

Forevate Market Intelligence · November 2026

What do shoppers check before they buy

The new rules of biscuit value your market intelligence tools should capture

Forevate

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12-minute read

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01

What happened?



Food got pricier, flour rose twice, and shoppers started pricing biscuits one by one.

1 April
Flour +Rs. 5/kg
First flour price rise

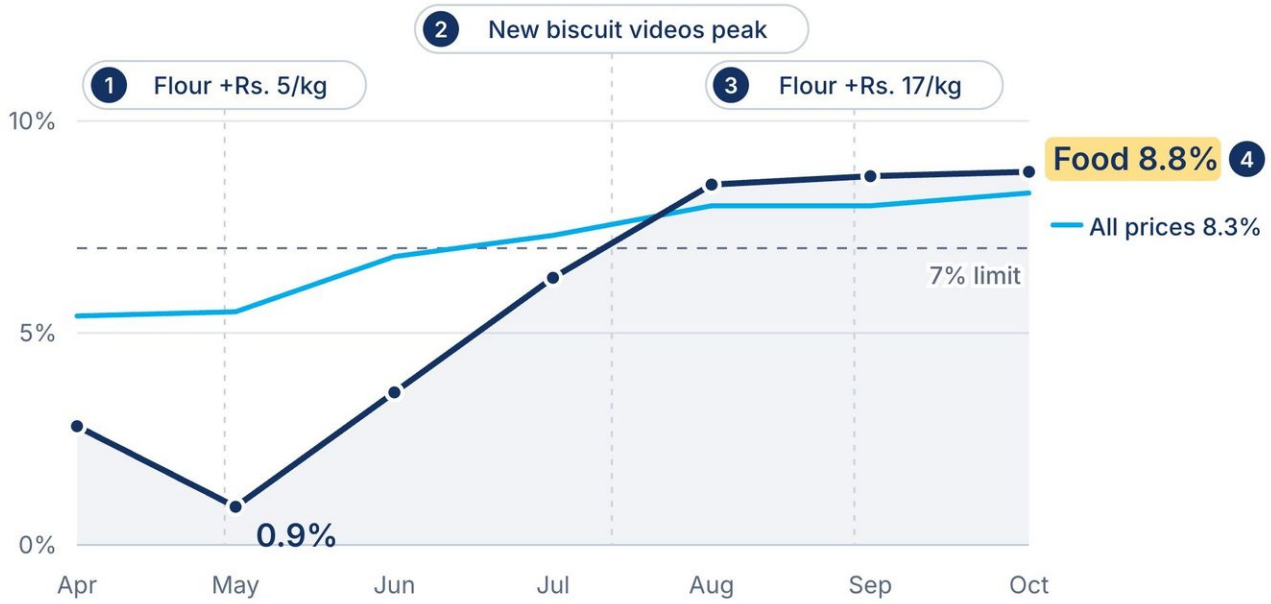
2 July
Videos peak
A new biscuit goes viral before most shops stock it

3 August
Flour +Rs. 17/kg
Second flour price rise

4 October
Food 8.8%
Food inflation, up from 0.9% in May

Between April and October 2026, everyday food in Sri Lanka got more expensive, and flour, the main ingredient in biscuits, went up in price twice. With less money to spare, shoppers began checking whether a biscuit was worth its price. Many filmed themselves trying new biscuits, counting how many were in the pack and working out the cost of each one. In July, these videos made a new biscuit popular almost overnight, even though many people could not find it in shops near them. The chart below shows these events on one timeline.

Food inflation vs all prices, Colombo, April–October 2026



Costs went up

Behind the price rises on page 3 are costs that hit biscuit makers and shoppers at the same time. Makers paid more to produce each pack, while shoppers had less to spend on it.

0.9% → 8.8%

Colombo food inflation, May to October

Fuel first, then food

- In April and May, fuel prices pushed inflation up after the Middle East conflict. Food stayed low.
- From June, food prices rose every month. From August, faster than prices overall.

Rs. 220 → Rs. 242

Prima household flour, 1 kg

Flour: two rises in four months

- 29 April: Prima +Rs. 5 a kilo, to Rs. 225, because of transport costs.
- 29 August: Prima and Serendib +Rs. 17 a kilo.
- After that, bakeries +Rs. 10 on a 450 g loaf, canteens +Rs. 5 on short eats.

