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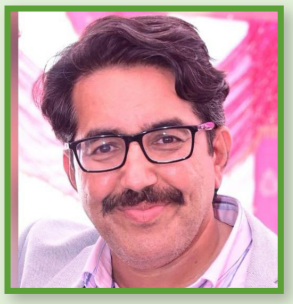
Cotton Exchange Building, 2nd Floor, Cotton Green, Mumbai - 400 033
Telephone: 8657442944/45/46/47/48 Email: cai@caionline.in
www.caionline.in

The Untold Story of India's Crop Saviour: India's Cotton Scientist Dr Mayee, The "ICAC Researcher of the Year 2025"

EXPERT'S COLUMN



Dr Bhagirath Choudhary
Founder Director,
South Asia Biotechnology Centre (SABC), Jodhpur

Dr Bhagirath Choudhary is founder director of South Asia Biotechnology Centre (SABC) – a DSIR recognized Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (SIRO) based at Jodhpur, Rajasthan. He has been associated as a board member of the Agricultural & Processed Food Export Development Authority (APEDA) and also serving as a member of Regional Advisory Committee of NABARD and member of the Task Force Committee of the Spices Board of India of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry. He is also associated as board member AFC India Ltd, Mumbai. He has dedicated his two and half decades of professional agriculture career working with smallholder growers and has contributed enormously to the transfer of bio-innovations from the lab to the land for the growth prospects for the bioeconomy of India.

Coinciding with the Government of India's campaign "Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan" launched on 29th May 2025, the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC) proudly announces the ICAC Researchers of the Year 2025 award to Dr. CD Mayee, fondly known as the "Cotton Man of India". This is a remarkable recognition to Dr Mayee who at the age of 80 years, continues his tireless journey for the welfare of cotton farmers, embodying a lifelong dedication to agricultural progress particularly in the dryland of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. His remarkable contributions to cotton research and smallholder cotton farmer empowerment are truly inspirational. This prestigious recognition is not just a tribute to Dr. Mayee's legacy, but a powerful call to action for the entire agricultural scientific fraternity and young researchers working in various institutions of ICAR, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVKs) and State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) in India to rise, commit, and contribute towards building a technology led, vibrant and prosperous agricultural future ensuring food security to 1.4 billion people of our country.

While announcing the winner of the ICAC Researcher of the Year 2025 on 29th May

2025, the ICAC's Chief Scientist congratulated Dr. Mayee on this well-deserved recognition. Moreover, ICAC recognizes that this prestigious award is a tribute to his outstanding contributions to cotton science and his lasting impact on the global agricultural community. The International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC), headquartered in Washington D.C., is an intergovernmental organization established in 1939 to serve as a global forum for cotton-producing, consuming, and trading countries. It provides objective, science-based analysis and policy advice to support the sustainable growth of the global cotton industry.

> *A life of science is a life of service*

In a remarkable 54-year scientific odyssey that began in a modest village in Maharashtra, Dr Mayee has emerged as one of India's most visionary agricultural scientists. From developing the country's first disease-tolerant sunflower hybrid to steering the national approval of insect resistant cotton, Dr. Mayee's journey has not only shaped policy and science but transformed the lives of millions of India's smallholder farmers. "Science is not an ivory tower. It is a field experiment that ends with a farmer's smile," often says Dr. Mayee, who continues to work with grassroots organizations even after his retirement in 2011 as Chairman of the Agricultural Scientists Recruitment Board (ASRB) of the Government of India.

The Man Behind India's Cotton Revolution

As Vice Chancellor of MAU Parbhani, Dr mayee pioneered mega-field experiments of cotton using Israeli high-input technology and another in Ashta village using low-input rainfed methods. Both models successfully showed dramatic gains, at that time in late 1990s significantly enhancing farmers income, improved yields and scalable models for resource-poor regions. His work then was cited by the Planning Commission in 1999 under "Guided Cotton Cultivation."

At the turn of the millennium, India faced a cotton crisis with spiralling pesticide use, falling yields, and farmer distress. As Director of the Central Institute for Cotton Research (CICR), Dr. Mayee led the nationwide evaluation of insect-resistant Bt cotton for biosafety, efficacy, and performance through 55 public institutional trials between 2000 and 2003. His leadership was pivotal in securing the 2002 approval for Bt cotton's commercial release in India. As Agriculture Commissioner, he further facilitated pan-India adoption of breakthrough cotton technology under the Technology Mission on Cotton launched in 2002. As a result, his efforts contributed enormously to revolutionizing cotton farming by reducing pesticide use, lowering costs, and increasing yields from 300 to over 500 kg per hectare, tripling national cotton production over two decades and making India a global cotton leader.

