

# Instability shoots up prices of essentials

Over the last one year prices of essentials have risen by 8.52 per cent, according to a survey. Experts believe government could play a vital role in controlling prices

BISHAWJIT DAS

Everyday living expenses in Dhaka have increased consistently throughout the year, a survey by the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) reveals an 8.52 per cent increase for the year. In the year 2001 it was 5.42 per cent.

The Government's lack of transparency concerning information in different sectors, fluctuation of the dollar and the inconsistent weather patterns has contributed to the instability of the market price.

Government officials claim the rice market has been relatively stable for the last six months, which has been confirmed by the retail and wholesale traders of the city. The price of IRRI has been Tk. 14 to Tk. 14.50 for several months.

There has been a relative price increase of 3.82 per cent for the year 2003 when compared with the market price of June 2002, said the CAB.

Though *Pijam* is down (-8.33 %), *Kataribhog*, *Jhinga*, and *Najirshail* had an average raise of 5.55%. IRRI and *Aaus* increased 3.5 per cent; while *Jamir* took a huge jump of 11.53 per cent.

"All governments during their term claim self sufficiency in meeting the needs of the country in rice production. Nevertheless, these statements always prove to be highly dubious," said Emdad Hossain Malek, a researcher of CAB.

"At the end of the year governments com-

monly reveal that they had imported a certain amount of rice. For the year 2002-2003 it was revealed that almost 35 lakh metric tons of rice was imported."

A government official, on condition of anonymity, backed those findings, "The present government showed (on papers) that they made a surplus of 20 lakh metric tons of rice last year. The previous government was little ahead putting it at 30 lakh metric tons." "If this information is correct, there should have been a price cut for rice, and there would not have been a need to import any rice in those years. The price would have dropped to Tk. 9 per kilogram," the official added.

"Farmers and traders never have a concrete idea of the amount of rice the country has or needs, though the total market could be controlled by them," said Malek.

The production of wheat and *Aaous* paddy is lower than the expectation due to rain, said Ramiz Ullah, a retail trader at Tongi Bazar. This may hamper the price to a degree, he stated. The price of flour (red) increased by 7.69 percent from last year and *Shuji* by 36.36 per cent, said CAB.

It is an added irony that the price of spices has decreased by 11.57 % this year. "Smuggling is the reason for the decrease in the price of spices which come from India and Burma illegally," said Malek.

The price of garlic, ginger, cumin (*jira*), almond, aniseed and cinnamon have decreased by 20.0 %, 15.0 %, 46.15 %, 50.0 % and 16.67 % respectively.

On contrary red (dried) chilli and turmeric

have increased by 28.57 % and 16.66 %.

"This year the production of chilli is down due to rain," said a spice trader at Kawran Bazar. Red chilli is now worth Tk. 80 per kilogram, he added.

Though the price of onion was inconsistent, now it is stable at a higher rate of Tk. 18 to Tk. 22, for local variety, and the imported ones are at Tk. 17 to Tk. 18. Specialists assume that this may rise soon during Ramadan.

The rainy season is always difficult for vegetables. Over flow of water destroys many crops, explained Shihab, a vegetable seller at Kawran Bazar.

Eggs price increases every year due to the infiltration of farm chickens in the market. The price had an increase of 17.83 % from last year.

Local chicken's eggs that used to provide the protein requirements for the whole country are now at risk of extinction, specialists claim. The increase in the price of poultry feed is the reason, says a poultry businessman.

The price of beef has increased to Tk. 100 per kilogram. Sellers said that the imported meat is less than the demand in the market. Traders claimed that the Value Added Tax (VAT) has been increased.

The fluctuations of dollar are also a reason for the instability of market price, said Malek. Since most of the ingredients of everyday needs are imported the market price is inextricably linked with international trade.



Prices of essentials such as vegetables have gone up steadily.

## Teachers for nationalising schools

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

Non-governmental primary school-teachers from across the country, who had observed a 24-hour strike since September 3 amid opposition by another group in Dhaka, gave an ultimatum to the prime minister for



Non government teachers on a hunger strike in the city.

nationalising all primary schools.

President of Bangladesh Private Primary Schoolteachers Association Shamsul Alam at a meeting had asked the striking teachers not to get confused by the propaganda of some other teachers who were not involved with their movement.

The hunger strike was scheduled

to take place at the Osmani Udyan, but the permission for the venue was cancelled by a short-notice, as the anti-strike group opposed it.

The hunger strikers ended their programme on September 4 at Mukhtangan instead of the Osmani Udyan and fixed October 30 as the deadline for the ultimatum for nation-

alisation of all primary schoolteachers and schools -- a pledge made in the ruling BNP's 2001 election manifesto.

"We are not a political organisation. This is a demand for our survival...if the government wants to raise the standards of education, it is impossible to do without improving the condition of primary schoolteachers," said Alam.

