

**Prices of essential kitchen items go up**

ISLAMABAD: Prices of essential kitchen items especially vegetables, eggs and rice have witnessed increase during this past week compared to the preceding week, a survey conducted by Business Recorder revealed here on Saturday.

The survey also observed an increase in price of various good brands of hand-washing soaps as family size Dettol, Lux, Safeguard and other soaps registered a jump in price from Rs70 per pack to Rs80.

Traders also told this correspondent almost 70 percent Dettol liquid available in the market was not original but was being sold at escalated prices in wholesale as well as in retail markets.

Traders told Business Recorder that during ongoing month, the prices of second grade ghee/cooking oil prices and few pulses have also reached new highest levels in the country, despite the fact that global commodity prices have witnessed a decline.

They said second grade ghee/cooking oil price per carton has jumped from Rs2,100 per carton to Rs2,250 per carton, and bean pulse price has reached Rs300 per kg, which is a record high.

However, during the week under review, chicken price has witnessed a decline as it went down from Rs7,200 per 40kg to Rs6,800 per 40kg, which in retail is being sold at Rs200 per kg against Rs230 per kg, while chicken meat price declined from Rs370 per kg to Rs320 per kg.

The survey observed a further increase in egg prices, which jumped from Rs110 per dozen to Rs115 per dozen in wholesales market, while in retail eggs are being sold at Rs125 per dozen against Rs120 per dozen.

During the week under review, prices of most of the pulses remained stable as moong is being sold at Rs290 per kg, maash is being sold at Rs250-260 per kg, masoor at Rs160 per kg, and chana at Rs135 per kg against Rs150 per kg.

Sugar price during the week under review went slightly down from Rs3,920 per 50kg bag to Rs3,900 per 50kg bag, which is still being sold at Rs84 per kg against Rs85 per kg.

However, it was also observed most of the retailers have not passed on the benefit of reduced sugar price to the end consumers due to lack of monitoring of prices by the market committee, while wheat flour is stable at Rs70 per kg.

The people have complained that despite the government's provision of multi-billion rupees subsidy to the Utility Stores Corporation (USC) for the supply of below the market price sugar, ghee, cooking oil, pulses and other items to the masses, most of the utility stores remain short of stocks.

People also alleged that some of the officials of the Utility Stores are privately selling the stocks provided to mobile utility outlets.

The survey observed an increase in rice prices as best quality Basmati rice price has touched Rs170 per kg level against Rs160 per kg, while broken best quality basmati rice are available at Rs100 per kg against Rs90 per kg.

No changes were witnessed in top brands of ghee/cooking oil, tea, spices, powder milk, salt, chillis, turmeric, and other items.

During the week, vegetables prices witnessed an increasing trend as potato price jumped from Rs250 per 5kg to Rs300 per 5kg, which in retail are being sold at Rs70 per kg against Rs60 per kg, onions price is stable at Rs150 per 5kg, which in retail is being sold at Rs40 per kg.

Tomato price went up from Rs100 per 5kg to Rs200 per 5kg, which in retail is being sold at Rs50 per kg against Rs30 per kg.

Garlic price went up from Rs800 per 5kg to Rs950 per 5kg, which in retail is being sold at Rs250 per kg against Rs200 per kg, and ginger price went up from Rs1,200 per 5kg to Rs1,300 per 5kg, which in retail market is being sold at Rs350 per kg.

Overall fruit prices witnessed an increasing trend as best quality white apple price went up from Rs130 per kg to Rs160 per kg, while normal is available in the range of Rs120-140 per kg against Rs90-100 per kg, while golden apple price went up from Rs120 per kg to Rs200 per kg.

Good quality banana is being sold at Rs130 per dozen against Rs120 per dozen, while normal quality at Rs100-80 per dozen.

Various qualities of melons are available in the range of Rs40-100 per kg, various qualities of peach in the range of Rs100-225 per kg.

Mangoes are available in the range of Rs90-150 per kg; outgoing cherry is available at Rs250 per pack against Rs300 per kg, and falsa at Rs250 per kg against Rs200 per kg.