



BANGLADESH FOOD SECURITY MONITORING QUARTERLY BULLETIN

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Retail price of food: The national average retail price of rice decreased after *Aman* harvest started in November and that of wholemeal wheat flour (*atta*) remained stable at 36 Tk/kg since June. Prices of lentils (*masur*) and oil (palm oil) began to increase prior to the month of Ramadan (July 2014). Although the price of oil has been decreasing since after Ramadan, prices of lentils are still increasing.

Inflation: General inflation, measured by the point to point variation in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), increased for the third consecutive month to 6.32 percent in April 2015 (from 6.04 percent in January) on the back of rising food inflation. This is in contrast to the first half of FY 2014/15 when general inflation dropped steadily along with food inflation (and non-food inflation increased).

Food inflation has however increased since the beginning of this year. It has gradually gone up from 5.86 percent in December 2014 to 6.48 percent in April 2015- an increase of 0.62 percentage point in four months. Meanwhile non-food inflation fluctuated- rising during October-December 2014, before decreasing by almost 0.5 percentage point in January, increasing again in February and finally dropping for two consecutive months to 6.08 percent in April.

Remittances: Month-on-month, the total remittance inflow (in USD) in January and February slumped by 2 percent and 8 percent respectively. The monthly average remittance inflow in FY 2014/15 is however around 8 percent higher than in the previous year. Remittance growth was expected to recover during the current FY on the back of the upgrade in legal status of labour migrants in Gulf countries.

Food production, import and stock: The public food grain stock in the beginning of FY 2014/15 was 1.29 million MT (which was 39 percent higher than a year ago) and as of 23 April 2015 decreased to 1.06 million MT, which is slightly above the level a year ago. Total *Aman* production in the 2014/15 season, although slightly less than the target, increased by 1.28 percent from the previous *Aman* season. Cumulative import of rice as of 22 April 2015 was 1.29 million MT which is three and a half times more than the cumulative import in FY 2013/14. Most of this import was during the reporting quarter. This period also coincided with continuous *hartals* and blockades.

Public food procurement and distribution: The revised foodgrain procurement target in FY 2014/15 is set at 1.55 million MT. Cumulative distribution of rice and wheat during the first half of FY 2014/15 was 0.7 million MT of which 58 percent was rice and 42 percent was wheat. As of 16 April 2015, the distributed amount has increased to 1.2 million MT (68 percent was rice).

Wage rate and purchasing capacity: In January, which is agricultural high season, the average wage in Barisal, Khulna and Rajshahi divisions for a female labourer was only 197 Taka/day whereas for a male labourer it was 295 Taka/day – a difference of 98 Taka/day. After the *Aman* harvesting period ends, there are far less work opportunities for female agricultural labourers than for their male counterparts.

Wage data collected by WFP sub-offices show that rice purchasing capacity in Barisal, Khulna and Rajshahi divisions in the months of the reporting quarter is higher than during the same period in 2014.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

In the agricultural calendar two major crops - *Boro* paddy and wheat- are planted during winter. Their planting periods are December to mid-February and November to mid-January respectively and the weather during this period in 2014/15 is considered to have been favourable.

Month-Year	Average Rainfall (mm)			Average Temperature (Celsius)		
	Actual	Normal	Deviation (%)	Actual	Normal	Deviation (%)
Jan-15	10.5	9.1	0.2	19.4	18.9	0.03
Feb-15	16.5	25.5	-0.4	22.2	21.4	0.03
Mar-15	25.8	52.4	-0.5	25.9	25.6	0.01

Source: Bangladesh Meteorological Department

The average temperature during January and February 2015 was close to the normal temperature during this period and was favourable for planting. Unlike *Aman* plantation which is heavily rainfall dependent, *Boro* plantation is mainly irrigation dependent and dry, cold weather is suitable for wheat plantation.

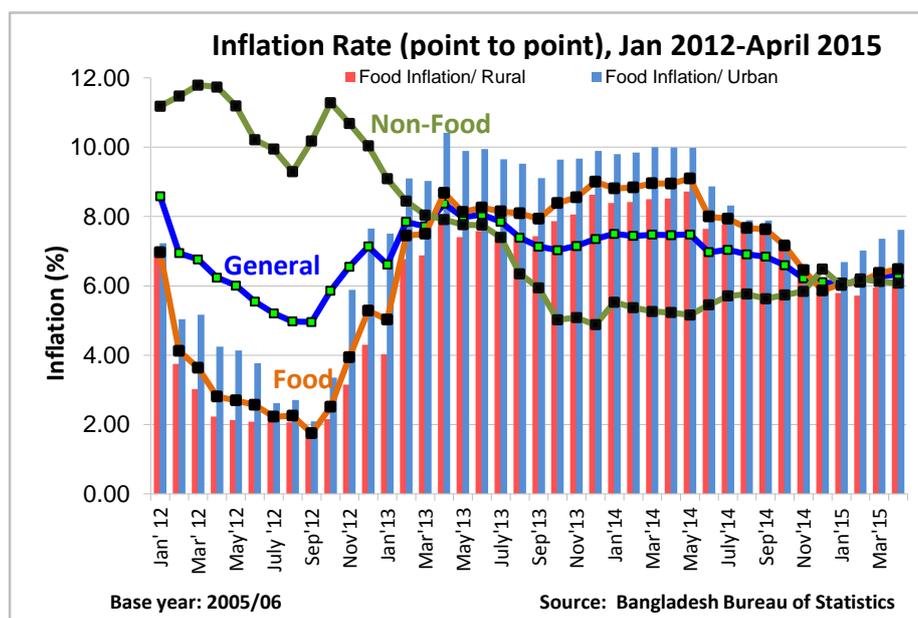
Aus planting season is March to May and the rice varieties benefit from summer rain. Rainfall in March was normal. Adequate rainfall during the *Aus* growing season is required for a bumper harvest.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

