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India: News in Brief

At a meeting in New Delhi August 6, the chief ministers of India's 16 states agreed to the rationing of grain and rice in the country's 8 cities with more than a million inhabitants.* Under the new system, to go into effect in the fall, rice or wheat consumption was to be limited to 12 ounces a day per person. The current nationwide average consumption was 14.4 ounces per day. Rationing eventually was to be extended to include cities with populations of over 300,000 and within 2 years to cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. Food rationing already was in effect in Calcutta and in Kerala State.

(*Bombay, Calcutta, New Delhi, Madras, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ahmadabad and Kanpur.)

The decision to impose rationing did not reflect a crisis in India's food situation since the 1965 food-grain harvest had been 10% better than the one in 1964, when near-famine conditions prevailed in many parts of the country. The government was seeking to institute a food distribution system that would provide more equitable distribution of grain and rice in good years as well as bad. Food and Agriculture Minister Chidambaram Subramaniam, however, expressed concern August 19 about a current drought which he said could cause "serious damage" to the September grain crop. The states most affected by the drought were Orissa, Maharashtra, Madras, Bihar, Rajasthan and the Uttar states.

AP reported August 19 that 6 persons had been shot and killed that day by police in Kolhapur (180 miles south of Bombay) during the looting of wheat and rice shops. The looting followed a demonstration sponsored by the "Anti-Starvation Committee," organized by opposition parties, to protest what the group called the "acute food shortage." 2 persons were reported to have been killed by police in Patna August 9 during a riot protesting rising food prices. The rioters also were demonstrating against higher school tuition fees and the agreement with Pakistan on the disputed Rann of Kutch area. [See 1964 [India: News in Brief](#)]

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