



## NATIONAL CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (NCPI) – MARCH, 2026 (Base 2021=100)

21 April 2026

Department of Census and Statistics  
Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development

The Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) has released the National Consumer Price Index (NCPI) for the month of March 2026, along with an updated index reference period and inflation rate.

The NCPI, previously based on the index reference period 2013=100, has been updated to a new base of 2021=100. The updated NCPI has been released monthly from January 2023, with a time lag of 21 days, covering the entire country.

To reflect international recommendations and best practices, the index weights are based on each item's share of total household consumption expenditure in Sri Lanka. Provincial weights are determined according to the share of consumption expenditure within each province relative to the national total. The index weights are derived from expenditure data obtained through the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) conducted in 2019. The HIES 2019 covered all types of household consumption expenditure and was broadly representative of all households in the country.

The national consumer basket for the updated NCPI includes 485 items, representing the consumption expenditure of all households in Sri Lanka. For compiling the NCPI, three price quotations are collected for each item in every district town. Prices for some items are collected weekly, while others are collected biweekly, monthly, or quarterly. The frequency of price collection is determined by how often price changes occur on average.

- ❖ The NCPI (Base 2021=100) for all items in March 2026 is 210.9, recording an increase of 1.5 index points compared to February 2026.
- ❖ The overall rate of inflation, as measured by the NCPI (Base 2021=100) on a year-on-year basis, was 2.4% in March 2026.

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Source Publication  
<http://www.statistics.gov.lk/InflationAndPrices/StaticInformation/MonthlyNCPI>

[statistics.gov.lk](http://www.statistics.gov.lk)

## 01. Month on Month (M on M) change of NCPI (Base 2021=100):

The NCPI for all items in March 2026 is 210.9, compared to 209.4 in February 2026, reflecting an increase of 1.5 index points or 0.72%. This corresponds to an increase in the expenditure value of Rs. 767.22 in the market basket.

Monthly changes in index numbers, expenditure values, and percentage changes in index numbers are presented in Table 01.

**Table 01: Monthly Changes by Main Groups of Market Basket**

Main Group	Index Number			Monthly Changes of the Expenditure Value (Rs.)			Monthly change of the index (%) <sup>1</sup>		
	Mar.	Feb.	Mar.	Mar.	Feb.	Mar.	Mar.	Feb.	Mar.
	2025	2026	2026	2025	2026	2026	2025	2026	2026
All Items	206.0	209.4	210.9	-106.39	-975.75	767.22	-0.10	-0.91	0.72
Food and Non Alcoholic Beverages	236.2	239.4	237.9	-103.09	-983.35	-285.03	-0.10	-0.92	-0.27
Non Food	186.4	190.1	193.5	-3.31	7.61	1052.25	0.00	0.01	0.99
Clothing and Footwear	210.5	216.0	216.7	-3.14	11.24	9.64	0.00	0.01	0.01
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	146.1	151.5	152.2	-2.15	5.26	81.43	0.00	0.00	0.08
Transport	222.7	218.9	233.7	-3.65	-31.82	822.79	0.00	-0.03	0.77
Restaurants and Hotels	237.3	243.1	243.7	0.72	8.18	13.18	0.00	0.01	0.01
Miscellaneous Goods and Services	208.8	214.6	221.8	0.06	3.37	120.20	0.00	0.00	0.11
Other groups	196.1	201.1	201.2	4.86	11.36	5.01	0.00	0.01	0.00

Source: Department of Census and Statistics

*Note 1: There are 12 main groups in the market basket. Significant monthly changes were observed in five main groups in March 2026, details of which are given in Table 02.*

*Note 2: For the March 2026, insignificant groups: 'Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco, and Narcotics', 'Furnishing, Household equipment and Routine household maintenance', 'Health' and 'Recreation and Culture' and unchanged groups: 'Communication' and 'Education' are considered as the 'Other Groups'.*

*Note 3: Monthly percentage change of the index is calculated using expenditure values.*

*Note 4: The percentage of items may not tally with the overall percentage due to rounding.*

### Contribution to Month-on-Month Changes:

Contributions to the NCPI on a month-on-month basis (March 2026 compared with February 2026) are presented in Table 02. The month-on-month change was mainly driven by a decrease in food items of 0.27% and an increase in non-food items of 0.99%.