Rs. 50/kg · 8.75%

Sugar import tax · interest rate

Sugar and borrowing costs

- Import tax on sugar: Rs. 50 a kilo, until 31 December 2026.
- 26 May: the Central Bank raised its interest rate by 1 point, to 8.75%. Held in September.

Because of these cost changes, three things have happened, across shopper behaviour, price sensitivity and product distribution.

A Shoppers now price biscuits one by one.
B Even small price rises get noticed.
C New biscuits trend online before they reach the shops.

Shoppers now price biscuits one by one

With food and flour costing more, shoppers are more careful with their money. When a new biscuit comes out, they film themselves trying it and check four things: the price, how many biscuits are in the pack, what is inside, and where they can buy it. **Reviewers do the maths for everyone watching, so a brand that shares the count, weight and any change first sets the story.**

TikTok 22 Jul 2026



Shows the Rs. 180 price and 10 biscuits in a 96 g pack

398 likes, comments and shares

TikTok 22 Jul 2026



Is it as good as people say?

381 likes, comments and shares

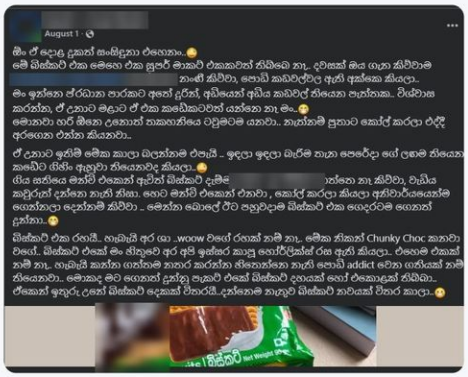
Facebook 26 Jul 2026



Taste test: “super tasty”

121 likes, comments and shares

Facebook 1 Aug 2026



No supermarket had it; a small shop did

689 likes, comments and shares

Screenshots of public posts. Names, faces, profile pictures and the brand are blurred.

Small price rises get noticed

With food prices up almost 9%, shoppers notice even a Rs. 5 rise, and they say so on camera. The two posts below show it. **A rise that looks small on a price list looks big once someone films it and shares it.**

1 Rs. 5 called out

A food creator filmed a bakery item going from Rs. 220 to Rs. 225 and called it too much.

2 Boarders check price first

Students in boarding rooms rate meals by how far the money goes, like a Rs. 200 rice packet.

TikTok 8 Aug 2026



Supermarket bakery item up from Rs. 220 to Rs. 225, called too high

591 likes, comments and shares

TikTok 8 Sep 2026



“Rs. 200 rice packet”: a boarding-life meal unwrapped on camera

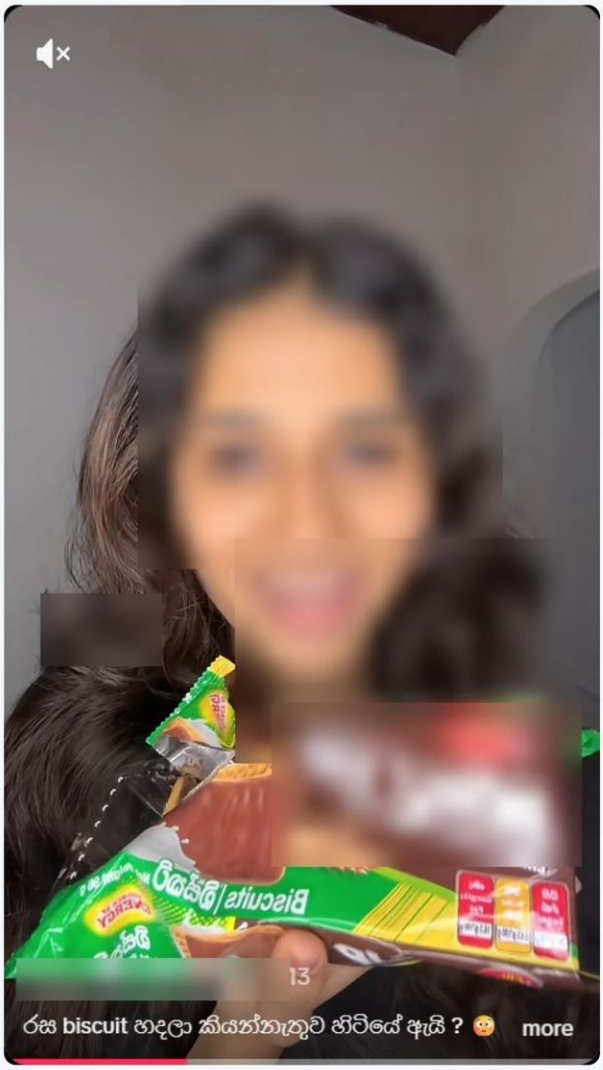
6,102 likes, comments and shares

Screenshots of public posts. Names, faces, profile pictures and the brand are blurred.

