



BANGLADESH FOOD SECURITY MONITORING QUARTERLY BULLETIN

Issue No. 25
Apr-Jun 2016

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HIGHLIGHTS

Retail price of food: During the reporting quarter, the national average retail prices of coarse rice and wholemeal wheat flour (*atta*) decreased slightly from the previous quarter. The prices of coarse rice were 12 percent and those of wheat 8 percent lower than during the same period a year ago. Prices of lentils (*masur*) and palm oil increased during the reporting quarter on the back of Ramadan, and hit 107.5 Tk/kg and 67.8 Tk/litre respectively in June 2016. The quarterly average price of lentils was 4 percent higher than in the previous quarter, whereas that of oil increased by 5 percent.

Inflation: General inflation, measured by the point to point variation in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), dropped by 16 basis points from 5.61 percent in April to 5.45 percent in May 2016, the lowest in the past four years. Higher production and lower prices of rice and vegetables at home and lower global commodity prices contributed to this decline of overall inflation. However, it raised slightly by 8 basis points to 5.53 percent in June 2016 on the back of an 11 percent increase in food inflation caused by price rises prior to Ramadan. Non-food inflation followed a declining pattern during the reporting quarter on the back of a reduction of commodity prices globally and fuel prices at home.

Remittances: The month-on-month remittance inflow (in USD) dropped by 7 percent in April 2016 compared to the previous month, which is about 8 percent lower than in the same month a year ago. The Central Bank considers low global oil prices as the cause of this decline which hit the incomes of Bangladeshi migrant workers in the Middle East. However, it started growing in May and increased as much as 21 percent in June 2016, the highest since August 2014, largely because of Ramadan and the Eid festival.

Food production, import and stock: The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) determined *Aus* and *Aman* production at 2.29 million MT and 13.48 million MT, 1.67 percent lower and 2.22 percent higher respectively than last year's production. *Boro* production, falling short of target in terms of area coverage, was not likely to achieve the target of 19 million MT. Foodgrain stocks reached 1.04 million MT in April; slightly decreased in May, and then had a huge fall to 0.86 million MT in June 2016. Cumulative rice import for the just concluded FY was 0.26 million MT as of July 2016. This figure was 0.04 million MT for the reporting quarter. Cumulative wheat import for the FY 2015/16 was 4.36 million MT as of July 2016. A total of 1.3 million MT of wheat was imported during the reporting quarter.

Public food procurement and distribution: The *Boro* procurement target had been set at 0.60 million MT. *Boro* procurement started from 5th May and will continue up to 31st August 2016. About 0.39 million MT of *Boro* paddy had been procured during the outgoing FY. The actual public foodgrain distribution of rice and wheat during the just concluded FY was 2.06 million MT of which 73 percent was rice and 27 percent wheat.

Wage rate and purchasing capacity: In March, which is agricultural lean season, the average wage rate for a female labourer was only 234 Taka/day whereas for a male labourer it was 312 Taka/day – a difference of 78 Taka/day. In the beginning of the *Boro* harvesting season in mid-April, with an increasing demand for agricultural labour, the average wage rate of women had a rise from 234 to 255 Taka/day, but then was still 76 Taka less than that of male labourers.

Wage data collected from BBS showed that the average ToT in the reporting quarter was higher than during the same period last year, mainly due to both lower rice prices and higher wage rates – for both male and female agricultural day labourers. 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 northwestern division of Rangpur and the southwestern division of Khulna resulting in lowest ToT in these divisions.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

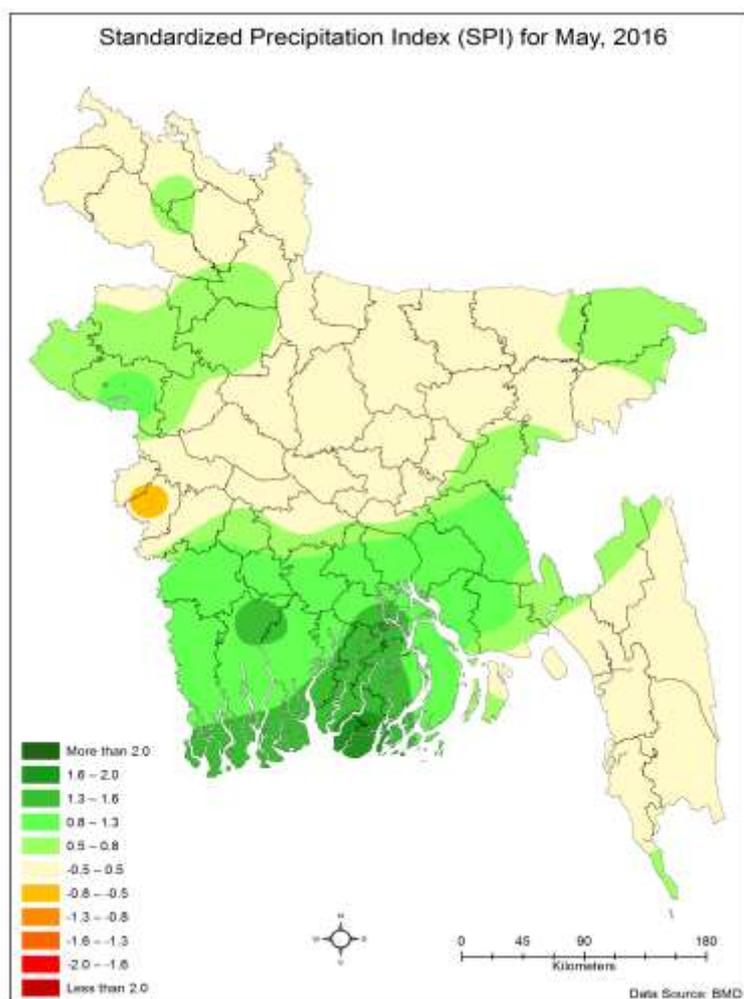
In the agricultural calendar *Boro* paddy and wheat are harvested in the April-May period which is also the planting period for *Aus*. *Aus* paddy is cultivated during March to May and the varieties benefit from summer rain. The actual rainfall pattern was quite unstable as compared to normal rainfall during the reporting quarter. It was about 51 percent lower in April, increased by 31 percent in May, and again fell by 28 percent in June 2016. However, the deviations in rainfall during this period did not cause any damage to the standing crops.