#### 1.1.1. Contribution of Food items: -0.27%

As shown in Table 02, index values decreased for Vegetables (0.27%), Fresh fish (0.09%), Coconuts (0.08%), Green chilies (0.04%), Limes (0.03%), Big onions (0.02%), Red onions (0.02%), Milk powder (0.01%), and Ginger (0.01%). However, index values increased for Chicken (0.07%), Dried fish (0.04%), Coconut oil (0.04%), Eggs (0.04%), Fresh fruits (0.03%), Sugar (0.01%), Dried chilies (0.01%), Chili powder (0.01%), Mysore dhal (0.01%), Potatoes (0.01%), and Infant milk powder (0.01%).

#### 1.1.2. Contribution of Non-food items: 0.99%

The increase in index values of the non-food group in March 2026 compared to the previous month was mainly due to price increases in the groups of 'Transport' (petrol and airline fare) (0.77%), 'Miscellaneous Goods and Services' (Agrahara Insurance) (0.11%), 'Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels' (LP gas) (0.08%), 'Restaurants and Hotels' (0.01%), and 'Clothing and Footwear' (clothing) (0.01%). However, slight price increases were also observed in the groups of 'Furnishing, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance', 'Health', and 'Recreation and Culture'. Further, a very slight price decrease was observed in the group of 'Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics'. Meanwhile, the price indices of the 'Communication' and 'Education' groups remained unchanged during the month.

Table 02: Contribution to the changes in NCPI from February 2026 to March 2026 (Base 2021=100)

Sub Group/Commodity	Rs. cts	Value change		
		% Change		Net effect
		Increase	Decrease	
Food	-285.03	0.30	0.57	-0.27
Vegetables	-289.55		0.27	
Fresh fish	-98.93		0.09	
Coconuts	-90.08		0.08	
Green chilies	-45.17		0.04	
Limes	-26.64		0.03	
Big onions	-20.18		0.02	
Red onions	-19.30		0.02	
Milk powder	-8.36		0.01	
Ginger	-6.14		0.01	
Chicken	71.60	0.07		
Dried fish	47.02	0.04		
<i>Sprats</i>	<i>27.19</i>	<i>0.03</i>		
Coconut oil	43.39	0.04		
Eggs	39.37	0.04		

Fresh fruits	32.05	0.03		
<i>Mangoes</i>	33.09	0.03		
<i>Apple</i>	7.55	0.01		
<i>Papaw</i>	-10.65		0.01	
<i>Water Melon</i>	-10.73		0.01	
Sugar	14.86	0.01		
Dried chilies	14.24	0.01		
Chili powder	13.72	0.01		
Mysore dhal	12.88	0.01		
Potatoes	11.73	0.01		
Infant milk powder	10.94	0.01		
Other food items	7.53	0.01		
Non Food	1052.25	0.99	0.00	0.99
Clothing & Footwear	9.64	0.01		
<i>Clothing</i>	9.64	0.01		
Housing, Water, Electricity & Other Fuels	81.43	0.08		
<i>LP gas</i>	68.61	0.06		
<i>Kerosene oil</i>	12.83	0.01		
Transport	822.79	0.77		
<i>Petrol</i>	489.67	0.46		
<i>Diesel</i>	82.39	0.08		
<i>Bus fare</i>	45.70	0.04		
<i>Three wheelers fare (other than schooling)</i>	12.68	0.01		
<i>Transport for schooling/ reschooling</i>	23.42	0.02		
<i>Airline fare</i>	153.47	0.14		
Restaurants and hotels	13.18	0.01		
Miscellaneous Goods & Services	120.20	0.11		
<i>Agrahara Insurance</i>	118.78	0.11		
Other Groups	5.01	0.00		
All Items	767.22			0.72

