

Prices of fruits, vegetables go through the roof

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Kolkata: Homemaker Kakali Mullick, who had thought it would be wiser to buy vegetables and fruits for Lakshmi Puja a couple of days in advance, was in for a shock when she found on Friday that the prices of almost item had increased by at least 20%. Finally, she had to alter her shopping list at the Gariahat market to fit her capacity.

"Cabbages are getting sold at Rs 50 per piece and the price of tomatoes is Rs 80 per kg. How will middle-class people like us buy our daily needs if the prices of vegetables increase so much? The prices had already increased before Durga Puja and have skyrocketed again ahead of Lakshmi Puja," rued Mullick.

available are from the old stock. Fresh vegetables will start hitting the market from Kartik. That is also one of the reason behind hefty prices," said Kumarsh Bose, a vegetable seller at Gariahat Market.

TOI took a tour of three major markets in the city on Friday and found out considerable differences in prices from Chaturthi evening to what was quoted on Friday evening. On Chaturthi, cucumbers sold for Rs 30 a kg but now they are around Rs 50. Guava price also rose from Rs 60 to Rs 100 a kg.

Vegetable prices, too, have climbed within a week. "I went to the market on Friday to shop vegetables for my daily household needs and not for Puja purpose but the prices were so high

Pics: Basabdatta Sarkar

FESTIVE PANGS

Veggies	Chaturthi	Friday
Tomato	50	80
Cabbage	40	50
Pointed gourd	60	70
Cauliflower	40	70
Brinjal	60	80
Ridged gourd	30	50
Fruits	Chaturthi	Friday
Apple	120	140
Guava	80	80
Musambi*	12	15

Prices in ₹/kg; *Per piece



Buyers are curtailing their lists to suit their pockets

Two days before Lakshmi Puja, sky-high prices have become a headache as sellers say the rates are unlikely to come down before 'bhaifonta'. "Incessant rain and restriction on truck movement are to blame. Also, the increasing demand for vegetables and fruits during the festive season will not allow the prices to come down till the end of the month," said Dilip Das, a vegetable seller at Lake Market.

According to traders, this is the transition period — between Ashwin and Kartik months of the Bengali calendar — and fresh vegetables are yet to reach the market. "The vegetables av-

that I had to return home almost empty-handed," said Chandrima Roy, a college professor, who was spotted bargaining with a vegetable seller at Lake Market.

Another shopper at Gariahat Market demanded for government intervention to regulate the price. "Prices of simple fruits like cucumber and sweet potato are so high that it is difficult to even bargain for them. We organise a very small puja at home with limited budget but the steep prices have forced me to curtail expenses," said Rajasri Som, 40, who was shopping with his mother at Gariahat on Friday evening.