The Scientist Who Predicted Epidemics and Stopped Them

In an era when Indian agriculture was trapped by unpredictable weather and pestilence, Dr. Mayee's groundbreaking research in his early scientific career on plant

pathology, epidemiology and forecasting of crop diseases has brought scientific clarity to chaos. His models for disease prediction, first piloted on groundnut and dryland crops, became national tools, notably adopted by ICRISAT's LAGOFTON program in the 1980s. Farmers in the rainfed regions of Marathwada and Vidarbha directly benefited, seeing a 20% increase in productivity and reduced costs. Moreover, it was Dr Mayee who first discovered sunflower downy mildew in India - a disease that threatened oilseed production and led the release of resistant hybrids now widely cultivated in Maharashtra.

From Teacher to Talent-Spotter: A Reformer at ASRB

As Chairman of the Agricultural Scientists Recruitment Board (ASRB) from 2004–2011, Dr. Mayee undertook an institutional overhaul of agricultural scientist recruitments and examination in the country. He introduced online recruitment exams, a first in India's scientific bureaucracy and recruited over 5,000 scientists with zero grievances. Dr. Mayee transformed the ASRB from a gatekeeper into a torchbearer of agricultural innovation by institutionalizing a fool-proof, transparent, and merit-based recruitment process.

Mega Demonstrations, Real-World Results

Even after retirement, Dr. Mayee has remained deeply involved in cotton research guiding scientists through various forums and spearheaded field-level scientific outreach through the South Asia Biotechnology Centre (SABC) tackling modern threats of invasive and endemic pests such as Fall Armyworm, Pink Bollworm, and Black Thrips in maize, cotton, and chilli.

He has played a pivotal role in guiding SABC to design and implement forward-looking strategies that train farmers across diverse domains, reducing their dependence on conventional crops and outdated practices. Over the past 14 years, he has championed the pillars of education, skilling, and empowerment, helping reshape the agricultural landscape of cotton production across North, Central and South cotton growing zones. Under his leadership, SABC has introduced innovative, science-based solutions such as area-wide implementation of mega field project on novel mating disruption PBKnot technology rigorously experimented over 1000 acres every year for last four consecutive years to tackle critical challenges of pink bollworm that has developed resistant to Bt cotton. Dr Mayee's active involvement extends to Vidarbha's annual mega agri-tech exhibition hosted by Agrovision Foundation, which attracts 3–4 lakh farmers and hosts over 30 thematic workshops. In addition, Dr Mayee continues to contribute to the advancement of science and technology in the region as a guiding force in the Maharashtra Knowledge Corporation, Rajiv Gandhi Science and Technology Commission, and as Chairman of the Science and Technology Resource Centre at Gondwana University, Gadchiroli, Maharashtra.

ICAC honours Dr Mayee with the ICAC Researcher of the Year 2025 award

From his humble beginnings in Maharashtra to leading India's cotton revolution, Dr. Mayee has been a transformative force in agricultural policy, biotechnology, and sustainable cotton farming. This global recognition of "ICAC researcher of the Year 2025" award, announced during India's "Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan," underscores his enduring impact as a scientist, reformer, and champion of smallholder farmers. The award will be presented at the 83rd ICAC Plenary Meeting "Leveraging Sustainable Cotton and Textile for Rural and Industrial Development" to be held in Mwanza, Tanzania in November 2025, represented by 35 to 40 cotton growing Governments.

It is right time for the scientific and farming community of India to celebrate the life of Dr Mayee not just a researcher but a visionary leader and an able science administrator who will continue to inspire generations in the field of agricultural science, technology and cotton farming.

"A life of science is a life of service," Dr. Mayee often says. And in his life's bountiful harvest of innovation, institutions, and impact, ICAC has finally found one of its greatest agricultural heroes from India.