Month-Year	Average Rainfall (mm)			Average Temperature (Celsius)		
	Actual	Normal	Deviation (%)	Actual	Normal	Deviation (%)
April'16	62.3	126.5	-50.7	30.0	28.2	6.4
May'16	349.6	266.8	31.0	29.1	28.7	1.5
June'16	320.4	447.8	-28.4	29.7	28.7	3.2

Source: Bangladesh Meteorological Department

The average temperature during the reporting quarter was close to the normal temperature and was favourable for the planting of *Aus* paddy and also for seed-bed preparation for *Aman* paddy.

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department forecasted the precipitation status for the month of May 2016 for the country with the southern coastal belt estimated to be very wet (SPI¹ 1.5 to 1.99). No state of dryness/drought had been forecasted anywhere in the country over this period.



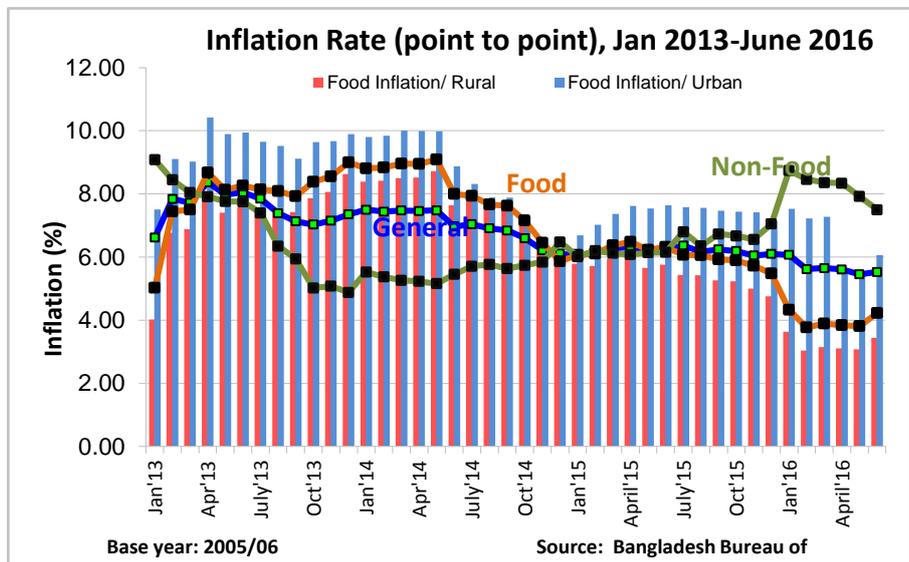
¹ Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI) refers to the probability of precipitation for any time scale to define drought intensity. The SPI ranges from +2.0 and more referring to extremely wet conditions, to -2.0 and less referring to extremely dry conditions/drought.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

INFLATION AND REMITTANCES

Inflation

General inflation, measured by the point to point variation in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), dropped by 16 basis points from 5.61 percent in April to 5.45 percent in May 2016, the lowest in the past four years. Higher production and lower prices of rice and vegetables at home and lower global commodity prices contributed to this decline of overall inflation. However, it raised slightly by 8 basis points to 5.53 percent in June 2016 on the back of a huge



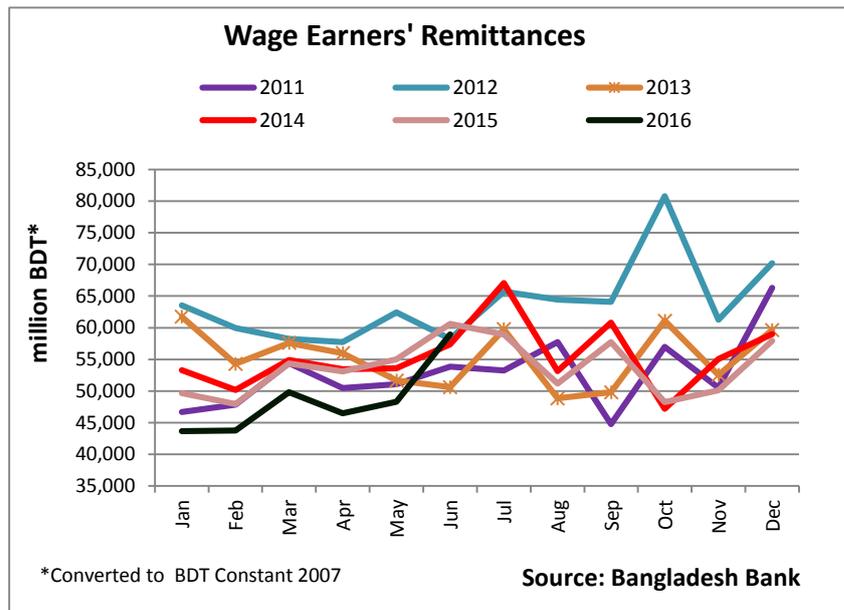
increase, as much as 11 percent, in food inflation caused by rise in prices prior to Ramadan. Non-food inflation, on the contrary, followed a declining pattern during the reporting quarter on the back of a reduction of commodity prices globally and fuel prices at home.