New biscuits trend online before they reach the shops

In July, a new malt biscuit became popular through shoppers' own videos, but many shops did not have it yet. Three of the buyers' posts are below.

TikTok 13 Jul 2026



Why launch it without telling anyone?
11,342 likes, comments and shares

TikTok 12 Jul 2026



Taste test of the new biscuit
3,770 likes, comments and shares

TikTok 29 Jul 2026



Hadn't seen any advert for it
137 likes, comments and shares

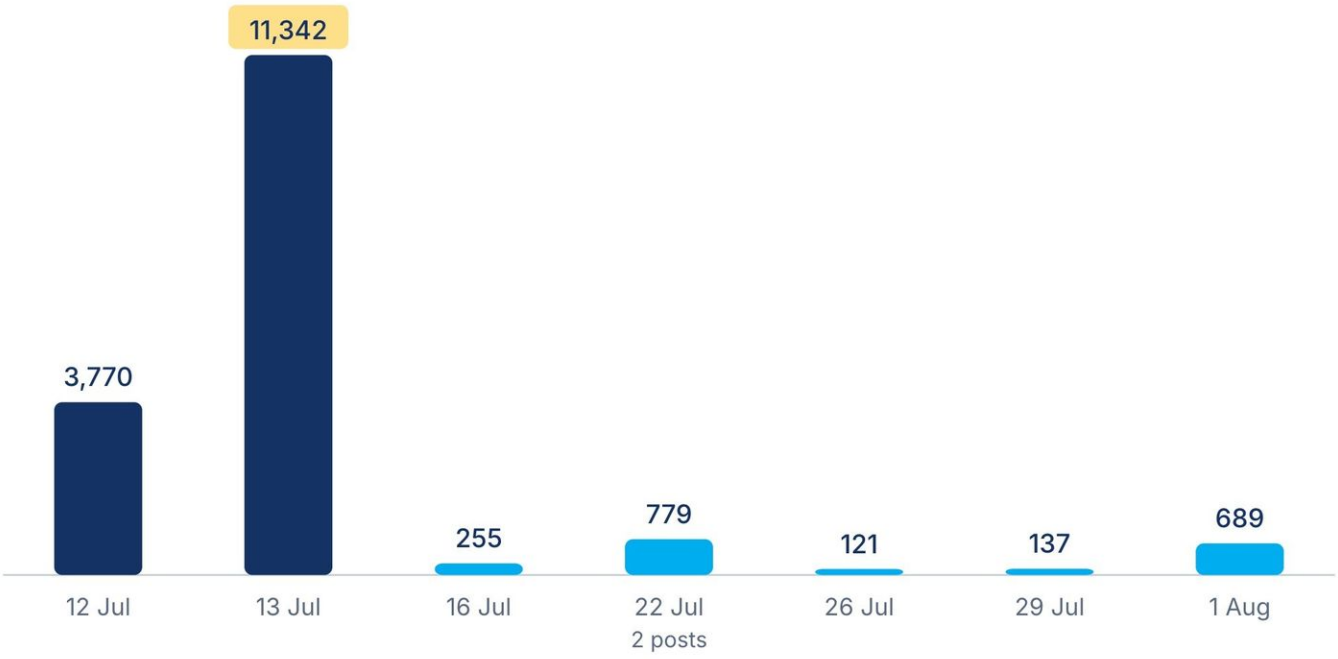
Screenshots of public posts. Names, faces, profile pictures and the brand are blurred.

How the new biscuit became popular

The new malt biscuit was launched on 10 July with an event. Within days, shoppers were posting videos of themselves tasting it, and two videos on 12–13 July got over 15,000 likes, comments and shares. Two shoppers said on camera that they had not seen any advert for it. Many could not find it either: nearby supermarkets didn't have it, so people tried small shops, asked shopkeepers to keep packs, or had family bring some. Most liked the taste, but still talked about the price and how many biscuits were in the pack. The chart shows how quickly interest peaked.