(The views expressed in this column are of the author and not that of Cotton Association of India)

Hard-Locked and Non-Editable GSTR-3B July 2025 Tax Period

EXPERT'S COLUMN

Shri. Ronak Jain
Partner, Jain Advocates

Shri. Ronak Sandip Jain is a Partner in Jain Advocates, Ahmedabad. He is a practicing advocate of indirect taxes upto the appellate level in Gujarat as well as other states of India. He has been on various committees of the Gujarat sales tax bar association: Member of Law Committee (2015-2016), Member of Website Committee (2015-2016) and Member of EDP representation and Website Committee (2016-2017 and 2019-2020); Member of Refresher Course Committee:- The Gujarat Sales Tax Bar Association (2021-2023) and Member of Indirect Tax Task Force:- The Gujarat Chamber Of Commerce And Industry (2022-2023). He is an accredited GST trainer from the National Academy of Customs, Excise & Narcotics, Faridabad. He has delivered lectures on GST at various trade forums, professional associations and also at departmental outreach programmes.

Effective from the July 2025 tax period (meaning for the GSTR-3B return to be filed in August 2025), the auto-populated liability in GSTR-3B will become hard-locked and non-editable.

Here's a breakdown of what this means and why it's being implemented:

What is Hard-Locking?

Previously, when you generated your GSTR-3B, certain fields (primarily related to outward supplies) would be auto-populated based on the data you filed in your GSTR-1/1A or IFF (Invoice Furnishing Facility). While these values were pre-filled, taxpayers had the flexibility to manually edit them before submitting the GSTR-3B.

"Hard-locking" means that these auto-populated values in GSTR-3B's Table 3 (outward supplies) will no longer be editable by the taxpayer. Once the system populates these figures from GSTR-1/1A/IFF, they will be final for that GSTR-3B filing.

Why is this change being introduced?

The primary objectives behind this hard-locking are:

- Ensure Data Consistency
- Curb Tax Evasion
- Streamline Compliance
- Promote Accurate GSTR-1 Filing

How to Handle Errors and Corrections?

With hard-locking in place, the window for making corrections shifts. If you discover any errors or need to make amendments to your outward supply details before filing GSTR-3B for a particular period, you must do so through GSTR-1A.

- GSTR-1A: The Correction Window: GSTR-1A is specifically designed to allow taxpayers to amend incorrectly declared outward supplies in GSTR-1 or IFF for the same tax period. This correction must be made before filing GSTR-3B.
- No Last-Minute Adjustments in GSTR-3B: Once GSTR-3B is generated with the hard-locked values, you cannot make any manual changes to the outward liability directly within the form.

Impact on Taxpayers:

- Increased Importance of GSTR-1/IFF Accuracy: Businesses must ensure that their GSTR-1 or IFF filings are accurate and complete, as these will directly determine the tax liability in GSTR-3B.
- Timely Use of GSTR-1A: Any corrections to outward supplies must be done promptly through GSTR-1A before the GSTR-3B filing deadline.
- Enhanced Internal Controls: Businesses will need to strengthen their internal processes for invoice management and reconciliation to identify and rectify errors early on.
- Potential for Initial Challenges: Taxpayers who are accustomed to making last-minute adjustments in GSTR-3B will need to adapt their compliance workflows.

Author Note:-

While the current hard-locking primarily applies to outward liability (Table 3 of GSTR-3B), all need to be cautions before sending the data to avoid unnecessary liabilities under GSTR 3B through the GSTR 1.

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COTTON ASSOCIATION OF INDIA
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Cotton Exchange Building, 2nd Floor,
Opposite Cotton Green Railway Station,
Cotton Green (East),
Mumbai - 400 033,
Maharashtra, INDIA

Tel.: +91 8657442944/45/46/47/48
E-mail: cai@caionline.in

www.caionline.in

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Basis Comparison of ICS 105 with ICE Futures – 19th July 2025

