the Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF), which keeps a buffer stock of pulses?

A) Food & Public Distrib.

B) Consumer Affairs

C) Agriculture

D) NITI Aayog

Answer: B – Explanation: Set up in 2015 under Agriculture with ₹500 crore; moved to Consumer Affairs from 1 Apr 2016. It began with onion and potato.

5. Under the Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses (2025–31), NAFED and NCCF assure 100% procurement of which three pulses?

A) Gram, moong, masoor

B) Moong, moth, peas

C) Tur, urad, masoor

D) Rajma, gram, peas

Answer: C – Explanation: Tur, urad and masoor, for four years; ₹11,440 crore, Cabinet nod on 1 Oct 2025; target 350 lakh tonnes by 2030-31.

Sources: Daily Thanthi; Maalaimalar; IANS via Social News XYZ; The Tribune; Arthapedia (Indian Economic Service); India Code (Essential Commodities Act, 1955); Farm Laws Repeal Act, 2021; TNCSC (Special PDS); TNAU Agritech (Cauvery delta cropping). © Shanmugam IAS Academy.