INFLATION AND REMITTANCES

Inflation

General inflation, measured by the point to point variation in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), increased for the third consecutive month to 6.32 percent in April 2015 (from 6.04 percent in January) on the back of rising food inflation. This is in contrast to the first half of FY 2014/15 when general inflation dropped steadily along with food inflation (and non-food inflation increased).



Food inflation had dropped for the seventh consecutive

month in December 2014 and stood at 5.86 percent. It was the first time since January 2013, that food inflation dropped below 6 percent. The year 2013 witnessed high food inflation which continued into 2014. Along with other economic and seasonality factors, political unrest resulting in *hartal*/strikes and blockades, which intensified during the months of November and December 2013, was considered a major contributing factor to the rise in food prices in 2013. Post-election stability which favoured internal transport of production inputs and food commodities and favourable downward international prices of imported food items such as oil and sugar had contributed to the downward trend in food inflation in the first half of FY 2014/15.

Food inflation has however increased since the beginning of this year. It has gradually gone up from 5.86 percent in December 2014 to 6.48 percent in April 2015- an increase of 0.62 percentage point in four months. Meanwhile non-food inflation fluctuated - rising during October-December 2014, before decreasing by almost

0.5 percentage point in January, increasing again in February and finally dropping for two consecutive months to 6.08 percent in April.

Current food inflation is still around 2.5 percentage points less than in April 2013 and April 2014 - when it was 8.67 percent and 8.95 percent respectively. At the beginning of the *hartals* and blockades in 2013 food inflation jumped by 2.42 percentage points from January to February while this time it increased by only 0.04 percentage point during the same period and by 0.26 percentage point from February to March.

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), which publishes the inflation figures, quoted prolonged *hartals* during January-March 2015 as being one of the reasons of this recent rise in food inflation on the back of a rise in price of perishable items. The rice price is still stable or decreasing after *Aman* harvesting (January). The global food price index and the cereal price index (FAO) decreased throughout January-April 2015. The global food price index has been decreasing since April 2014 on the back of a slump in the international oil price. At country level there has not been any reporting either on reduced crop production. The increase in food inflation during January-March can be attributed to the disruption in the supply chain system due to prolonged *hartals* and blockades. However the intensity of the effect on food inflation seems much less compared to 2013. The continuation of the increasing trend even after *hartals*/blockades were lifted in April was attributed by BBS to the rise in food prices due to celebration of Bengali New Year, however such trends were not evident in past years.

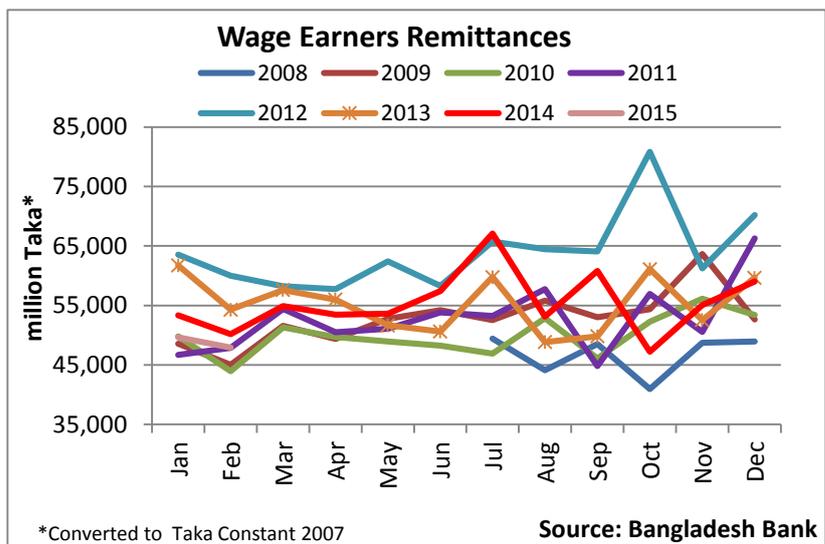
The difference between food inflation in rural and urban areas has been widening. Urban food inflation in April was 1.63 percentage point higher than rural food inflation and this gap has increased from 0.16 percentage point in October 2014. Strikes and blockades significantly disrupt the food supply especially of perishable items from rural areas to urban centres. During *hartals*, transport owners refrained from plying the highways for fear of arson attacks and vandalism. The wholesale market association members reported that during *hartals* they had to rent vehicles for transport of their commodities at increased costs which transmitted into an increase in the price of food commodities. Long and intense disruption in the supply chain has a high likelihood to fuel up food prices.

