

# Fall in real prices of rice benefits consumers, hurts farmers

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Real prices of rice have fallen in the decade from 2010 to 2020, benefiting consumers but generating lower real incomes for producers, according to a paper presented at an event in Dhaka yesterday.

However, real prices of the staple food climbed in the years following the turn of the decade.

Real prices are those which have been adjusted for inflation and other market factors, as opposed to nominal prices, the current value of a product without accounting for such factors.

For example, real prices of the grain were 35 percent higher in 2021 compared to prices in January 2020.

The real prices had soared to 18 percent higher in 2024 compared to January 2020, Paul Dorosh, a senior research fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), said while presenting a paper on food price policy in South Asia at a conference in Dhaka.

The Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) organised the four-day event at the Lakeshore Hotel in the capital's Gulshan.

Other than falling prices, other factors influencing the real incomes of rice farmers include low yields and higher input costs.

Echoing those sentiments, Nicholas Minot, another senior research fellow at the IFPRI, said nominal prices are rising. He said rice prices in Bangladesh tend to rise and fall over a period of one to three years, adding that elimination or reduction in the rice import tariff may reduce price instability at little cost in terms of revenue for farmers.

"Reducing the rice import tariff will reduce price instability while higher tariff increases price instability," Minot said.

The researchers made the comments at a time when the country is reeling from elevated inflation, especially food inflation.

In November, the government cut the import duty on rice to bring down the cost and encourage trade.

Dorosh also elaborated on the rice stock scenario in South Asian countries. "Although Bangladesh, India and Pakistan all hold public stocks of rice, only India consistently intervenes in its domestic rice market," he said.



The harvest of Aman season paddy has begun, with farmers hoping to take home a bumper crop by mid-December. Growth under monsoon rains, Aman accounts for the second biggest yield of rice. This year's production target is 1.78 crore tonnes. Around 1.66 crore tonnes were produced in fiscal year 2023-24, roughly 40 percent of the rice produced that year, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. The photo was taken at Mugolgaon union of Sylhet sadar upazila last week.

PHOTO: SHEKH NASIR

India maintains the largest rice stocks in South Asia while Pakistan has significant wheat stocks.

The wholesale prices of rice in Dhaka were close to import parity levels in 2018 and from 2021 to mid-2023, making private imports profitable in these periods, according to Dorosh.

For most of the 2018 to 2024 period, however, domestic prices of rice were higher than imported parity prices, making private imports unprofitable.

Private sector rice imports, including imports from India in some years, helped stabilise domestic rice prices in Bangladesh, Dorosh added.

"Since the mid-1990s, private sector imports of rice (mainly from India) have prevented large spikes in Bangladesh rice prices," he said.

At a public lecture, Prof MA Sattar Mandal said that although the total agricultural production is increasing in Bangladesh, the growth rate is decelerating very fast.

"And there has been low diversification. Rice is still the dominant crop. In terms of numbers, we have over hundreds of crops grown in Bangladesh. But that is a misleading proxy."

In reality, Bangladesh is contending with lower crop diversification and a huge yield gap, he said.

## AB Bank MD Tarique Afzal resigns

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Syed Mizanur Rahman, the bank's additional managing director, has assumed the role of managing director (current charge).

He said the board of directors accepted Afzal's resignation at a meeting yesterday.

Rahman added that the resignation will now be sent to the central bank for necessary approval.

Tarique Afzal joined AB Bank in 2018 as a deputy managing director and was appointed as the president and managing director in July 2019.

Efforts to contact Afzal for comment were unsuccessful, as he did not respond to phone calls.

Afzal previously courted controversy for his active involvement in politics. Despite serving as AB Bank's managing director, he was a member of the Awami League's international subcommittee.

## Female workforce in garment industry slips

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But although modern technology enabling automation is displacing labour, such innovations are creating new opportunities for employment, the study said.

Additionally, the study pointed out that the growing capabilities of local firms propelled automation in recent years, reducing the need for labourers to operate machinery.