Buyers' posts about one new malt biscuit, 12 July to 1 August

Likes, comments and shares, by day posted



What we see emerging is that demand for a new biscuit can now build faster than it can be stocked. Online interest peaks in the first few days and then fades quickly. If the biscuit isn't in shops during that short window, much of that interest is wasted, leading to missed sales.

02

Why are these changes easy to miss?



These changes appear as signals from different sources, such as news reports on price rises, Central Bank inflation figures, and shoppers' own videos and posts, mostly in Sinhala. Each source shows only one part of the picture. Sales figures show only the end result, and often weeks later.

1	Flour goes up 10%. Bakeries and canteens raise prices.	**News** Page 4
2	Food inflation rises from 0.9% to 8.8%.	**Central Bank** Page 3
3	Shoppers call out a Rs. 5 rise on camera.	**Social media** Page 6
4	Reviewers work out the price of one biscuit.	**Social media** Page 5
5	**Put together, they point to one thing: the next price or pack change will be checked in public within days.**	**Forevate view** Page 7

Signals 1 to 4 are already visible. Signal 5 is Forevate's reading of what they mean together. None of them shows up in sales figures.

Brands that rely on sales figures alone will see these changes late. To see them in time, you need to watch all three sources. Section 3 shows what this means for your 4Ps.



03

What does this mean for your 4Ps?

Price · Product · Place · Promotion

What shoppers now do, and the risk for brands

The changes in Section 1 affect all four Ps. For each one, here is what shoppers now do and the risk it creates for brands.

	What shoppers now do	The risk for brands
Price	Quote the price of one biscuit, not the pack (page 5).	A tidy pack price at the till can still look high once a reviewer divides it.
Product	Count the biscuits on camera (page 5).	One biscuit fewer is the easiest change to spot. On a 10-pack it raises the price per biscuit twice as much as Rs. 10 more (page 13).
Place	Buy a new biscuit wherever they find it, often the corner shop (pages 7–8).	If stock isn't there in the first few days, interest fades and sales are missed.
Promotion	Learn about new biscuits from other shoppers' videos (pages 7–8).	Reviewers, not the brand, decide what gets checked and said.

Shoppers now set the standard for all four Ps, and they say publicly whether a brand meets it. Section 4 looks at what could force your next price or pack change, and when.

04

What could change your prices next?



Any price or pack change will be judged by shoppers, and the next one may not be your choice. The 12 November Budget can change taxes on flour, sugar and fats, and the Central Bank expects prices to stay high until at least March 2027. Use the table below to check what the Budget means for your costs. The next page shows when a change would land.

Budget items to watch

Item	Before the Budget	Why it matters	What to check in the Budget
VAT rate	Government wants to cut VAT within 2–3 years. No cut promised for 2027 (Newswire).	Goes straight into shop prices.	A cut, or a date
Who charges VAT	Businesses with sales over Rs. 60m a year. A plan to lower it to Rs. 36m was dropped in June 2026 (Newswire).	Small shops under Rs. 60m still don't charge VAT.	A new plan to lower it
Tax on imported wheat	Wheat 10% or Rs. 12/kg. Flour 20% or Rs. 27/kg (Sri Lanka Customs).	Flour is the main ingredient.	Any change
Tax on imported sugar	Rs. 50/kg until 31 December 2026 (Sri Lanka Customs).	Sugar is the next biggest ingredient.	Renewed, raised or removed
Tax on imported fats	Margarine Rs. 650/kg, palm oil Rs. 250–275/kg, vegetable fats Rs. 160/kg, butter Rs. 1,500/kg, until 31 December 2026 (Sri Lanka Customs).	Fats are the next biggest cost.	Renewed, raised or removed
Government salaries	Rising in three steps, Rs. 330bn extra by 2027 (Newswire).	More to spend for government workers' families.	Rises stay on time
Interest rate	8.75%. Next decision 20 November (CBSL).	What it costs distributors and shops to borrow.	The 20 November decision

If a tax changes and a price changes with it, shoppers will check whether the two match. Brands that explain the link first will be trusted more.

When a change would land

Any change after the Budget would land during busy buying times: O/L exams in December, Christmas, the Big Match season and Avurudu in April. With prices expected to stay high until at least March 2027, more shoppers will be checking value at each of these.