Remittance inflow

Month-on-month, the total remittance inflow (in USD) in January and February slumped by 2 percent and 8 percent respectively. Monthly average remittance inflow in FY 2014/15 is around 8 percent higher than in the previous year.

Remittance inflow in FY 2013/14 (USD 14.23 billion) had slumped. The main causes were political turmoil which disrupted and increased the costs of transactions, strengthened law enforcement in migrant countries against illegal workers, and the appreciation of the Taka against the USD.

The cumulative migrant outflow in FY 2013/14 was 7 percent less year-on-year. Remittance growth was expected to recover during the current FY on the back of the upgrade in legal status of labour migrants in Gulf countries.

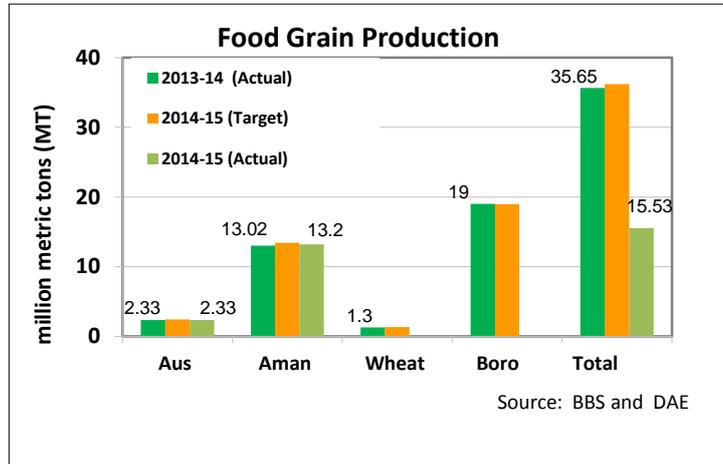


FOOD AVAILABILITY

CROP PRODUCTION, FOOD GRAIN IMPORT AND PUBLIC GRAIN STOCK

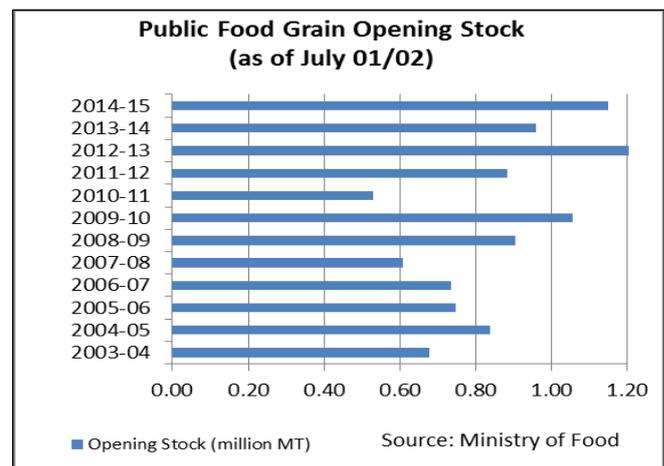
Food grain production

- The FY 2014/15 target for food grain production is 34.86 million MT for rice and 1.33 million MT for wheat - a total of 36.19 million MT (*FPMU, FSR 98*), up by almost 2 percent from the previous year's actual production. 55 percent of the rice production is expected from the *Boro* season (cultivated December-February, harvested April-May).
- The total *Aman* production in the 2014/15 season, although slightly less than the target, increased by 1.28 percent and yield by 1.27 percent from the previous *Aman* season. No change in area under *Aman* cultivation took place in 2014/15 compared to the previous *Aman* season. BBS estimated a total *Aman* production of 13.2 million MT (the target was 13.45 million MT) and an *Aus* production of 2.33 million MT (the target was 2.43 million MT). Production estimates of the *Boro* season and of wheat have not been finalized yet.



Food grain stocks

- The public food grain stock in the beginning of the year was 1.29 million MT (which was 39 percent higher than a year ago) and as of 23 April 2015 decreased to 1.06 million MT, which is only slightly above the level a year ago (Ministry of Food).
- The opening public stock of food grain for the FY 2014/15 was 1.15 million MT; it had increased by around 20 percent from FY 2013/14 but was still low compared to FY 2012/13. Relatively high amounts of public distribution and low procurement amounts of food grain during the second half of the FY 2012/13 had contributed to low end-of-FY stocks and the situation continued into FY 2013/14.