Average inflation stood at 5.92 percent for the just concluded FY, the lowest in 12 years and more than 8 percent lower compared to the FY 2014/15. The Ministry of Finance has set the inflation target for the upcoming FY at 5.8 percent. Food inflation also had been showing a falling trend since June 2014 and the average for the just concluded FY was 4.92 percent, the lowest in the past four fiscal years. As stated by the Bangladesh Bank, falling international commodity prices and a good harvest of *Boro* paddy propelled the decline in food inflation. However, non-food inflation showed a considerably higher trend during 2015/16. It was as much as 24 percent higher than the previous FY and the highest since 2014.

Even though food inflation had been following a decreasing trend during the past few years, the difference between food inflation in rural and urban areas continued widening. Although reduced slightly during the previous quarter, the gap between urban and rural food inflation increased throughout the reporting quarter and had been increasing since October 2014.

Remittance inflow

The month-on-month remittance inflow (in USD) dropped by 7 percent in April 2016 compared to the previous month and is about 8 percent lower than in the same month a year ago. The Central Bank considers low global oil prices as the cause of this decline which had hit the incomes of Bangladeshi migrant workers in the Middle East. However, remittances started growing in May and increased as much as 21 percent in June 2016, the highest since August 2014 largely because of Ramadan and the Eid festival when migrant workers tend to send more money home.



Remittance inflow for the just concluded FY reached USD 14.93 billion, 2.5 percent lower than in the FY 2014/15 since the oil prices continued to decline in the international market. Remittances are expected to play a vital role in achieving the country's 7th Five-year Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Bangladesh sends a substantial number of workers abroad every year. According to the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), manpower export rose by more than 62 percent in the FY 2015/16 from a year ago. But it could not demonstrate positive effect on the remittance inflow as workers are mostly little trained and lowly educated. About 88 percent of migrant workers move out without receiving any formal training (*newspaper source*). However, a sign of hope is the increased female migration in the international labour market; although the women's safety and security are yet to be ensured. Human trafficking remains a crucial challenge for Bangladesh.

FOOD AVAILABILITY

CROP PRODUCTION, FOOD GRAIN IMPORT AND PUBLIC GRAIN STOCK

Food grain production

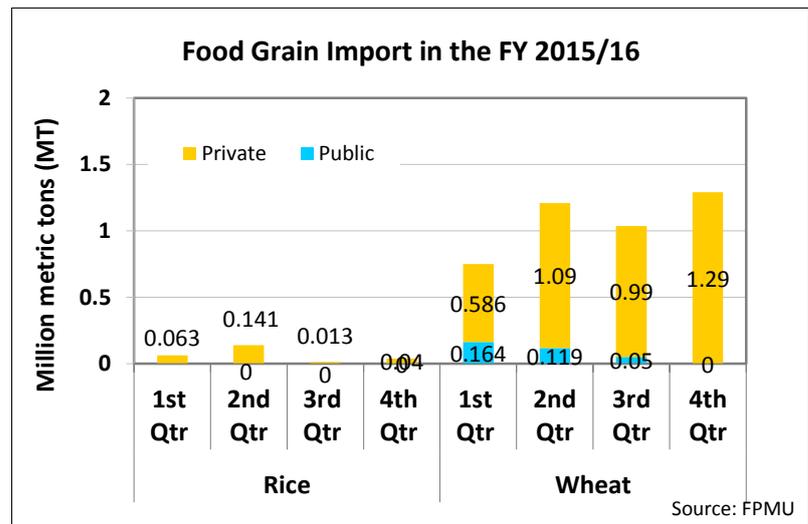
- The Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) had fixed the target for food grain production at 36.42 million MT for the just concluded FY of which 35.02 million MT is for rice and 1.4 million MT for wheat. Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) had determined *Aus* and *Aman* production at 2.29 million MT and 13.48 million MT, 1.67 percent lower and 2.22 percent higher respectively than last year's production (*FPMU, FSR 105*).
- *Boro* production, falling short of target in terms of area coverage, was not likely to achieve the target of 19 million MT even if last year's yield rate is maintained. Similarly, BBS anticipated wheat production to be slightly lower than the target due to some set back caused by the incidence of 'wheat blast' in parts of the country.
- DAE presumed that the actual foodgrain production for the FY 2015/16 would fall short marginally of the target and also would be slightly lower than the production level during the previous year.

Food grain stocks

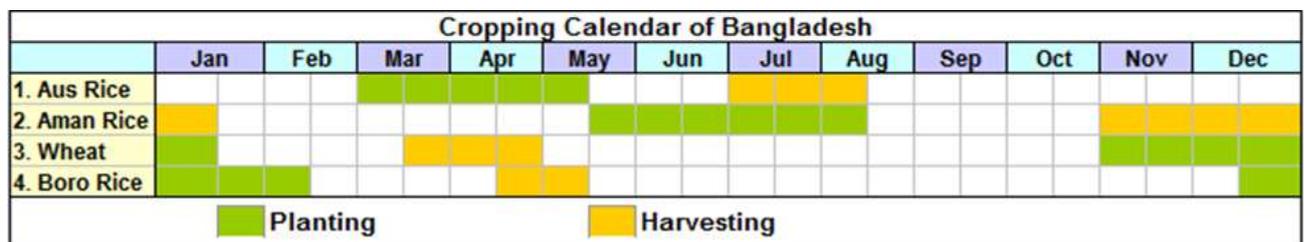
- The opening public stock of food grain for the just concluded FY 2015/16 was 1.48 million MT (as of July 2015) and had been increasing gradually till November 2015. However, it showed a declining pattern since December 2015 and continued during the reporting quarter. Foodgrain stocks reached 1.04 million MT in April; slightly decreased in May, and then had a huge fall to 0.86 million MT in June 2016. The Ministry of Food anticipated the stock replenishment to be stabilized and be adequate to satisfy the food grain demand for public distribution during the coming months (*Ministry of Food*).