There was also evidence that the reduction in female participation could have resulted from gender-biased technological transitions for occupations like machine operators.

Moderated by Sajjad Zohir, executive director of the Economic Research Group, a total of four studies were shared at the session.

Presenting a paper on "Supply Chain Dynamics for Sustainable RMG

Growth in Bangladesh", BIDS Research Director Monzur Hossain said the European Union (EU) offers tariff protection for least developed countries (LDC) following their graduation to developing country status.

This includes import subsidies of about 4 percent for fabrics, 8 percent for semi-finished garments and 12 percent for clothing sourced from "Most-Favoured Nations".

In the post-LDC era, Bangladesh may face tariffs as high as 9.6 percent on exports to the EU, he added.

The study also said Bangladesh may lose 10.8 percent of its garment exports by 2031 due to the elimination of export subsidies following LDC graduation.

This potential loss of export earnings could range from 7 percent to 14 percent in major markets.

For the 9.6 percent tariff in the EU, the production of textiles and apparel

items for the trade bloc may decline by about 6.1 percent. So, it is possible that Bangladesh's negative trade balance with the EU could widen, thereby impacting its gross domestic product (GDP).

As such, the country's real GDP could contract by about 0.38 percent if developed countries start imposing tariffs, it added. This loss of duty benefits could slash Bangladesh's total exports by about 6 percent while the apparel sector will likely witness a 14 percent decline.

A study titled "Structural Changes in Industrial Sector of Bangladesh: 2012 to 2019", presented by BIDS Research Associate Jayed Bin Satter, said female participation has also dropped in the manufacturing sector.

Similarly, the overall share of female business leaders fell, mostly driven by their exit from the garment sector, it added.

Presenting a study

on "The State of the Manufacturing Workers in Bangladesh", BIDS Research Associate Farhin Islam said significant intergenerational effects on workers' education were observed.

While there is a tendency for real wages to remain flat, collective bargaining has a significant impact on raising wages, improving other benefits and enhancing working conditions.

Trade unionisation significantly enhances women's family decision-making power through stronger collective bargaining and advocacy whereas factory-level unions lack sufficient influence on women empowerment.

The poverty rate among garment workers is significantly lower than that of workers in non-garment sectors and other domestic industries with more stringent compliance requirements.

## US hiring rebounds after slump on hurricanes, strike

AFP, Washington

The US economy added more jobs than expected last month, government data showed Friday, bouncing back from a dramatic slowdown triggered by hurricanes and labor strikes.

The world's biggest economy gained 227,000 jobs in November, up from a revised 36,000 in October, said the Department of Labor.

The overall jobless rate ticked up to 4.2 percent from 4.1 percent.

The rise in hiring was likely due to a return of Boeing workers and others who had gone on strike, and came as the cumulative impact of hurricanes Helene and Milton faded.

"This has been a hard-fought recovery, but we are making progress for working families," said President Joe Biden in a statement.

Analysts warn, however, that job growth has been narrowly based across just a few sectors. Friday's figure "marks only a moderate-sized bounce back" from the strikes and disasters, said Nationwide chief economist Kathy Bostjancic.

Average job gains over the last two months remains soft, she added.

Last month "employment trended up in health care, leisure and hospitality, government, and social assistance," said the Labor Department. But the retail trade sector lost jobs, the department added in its report.

The hiring figure was above a market consensus expectation of 200,000 according to Briefing.com. Average hourly earnings rose more than expected too from a month prior, by 0.4 percent to \$35.61.

From the same period a year ago, wages were up 4.0 percent.

Strong wage growth should help boost consumer spending during the holiday season, Bostjancic said. EY senior economist Lydia Boussour said in a recent note that she expects job growth to settle "below trend" as the labor market cools gradually.

But she believes "a labor market downturn isn't on the near-term horizon" with layoffs remaining relatively low.

Companies have also been managing their workforces using other means like holding back wages and resizing instead of letting people go.

**গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার**  
উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়  
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স্মারক নং-উস্বাক/নিকলী/দরপত্র/২০২৪-২৫/৪৫৪৪ তারিখঃ ০৭/১২/২০২৪ইং

**দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য কমপ্লেক্স, নিকলী, কিশোরগঞ্জ এর ২০২৪-২৫ইং অর্থ বছরের জন্য রোগীদের খাদ্যদ্রব্য ও পখাদ্যি সরবরাহ, ষ্টেশনারী ও অন্যান্য মনোহারি মালামাল সরবরাহ এবং লিনেন সামগ্রী (ময়লাযুক্ত কাপড়) খোলাই এর নিমিত্ত প্রকৃত টিকাদার/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত পাল্লাবদ্ধ বামে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। দরপত্র দাখিলের নিয়মাবলী এবং দরপত্রের যাবতীয় বিবরণ ও অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী দরপত্র সিডিউলে সংযুক্ত আছে। দরপত্র দাখিলে আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিজস্ব স্টেটসমেন্ট পেতে আবেদনের মাধ্যমে প্রতিটি দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য বাবদ (অফেরতযোগ্য) সোনালী ব্যাংক, নিকলী শাখা অথবা অন্য কোন তফসিলি ব্যাংক হতে উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তা, নিকলী, কিশোরগঞ্জ এর অনুমোদিত নির্ধারিত মূল্যমানের ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার জমা দানপূর্বক দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ হইতে আগামী ২২/১২/২০২৪ইং তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে (সকাল ০৮:০০ ঘটিকা হইতে বেলা ০২:৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত) নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারী কার্যালয় হতে দরপত্র সিডিউল ও শর্তাবলী সংগ্রহ করা যাবে।

ক্রমিক নং	দরপত্রের বিবরণ	সিডিউলের মূল্য
০১।	হাসপাতালে ভর্তি রোগীদের খাদ্যদ্রব্য ও পখাদ্যি সরবরাহ	= ৭৫০/-
০২।	ষ্টেশনারী ও অন্যান্য মনোহারি মালামাল সরবরাহ	= ৫০০/-
০৩।	লিনেন সামগ্রী যৌতকরণ (ময়লাযুক্ত কাপড়)	= ৫০০/-

দরপত্র আগামী ২৪/১২/২০২৪ ইং তারিখ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারী কার্যালয়ের রক্ষিত দরপত্র বাস্তবে গ্রহণ করা হবে এবং ঐ দিনই দুপুর ১.০০ ঘটিকার নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর কার্যালয়ে উপস্থিত দরপত্রদাতাদের সম্মুখে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) দরপত্র বাস্তব খোলা হবে। নির্ধারিত তারিখ ও সময়ের পর কোন দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়/গ্রহণ করা হবে না।

**স্বাক্ষর**  
৩১/১২/২৪

ডাঃ সজীব শোভ  
কোড নং-১২৯৬০৩  
উপজেলা স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার পরিকল্পনা কর্মকর্তা  
নিকলী, কিশোরগঞ্জ

GD- 1133

## Rural poor reliant on rice as inflation cuts protein

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percent in the last year when calculated through the 12-month recall method and by 17.76 percent when calculated through the prices of one-month recall method, said.

During FY24, rice prices increased by 1.5 percent, while prices for beef, mutton, poultry, and fish rose by 6 percent, 11 percent, 15 percent and 27 percent respectively.

Pulses saw an 11.23 percent increase, eggs 24-27 percent, and fruits and vegetables experienced hikes ranging from 20-33 percent. Prices of some items, such as onions and gourd, even rose more than 100 percent.

Meanwhile, sugar prices surged 35 percent, and liquid milk prices rose 25 percent.

In an analysis of rural food consumption patterns, the study found that consumption of

protein-rich animal food items such as beef and mutton was much higher among the richest group compared to the poorest, especially in times of high inflation.

For example, per capita daily beef consumption has been assessed at 7.4g for the richest group, in contrast to only 1g for the poorest.