Busy buying times, with prices still high

November 2026 to April 2027



A price or pack change made during a busy buying time will be seen by more shoppers and checked more closely. When costs rise, brands may need to change their prices or pack sizes. Section 5 shows why shoppers would notice either.

05

What will shoppers notice next?



If the Budget pushes costs up, brands may have to change the price or the pack size. Either way, three trends mean shoppers are now better at checking.

Shrinkage

Abroad

Shoppers weigh packs and compare old and new (example video). A German court ruled in May 2026 that an unannounced smaller bar misled shoppers (Newswire).

Sign it's arriving: a local post saying a brand shrank a pack.

Sugar tax

Abroad

Germany plans a tax on sugary drinks; there are new calls for one in Australia. Industry pushed back, August–October 2026.

Sign it's arriving: a sugar tax debated here, including in the Budget.

Tax-maths videos

Already in Sri Lanka

A Sinhala video on how VAT works got about 6,900 likes, comments and shares in August.

Sign it's arriving: posts comparing a price rise with a tax change.

The sum shoppers will do

A 10-biscuit pack at Rs. 180 (illustrative numbers, not a real product).

Rs. 10 more

+5.6%

price per biscuit (Rs. 19.0)

One biscuit fewer

+11.1%

price per biscuit (Rs. 20.0)

Shoppers are learning to check packs, taxes and prices together, and they can work out a change like this in seconds. Section 6 sets out what brands can do about it.



06

What should you do now?

Five steps for the next three months

Five steps for the next three months

Put together, this report points to one thing: costs may lead to your next price or pack change, and shoppers will notice it within days. Handled well, that can build trust. These five steps can help shoppers understand any change you make.

1 **Explain changes first.** Pages 5, 13

Showing the new count, weight and price on the pack and online from day one, with a short reason, helps shoppers see the full picture.

2 **Use all three languages.** Page 15

Sharing news in Sinhala, Tamil and English at the same time means every shopper hears it directly.

3 **Check weekly.** Pages 5–8

Reviews and price comments often come within days, so a weekly look at mentions of price, count and filling helps you respond early.

4 **Stock small shops early.** Page 7

When supermarkets run out, buyers often turn to the corner shop, so early stock there helps them find you.

5 **Respond when Budget changes take effect.** Page 11

If a tax change affects your costs, a clear note on what it means for your prices helps shoppers trust the change.

Shoppers will check every change. Brands that explain first keep control of the story.

07

The evidence behind this report



Every finding in this report comes from public evidence only: published figures, such as Central Bank data and news reports, and what Sri Lankan shoppers post on Facebook and TikTok. This page shows what we looked at, and how sure we are about each finding.

What we looked at

10,172

Public Facebook and TikTok posts about biscuits and snacks, 26 weeks to 21 October 2026. 3,852 from Sri Lanka.

363

Posts used as evidence, in 103 recurring topics.

Who posted

Shoppers	66%
Brands or sellers	17%
Recipe or creator pages	10%
News pages	7%

Language

English	54%
Sinhala	45%
Tamil	1%

Finding	How sure	Why
Costs went up (p. 4)	Strong	Central Bank figures and news reports
A. Shoppers price biscuits one by one (p. 5)	Emerging	21 public posts, in Sinhala and English, mostly about one new biscuit
B. Small price rises get noticed (p. 6)	Early signal	A few Sri Lankan posts so far
C. New biscuits trend online before they reach the shops (pp. 7–8)	Emerging	Buyer posts and videos about one launch in July
What shoppers will notice next (p. 13)	Early signal	Mostly seen abroad; tax-maths videos have just started here

Strong means backed by published figures. **Emerging** means a clear Sri Lankan pattern from a few posts or one product. **Early signal** means only a few posts so far, or seen mainly abroad.

How to read these findings

Public posts give an honest, early view of what shoppers notice and talk about. A few notes help put the numbers in context.

Likes show interest.
Likes, comments and shares tell us what caught people's attention. Reach and sales are measured separately.

Well-known brands come up more often.
Searching by keyword naturally brings up familiar names first, so the findings focus on shared patterns rather than brand share.

Tamil posts are a starting point.
Most posts were in English or Sinhala, so we see the Tamil findings as an early view that we'd like to build on.

Shoppers' privacy comes first.
We describe what individual shoppers shared without naming or linking them. Links go only to public pages and news.