Food grain import

- Import of rice in the past two FYs was minimal (29,000 MT in FY 2012/13 and 375,000 MT in FY 2013/14). Almost all the import was by the private sector and the Government did not import any rice in the last FY. The same trend has continued into the current FY, however the absolute amount of import by the private sector has increased significantly. Cumulative import of rice as of 22 April 2015 was 1.29 million MT which is three and a half times more than the cumulative import of FY 2013/14. Most of this import was during the reporting quarter with only 586,000 MT of rice having been imported during October-December 2014 (none during Q1, FY 2014/15). This period also coincides with continuous *hartals* and blockades.

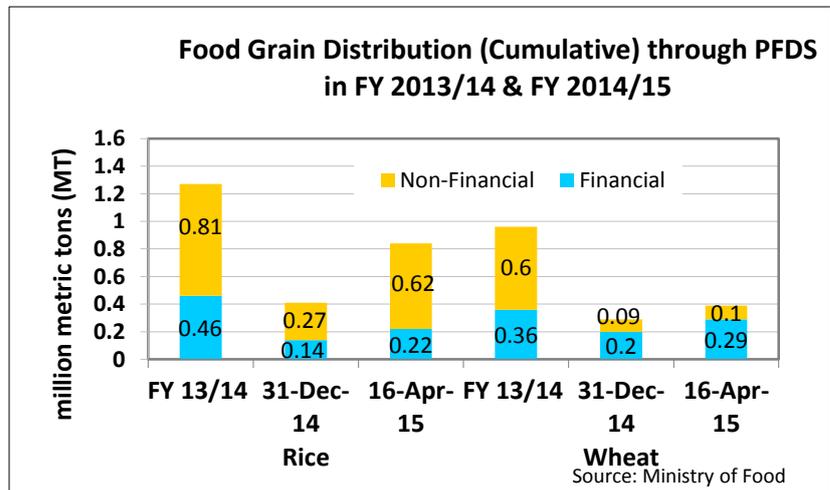
- Cumulative wheat import as of 22 April 2015 was 2.88 million MT, around two times the import of rice during the same period; it surpassed the total import figure of the last FY. Of the total import, 94 percent was by the private sector. The Government is however expected to gear up import of wheat in an effort to stabilize the price of *atta*/whole meal wheat flour.

Food grain procurement

- The FY 2014/15 budget allocated Tk 49.6 billion (USD 628 million) to grain procurement, which is 21 percent higher than last FY. The revised foodgrain procurement target in FY 2014/15 is set at 1.55 million MT (original 1.29 million MT) of which 1.40 million MT would be rice and 0.15 million MT wheat (*FPMU, FSR 98*). Actual rice and wheat procurements in FY 2013/14 were 1.29 million MT and 0.15 million MT respectively.
- Aman* rice procurement started on 15 November 2014 and 0.32 million MT were collected as of 28 February 2015. The wheat collection programme started on 01 April 2015.

Food grain distribution through PFDS

- Cumulative distribution of rice and wheat during the first half of FY 2014/15 was 0.7 million MT of which 58 percent was rice and 42 percent was wheat. As of 16 April 2015, the distributed amount increased to 1.2 million MT (68 percent was rice). The distributed amount is 76 percent of the amount distributed during the same period a year ago.
- 41 percent of the distribution was through financial channels with Open Market Sales (OMS) having the largest share. Among non-financial channels distribution through the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programme was highest, closely followed by Test Relief (TR), Food For Work (FFW) and Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF).
- The Government actually distributed a total of 2.23 million MT of food grain under PFDS in FY 2013/14 against a target of 2.56 million MT (*FPMU, FSR 95*). The share of wheat in the food grain distribution increased significantly. In the FY 2013/14 around 45 percent of the total amount of food grain distributed through the PFDS was wheat compared to around 30 percent in the previous two FYs.



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1. Aus Rice												
2. Aman Rice												
3. Wheat												
4. Boro Rice												