Food grain import

- The actual foodgrain import for the just concluded FY was 4.62 million MT, 7 percent higher than the target (4.3 million MT). The Government reduced the rice import target for FY 2015/16 to one-third compared to the previous FY. The National Board of Revenue has doubled the import duty on rice to 20 percent with an intent to discourage import and protect the interest of the local rice growers. The Government had even been mulling over imposing a



- 10 percent supplementary duty on top of the existing 20 percent as stated by the Minister of Agriculture (*newspaper sources*).
- Cumulative rice import for the just concluded FY was 0.26 million MT as of July 2016 (*Ministry of Food*). This figure was 0.04 million MT for the reporting quarter. The total rice import was undertaken by the private sector with an insignificant amount as food aid. The Government did not import any rice (*FPMU, FSR 105*).
- Cumulative wheat import for the FY 2015/16 was 4.36 million MT as of July 2016 (*Ministry of Food*). More than 90 percent of the total wheat import was undertaken by the private sector with negligible contribution from public commercial import and food aid. A total of 1.3 million MT wheat was imported during the reporting quarter (*FPMU, FSR 105*).



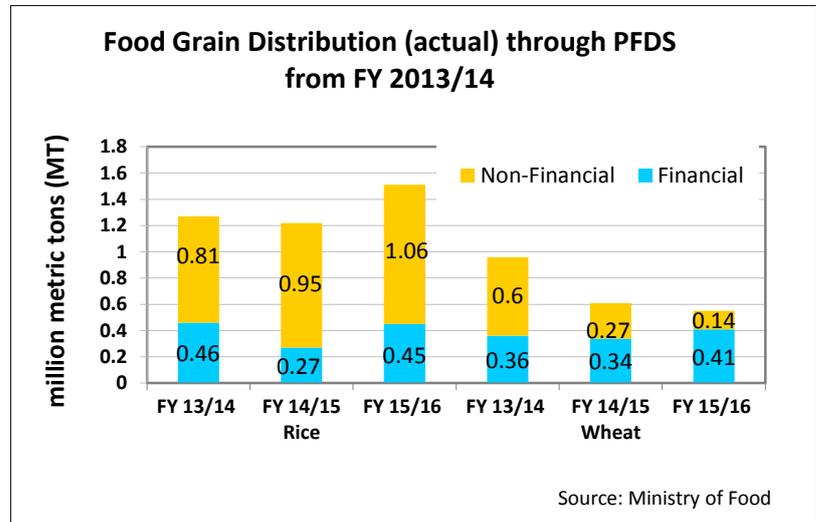
Food grain procurement

- The actual foodgrain procurement during the just concluded FY was about 1.23 million MT, about 25 percent less than the revised foodgrain procurement target (1.63 million MT). The deviation was largely due to a 28 percent lower actual rice procurement (1.43 million MT) than the target (1.03 million MT). The actual wheat procurement was exactly according to the target of 0.2 million MT (*FPMU, FSR 105*).
- The *Boro* procurement target has been set at 0.60 million MT. *Boro* procurement started from 5th May and will continue up to 31st August 2016. About 0.39 million MT of *Boro* paddy had been procured during

the outgoing FY. The Government decided to procure such a large amount of *Boro* rice from the farmers this year, for the first time in history (FPMU, FSR 105).

Food grain distribution through PFDS

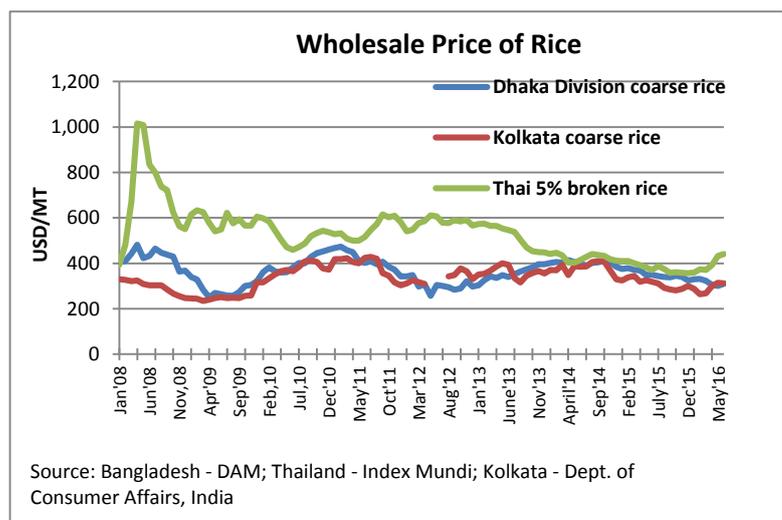
- The actual public distribution of rice and wheat during the just concluded FY was 2.06 million MT of which 73 percent was rice and 27 percent wheat. The actual distribution for the FY 2015/16 was about 7 percent less than the target of 2.21 million MT (Ministry of Food).
- The distributed amount during the year was about 12 percent higher than the amount distributed during the same period a year ago. The Government increased the allocation for foodgrain distribution and reduced the rice price under the Open Market Sales (OMS) as there were huge stocks remaining from the previous years. The demand for foodgrains sold under the OMS programme declined in recent times as the price of rice fell much in the local market (newspaper sources).
- 42 percent of the distribution in the just concluded FY was through financial channels with Open Market Sales (OMS) having the largest share, about 60 percent. Among non-financial channels the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) and the Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programmes dominated with higher shares of distribution.