Forevate
by Fcode Labs

Add your own data

Public posts show what shoppers are saying. Combined with your own sales, retail and marketing data, they can show how these conversations affect your 4Ps and your sales. Forevate can bring the two together for you.

forevate.com →

Forevate is a market intelligence platform built in Sri Lanka by Fcode Labs. It reads daily market signals in Sinhala, Tamil and English and links them to brand decisions.



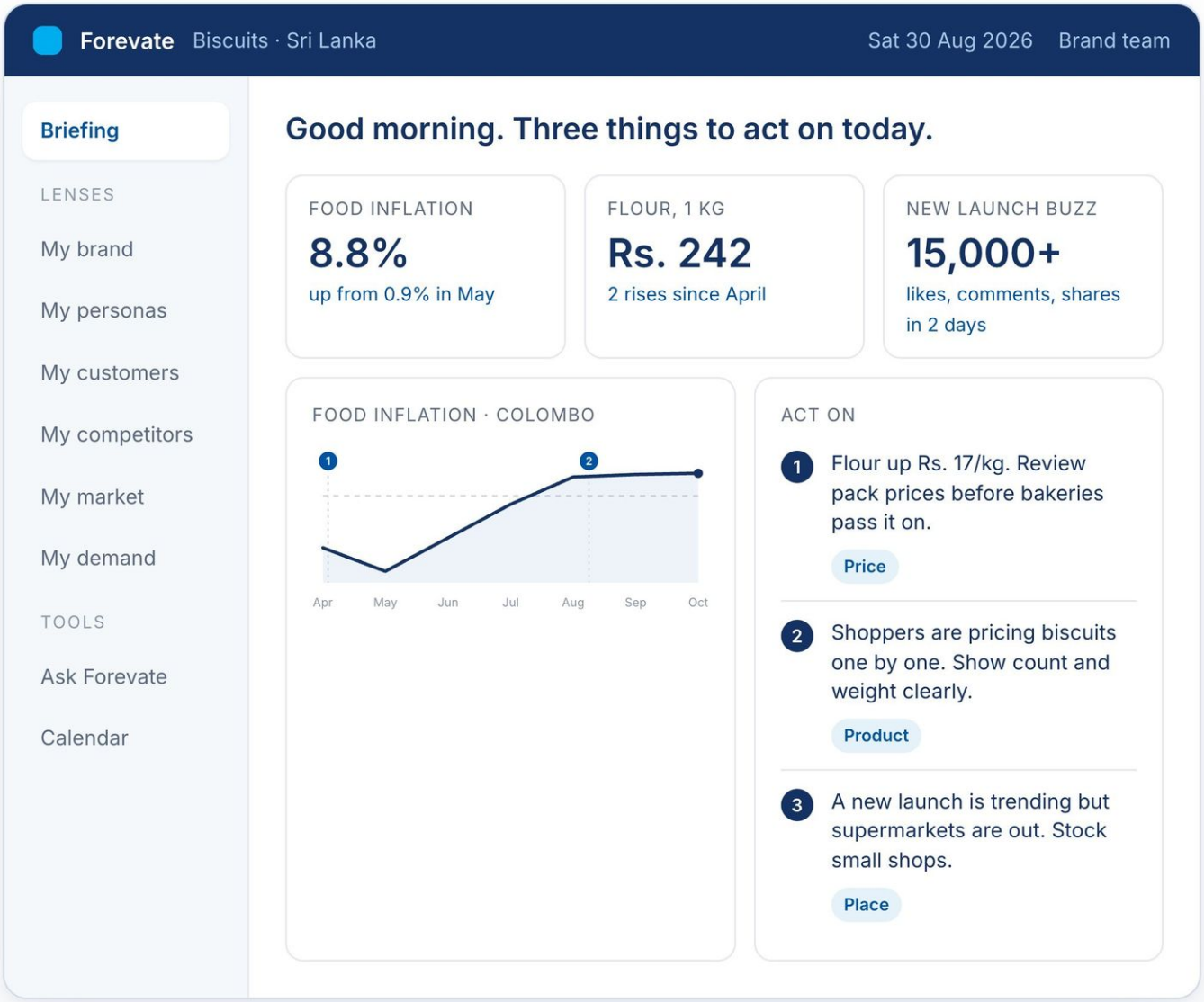
08

How Forevate Intelligence could have helped you

Read · Interpret · Show the effect

This story, on one dashboard

Everything in this report was public, but spread across news, Central Bank figures and shoppers' videos. Here is how it would have looked in Forevate the morning after the second flour rise.