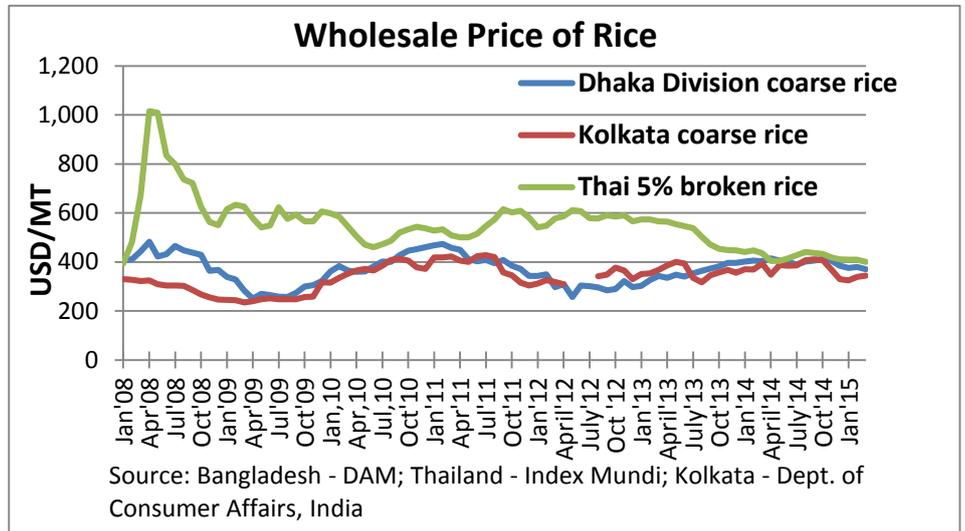
Legend: ■ Planting, ■ Harvesting

FOOD PRICE MONITORING

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL PRICES AND TERMS OF TRADE

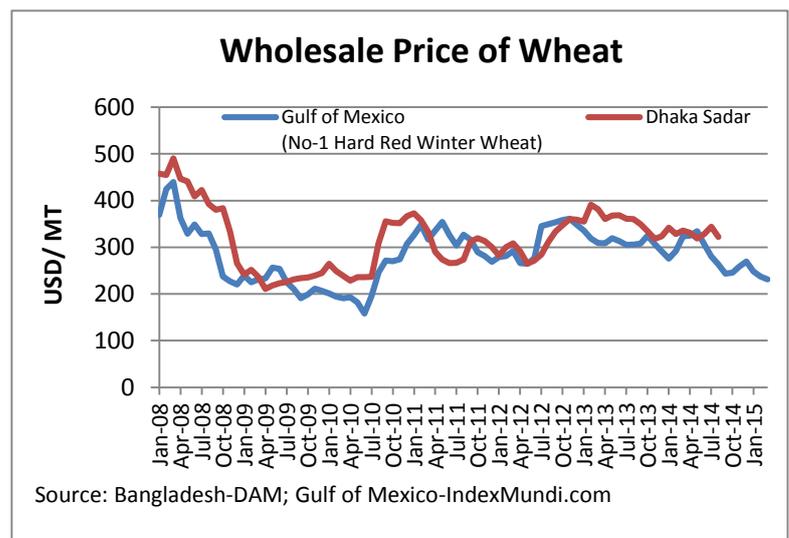
International wholesale prices of rice and wheat

International rice prices, as per FAO rice price index which is based on 16 rice export quotations, increased throughout January to August 2014 before steadily falling to 219 points in March 2015. The rice price index of March is a four and a half year low. Sluggish import demands and abundant export supplies is said to have pushed down the international rice price.



Coarse rice prices in Dhaka division and in Kolkata decreased by 60 to 90 percent compared to the average price in the previous quarter, while there was around 30 percent decrease for Thai 5% broken rice. Although the quarterly average of the coarse rice price in Kolkata was lower, within the quarter prices started increasing from February. The price of Thai 5% broken rice has been falling since September 2014 and hit 401 USD/MT in March 2015. In an effort to boost farmers' incomes, in 2011 the then Thai Government had started paying paddy farmers 15,000 baht (USD420) per ton - a 60 percent increase over 2010, under its rice pledging programme. With its higher price Thailand lost out to India (which took off a four year ban on the export of non-basmati rice) in 2012 as the world's largest rice exporter. One year after the start of the programme rice export prices for Thailand were on a decreasing trend as it tried to sell its huge stockpile of rice as a result of the intervention.

Bangladesh is a net importer of wheat and international prices heavily influence the price in the domestic market. After increasing steadily through October-December 2014, the wholesale price of wheat in the Gulf of Mexico slumped to 231 USD/MT in March which is lowest since August 2010.



In Dhaka *sadar* market the wholesale price was 322 USD/MT in August - a difference of 59 USD/MT compared to the price in the Gulf of Mexico. Prices since then were not directly available

from the Department of Agricultural Marketing website, however reports by FPMU suggest prices increased during this period (FPMU, *Fortnightly Foodgrain Outlook 175*).

Retail prices for essential food commodities

The national average retail price of rice decreased after *Aman* harvest started in November and that of wholemeal wheat flour (*atta*) remained stable since June. Prices of lentils (*masur*) and oil (palm oil) began to increase prior to the month of Ramadan (July 2014). Although the price of oil has been decreasing since after Ramadan, prices of lentils are still increasing.

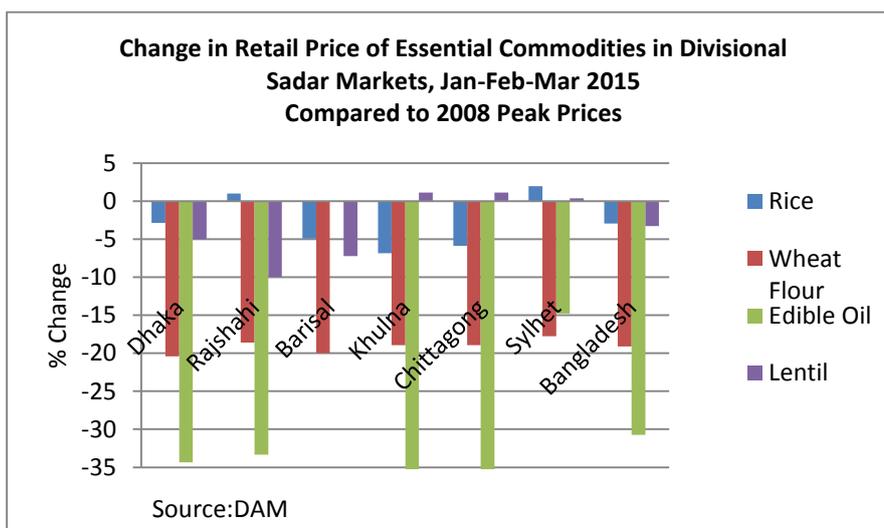
% Change of Retail Prices (National Average) of Jan-Mar'15 compared to-			
Commodities	Last Quarter	Last Year	2008 (high food price peak periods)
	Oct-Dec'14	Jan-Mar'14	
Coarse Rice	-4.8	-4.6	-3.9
Wheat Flour (atta)	0.4	-1.8	-17.5
Palm Oil	-2.4	-11.0	-28.2
Lentil (masur)	5.6	11.0	0.1