Source: Department of Census and Statistics

Note 5: Percentage of items does not tally with overall percentage due to rounding off

## Inflation

The NCPI is a macroeconomic indicator used to measure inflation, which is defined as a sustained increase in the general price level of goods and services. Inflation is expressed as an annual percentage change in the NCPI. Inflation can be measured in two ways. The first is the year-on-year (point-to-point) inflation, which is the percentage change in the current month's CPI compared to the same month of the previous year. The second is moving average inflation, which is the percentage difference between the average price indices of the last 12 months and the average of the previous 12 months.

**Table 03: Movements of the NCPI (Base: 2021=100)**

Year	Month	All Item			Food			Non Food						
		Index Number	Inflation %			Index Number	Inflation %			Index Number	Inflation %			
			% Change Month on Month	Y on Y	12 Month Moving Avg.		% Change Month on Month	Y on Y	12 Month Moving Avg.		% Change Month on Month	Y on Y	12 Month Moving Avg.	
2025	March	206.0	-0.1	-1.9	-0.4	236.2	-0.3	0.8	0.7	186.4	-0.1	-4.1	-1.3	
	April	206.5	0.2	-0.8	-0.7	237.8	0.7	2.9	0.7	186.3	-0.1	-3.7	-1.8	
	May	207.5	0.5	0.6	-0.8	240.6	1.2	5.9	1.1	186.2	-0.1	-3.4	-2.2	
	June	208.7	0.6	0.3	-0.9	242.5	0.8	4.2	1.3	186.8	0.3	-2.8	-2.7	
	July	208.3	-0.2	0.7	-1.1	239.2	-1.4	2.2	1.3	188.3	0.8	-0.6	-2.9	
	August	207.2	-0.5	1.5	-1.0	236.3	-1.2	2.9	1.3	188.4	0.1	0.4	-2.9	
	September	207.4	0.1	2.1	-0.9	236.6	0.1	3.8	1.6	188.5	0.1	0.7	-2.8	
	October	207.5	0.0	2.7	-0.6	236.4	-0.1	4.1	1.8	188.8	0.2	1.5	-2.5	
	November	207.2	-0.1	2.4	-0.2	236.1	-0.1	3.6	2.1	188.6	-0.1	1.5	-2.1	
	December	210.5	1.6	2.9	0.2	244.3	3.5	4.4	2.5	188.7	0.1	1.6	-1.7	
	2026	January	211.4	0.4	2.4	0.7	244.3	0.0	3.4	3.1	190.1	0.7	1.6	-1.1
		February	209.4	-0.9	1.6	1.2	239.4	-2.0	1.1	3.3	190.1	0.0	1.9	-0.5
March		210.9	0.7	2.4	1.5	237.9	-0.6	0.7	3.2	193.5	1.8	3.8	0.2	

Source: Department of Census and Statistics

Note 6: The month-on-month percentage change and year-on-year inflation rate were calculated using rounded index numbers.

### 2.1. Year -on-Year Inflation

The overall rate of inflation, as measured by the NCPI on a year-on-year basis, was 2.4% in March 2026, compared with 1.6% in February 2026 (Table 03). The year-on-year inflation of the food group decreased to 0.7% in March 2026 from 1.1% in February 2026, while the year-on-year inflation of the non-food group increased to 3.8% from 1.9% over the same period.

#### Contribution to Year-on-Year inflation:

On a year-on-year basis, the contribution of food commodities to inflation was 0.32 percent in March 2026 compared to March 2025 (Table 04).