The president of the association also said that if the government does not do anything till October 30, the teachers would go for further action. They will launch a campaign from November 1 to 15, asking every lawmaker of 300 constituencies to submit a bill on nationalisation of all primary teachers and schools in the coming winter session of parliament.

The teachers vowed not to back-track until their demand is met. As a continuation of their movement, they will be holding special meetings with the frontline leaders of the ruling four-party alliance from November 16 to 30 to make the policymakers recognise their efforts to scale up the standards of education.

If that does not work, the teachers will go on a 48-hour hunger strike from December 30, said the president.

The meeting was addressed by Abdur Rahman Bachchu, secretary general of the association and Abul Kalam Azad, organising secretary, among others.

## PAB blasts globalisation

CITY CORRESPONDENT

People's Alliance of Bangladesh (PAB) in a press conference at the Reporters' Unity Auditorium yesterday alleged that corporate globalisation would destroy peoples' livelihood, environment, diversity of cultures and ethics.

The press conference was held on the occasion of the 5<sup>th</sup> ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to be held from September 10 to 14 at Cancun, Mexico.

Naila Khan said that the essential services for survival like water, food, health, house, energy should not be made commodities. World Bank, Inter-

national Monetary Fund (IMF), Asian Development Bank (ADB), multinational organisations and donor organisations are hampering the state and people's relationships by imposing privatisation policies in every sector of life.

Industrialised countries give subsidies to their agriculture sector and dump their agricultural products in developing countries and destroy the agricultural sector of the developing countries, Naila Khan said.

WTO is formed to realise the international business treaty of the world. The treaty has been done to patronize the multinational companies in doing their

business all around the world. The countries like Bangladesh those have signed the treaty would not be able to violate any rules even if it is required for the benefit of their people, a press release said.

"This treaty has been rejected by the freedom minded people of the world, as it is similar to neo colonialism," a speaker said.

People's Alliance of Bangladesh will demonstrate against WTO at Central Shahid Minar tomorrow in solidarity with the people of the world who will organise movement throughout the world on the same day, Coordinator of the PAB, Mizanur Rahman said.

## Bookbinders cry for rights

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Bookbinders at a demonstration in the city on Sunday demanded that the government cancel a tender that 'denies' their right to binding textbooks.

The Bangladesh Bookbinding Owners-Labourers Union protested the National Curriculum and Textbook Board's publication of the tender in newspapers on September 3 that asked printing press owners instead of the bookbinders to submit quotations. The demonstrators tried to submit a

memorandum to the textbook board chairman, Professor Kabir Uddin Ahmed, but he did not allow them to enter the building in Motijheel.

At a meeting between bookbinders and the education ministry officials, held at the textbook board on October 5, 2002, it was decided that all tenders for bookbinding should be awarded to the binders, Moksedur Rahman Khan, the union convenor, recalled.

State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Haq chaired the meeting, also attended by State Minister for Water Resources Goutam Chakraborty,

Deputy Minister for Education Abdus Salam Pintu, and the textbook board chairman, among others.

According to the decision, 45 bookbinders would be able to participate in the government tender this year and another 213 will be allowed to take part in the tender in 2004.

But the chairman did not go by the decision of the education ministry and invited the press owners to participate in tender bidding, shutting the bookbinders out of their right to binding government textbooks, complained the union convenor.

## Marketprice

### MARKET PRICE

#### Dhaka New Market, Dhaka

CEREALS  
Rice (HYV) Aman MediumKGS17.67  
Rice coarse(HYV)KGS14.33  
Rice Chiniguri (Aromatic)KGS34.00  
Wheat Grain (Local White)KGS10.33  
PULSES  
Masuri Dal (Deshi)KGS45.00  
Masuri Dal (Imported)KGS38.00  
Khesari Dal (Deshi)KGS21.00  
OIL & OIL SEEDS  
MustardseedsKGS31.00  
SPICES  
Onion (Deshi)KGS21.00  
Onion (India big)KGS17.00  
Garlic Deshi (common)KGS34.00  
Garlic Big (Imported)KGS29.00  
Ginger (Deshi)KGS35.00  
Ginger (Imported)KGS39.00  
TurmericKGS67.67  
Turmeric (India)KGS63.33  
Chili GreenKGS27.67  
Chili Dried (Deshi Bogra)KGS87.67  
Chili Dried (Imported)KGS77.67  
VEGETABLES  
Potato (Holand)KGS10.67  
Bitter GourdKGS15.00  
OkraKGS15.00  
Barbati Green (Long bean)KGS13.00  
Lau (Water Gourd)KGS15.00  
PatalKGS9.00  
Brinjal (Long purple)KGS15.00  
Pumpkin (Sweet)KGS7.00  
Papaya GreenKGS6.67  
FRUITS  
Banana Sagar (Medium)4 PCS10.00

