

Bid deadline cut to speed up 4 lakh tonnes of rice import

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government has shortened the tender submission period for importing 4 lakh tonnes of rice, according to a decision of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs yesterday.

The move is intended to build up public food stocks and contain the price of the staple in the local market.

"Instead of the standard 42 days stated in the public procurement rules, bidders will now have 15 days to submit their offers," said a ministry official on condition of anonymity.

The countdown begins from the date the international open tender is advertised in newspapers. The rule had been relaxed only for this consignment and as part of an urgent effort to increase domestic availability, he added.

The government recently decided to import 4 lakh tonnes of rice to tackle the ongoing price hike and build up reserves in advance so that it can intervene in the market in case of volatility caused by natural disasters.

Food Adviser Ali Imam Majumder said, "Last year, when the floods occurred, the government was unable to make adequate preparations. So, we have initiated the process of advance procurement to buy rice through international tenders."

In 2024, Bangladesh endured repeated flooding, especially in August and September, which damaged Aus and Aman crops and drove up rice prices.

The production estimate by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, released later, indicates that production of rice from both seasons declined.

For the current fiscal year, the interim government has set a target to import 9 lakh tonnes of rice, up from 8.35 lakh tonnes brought in during the previous year.

Majumder also said that while the country's current



Farmers in the haor areas of the northeastern region are busy in the fields transplanting seedlings of Aman paddy. The photo was taken recently in Borni of Companiganj.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

food reserves are satisfactory, the government is taking precautionary steps to ensure food security in the event of possible flooding.

As of yesterday, total grain reserves, comprising rice, paddy, and wheat, stood at 21.43 lakh tonnes, of which rice accounted for 18.93 lakh tonnes, according to food

ministry data. During the last fiscal year, the government and private sector together imported 76.72 lakh tonnes of rice and wheat, official data show.

Meanwhile, the initiative has also been taken to support the government's increased food distribution target of 36.6 lakh tonnes for the current fiscal year.

US reciprocal tariff

FROM PAGE B1

He said that it usually takes 28 to 35 days for shipments to reach US ports, meaning consignments leaving Chattogram port after midnight tonight will fall under the new duty structure.

Meanwhile, Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed told journalists yesterday that while the 20 percent tariff is not ideal, it is still better than the initial 35 percent.

He added that Bangladesh remains competitive, especially in knitwear, where over 80 percent of backward linkage offers a strong advantage. "Our reputation with timely payments and ethical business has built goodwill abroad," said the adviser.

However, he pointed out that no formal agreement has yet been signed regarding reciprocal tariff adjustments.

AK Azad, chairman and managing director of Ha-Meem Group, one of the largest apparel exporters to the US, said some last-minute negotiations have taken place with buyers, who are now trying to reduce their offers in response to the new tariff.

"Everyone is under pressure. As the tariff has gone up by 20 percent, buyers are asking us to share it," Azad told The Daily Star.

"They are suggesting that the burden should be shared, partly by us and partly by them. But we simply cannot."

The exporter said they don't have

that room. "Our margins are already razor-thin, and absorbing further cost increases is not feasible."

"With mounting cost pressures and extremely tight profit margins, the scope to absorb any new tariff burden is very limited," he said. "In such a scenario, asking suppliers to adjust prices downward is neither sustainable nor fair."

Although the new duty takes effect from tomorrow and goods shipped before then will face lower rates, exporters said there had been no last-minute rush at Chattogram port.

Syed Tanvir, managing director of Pacific Jeans, said there was no visible scramble to meet the tariff deadline.

"Port congestion remains normal. Exporters are not scrambling to push shipments ahead of the cut-off," he said.

Tanvir said that most exporters are taking a measured approach this time, opting to absorb the change rather than react in haste. "Given the long shipping cycle and buyers' negotiation patterns, many have already adjusted their planning to factor in the tariff."

Rakibul Alam Chowdhury, director of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), said many US buyers rushed shipments before July 31 to avoid the new duty, which caused a surge in exports through Chattogram port.

Now, some buyers are proposing to share the additional cost for new orders, he added.

S Korean company to invest \$8m in Mongla EPZ

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

OCF Co. Ltd, a South Korean company, is set to invest \$8 million in the Mongla Export Processing Zone (Mongla EPZ) to establish a manufacturing industry for tents, tent accessories, camping furniture, furniture accessories, and bags.

The company plans to produce tents, tent and furniture accessories, camping chairs and tables, aluminum and carbon products, ski and trekking poles, mountain and walking sticks, bed cots, stands, pet furniture, arrows, and all types of bags, creating employment opportunities for 820 Bangladeshi nationals.

Md Ashraful Kabir, member for investment promotion at Bepza, and Hyun Gil Kim, chairman of OCF Co. Ltd, signed an agreement in this regard at the Bepza Complex in Dhaka yesterday. At the event, Maj Gen Abul Kalam Mohammad Ziaur Rahman, executive chairman of Bepza, said Bepza always encourages investment in the production of diversified products.