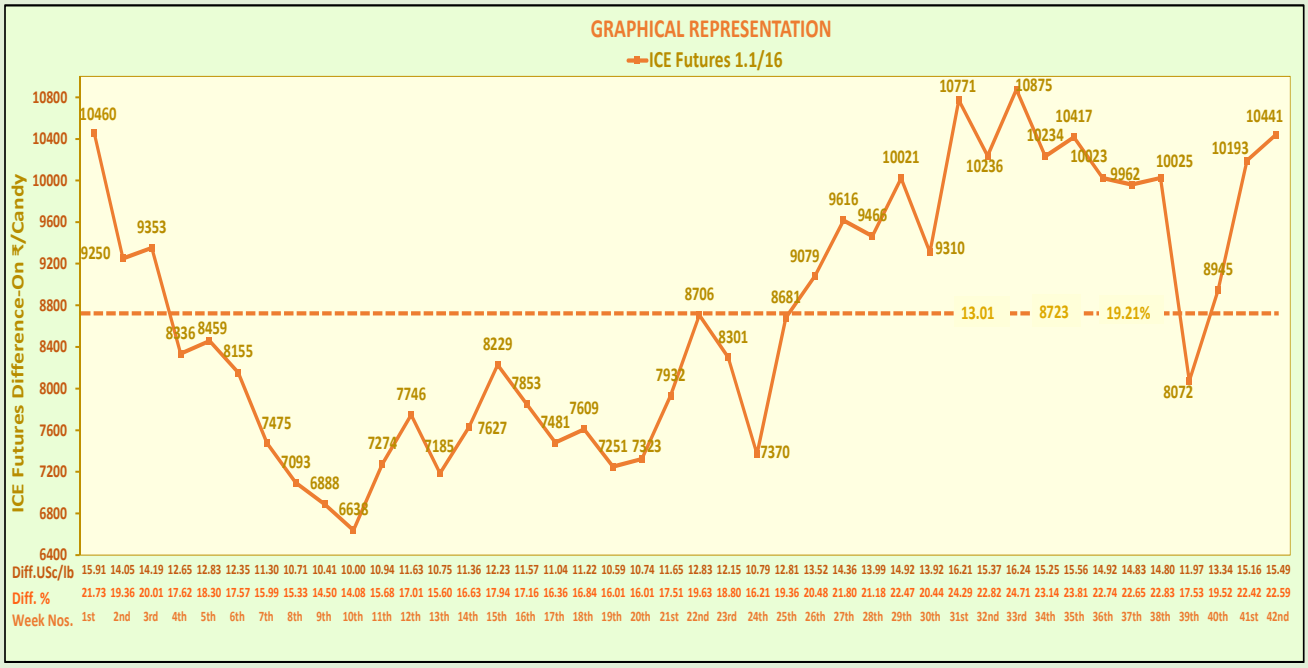
SEASON 2024-2025

Comparison M/M(P) ICS-105, Grade Fine, Staple 29mm, Mic. 3.7-4.9, Trash 3.5%, Str./GPT 28 with ICE Futures

CAI Price for July Compared with ICE December Settlement Futures

Date	CAI (₹ /Candy)	Conversion Rate (US$ = ₹)	CAI (USc/Ib.)	ICE Settlement Futures 1.1/16" Front Mth. Dec.'25 (USc/lb.)	Difference-ON/OFF ICE Futures		
					USc/lb.	₹ /Candy	%
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Cotton Year Week No-42nd							
14th July 2025	56300	85.99	83.51	68.12	15.39	10375	22.59
15th July 2025	56600	85.82	84.12	68.59	15.53	10449	22.64
16th July 2025	56800	85.94	84.30	68.56	15.74	10605	22.96
17th July 2025	56800	86.08	84.16	68.80	15.36	10366	22.33
18th July 2025	56800	86.16	84.09	68.68	15.41	10409	22.44
Average	**56660**	**86.00**	**84.04**	**68.55**	**15.49**	**10441**	**22.59**
Total Avg. From 1st Oct 2024	**54264**	**85.53**	**80.95**	**67.94**	**13.01**	**8723**	**19.21**

