

Weekly Price Monitor

CONSUMERS HIT HARD BY OFFICIAL INDIFFERENCE TO SOARING PRICES

ISLAMABAD, June 17, 2020

A weak monitoring system and lax attitude towards irregular pricing hit the consumers hard as the authorities did not regulate the notified prices of essential commodities, says the Weekly Price Monitor of the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN).

The Weekly Price Monitor comprises a market survey conducted on Thursday, June 11, 2020, in 45 districts—15 in Punjab, 13 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, nine in Balochistan, and eight in Sindh.

The observers from several districts reported that the official prices of the necessary grocery items were not notified, or readily available. The official rates of wheat flour and sugar were not accessible in 42 percent and 40 percent of the districts, while those of four pulses—moong, masoor, mash, and chana—were missing in nearly 11 percent of the areas. At the same time, the official rates for milk and yogurt were not publicly available in 18 percent and 31 percent districts, respectively. Moreover, the meat prices were missing in 18 percent of areas and poultry prices in 33 percent of districts. However, the official rates of vegetables were generally available across the country except for 13 percent of the observed markets.

The enforcement of the official market prices varied significantly across districts. Among the everyday vegetables, onions were sold above the officially notified price in 38 percent of the observed areas. This overpricing ranged between Rs2 (Khushab) and Rs20 (Karachi South). Similarly, tomatoes were sold above the official price in 31 percent of districts and potatoes in 33 percent of areas. Panjgur saw the highest difference in the official and market



- Onions sold above officially notified price in 38 percent of the observed areas
- Potatoes sold Rs20 above official rate in Panjgur
- Tomatoes sold at Rs27 more than official price in Muzaffargarh
- Highest difference of Rs173 observed in chicken prices in Swabi
- Official rates of wheat flour and sugar were not accessible in 42 percent and 40 percent of the surveyed districts
- Official prices of pulses—moong, masoor, mash, and chana— were missing in nearly 11 percent of observed areas
- Official meat prices missing in 18 percent of the areas and poultry prices in 33 percent of the surveyed districts



prices of potatoes, going Rs20 above the official rate, while tomatoes sold at Rs27 more than the official price in Muzaffargarh.

In the meat category, mutton and beef were overpriced in 56 percent and 53 percent districts, respectively. In markets in Lahore Cantonment and Karachi South, mutton and beef were priced per kilogram at Rs500 and Rs449, respectively, more than the rates notified officially. Moreover, markets in nearly 33 percent of districts paid no heed to the official prices of chicken, Swabi reporting the highest difference of Rs173 in the market price and the official rate.

The official and market prices of various pulses also recorded a significant difference in many parts of the country. Daal chana and daal mash were sold above the official rates in 60 percent and 67 percent of the districts. Daal mash went Rs126 above the officially notified rate in a Lahore City market, while daal chana was sold Rs78 higher than the official price in a market in Karachi South. The market prices of daal masoor and daal moong varied from the official prices in around 67 percent and 60 percent of the districts, respectively.

Refined sugar and wheat flour were sold above official rates in 40 percent and 44 percent districts, respectively. A 20-kilogram bag of wheat flour was Rs290 above the official price in Mansehra. Refined sugar was Rs16 more than the market price in Karachi South.

The market price of eggs per dozen was more than the officially notified rates in 24 percent of districts. At the same time, milk and yogurt prices were also higher than the official rates in 40 percent and 36 percent of the observed areas, respectively.

TDEA-FAFEN generates this Weekly Price Monitor covering 15 necessary kitchen items, including basic groceries such as wheat, pulses, oil, sugar, and perishable commodities like meat, and vegetables. It does this considering the need for an independent and regular assessment of the availability of such items.

The observers obtained the official prices from the officials of district administrations, or market committees, and collected the wholesale prices through market surveys. In the case of Punjab, the government price app 'Qeemat Punjab' was also used to get the official rates.