The national average retail price of coarse rice was around 33-34 Tk/kg throughout 2014 and decreased to 32-33 Tk/kg. The national average for January-March 2015 is 5 percent less than the average of the previous quarter and the same period in 2014.

Retail prices of essential food commodities (Tk/kg); Dhaka Sadar Market					
	Dec'14	Jan'15	Feb'15	Mar'15	Peak 2008
Coarse Rice	35	35	34	33	35
Whole wheat flour	36	36	35	36	45
Palm Oil	69	68	65	64	100
Lentil (masur)	87	89	88	88	92

Among the divisional *sadar* markets, prices were recorded highest in Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions (33-36 Tk/kg) and lowest in Barisal, Chittagong and Khulna divisions (31-32 Tk/kg).

The average retail price of wholemeal wheat flour (*atta*) in the current quarter is stable at around 36 Tk/kg. Prices were around 34-36 Tk/kg in the divisional *sadar* markets except in Sylhet *sadar*, which was exceptionally high in the quarter of April-June 2014 (39 Tk/kg) compared to other divisions (36 Tk/kg), has been at 37 Tk/kg since December.



Palm oil is the dominating edible oil in the country, accounting for around 64 percent of the market share among the three major edible oils (the other two are soybean oil and mustard oil). 90 percent of the edible oil requirement is imported. The national average price of palm oil is down to 69 Tk/litre from 84 Tk/litre in the beginning of last Ramadan. Prices are expected to increase in the months approaching Ramadan which begins in mid-June 2015.

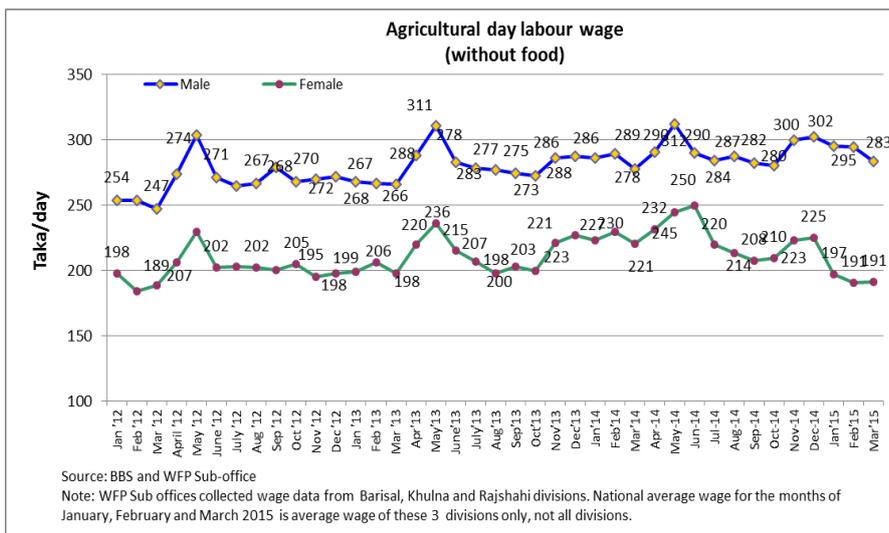
The average retail price of lentils (*masur*) increased by 14 percent from April (79 Tk/kg) to December (91 Tk/kg). There was little price differential in the divisional averages. Among divisional *sadar* markets the highest price is recorded in Sylhet with 93 Tk/kg. The prices of lentils in the *sadar* markets of Khulna, Chittagong and Sylhet are in fact higher than during the peak of 2008 (high food price year). Most of the requirement for lentils is met by imports. Nepal is the main source of imported lentils. Local production can meet demand only for 2-3 months. Traders attributed the rising price of lentils to higher import costs which were expected to decline after the harvesting season (mid-January to mid-February) in Nepal.