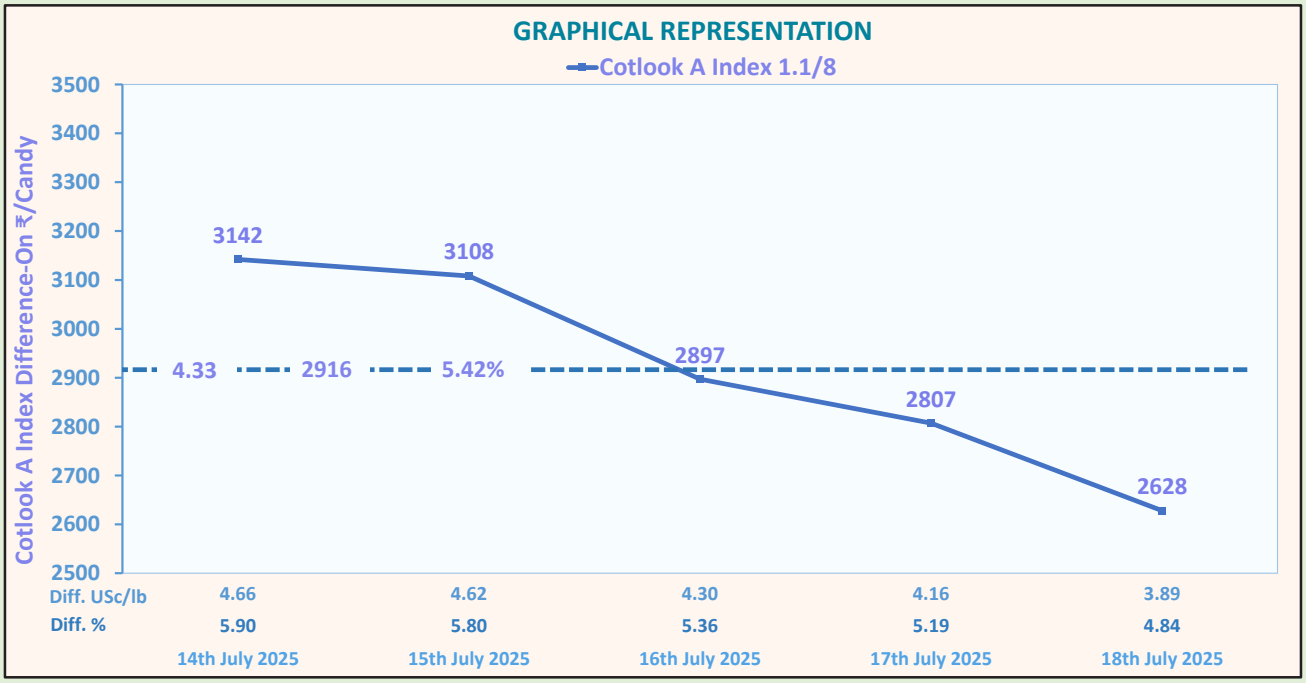
Note:- Weeks taken as per Cotton Year (October To September).



Basis Comparison of ICS 105 with Cotlook A Index – 19th July 2025

SEASON 2024-2025 Comparison M/M(P) ICS-105, Grade Fine, Staple 29mm, Mic. 3.7-4.9, Trash 3.5%, Str./GPT 28 with Cotlook A Index							
Date	CAI (₹ /Candy)	Conversion Rate (US$ = ₹)	*CAI (USc/lb.)	Cotlook A Index M-1.1/8" (Forward Mth.) C & F FE Ports	Difference-ON/OFF Cotlook A Index		
					USc/lb.	₹/Candy	%
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Cotton Year Week No-42nd							
14th July 2025	56300	85.99	83.71	79.05	4.66	3142	5.90
15th July 2025	56600	85.82	84.32	79.70	4.62	3108	5.80
16th July 2025	56800	85.94	84.50	80.20	4.30	2897	5.36
17th July 2025	56800	86.08	84.36	80.20	4.16	2807	5.19
18th July 2025	56800	86.16	84.29	80.40	3.89	2628	4.84
Average	**56660**	**86.00**	**84.24**	**79.91**	**4.33**	**2916**	**5.42**

Note:- Weeks taken as per Cotton Year (October To September).
***Converted to C & F FE Ports by adding 0.20 c/lb. to CAI spot rates.**



UPCOUNTRY SPOT RATES

(Rs./Qtl)

