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WR 329
economy

On Cuban Parallel Market
Shops

hav924v yy ylp nor

1240:shops (profesores):

1982 by Lionel martin

havana, dec 23, reuter -- for the first time in two decades, this christmas season havana's population has the opportunity to buy substantial quantities of food, clothing and other products that until now have been either rationed, unavailable or in short supply.

the goods are being sold at special shops, and the oft-repeated plaint of havanans is that prices are very high.

the shops are part of what is officially known as +the parallel market+ to differentiate them from the shops that sell rationed or unrationed products at reasonable and often low prices. all shops in cuba, except for the free farmers' markets, are state owned.

the +parallel market+ for milk and cigarettes was introduced a decade ago, but the new shops carry a broad variety of products. the +parallel market+ works in the following way: children under seven, senior citizens and persons with a doctor's prescription get a ration of one liter of milk a day at 25 centavos. but cubans can buy all the milk they want on the +parallel market+ for eighty centavos.

--more lam/syl

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1248:shops 2 havana:

rationed cigarettes --four packs a month per adult-- cost only twenty or twenty-five centavos a pack. unrationed cigarettes on the +parallel market+ cost between eight and twelve times as much as the rationed packs.

despite high prices, long queues have been forming daily outside the old sears department store, which has been turned into a shop selling +parallel market+ food products. the shop sells pork, turtle, rabbit, chicken, ham, cheese, beer, tinned goods and vegetables at prices that severely limit the amount most families can buy. the average monthly income in cuba is about 175 pesos.

the long queues indicate that there is sufficient buying power among havanans to keep the goods moving off the shelves at a rapid pace. one havana housewife at the old +sears+ commented: +prices are high, but at least items are available and you have to make your selections in accordance with the money you have.+

--more lem/syl

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1253:shops 3 havana:

in cuba all citizens are ensured an austere but equal quantity of staples such as meat, beans and rice at below cost prices subsidised by the government. several non-rationed foods, such as bread and eggs are also sold at low prices in unlimited quantities.

the government has opened +parallel market+ shops in havana for clothing and electrical appliances. while women's shoes rationed at the rate of one pair a year sell from between twenty and thirty pesos, a new +parallel market+ shop sells unrationed shoes for around 100 pesos a pair. a +parallel market men's clothing shop has been opened and a women's clothing shop is soon to be opened.

at a new +parallel market+ shop for electrical appliances, a fan costs 400 pesos. at another +parallel market+ shop, perfume that normally costs ten pesos but is seldom available is selling in unlimited amounts for 40 pesos a bottle. shampoo that normally costs four pesos is selling for 18 pesos.

the +parallel+ prices bhavve brought back the old joke in which the client, complaining about the 15 dollar price asked for an item, tells the shop owner: +across the street it only costs ten dollars, but they are out of them.+ to which the owner replies: +when we are out of them we only charge eight dollars.+
--reuter lem/syl