# Inflation for industrial workers is the highest in 33 months

In August 2026, inflation for India's industrial workers reached 4.96 per cent, the highest in 33 months, since November 2023.

**The rate rose in nine of the ten months that ran from November 2025 to August 2026, and eight of those rises came in a row, which is the longest run in more than 32 years.**

## 4.96 per cent

inflation for industrial workers in August 2026, the highest in 33 months

The Labour Bureau will release the September figure on 30 October 2026, and that figure will be set against August's 4.96 per cent, the highest in 33 months.

Shri Ajay Maken's office worked out the figures from the Labour Bureau's own data, and this brief is dated 28 October 2026.

Sources: Read on 27 October 2026. Labour Bureau, release for August 2026, dated 30 September 2026; Reserve Bank, DBIE copy of the Bureau's index, read 11 October 2026.

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This brief reads the index that the Labour Bureau keeps for industrial workers, and it covers each month up to August 2026, which is the latest one published.

# Four findings from the Labour Bureau's own data

In August 2026, inflation for India's industrial workers reached 4.96 per cent, the highest in 33 months, since November 2023.

| Finding | What the Labour Bureau's own data show |
|---|---|
| **The highest in 33 months** | In August 2026, inflation for India's industrial workers reached 4.96 per cent, the highest in 33 months, since November 2023. |
| **Nine rises in ten months** | The rate rose in nine of the ten months that ran from November 2025 to August 2026, and eight of those rises came in a row, which is the longest run in more than 32 years. |
| **Food rose fastest** | Food rose fastest in August. The food and beverages index climbed 2.4 points in one month, from 158.9 to 161.3, a rise of 1.51 per cent, and no other of the six groups rose as much. |
| **A year earlier** | A year earlier, in August 2025, the rate was 3.16 per cent, which means that it is now 1.80 percentage points higher. |

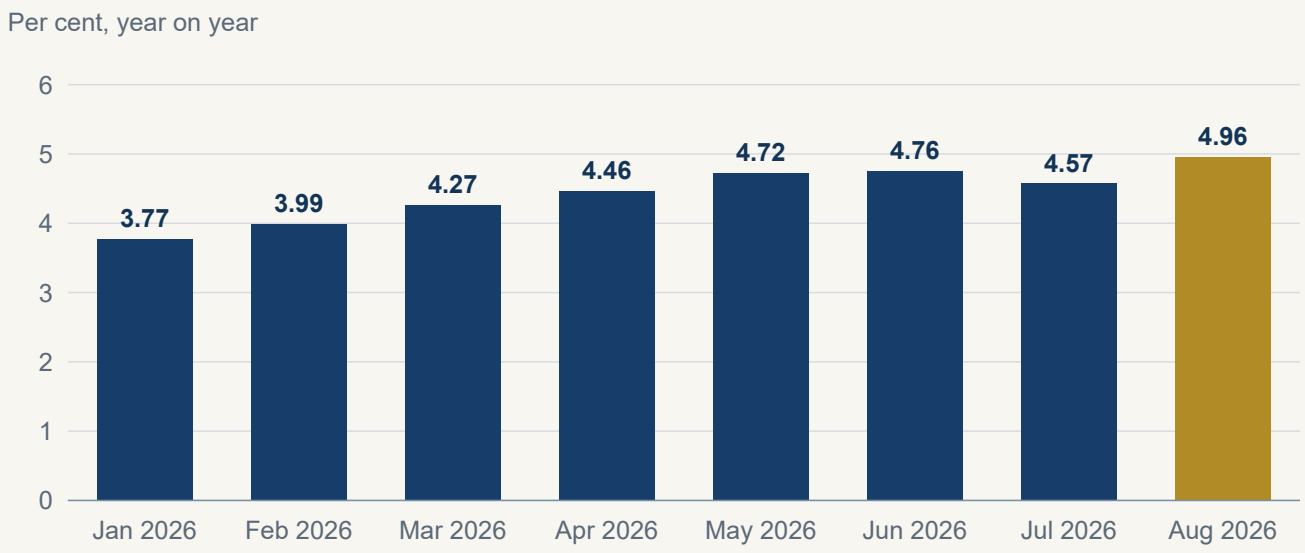
The index itself rose in every month from March to August 2026, when it went from 148.5 in February and reached 154.4 in August.