Terms of Trade/Food purchasing capacity of agricultural day labourers

WFP collects wage data from a selection of farmers and labourers and interviews with upazila agricultural officers in Barisal, Khulna and Rajshahi (old Rajshahi division including districts from current Rangpur division) divisions. To create a time series of national agricultural day labour (male and female) wage rates and the daily purchasing capacity up to March 2015, the wage data collected by WFP was used for the period of January to March 2015 and the wage data from BBS was used for the time period preceding January 2015. However, the estimated 'national average' based on wage data collected by WFP is an average of wage data from only 3 divisions- Barisal and Khulna in the south and Rajshahi in the north. It cannot be presented as statistically valid data, but provides an indication of the wage trend.

Year-on-year average agricultural daily wages for male labourers in the months of 2014 increased by 3-8 percent. The average rate of growth was 15 percent in 2012. Compared to that it was only 5 percent in 2013 – a year marred by political turmoil which reduced the migration of labourers during agricultural peak seasons.

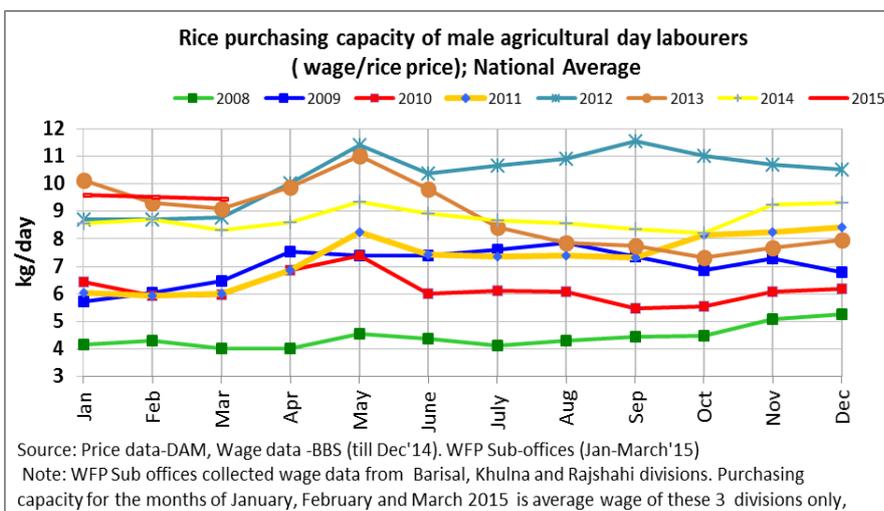
There continues to be a significant difference between the agricultural daily wages of male and female labourers. In January, which is agricultural high season, the average wage in Barisal, Khulna and Rajshahi divisions for a female labourer was only 197 Taka/day whereas for a male labourer it was 295 Taka/day – a difference of 98 Taka/day. After the *Aman* harvesting period ends, there are far less work opportunities for female agricultural labourers than for their male counterparts. Agricultural activities such as *Boro* transplanting (December-February) are predominantly practiced by male labourers. And thus the wage gap is also highest during *Boro* season.



The Terms of Trade (ToT) of agricultural day labourers is an indicator of the quantity of essential food items that an agricultural day labourer can buy with his/her daily income. Since rice is the staple food and constitutes the major share in household food expenditure, rice purchasing capacity is an important indicator of the ToT.

In the first half of 2014, year-on-year ToT were 7-15 percent less than in 2013. During July-December it rose to levels higher than a year ago but was still less than the 2013 level.

Wage data collected by WFP sub-offices show that ToT in Barisal, Khulna and Rajshahi divisions in the months of the reporting quarter is higher than during the same period in 2014. This is due to both lower rice prices and higher wage rates - both for male and female agricultural labourers.



Differences in rice prices weigh little on the monthly ToT (ToT*average monthly work days). The significant difference in the monthly ToT is due to regional differences in wage rates and work opportunities. Wage rates are usually lowest in the northwest divisions of Rajshahi and Rangpur and the southwest division of Khulna resulting in lowest ToT in these divisions.

The difference in wage between male and female agricultural day labourers is reflected in the ToT. In the past three years, the average wage gap between male and female labourers has been around 20-25 percent resulting in a purchasing capacity difference of 2 kg of rice per day. This has had significant implications on the food security status of households dependent largely on the income of female members. Interestingly, except for Rangpur, the wage gap is lowest in the divisions with lowest ToT and highest in the divisions with highest ToT.

SHOCKS FACED BY HOUSEHOLDS

IMPACT OF HARTAL AND BLOCKADES

2015 – Renewed political unrest

The year 2013 was marked by political unrest resulting in strikes/*hartals*¹, blockades²/*oborodhs* and violence. There were 75.5 days of countrywide strikes and blockades in the year 2013 with the frequency and continuity increasing in the months of November and December prior to the 10th national elections on 05 January 2014.

Afterwards there was a lull in *hartals* and blockades in 2014 but new waves of protest in the form of *hartal*, blockades and increased arson attacks started in the beginning of 2015 and continued nationwide until the end of March. The intensity of the continuous *hartals* and blockades fluctuated with gradually increasing movement of vehicles in February and March.