Guava (Kazi)4 PCS10.00  
Apple (Australia)KGS75.00  
CoconutPCS11.00  
FISH  
Ruhi (Deshi)KGS130.00  
HilshaKGS185.00  
**Shaheb Bazar, Rajshahi**  
CEREALS  
Rice coarse(HYV)KGS13.40  
Wheat Grain (Local White)KGS10.95  
PULSES  
Masuri Dal (Deshi)KGS41.20  
Masuri Dal (Imported)KGS38.00  
Khesari Dal (Deshi)KGS21.40  
SPICES  
Onion (Deshi)KGS20.40  
Onion (India big)KGS16.60  
Garlic Deshi (common)KGS32.80  
Garlic Big (Imported)KGS25.80  
Ginger (Deshi)KGS35.00  
Ginger (Imported)KGS32.80  
TurmericKGS62.00  
Chili GreenKGS13.60  
Chili Dried (Deshi Bogra)KGS88.00  
VEGETABLES  
Potato (Holand)KGS9.10  
Bitter GourdKGS13.60  
OkraKGS6.60  
Barbati Green (Long bean)KGS9.40  
PatalKGS6.60  
Brinjal (Long purple)KGS10.80  
Pumpkin (Sweet)KGS6.20  
Papaya GreenKGS3.60  
FRUITS  
Banana Sagar (Medium)4 PCS5.40  
Guava (Deshi)KGS14.60

Apple (India)KGS49.00  
FISH  
Ruhi (Deshi)KGS133.00  
HilshaKGS183.00  
FERTILIZER  
Urea (Local)KGS6.10  
TSP (Imported)KGS13.30  
**Reazuddin Bazar, Chittagong**  
CEREALS  
Rice(HYV) Aman MediumKGS16.45  
Rice coarse(HYV)KGS14.65  
Rice Chiniguri (Aromatic)KGS32.60  
Wheat Grain (Local White)KGS10.60  
PULSES  
Masuri Dal (Deshi)KGS43.60  
Masuri Dal (Imported)KGS39.60  
Khesari Dal (Deshi)KGS24.60  
SPICES  
Onion (India big)KGS17.00  
Garlic Deshi (common)KGS45.00  
Garlic Big (Imported)KGS22.80  
Ginger (Deshi)KGS29.20  
Ginger (Imported)KGS30.80  
TurmericKGS52.80  
Turmeric (common)KGS36.60  
Chili GreenKGS21.20  
Chili Dried (Deshi Bogra)KGS76.60  
Chili Dried (Imported)KGS65.60  
VEGETABLES  
Potato (Holand)KGS11.60  
Bitter GourdKGS13.00  
OkraKGS14.80  
Barbati Green (Long bean)KGS11.60  
Tomato Ripen (Imported)KGS33.20  
Carrot Medium SizeKGS30.80  
Lau (Water Gourd)KGS8.40

PatalKGS10.40  
Brinjal (Long purple)KGS14.80  
Pumpkin (Sweet)KGS9.40  
Papaya GreenKGS7.40  
FRUITS  
Banana Sagar (Medium)4 PCS9.80  
Mango Fajli (Half Kg Size)KGS57.00  
Guava (Deshi)KGS14.40  
Apple (Australia)KGS73.40  
FISH  
Ruhi (Deshi)KGS139.00  
HilshaKGS140.00  
FERTILIZER  
Urea (Local)KGS6.31  
TSP (Imported)KGS11.96  
**Comilla Chaka Bazar, Comilla**  
PULSES  
Masuri Dal (Deshi)KGS43.60  
Masuri Dal (Imported)KGS35.60  
Khesari Dal (Deshi)KGS20.80  
SPICES  
Onion (Deshi)KGS21.20  
Onion (India big)KGS16.80  
Garlic Deshi (common)KGS36.60  
Garlic Big (Imported)KGS30.00  
Ginger (Deshi)KGS32.00  
Ginger (Imported)KGS25.00  
TurmericKGS78.00  
Turmeric (India)KGS58.40  
**Rajganj Bazar, Comilla**  
SPICES  
Chili GreenKGS26.20  
Chili Dried (Deshi Bogra)KGS83.00  
Chili Dried (Imported)KGS71.00  
VEGETABLES