The contribution of non-food items was 2.09 percent. This was mainly due to price increases in the groups of 'Alcoholic Beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics' (0.03%), 'Clothing and Footwear' (0.09%), 'Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels' (0.67%), 'Furnishing, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance' (0.07%), 'Health' (0.11%), 'Transport' (0.59%), 'Communication' (0.01%), 'Education' (0.17%), 'Restaurants and Hotels' (0.14%), and 'Miscellaneous Goods and Services' (0.21%). However, a slight increase in prices was also observed in the 'Recreation and Culture' group during the period.

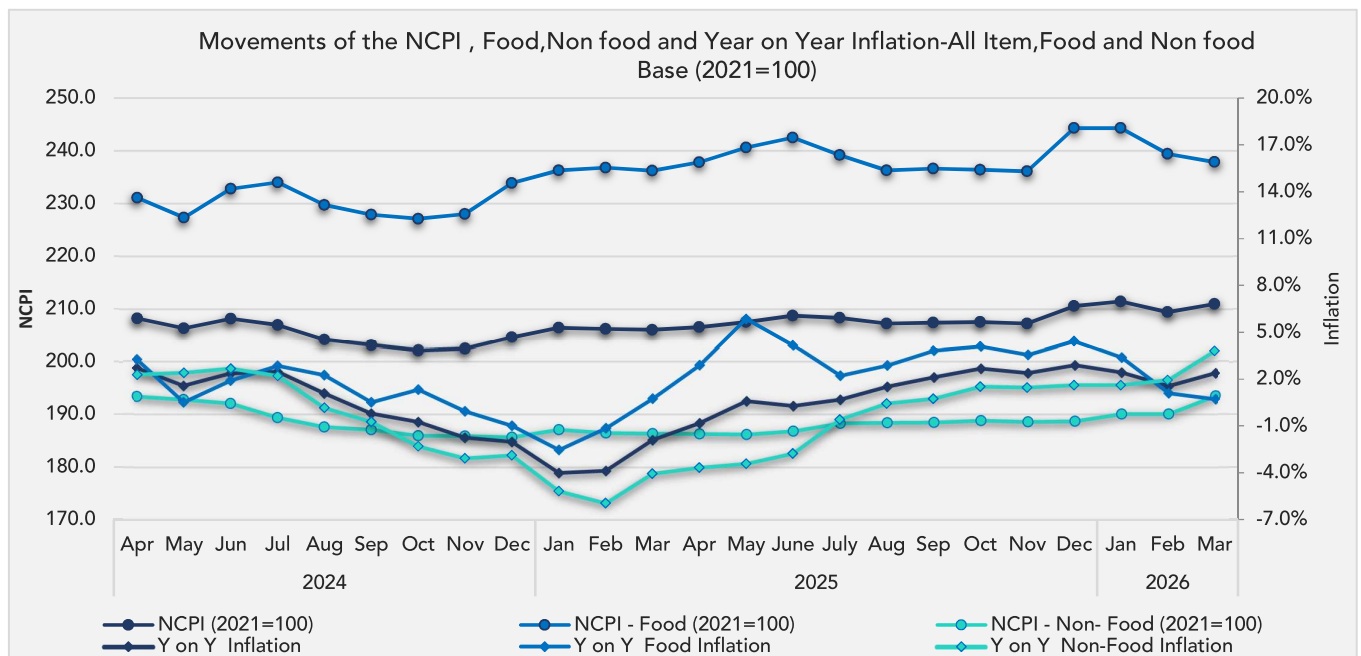
**Table 04: Contribution to the changes in NCPI (Base 2021=100) on year on year basis March 2026 as compared to March 2025**