Hartal and macroeconomic impact

Although growth was picking up with increased economic activity in the first half of FY 2014/15, the three month long sustained political turbulence since January 2015 put the economy at a delicate situation. Continued *hartals* and transport blockades piled up losses across the sectors. The 2015 *hartals* and blockades are expected to have greater macroeconomic impact as business investments and activities were hampered due to longer continuity of *hartals* compared to 2013 when *hartals* and blockades were sporadic except during November and December.

The World Bank had estimated a loss of USD 1.4 billion in 2013 due to *hartals* and blockades and this time around it is expected to be larger. Direct production losses could be around 1 percent of GDP or USD 2.2 billion (*Development Update, April 2015*). The country is not expected to achieve its GDP growth target. Both the World Bank and IMF revised their GDP growth projection for FY 2014/15 downward to 5.6 percent and 6 percent respectively considering the impact of the political unrest.

Ready-Made Garments are a principal element in Bangladesh's development strategy and make up 81 percent of exports equivalent to 15 percent of the GDP. Fitch Ratings³ observed that the concentration of exports in

¹ The term "*Hartal*" which has a Gujarati origin and literally means "closing down shops" was first institutionalized by Mahatma Gandhi to refer to his anti-British general strikes. In today's context it is defined as "the temporary suspension of work in business premises, offices and educational institutions and movement of vehicular traffic nationally, regionally or locally as a mark of protest against actual or perceived grievances called by a political party or parties or other demand groups" (UNDP, 2005).

² Blockades or "*Oborodhs*" are defined as blockade of all road, rail and water transport networks. The difference is that during *hartals* all offices, shops and institutions are asked to remain closed and in case of a blockade these can remain open. But essentially a blockade and a *hartal* have the same effect as the transport networks needed to reach anywhere remain shut down.

³ **Fitch Ratings** Inc. is one of the three nationally recognized statistical rating organizations (NRSRO) designated by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in 1975. The three agencies are commonly known as the "Big Three credit rating agencies".

this sector means that a structural slow down here or any broader trend to transfer production assets to other countries would threaten Bangladesh's long-term growth potential. 80 percent of the employed garment workers are women. Negative impact of continuation of slowdown in the industry's growth following lack of safety standards and the deterioration in business climate will trickle down to the households of current and potential garments workers.

Hartals and impact on livelihoods of vulnerable groups

In January 2014, the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) Unit of WFP supported by the Food Security Cluster (FSC) had conducted a rapid assessment (consisting of focus group discussions (FGDs) and market surveys) to understand the impact of the 2013 *hartals* on vulnerable livelihood groups in urban and rural areas, and the changes in food prices and supply chain in the rural markets. WFP through its sub-offices in Barisal, Khulna, Rangamati, Rangpur and Sirajganj collected information on overall impact of the unrest on communities' economic activities and markets.

At microeconomic level *hartals* seem to have faster effects on the income opportunities of non-agricultural wage labourers than on agricultural wage labourers and salaried workers like household helpers and garment workers. The hardest hit of *hartals* is felt by the urban poor who depend on daily income.

There is also a difference between how *hartals* impact different categories of livelihoods in the agricultural sector. As big farmers and fishermen do not live on daily income, during one or two day *hartals* they can postpone their agricultural activities if needed. However this has an impact on the income of agricultural labourers who work in their fields.

During *hartals*, the intermediary traders are unable to transport their goods and other traders are unable to come to buy at the local markets. Small farmers who sell their agricultural produce to the traders and who are more dependent on daily income are forced to sell their produce at a discounted price in the local markets. Especially producers of perishable items like vegetables and milk are much affected. The reduced income in return not only affects their food security but also their ability to buy other essential necessities.

January-February 2015, the peak of *hartal* activities so far this year, was agricultural peak season as well. There have been sporadic reports in the media about producers of perishable items being affected but the intensity is judged to be much less than in 2013. Also in 2013 the urban poor were assessed to be more affected than the rural poor. This time around the urban petty traders had better opportunities at continuing business activities as urban restriction in movement slowed down after the first month of *hartals*. Transport workers, however, were reported to be largely affected as arson attacks increased as a form of *hartal* violence mainly targeted at vehicles.

Impact on food commodity markets and food price stability

Both the recent assessment and 2013 assessment indicate that markets in Bangladesh are so vibrant and integrated that *hartals* can hardly result in complete unavailability of any food commodity in the markets, but they can change the supply chain relationships between markets and cause instability in prices of food commodities.

In 2013, a decrease in the price of fish and vegetables due to *hartals* was largely offset by increases in the prices of cereals, oil and lentils which are eaten and bought in much larger quantities. This time around prices of cereals, oil and onions remained stable or decreased, but prices of poultry and livestock products (eggs, chicken, beef etc) increased. Like in 2013, prices of vegetables decreased as farmers tried to sell off their perishable produce.

All types of traders perceived themselves as being mildly or moderately affected by *hartals*. The decrease in trade performance reportedly had more to do with customer behaviour than with the food supply chain. The most commonly reported reason for negative effects on businesses was the decrease in the number of customers in the market during *hartals*, followed by customers reducing the amount of food items bought. High costs of transportation were reported by traders as one of the major reasons of price increases.

Reference:

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