FOOD PRICE MONITORING

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL PRICES AND TERMS OF TRADE

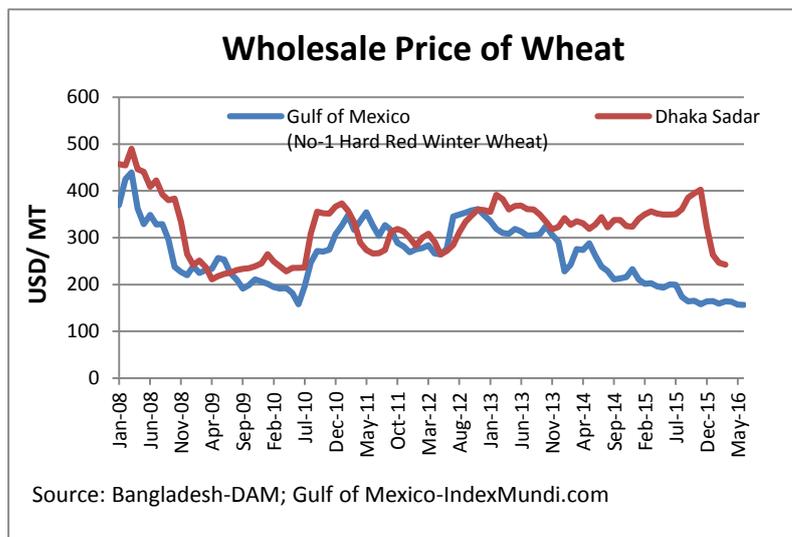
International rice prices, as per FAO rice price index which is based on 16 rice export quotations, remained quite stable during the just concluded FY after a continuous downward trend since August 2014. The average price for the reporting quarter was about 8 percent less than in the same period a year ago. Again, the average international rice price for the FY 2015/16 was 12 percent lower than in the previous FY. Sluggish import demands and abundant export supplies are said to have pushed down the international rice prices.



Coarse rice prices in Dhaka division during the reporting quarter decreased by almost 7 percent as compared to the average price in the previous quarter, which was 14 percent lower than in the same period a year ago. However, the average coarse rice prices for both Kolkata and Thai 5% broken rice increased by 13 percent and 15 percent respectively during the reporting quarter as compared to the previous quarter. Nevertheless, the

average prices for Dhaka, Kolkata and Thai 5% broken rice declined during the just concluded FY as compared to the previous FY.

Bangladesh is a net importer of wheat and international prices heavily influence the price in the domestic market. The wholesale price of hard red winter wheat in the Gulf of Mexico followed a declining trend during the reporting quarter. It was 158 USD/MT in April and had a huge fall to 134 USD/MT in June 2016. The quarterly average price for the reporting quarter was 2 percent less than the previous one and about 19 percent less than in the same period a year ago. Again, the average wheat price during the just concluded FY was 22 percent lower than the price during the previous FY.



In Dhaka *sadar* market the wholesale price of imported red wheat was 322 USD/MT in August 2014- a difference of 93 USD/MT compared to the price in the Gulf of Mexico. Prices for the imported red wheat since then were not directly available from the Department of Agricultural Marketing website; therefore, that of imported white wheat was used from September 2014. The price hit 242 USD/MT in March 2016, the lowest in the country's history. The fall in price was mainly on the back of reduced import and the Government's decision to slightly reduce the cereal price for OMS in order to clear stock (*newspaper sources*). However, wheat prices for Dhaka *sadar* during the reporting quarter were not available.

Retail prices for essential food commodities

During the reporting quarter, the national average retail prices of coarse rice and wholemeal wheat flour (*atta*) decreased slightly from the previous quarter. The prices of coarse rice were 12 percent and those of wheat 8 percent lower than in the same period a year ago. Prices of lentils (*masur*) and palm oil increased during the reporting quarter on the back of the holy month of Ramadan, and hit 107.5 Tk/kg and 67.8 Tk/litre respectively in June

% Change of Retail Prices (National Average) of Apr-Jun'16 compared to past			
Commodities	Last Quarter Jan-Mar'16	Last Year Apr-Jun'15	2008 (high food price peak periods)
Coarse Rice	-3.6	-12.1	-22.2
Wheat Flour (atta)	-3.3	-8.3	-27.5
Palm Oil	4.9	0.8	-
Lentil (masur)	3.8	16.0	18.7

2016. The quarterly average price of lentils was 4 percent higher than in the previous quarter and about 16 percent higher than in the same period one year ago. Similarly, the national average oil price increased by 5 percent during the reporting quarter as compared to the previous quarter.

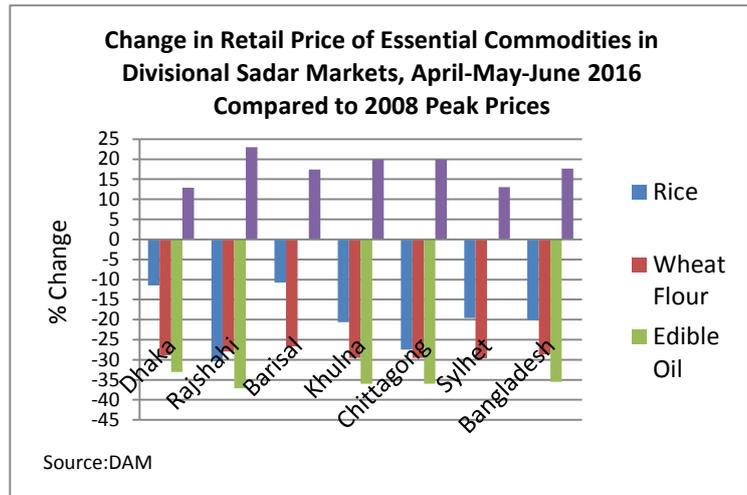
The national average retail prices of coarse rice and wheat were around 26-27 Tk/kg and 32-34 Tk/kg respectively during the just concluded FY. Among the divisional *sadar* markets, coarse rice prices during the reporting quarter were recorded highest in Dhaka division (31 Tk/kg) and lowest in Rajshahi division (23 Tk/kg). Similarly, the prices of wheat in all the divisional *sadar* markets fluctuated between 31 to 33 Tk/kg during the reporting