Sources: Read on 27 October 2026. Labour Bureau, release for August 2026, dated 30 September 2026; Reserve Bank, DBIE copy of the Bureau's index, read 11 October 2026.

# The rate rose in seven of the eight months of 2026

The rate stood at 3.77 per cent in January 2026 and had reached 4.96 per cent by August. In seven of the eight months of 2026 it was higher than in the month before, and July was the one exception.

## Inflation for industrial workers, 2026




Source: Labour Bureau, CPI-IW (2016=100); rates worked out from its index by the office of Shri Ajay Maken.

Each bar shows the year-on-year rate for one month of 2026. The gold bar is August, the highest in 33 months, and the axis starts at zero.

| Month | Rate, per cent | How it is known |
|---|---|---|
| January 2026 | 3.77 | worked out from the index |
| February 2026 | 3.99 | worked out from the index |
| March 2026 | 4.27 | worked out from the index |
| April 2026 | 4.46 | worked out from the index |
| May 2026 | 4.72 | worked out from the index |
| June 2026 | 4.76 | worked out from the index |
| July 2026 | 4.57 | worked out from the index |
| August 2026 | 4.96 | printed by the Bureau |

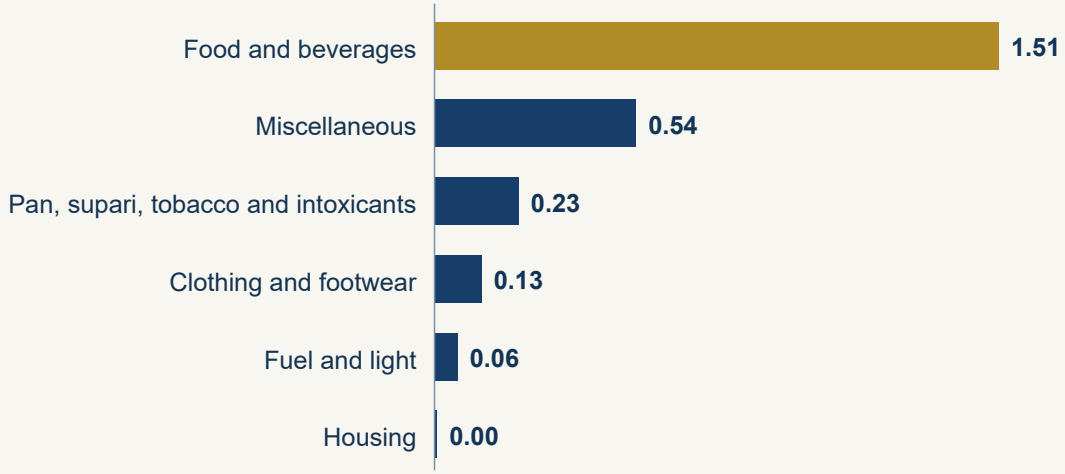
Sources: Read on 27 October 2026. Labour Bureau, release for August 2026, dated 30 September 2026; Reserve Bank, DBIE copy of the Bureau's index, read 11 October 2026.

# Food rose fastest in August

Food rose fastest in August. The food and beverages index climbed 2.4 points in one month, from 158.9 to 161.3, a rise of 1.51 per cent, and no other of the six groups rose as much.

## Food rose most in August

Per cent change in the group index, July to August 2026




Source: Labour Bureau, CPI-IW (2016=100); rates worked out from its index by the office of Shri Ajay Maken.

