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FAO pulls for Dhaka amid global food crisis

Food price inflation going up by 11pc every month since July; essential prices spiral even up to 116pc in a year

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The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations has put Bangladesh and four other Saarc nations on the list of 37 countries facing food crisis and requiring external assistance.

In the list released Monday, the FAO urged the governments and the international community to take immediate measures to help the poor countries hit hard by dramatic food price increases.

According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), food price inflation was spiralling up by

over 11 percent every month from July to October this year. In the urban areas, this inflation rate was over 12 percent.

According to the latest data of Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB), prices of most of the essential food items shot up by six percent to 116 percent over the last one year. Of them, price of the main essential item -- rice -- rose by 40 to 50 percent.

In this context, the FAO in a press release said, "FAO is calling for urgent action to provide small farmers in LIFDC (Low Income Food Deficit Countries) that depend heavily on food imports,

with improved access to seeds, fertiliser and other inputs to increase, in particular, local crop production.

"Within countries, improved access to these inputs could be provided by issuing poor farmers with vouchers to buy seeds, fertiliser and other inputs for major staple crops, which should increase local food production. Such steps could help to alleviate the persistent threat of severe undernourishment of millions of people."

The FAO noted that currently 37 countries are facing food crises due to the following reasons:

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