Retail prices of essential food commodities (Tk/kg); Dhaka Sadar Market					
	Mar'16	Apr'16	May'16	Jun'16	Peak 2008
Coarse Rice	32	32	33	28	35
Whole wheat flour	33	32	32	32	45
Palm Oil	61	65	68	68	100
Lentils (masur)	101	105	105	105	92

Source: Department of Agricultural Marketing

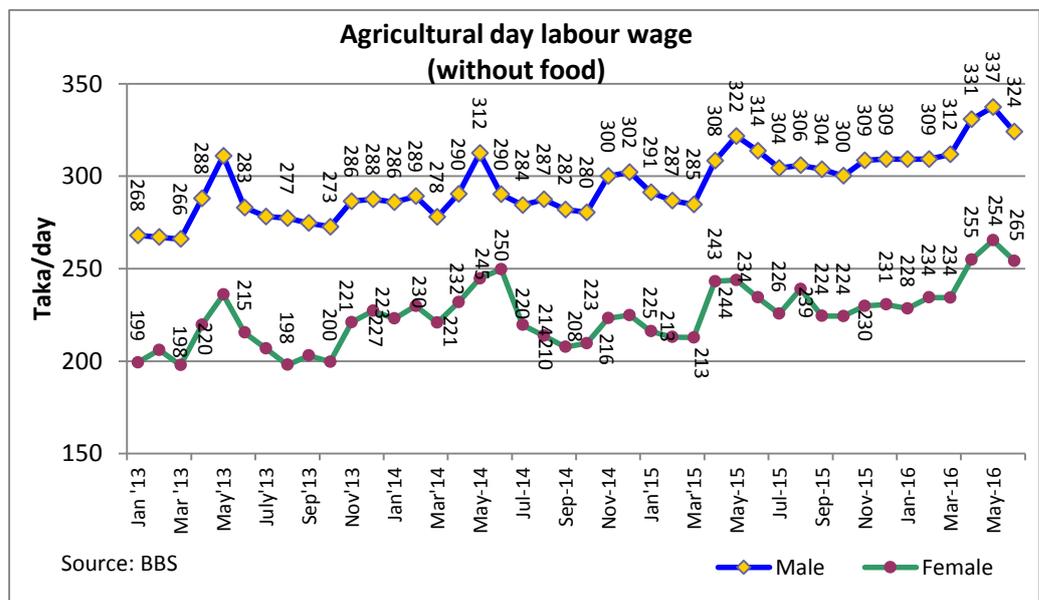
quarter. The quarterly average price in Barisal *sadar* was found to be the highest (33 Tk/kg), and that in Rajshahi *sadar* to be the lowest (31 Tk/kg) among the divisional *sadar* markets.

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 being soybean oil and mustard oil). 90 percent of the edible oil requirement is imported. The quarterly average prices of palm oil in all the divisional *sadar* markets varied widely from the lowest 59 Tk/litre in Chittagong *sadar* to the highest 71 Tk/litre in Sylhet *sadar* during the reporting period. For the average lentil prices in the divisional *sadar* markets, the highest price during the reporting quarter was recorded in Barisal *sadar* market with 108 Tk/kg and the lowest in Chittagong *sadar* with 103 Tk/kg. The prices of lentils in the divisional *sadar* markets during the reporting quarter were in fact higher than during the peak of 2008 (high food price year). About 80 percent of the lentil requirement is met by imports. Local production can meet the demand for only 2-3 months.



Terms of Trade/Food purchasing capacity of agricultural day labourers

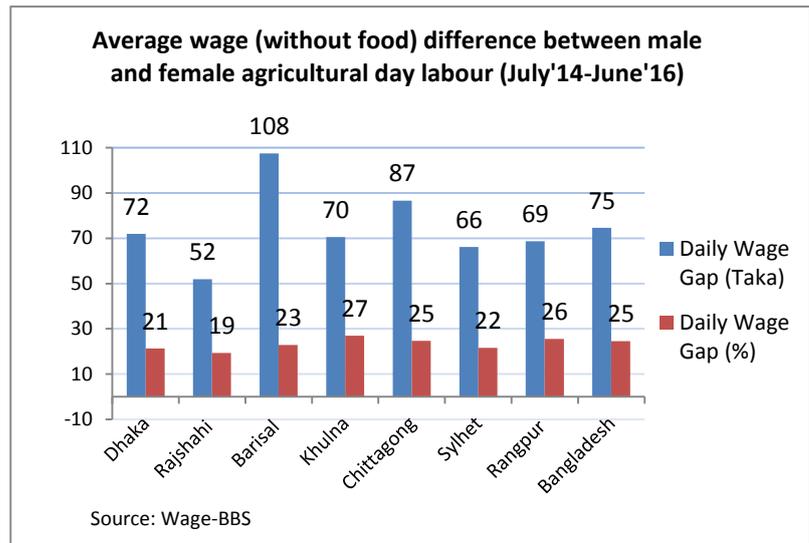
The agricultural wage data for the reporting quarter was available from BBS. During the reporting quarter, the average agricultural wage rate decreased in June 2016 as there are usually less agricultural activities available in this month. The year-on-year average daily wage for male labourers in the months of the just



concluded FY increased by about 3-9 percent. The average rate of growth during the previous FY was 3.5 percent. The scenario was fairly similar for female labourers over the months of the concluded FY. Although the wage rate of female labourers was lower than that of their male counterparts, the year-on-year average grew about 7 percent during this period. April-May was the time for harvesting and processing activities of *Boro* rice and wheat. However, the later part of the reporting quarter (June) instigated temporary migration of labourers to other places in search of non-farm working opportunities.