Sub Group/Commodity	Value change			
	Rs. cts	% Change		
		Increase %	Decrease %	Net effect %
<b>Food</b>	<b>339.45</b>			<b>0.32</b>
<i>Fresh fish</i>	<i>457.80</i>	<i>0.44</i>		
<i>Chicken</i>	<i>310.78</i>	<i>0.30</i>		
<i>Milk powder</i>	<i>301.87</i>	<i>0.29</i>		
<i>Dried fish</i>	<i>301.09</i>	<i>0.29</i>		
<i>Eggs</i>	<i>80.70</i>	<i>0.08</i>		
<i>Fresh fruits</i>	<i>72.67</i>	<i>0.07</i>		
<i>Coconuts</i>	<i>-380.85</i>		<i>0.36</i>	
<i>Vegetables</i>	<i>-326.75</i>		<i>0.31</i>	
<i>Green chillies</i>	<i>-292.19</i>		<i>0.28</i>	
<i>Rice</i>	<i>-157.04</i>		<i>0.15</i>	
<i>Red onions</i>	<i>-72.29</i>		<i>0.07</i>	
<i>Sugar</i>	<i>-69.92</i>		<i>0.07</i>	
<b>Non Food</b>	<b>2183.42</b>	<b>2.09</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2.09</b>
<b>Alcoholic beverages, Tobacco and Narcotics</b>	<b>29.78</b>	<b>0.03</b>		
<i>Beetle leaves</i>	<i>31.87</i>	<i>0.03</i>		
<b>Clothing and Footwear</b>	<b>94.12</b>	<b>0.09</b>		
<i>Clothing</i>	<i>87.88</i>	<i>0.08</i>		
<i>Footwear</i>	<i>6.24</i>	<i>0.01</i>		
<b>Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other fuels</b>	<b>703.45</b>	<b>0.67</b>		
<i>Housing rent</i>	<i>197.19</i>	<i>0.19</i>		
<i>Materials for Maintenance</i>	<i>88.75</i>	<i>0.08</i>		
<i>Electricity bill</i>	<i>283.73</i>	<i>0.27</i>		
<i>LP gas</i>	<i>120.29</i>	<i>0.12</i>		
<i>Kerosene oil</i>	<i>12.24</i>	<i>0.01</i>		
<b>Furnishings, Household equipment and Routing household maintenance</b>	<b>74.21</b>	<b>0.07</b>		
<i>Wages to servants</i>	<i>32.45</i>	<i>0.03</i>		
<b>Health</b>	<b>117.20</b>	<b>0.11</b>		
<i>Purchase of medical/ pharmacy products</i>	<i>10.90</i>	<i>0.01</i>		
<i>Fees to private medical practices</i>	<i>63.26</i>	<i>0.06</i>		
<i>Consultation fees to specialists</i>	<i>20.24</i>	<i>0.02</i>		
<b>Transport</b>	<b>614.81</b>	<b>0.59</b>		
<i>Petrol</i>	<i>301.17</i>	<i>0.29</i>		
<i>Diesel</i>	<i>65.95</i>	<i>0.06</i>		
<i>Cost of servicing of vehicles</i>	<i>54.43</i>	<i>0.05</i>		
<i>Bus fare</i>	<i>37.85</i>	<i>0.04</i>		
<i>Transport for schooling/ preschooling</i>	<i>46.56</i>	<i>0.04</i>		
<i>Airline fare</i>	<i>76.10</i>	<i>0.07</i>		
<b>Communication</b>	<b>12.81</b>	<b>0.01</b>		
<b>Recreation and Culture</b>	<b>4.64</b>	<b>0.00</b>		
<b>Education</b>	<b>173.47</b>	<b>0.17</b>		

Pre-school fees	9.99	0.01
Tuition fees	119.05	0.11
School fees (International)	32.31	0.03
Restaurants and Hotels	141.07	0.14
Miscellaneous Goods and Services	217.85	0.21
Hair cutting and shaving charges	46.26	0.04
Agrahara Insurance	118.78	0.11
<b>All Items</b>	<b>2522.87</b>	<b>2.41</b>

Source: Department of Census and Statistics

Note 7: Percentage of items does not tally with overall percentage due to rounding off



Source: Department of Census and Statistics

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