Sr. No.	Growth	Grade Standard	Grade	Staple	Micronaire	Gravimetric Trash	Strength /GPT	Spot Rate (Upcountry) 2024-25 Crop July 2025 14th	15th	16th	17th	18th	19th
1	P/H/R	ICS-101	Fine	Below 22mm	5.0 – 7.0	4%	15	13919 (49500)	13919 (49500)	13919 (49500)	13919 (49500)	13891 (49400)	13891 (49400)
2	GUJ	ICS-102	Fine	22mm	4.0 – 6.0	13%	20	10967 (39000)	10967 (39000)	11023 (39200)	10995 (39100)	11051 (39300)	11107 (39500)
3	M/M (P)	ICS-104	Fine	23mm	4.5 – 7.0	4%	22	13301 (47300)	13357 (47500)	13357 (47500)	13413 (47700)	13469 (47900)	13469 (47900)
4	P/H/R (U)	ICS-202 (SG)	Fine	27mm	3.5 – 4.9	4.5%	26	15269 (54300)	15297 (54400)	15297 (54400)	15325 (54500)	15325 (54500)	15297 (54400)
5	P/H/R(U)	ICS-105	Fine	27mm	3.5 – 4.9	4%	26	15438 (54900)	15466 (55000)	15466 (55000)	15494 (55100)	15494 (55100)	15466 (55000)
6	M/M(P)/ SA/TL/G	ICS-105	Fine	27mm	3.0 – 3.4	4%	25	13357 (47500)	13357 (47500)	13357 (47500)	13357 (47500)	13357 (47500)	13357 (47500)
7	M/M(P)/ SA/TL	ICS-105	Fine	27mm	3.5 – 4.9	3.5%	26	15241 (54200)	15325 (54500)	15382 (54700)	15382 (54700)	15382 (54700)	15382 (54700)
8	P/H/R(U)	ICS-105	Fine	28mm	3.5 – 4.9	4%	27	15888 (56500)	15916 (56600)	15916 (56600)	15944 (56700)	15944 (56700)	15916 (56600)
9	M/M(P)	ICS-105	Fine	28mm	3.7 – 4.9	3.5%	27	15522 (55200)	15607 (55500)	15663 (55700)	15663 (55700)	15663 (55700)	15663 (55700)
10	SA/TL/K	ICS-105	Fine	28mm	3.7 – 4.9	3.5%	27	15325 (54500)	15382 (54700)	15438 (54900)	15438 (54900)	15438 (54900)	15438 (54900)
11	GUJ	ICS-105	Fine	28mm	3.7 – 4.9	3%	27	15775 (56100)	15832 (56300)	15944 (56700)	15944 (56700)	15944 (56700)	15944 (56700)
12	R(L)	ICS-105	Fine	28mm	3.7 – 4.9	3.5%	27	15663 (55700)	15747 (56000)	15747 (56000)	15775 (56100)	15775 (56100)	15747 (56000)
13	R(L)	ICS-105	Fine	29mm	3.7 – 4.9	3.5%	28	15803 (56200)	15888 (56500)	15888 (56500)	15916 (56600)	15916 (56600)	15888 (56500)
14	M/M(P)	ICS-105	Fine	29mm	3.7 – 4.9	3.5%	28	15832 (56300)	15916 (56600)	15972 (56800)	15972 (56800)	15972 (56800)	15972 (56800)
15	SA/TL/K	ICS-105	Fine	29mm	3.7 – 4.9	3%	28	15635 (55600)	15691 (55800)	15747 (56000)	15747 (56000)	15747 (56000)	15747 (56000)
16	GUJ	ICS-105	Fine	29mm	3.7 – 4.9	3%	28	16056 (57100)	16113 (57300)	16225 (57700)	16225 (57700)	16225 (57700)	16225 (57700)
17	M/M(P)	ICS-105	Fine	30mm	3.7 – 4.9	3%	29	16056 (57100)	16141 (57400)	16225 (57700)	16225 (57700)	16225 (57700)	16225 (57700)
18	SA/TL/K/O	ICS-105	Fine	30mm	3.7 – 4.9	3%	29	15916 (56600)	15972 (56800)	15972 (56800)	15972 (56800)	15972 (56800)	15972 (56800)
19	M/M(P)	ICS-105	Fine	31mm	3.7 – 4.9	3%	30	16253 (57800)	16310 (58000)	16366 (58200)	16366 (58200)	16366 (58200)	16366 (58200)
20	SA/TL/K/ TN/O	ICS-105	Fine	31mm	3.7 – 4.9	3%	30	16197 (57600)	16253 (57800)	16310 (58000)	16310 (58000)	16310 (58000)	16310 (58000)
21	SA/TL/K / TN/O	ICS-106	Fine	32mm	3.5 – 4.9	3%	31	N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)	N.A. (N.A.)
22	M/M(P)	ICS-107	Fine	34mm	2.8 - 3.7	4%	33	21259 (75600)	21259 (75600)	21259 (75600)	21259 (75600)	21259 (75600)	21259 (75600)
23	K/TN	ICS-107	Fine	34mm	2.8 - 3.7	3.5%	34	22355 (79500)	22355 (79500)	22355 (79500)	22355 (79500)	22355 (79500)	22355 (79500)
24	M/M(P)	ICS-107	Fine	35mm	2.8 - 3.7	4%	35	21793 (77500)	21793 (77500)	21793 (77500)	21793 (77500)	21793 (77500)	21793 (77500)
25	K/TN	ICS-107	Fine	35mm	2.8 - 3.7	3.5%	35	23199 (82500)	23199 (82500)	23199 (82500)	23199 (82500)	23199 (82500)	23199 (82500)

Note: *(Figures in bracket indicate prices in Rs./Candy)*