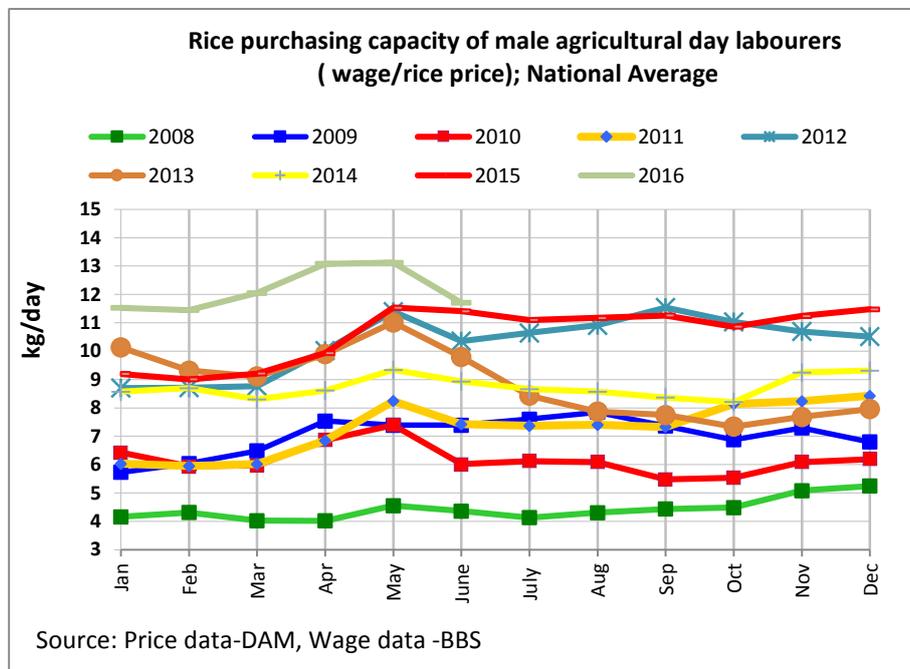
There continues to be a significant difference between the agricultural daily wages of male and female labourers. In March, which is agricultural lean season, the average wage for a female labourer was only 234 Taka/day whereas for a male labourer it was 312 Taka/day – a difference of 78 Taka/day. After 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 are predominantly practiced by male labourers. And thus the wage gap is also highest during *Boro* season. In the beginning of the *Boro* harvesting season in mid-April, with an increasing demand for agricultural labour, the average wage rate of female labourers had a rise from 234 to 255 Taka/day which then was still 76 Taka less than that of a male labourer. Households depending on female wage labourers are, therefore, highly disadvantaged and remain more impoverished.



Trend analysis of the agricultural wage data of male and female labourers in the past two years shows that on average, female labourers receive a wage that is 25 percent less than their male counterparts, resulting in a purchasing capacity difference of about 2.7 kg of rice per day. This has had significant implications on the food security status of households dependent largely on the wage labour income of female members. The wage gap is higher in the southern divisions of Chittagong and Barisal. On average during July 2014 to June 2016, the wage gap for a female labourer was 108 Taka/day in Barisal division, the second poorest division in the country. Again, a female agricultural labourer in Chittagong division, which has the second lowest poverty rate among all divisions, received 87 Taka/day less wage (25 percent less) than her male counterpart during this period. Chittagong is one of the divisions where agricultural activities are less concentrated and female labourers are of less demand, partly due to the conservative nature of the society. Wage differences were lowest in Rajshahi division in the northern part of the country.

The Terms of Trade (ToT) of an agricultural day labourer's wage is an indicator of the quantity of essential food items that the household can buy with his/her daily income. Since rice is the staple food and constitutes the major share in the household food expenditure, rice purchasing capacity is an important indicator of the ToT. Wage data collected from BBS showed that the average ToT in the reporting quarter was higher than in the same period last year mainly due to both lower rice prices and higher wage rates – for both male and female agricultural day 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 northwestern division of Rangpur and the southwestern division of Khulna resulting in lowest ToT in these divisions.

SHOCKS FACED BY HOUSEHOLDS

IMPACT OF TROPICAL STORM 'ROANU' IN MAY 2016

Situation Overview

Tropical storm Roanu hit the southern coastal region of Bangladesh with landfall on 21 May 2016. The storm brought heavy rain, winds of over 100km/h, and storm surges peaking at 2.7 metres. At least seven coastal districts - Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Bhola, Barguna, Lakshmipur, Noakhali and Patuakhali - were affected. Three districts - Cox's Bazar, Barguna and Chittagong - were reported to be the worst affected with widespread damage to lives, houses, infrastructure and agriculture, breached embankments causing floods. The Department of Disaster Management (DDM) identified a total of over 1.3 million people impacted (258,266 households). The Government of Bangladesh responded to the needs of the affected communities. A total of 513,363 people sought protection in 3,494 cyclone shelters where the Government provided dry food rations. The Government also allocated rice, 3,522 MT and cash, Tk. 10,052,000 (US\$ 128,800) to assist those most affected. WFP supported around 11,150 households (about 55,750 people) in the most affected districts by providing them 25 kg of rice per household (one-off transfer) and 3,960 households (about 19,800 people) with Tk. 8,000 per household over two months (Tk. 4,000/month).