For relatively lower-priced items like chicken or duck, the difference is less striking—32g for the richest group as opposed to 21g for the poorest.

For eggs, the consumption figures are even closer, 13g and 9g respectively.

However, the poor consume a higher proportion of low-priced fish such as pangasius.

The average per capita daily consumption of pangasius is 14g for the poorest, 12g for the poor, and only 8g for the richest, according to the survey.

**সামরিক চিকিৎসা সার্ভিস মহাপরিদপ্তর**  
**প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস**  
**জরুরি দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

১। সশস্ত্র বাহিনীর জন্য দেশীয় মুদ্রায় নিয়ন্ত্রিত চিকিৎসা সামগ্রী ক্রমাগত প্রতিরক্ষা ক্রম মহাপরিদপ্তরের তালিকাভুক্ত ব্যবসায়ী/প্রকৃতকারী/আমদানীকারক/ইন্টেলি প্রকৃতকারী নিকট হতে সীল মোহরকৃত বামে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

২। দরপত্রের সিডিউল নিম্নে হতে উল্লিখিত তারিখ ও সময় মোতাবেক সামরিক চিকিৎসা সার্ভিস মহাপরিদপ্তর, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস থেকে নগদ মুদ্রায় (অফেরতযোগ্য) সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্যাবলীসহ দরপত্র সীলমোহরকৃত বামে মহাপরিদপ্তরে রক্ষিত টেন্ডার ব্যগে হতে বর্ণিত নির্ধারিত তারিখের মধ্যে প্রতিদিন ০৯:০০ ঘটিকা হতে ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত জমা করা হবে এবং দরপত্র খোলার তারিখে ১০:০০ ঘটিকা দরদাতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) উন্মুক্ত করা হবে।

ক্রমিক নং	দ্রব্যের বিবরণ	সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের তারিখ		দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ	দরপত্র নম্বর
		হইতে	পর্যন্ত		
1.	Plaster Cutting Saw	09-12-24	22-12-24	22-12-24	123/2024-2025/EM
1.	General Anesthesia Machine with Sevoflurane & Isoflurane Vaporizer	09-12-24	22-12-24	22-12-24	124/2024-2025/EM
2.	Multiparameter Monitor				
3.	Blood Warmer				
4.	Portable Suction Machine				
5.	Diathermy machine				
6.	Fetal Doppler				
7.	CTG Machine & Papers				
8.	Ophthalmoscope				
1.	Vaporizer (Sevoflurane) for Anaesthesia Machine For CWM-201A Anesthesia Machine	09-12-24	22-12-24	22-12-24	125/2024-2025/EM
2.	Vaporizer (Isoflurane) for Anaesthesia Machine For CWM-201A Anesthesia Machine				
3.	Ultrasonic Washer for Surgical Instruments				
4.	Automatic Sealer Machine				

৩। নির্ধারিত সময়ের পরে আর কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না।

৪। বর্ণিত ইলেক্ট্রো মেডিকেল ইকুইপমেন্টস এর বিজ্ঞপ্তি বিবরণ, কারিগরি বিবরণ ও চাহিদাকৃত বিভিন্ন তথ্যাদি/সমন্বয়ের তালিকা দরপত্র সিডিউলে উল্লেখ থাকবে।

৪। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শনো ছাড়াই দরপত্র সিডিউল উল্লিখিত আইটেমের পরিমাণ বৃদ্ধি/কমানোর এবং দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা রাখেন।

৫। পিপিএ/২০০৮ ও পিপিআর/২০০৮ মোতাবেক দরপত্রের সকল শর্তাবলী কার্যকর হবে।

৬। দরপত্র নম্বর ১২৪ এবং ১২৫ এর ক্ষয়মুক্ত অংশই **Ready Stock** থাকতে হবে।

তারিখ:.....ডিসেম্বর ২০২৪।

আই এস পি আর/বিবিধ/৫৬৪  
০৮/১২/২৪

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