As this is the company's second project under Bepza, he thanked OCF Co. Ltd. for their continued trust in Bepza and requested them to act as an ambassador for bringing more South Korean investment to Bangladesh, especially in the EPZs. He also highlighted Bepza's commitment to providing a secure and supportive environment for investors.

Kim thanked Bepza for its support and expressed hope that the company would be able to start production by next year.

Dollar drifts

REUTERS

The dollar remained fixed in its recent trading channel on Wednesday, with investors choosing to stay on the sidelines after another round of weak data and as US President Donald Trump prepared to fill a coming vacancy on the Federal Reserve's Board of Governors.

Trump said on Tuesday he will decide on a nominee by the end of the week and had separately narrowed the possible replacements for Fed Chair Jerome Powell to a short list of four.

Data out the same day also showed the US services sector activity unexpectedly flattened in July even as input costs climbed by the most in nearly three years, underscoring the hit from Trump's tariffs on the economy, which has also begun to bite corporate earnings.

Short-term

FROM PAGE B1

"To truly understand this, you need both vision and insight. It isn't right to just look at the surface and make superficial comments," said the finance adviser.

"Over the past year, the economy has regained a fair amount of stability. But definitely, there are still many challenges—like inflation, employment, and the issue of US tariffs," he said.

"The biggest challenge now is to restore business confidence and inject some momentum into trade and commerce, which has slowed down," he added.

Regarding the tariff issue, he said, "It has come down from 35 percent to 20 percent. Compared to other countries, that's not bad."

"Now we need to sign an agreement with the US—that hasn't happened yet. Once it happens, the details will be finalised," said Ahmed.

Hossain said.

Karim of Pragati Insurance also pointed to intense competition over agent commissions as a key reason for the fall in profits. "On the one hand, the situation is not that lucrative for businesses, and on the other, insurers' profits were hit due to unhealthy competition over agent commissions."

The Insurance Development and Regulatory Authority (IDRA) had capped agent commissions at 15 percent of the premium. But many companies now offer 60 to 70 percent, Karim claimed.

"If a company needs to spend 60 to 70 percent of its premium income for commissions, and it has to bear costs for management and operations, how will it make a profit?" he asked.

"There was a time when only small companies paid high commissions, but now many large companies are doing the same," he said. "As a result, the insurance companies' profits

have been hit hard."

Among the 37 listed firms, only 6 made profits above Tk 10 crore. Most of the others earned between Tk 1 crore and Tk 4 crore, suggesting that the overall market size has remained largely unchanged.

"Some insurance companies are doing well year after year, mainly due to being better with their capacities and capabilities of their leaders and employees," said Hossain, adding that business was growing for those firms.

"Other companies are struggling year after year and their scope for doing business remains narrow," he said.

Bangladesh has the highest number of insurance firms in the world in comparison to economies of a similar size.

There are 80 insurers in the country, compared with 58 in India, 54 in Pakistan, 53 in Vietnam, 57 in Nigeria, 34 in Nepal, 27 in Sri Lanka, and 74 in Thailand.

Run optimal number of feeder vessels CPA urges operators

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) yesterday urged stakeholders to help restore an optimum number of feeder vessels, which connect transshipment ports, in alignment with the operational efficiency of the country's premier maritime gateway.

A press release signed by CPA Secretary Md Omar Faruk also cleared confusions over the number of feeder vessels currently operating on the routes.

The Chattogram port can function optimally to cater to the country's import-export trade if 95 to 105 feeder vessels operate between the port and transshipment ports, it said.

This estimate is based on the port's existing infrastructure, noted the CPA.

This includes yard capacity, handling equipment, voyage frequency of container ships, vessel space utilisation rates, and projected growth in container handling over the next four to five years.

The CPA said until a few months ago, vessel operations at the port were smooth, enabling timely delivery of import cargo and on-schedule shipments for exporters, with most ships berthing directly without delays.

However, conflict in the Middle East that began around four to five months ago disrupted the Northern Atlantic Sea Route, leading to a backlog of Bangladesh-bound containers at several transshipment ports, it stated.

Several feeder operators approached the CPA seeking approval to add a few more ships to their fleets to reduce that backlog, it said.

"Considering the reality and for the sake of national trade, the CPA granted temporary approval to around 20-22 additional vessels, strictly for the purpose of clearing the backlog," it said.

Although the situation at feeder ports has improved, some shipping lines have not yet withdrawn those additional vessels, the port authority said.

As a result, the current number of vessels operating from the Chattogram port has risen to around 130, well above the ideal range, it said.

This has led to an increase in waiting time at the outer anchorage, a rise in the number of waiting vessels, and longer operational time at the jetties, said the CPA.

These are now causing shipment delays for importers and exporters, it said.

Data from the last two months show that most vessels are not getting containers at full capacity due to the increase in the number of vessels, resulting in poor utilisation of vessel space, it stated.

To address the issue, a tripartite meeting was held among the CPA, Bangladesh Container Shipping Association (BCSA), and Bangladesh Shipping Agents Association (BSAA) on July 20.