Impact of 'ROANU' on food security:

The Joint Needs Assessment (JNA) field team conducted assessments based on analyses of primary and secondary data, undertaken as a joint effort of the inter-cluster and INGO representatives. The report summarizes an overview of the affected areas, identifies needs and responses from the Government and other agencies, and describes the impact of the storm on food security, shelter, health, sanitation, livelihoods and other priority sectors.

The main findings of the analysis on household food security issues were:

- Food was reported as the 1st priority in the most affected upazilas of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Bhola districts. For 13 upazilas in 6 districts, food was among the three first priorities.
- Across the 7 districts, based on the assessment on immediate and longer term impact on food, 22 upazila authorities in 6 districts expressed concerns about the immediate impact on food security.
- In 5 districts, the upazila authorities expressed concerns about the long term impact on food security as a result of loss of livelihoods.
- Food stock were worst damaged in Cox's Bazar and Noakhali; also in Bhola, Barguna and Chittagong. Almost all upazilas in these 5 districts reported moderate to severe damage to food stocks.

Considering the damages that occurred on food, shelter, livelihoods, health, etc., the study recommended to support the most affected households with cash transfer activities such as Cash For Work and Unconditional Cash Transfer. The early restoration of livelihoods and production assets were considered essential steps towards recovery of the disaster affected communities. This was particularly important and urgent for the affected population who are heavily dependent on agriculture, farming and day labouring. The assessment also recommended to prioritize most vulnerable groups such as pregnant women; lactating mothers; female-headed households; disabled people etc. for cash and food assistance. Women and girls' security was to be assured during and after the disaster.

FOOD SECURITY OUTLOOK

FOOD GRAIN PRODUCTION, IMPORT, UTILIZATION AND PRICE

Global

The Food Price Index (consisting of average food price indices of five commodity groups - cereals, dairy products, oil, sugar and meat) reported by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) declined gradually during the months of the just concluded FY and reached 149.7 points in February, then started rising till the end of the FY. It hit 164 in June 2016, about 5 percent up from the previous month. The values of all sub-indices moved up in June with a huge surge of dairy and sugar, by 8 percent and 15 percent respectively.

The FAO Cereal Price Index had shown an increasing trend during the reporting quarter and hit 157 points in June 2016, yet about 4 percent down from the same period a year ago. Among the major cereals, maize prices increased sharply on the back of tight export supplies until the harvesting of new crops in the northern hemisphere later in the year. Rice quotations also strengthened on rising concerns about availabilities and firming import demand.

FAO forecasted the world cereal production for 2016 at 2.57 billion MT which is 1.6 percent higher than in 2015 and only 0.7 percent below the 2014 record. Compared to 2015, the revised forecast for world wheat production was 1.2 percent higher. The upward forecast reflects higher wheat production mainly in Australia, Canada, India, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United States. The 2016 rice production forecast also had an upward revision from previous expectations reaching a new record. The upward adjustment was the result of larger planting estimates than previously envisaged in Asia, owing to favourable weather conditions, and in the United States, chiefly on account of less attractive prices for competing crops.

Global cereal utilization in 2016/17 has been forecasted at 2.5 billion MT which is only 0.9 percent higher than the 2015/16 estimate. Cereal consumption prospects exist as both food and feed had been anticipated to increase as compared to the FY 2015/16. However, total wheat utilization forecast has been revised up slightly to 0.7 billion MT. An abundance of low quality wheat supplies boosted global feed use of wheat up by 5.8 percent from 2015/16 (*FAO Food Price Index, May 2016*).

Bangladesh

The rice prices during the months of the just concluded FY were much lower than what was observed in the past few years. The rice prices during the February-June 2016 period followed more or less a similar pattern than in the last four years. The rice retail prices were quite stable at around 27 Tk/kg throughout the year which was about 17 percent less than in the previous FY. However, the wholesale rice prices during the reporting quarter increased by 11 percent as compared to the previous quarter, whereas the situation was opposite during the same period a year earlier. The Government, through its price monitoring model to forecast domestic foodgrain prices, has estimated the wholesale prices of coarse rice for the months of the first quarter of FY 2016/17 to remain stable. Domestic production of foodgrain had been predicted not to meet the target for the FY 2015/16. *Boro* plantation fell short of the targeted area which resulted in lower production than the target (*FPMU, FSR 105*).

For the agricultural cycle of July 2015 to June 2016, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in its 'Annual Update of Grain and Feed for Bangladesh' forecasted wheat production at 1.3 million MT and imports at 3.8 million MT on expectations of low international wheat prices and strong domestic demand. Domestic prices of wheat showed a stable pattern during the reporting quarter. Commercial wheat import is mostly done by the private sector; the public sector contributes a very insignificant part. Imports constitute 70 percent of Bangladesh's total wheat consumption and strong global production and high global exportable supplies keep international prices low.

Reference:

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The Bangladesh Food Security Monitoring Bulletin is prepared by the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) unit of the World Food Programme (WFP) and published by the WFP Bangladesh Country Office. It is published four times a year and focuses on developments affecting food security in Bangladesh. This issue covers the quarter of April-June 2016.

The previous BFSM bulletins are available on the internet at the following URL addresses:
<http://www.wfp.org/content/bangladesh-food-security-monitoring-system-2015>
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