Each bar is one group's change from July to August 2026, and the gold bar is food and beverages. The housing index did not move.

| Group | July 2026 | August 2026 | Change, per cent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Food and beverages | 158.9 | 161.3 | 1.51 |
| Miscellaneous | 148.2 | 149.0 | 0.54 |
| Pan, supari, tobacco and intoxicants | 176.9 | 177.3 | 0.23 |
| Clothing and footwear | 158.0 | 158.2 | 0.13 |
| Fuel and light | 159.9 | 160.0 | 0.06 |
| Housing | 143.0 | 143.0 | 0.00 |
| General index | 153.2 | 154.4 | 0.78 |

Food prices for these workers now stand 61.3 per cent above where they were in 2016, while the whole basket stands 54.4 per cent above it.

Sources: Read on 27 October 2026. Labour Bureau, release for August 2026, dated 30 September 2026.

# What the index measures, and what comes next

The Labour Bureau builds the index from retail prices that it collects in 317 markets, which are spread over 88 industrial centres across the country.

| Term | What it means |
|---|---|
| CPI-IW | The Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers is the Labour Bureau's measure of the prices that the families of industrial workers pay. The Bureau collects the prices in 317 markets, across 88 industrial centres. |
| Rate of inflation | The rate compares one month's index with the index of the same month a year earlier. A rate of 4.96 per cent means that prices were 4.96 per cent higher than a year before. |
| Base 2016=100 | The Bureau sets the index at 100 for the year 2016. So a reading of 154.4 means that prices stand 54.4 per cent above their 2016 level. |
| Groups | The Bureau splits the basket into six groups: food and beverages; pan, supari, tobacco and intoxicants; clothing and footwear; housing; fuel and light; and everything else, which it calls miscellaneous. |

A basket that cost Rs 100 in August 2025 cost Rs 104.96 in August 2026. A basket that cost Rs 100 in 2016 cost Rs 154.40 in August 2026, and food that cost Rs 100 in 2016 cost Rs 161.30.

The Labour Bureau will release the September figure on 30 October 2026, and that figure will be set against August's 4.96 per cent, the highest in 33 months.

Sources: Read on 27 October 2026. Labour Bureau, release for August 2026, dated 30 September 2026; Labour Bureau, calendar of CPI-IW releases for 2026.

# Annexure: how the figures were made

The Labour Bureau publishes the CPI-IW each month. Its release for August 2026, dated 30 September 2026, prints the index and the six group indices and gives the rates for August 2026 and August 2025.

The Reserve Bank of India keeps a copy of the Bureau's monthly index in a database that it calls the Database on Indian Economy. This brief uses that copy to work out each other month's rate, by dividing a month's index by the index of a year earlier and taking away one.

The Bureau's own chart prints the rate for each month since August 2025, and in all 13 of those months the rates worked out here match the Bureau's to two decimals. Every figure is rounded once, from the unrounded result.

Where the brief counts back beyond September 2020, it joins the older series to the present one using only the Bureau's own linking factors.

| Step | What was done |
|---|---|
| The index | The Labour Bureau's own monthly index, on the 2016 base |
| The rate | The index over the index a year earlier, less one |
| The check | Equal to the Bureau's own chart in every month from August 2025 |
| Rounding | Once, to two decimals, from the unrounded result |

Each row names one step of the method, so that a reader can repeat the work from the same files.

Sources: Read on 27 October 2026. Labour Bureau, release for August 2026, dated 30 September 2026; Reserve Bank, DBIE copy of the Bureau's index, read 11 October 2026.

# Annexure: sources

Every figure in this brief comes from the Labour Bureau's own index, and each source below is linked to its public address.

| Source | Where |
|---|---|
| Labour Bureau, release for August 2026, dated 30 September 2026 | paragraphs 2 and 3, and the group table |
| Reserve Bank, DBIE copy of the Bureau's index, read 11 October 2026 | the cpiIW_1982, cpiIW_2001 and cpiIW_2016 columns |
| Labour Bureau, calendar of CPI-IW releases for 2026 | the row for September 2026 |

The data come from the Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour and Employment. The analysis is this brief's own, and so is any error in it.

Sources: Read on 27 October 2026. Labour Bureau, release for August 2026, dated 30 September 2026; Reserve Bank, DBIE copy of the Bureau's index, read 11 October 2026; Labour Bureau, calendar of CPI-IW releases for 2026.