See it as it happens

Flour, inflation and shopper videos land in one daily briefing, not in sales figures weeks later.

Know which P it hits

Each signal is tagged to price, product, place or promotion.

Know what to do first

The briefing ends with the actions worth taking today.

Illustrative dashboard, built with the public data in this report.

Beyond this story: six lenses on your market

The same platform watches the rest of a biscuit brand's world, every day. Each lens is tagged to the 4Ps it affects.



My brand

How shoppers feel about your biscuits, and your share of voice.

Product Promotion

Parents Students

My personas

Who buys, what they care about, and how that is shifting.

Product Promotion



My customers

Praise and complaints by pack: count, taste, broken biscuits.

Product Place

2-for-1 New launch

My competitors

Every rival price move, launch and promotion, and how shoppers react.

Price Promotion



My market

Flour, sugar, fuel, levies, weather and festivals that change what people buy.

Price Place



My demand

Why sales rose or dipped, and what comes next, using your sales data.

All 4Ps

Also built in

Ask Forevate

Test a change before you make it: "What if we drop one biscuit from the 10-pack?"

90-day calendar

O/L exams, Christmas, levy deadlines and Avurudu, flagged ahead.

Research on demand

Brief a study from inside Forevate; findings arrive in your feed.

Forevate brings the signals together early. Your team makes the decisions. forevate.com

Sources

Posts behind findings A–C

Date (2026)	Who posted	Platform · language	What it shows	Likes, comments, shares
8 Sep	Individual creator	TikTok · Sinhala	"Rs. 200 rice packet": a boarding-life meal	6,102
8 Aug	Individual food creator	TikTok · Sinhala	Supermarket bakery item up from Rs. 220 to Rs. 225, called too high	591
1 Aug	Kanchi's Food World (creator page)	Facebook · Sinhala	Couldn't find the new biscuit in any supermarket; a small shop had it	689
29 Jul	Individual buyer	TikTok · Sinhala	Hadn't seen any advert for the new biscuit	137
26 Jul	Sithu Baba's Kitchen (creator page)	Facebook · Sinhala	Taste test praising the chocolate-layered malt biscuit	121
22 Jul	Individual buyer	TikTok · Sinhala	Shows the Rs. 180 price and 10 biscuits in a 96 g pack	398
22 Jul	Individual buyer	TikTok · Sinhala	Asks whether the trending biscuit is as good as people say	381
16 Jul	Individual buyer	TikTok · Sinhala	Bought the new biscuit because it was trending	255
13 Jul	Individual food creator	TikTok · Sinhala	Taste test; asks why such a good biscuit launched without telling anyone	11,342
12 Jul	Individual buyer	TikTok · English	Taste test of the new malt biscuit	3,770
22 Jun	FOOD ZONE (creator page)	Facebook · Sinhala	"Have you tried the new biscuit?"	245
5 Jun	Individual buyer	TikTok · Sinhala	Shares the newest biscuit find	1,513

Economic data

CBSL: CCPI inflation, October 2026

CBSL: CCPI inflation, June 2026 (includes May)

Daily FT: CCPI inflation holds at 8% in September (includes July and August)

Daily FT: CCPI inflation rises to 8.3% in October

The Morning: CBSL keeps policy rate at 8.75%

CBSL: Monetary Policy Review No. 05, September 2026

Public pages and media

Newswire, Facebook: German court ruling on pack shrinking (14 May 2026)

foodiestruthh, TikTok: pack comparison (23 Jun 2026)

Prices, levies and policy

Daily FT: Prima raises wheat flour prices (30 Apr 2026)

Sunday Times: Higher wheat flour price further burdens the people (6 Sep 2026)

Newswire: Prices increased after wheat flour hike (29 Aug 2026)

Newswire: Sri Lanka aims to reduce VAT rates within 2–3 years (8 Oct 2026)

Sri Lanka Customs: National Imports Tariff Guide 2026, Chapters 10–11

Sri Lanka Customs: Special Commodity Levy chart (3 Nov 2026)

Newswire: Explained: 9 key changes under Sri Lanka's new VAT law (4 Jul 2026)

Posts by individuals are described but not linked, to respect their privacy.

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