Potato (Holand)KGS11.20  
OkraKGS13.20  
Barbati Green (Long bean)KGS13.20  
Lau (Water Gourd)KGS8.80  
Brinjal (Long purple)KGS16.60  
Pumpkin (Sweet)KGS9.20  
Papaya GreenKGS9.20  
FRUITS  
Banana Sagar (Medium)4 PCS8.80  
PineapplePCS18.40  
Mango Fajli (Half Kg Size)KGS58.00  
Guava (Kazi)KGS17.60  
Guava (Deshi)KGS13.20  
Apple (Australia)KGS77.00  
Apple (India)KGS62.00  
CoconutPCS8.80  
FISH  
Ruhi (Deshi)KGS137.00  
HilshaKGS168.00  
Chingri SmallKGS147.00  
**Khulna Sadar Bara Bazar, Khulna**  
CEREALS  
Rice coarse(HYV)KGS13.20  
Rice Chiniguri (Aromatic)KGS34.40  
Wheat Grain (Local White)KGS12.00  
Masuri Dal (Deshi)KGS41.50  
Masuri Dal (Imported)KGS39.20  
Khesari Dal (Deshi)KGS24.00  
SPICES  
Onion (Deshi)KGS19.60  
Onion (India big)KGS18.40  
Garlic Deshi (common)KGS34.80  
Garlic Big (Imported)KGS28.80  
Ginger (Deshi)KGS36.00  
Ginger (Imported)KGS32.80  
TurmericKGS69.20

Chili GreenKGS25.00  
Chili Dried (Deshi Bogra)KGS88.00  
Chili Dried (Imported)KGS98.00  
VEGETABLES  
Potato (Holand)KGS10.70  
Bitter GourdKGS12.00  
OkraKGS10.00  
Barbati Green (Long bean)KGS12.00  
Lau (Water Gourd)KGS7.00  
PatalKGS8.00  
Pumpkin (Sweet)KGS7.20  
Papaya GreenKGS6.00  
FRUITS  
Banana Sagar (Medium)4 PCS9.20  
PineapplePCS12.00  
Guava (Kazi)KGS11.00  
Apple (Australia)KGS85.00  
Apple (Pakistan)KGS75.00  
CoconutPCS11.50  
FISH  
Ruhi (Deshi)KGS136.25  
HilshaKGS169.00  
FERTILIZER  
Urea (Local)KGS6.25  
TSP (Imported)KGS13.50  
**Ghop Market, Jessore**  
FERTILIZER  
Urea (Local)KGS6.35  
TSP (Imported)KGS14.60  
**Jessore Sadar Bazar, Jessore**  
CEREALS  
Rice coarse(HYV)KGS12.80  
Rice Chiniguri (Aromatic)KGS33.60  
PULSES  
Masuri Dal (Deshi)KGS42.80  
Masuri Dal (Imported)KGS40.00

Khesari Dal (Deshi)KGS21.00  
SPICES  
Onion (Deshi)KGS20.40  
Onion (India big)KGS17.60  
Garlic Deshi (common)KGS38.80  
Garlic Big (Imported)KGS31.20  
Ginger (Imported)KGS40.80  
TurmericKGS62.20  
Chili GreenKGS14.40  
Chili Dried (Deshi Bogra)KGS98.00  
VEGETABLES  
Potato (Kazi)KGS10.00  
Bitter GourdKGS13.00  
OkraKGS13.40  
Barbati Green (Long bean)KGS10.80  
Lau (Water Gourd)KGS9.20  
PatalKGS7.00  
Brinjal (Long purple)KGS11.00  
Pumpkin (Sweet)KGS6.80  
Papaya GreenKGS6.40  
FRUITS  
Banana Sagar (Medium)4 PCS7.00  
PineapplePCS10.80  
Apple (Australia)KGS73.00  
Apple (India)KGS63.00  
CoconutPCS8.00  
FISH  
Ruhi (Deshi)KGS125.00  
HilshaKGS168.00  
**Barishal Sadar Bazar, Barishal**  
CEREALS  
Rice coarse(HYV)KGS13.30  
Rice Chiniguri (Aromatic)KGS35.60  
PULSES  
Masuri Dal (Deshi)KGS42.80  
Masuri Dal (Imported)KGS39.20

Khesari Dal (Deshi)KGS20.80  
OIL & OIL SEEDS  
MustardseedsKGS36.80  
SPICES  
Onion (Deshi)KGS20.80  
Onion (India big)KGS18.40  
Garlic Deshi (common)KGS39.20  
Garlic Big (Imported)KGS30.80  
Ginger (Deshi)KGS32.80  
Ginger (Imported)KGS37.60  
TurmericKGS67.00  
Chili GreenKGS26.40  
Chili Dried (Deshi Bogra)KGS88.00  
VEGETABLES  
Potato (Holand)KGS10.40  
Pumpkin (Sweet)KGS9.40  
Papaya GreenKGS6.40  
FRUITS  
Pineapple4 PCS46.80  
Apple (India)KGS62.00  
Coconut4 PCS40.80  
FISH  
Ruhi (Deshi)KGS134.00  
HilshaKGS162.00  
FERTILIZER  
Urea (Local)KGS6.40  
TSP (Imported)KGS12.60