It was unanimously decided that the BCSA and BSAA would coordinate to bring down the number of vessels in operation within a week.

However, as the associations failed to come up with specific recommendations within the stipulated time, a committee comprising representatives from both the BCSA and BSAA has been formed and is currently working on the matter.

Sirajganj Industrial Park

FROM PAGE B4

According to a senior official at Paschimanchal Gas Company Ltd (PGCL), one of the three required transmission sections has been set up, while the other two are under tender.

The official, requesting anonymity, said, "The PGCL aims to finish transmission infrastructure by mid-2026. However, commercial gas supply will ultimately depend on government authorisation."

Once all the 829 industrial plots

in Sirajganj Industrial Park go commercial, the park is expected to generate two lakh jobs, hopefully uplifting the local economy, according to park officials.

Officials expect to wrap up all the required official procedures within this year and investors to go for establishing factories by early next year.

If foreign investment is allowed then the full-fledged operations of factories in Sirajganj Industrial Park will begin within one year, said the project director.

"Now we need to sign an agreement with the US—that hasn't happened yet. Once it happens, the details will be finalised," said Ahmed.

Hossain said.

Karim of Pragati Insurance also pointed to intense competition over agent commissions as a key reason for the fall in profits. "On the one hand, the situation is not that lucrative for businesses, and on the other, insurers' profits were hit due to unhealthy competition over agent commissions."

The Insurance Development and Regulatory Authority (IDRA) had capped agent commissions at 15 percent of the premium. But many companies now offer 60 to 70 percent, Karim claimed.

"If a company needs to spend 60 to 70 percent of its premium income for commissions, and it has to bear costs for management and operations, how will it make a profit?" he asked.

"There was a time when only small companies paid high commissions, but now many large companies are doing the same," he said. "As a result, the insurance companies' profits

have been hit hard."

Among the 37 listed firms, only 6 made profits above Tk 10 crore. Most of the others earned between Tk 1 crore and Tk 4 crore, suggesting that the overall market size has remained largely unchanged.

"Some insurance companies are doing well year after year, mainly due to being better with their capacities and capabilities of their leaders and employees," said Hossain, adding that business was growing for those firms.

"Other companies are struggling year after year and their scope for doing business remains narrow," he said.

Bangladesh has the highest number of insurance firms in the world in comparison to economies of a similar size.

There are 80 insurers in the country, compared with 58 in India, 54 in Pakistan, 53 in Vietnam, 57 in Nigeria, 34 in Nepal, 27 in Sri Lanka, and 74 in Thailand.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh																																										
Finance Division, Ministry of Finance																																										
Strengthening Public Financial Management System to Enable Service Delivery Program (SPFMS)																																										
'Scheme on Improving Budget Process through Capacity Development of BMCs and BWGs'																																										
www.spfms.gov.bd																																										
Memo No. 07.00.0000.000.29.017.20-829																																										
Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)																																										
Customized Training Program to Enhance Capacity of Public Finance Managers in Ministries/Divisions																																										
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Description</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 Ministry/Division</td> <td>: Finance Division, Ministry of Finance</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 Agency</td> <td>: Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3 Procurement Entity Name</td> <td>: Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4 Procurement Entity District</td> <td>: Dhaka</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5 EOI for Selection of</td> <td>: Consulting Firm/Training Institution/Academic Institution (International)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 EOI Ref. No.</td> <td>: P.15.2: Performance Budgeting: Measures to Improve Allocative and Operational Efficiency</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7 EOI Publication Date</td> <td>: 7/8/2025</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8 Key Information</td> <td>Procurement Method Applied Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9 Funding Information</td> <td>Budget and Sources of Fund GoB</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10 Development Partner (if applicable)</td> <td>: None</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11 Particular Information</td> <td>Project/Program Code Not applicable</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12 Project/Program Name</td> <td>: Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13 EOI Closing Date & Time</td> <td>: 28/08/2025, 12:00 pm (Local Time)</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Information of the Applicant:</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">14 Brief Description of the Assignment To arrange and deliver customized training—contextualized for Bangladesh—to support efficient and effective budget planning and execution with expertise in public financial management (PFM) special focus on performance budgeting.</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Experience, Resources & Delivery Capacity required</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>a) Qualification and Experiences</td> <td>1. The training provider should have internationally recognized brand Legacy, rich history and strong alumni that will help the client in determining its capacity; 2. Wide range of knowledge and experiences in conducting trainings, preferably more than 05 years in the relevant fields; 3. Extensive professional experience in conducting and managing trainings for the civil servants in particularly in Public Financial Management; 4. Should have sufficient expert faculties/resource persons to provide specialized trainings.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b) Required Financial Capability</td> <td>Adequate financial capacity to execute the training mentioned above.</td> </tr> </table> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>15</td></tr></table>		Description		1 Ministry/Division	: Finance Division, Ministry of Finance	2 Agency	: Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS)	3 Procurement Entity Name	: Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS)	4 Procurement Entity District	: Dhaka	5 EOI for Selection of	: Consulting Firm/Training Institution/Academic Institution (International)	6 EOI Ref. No.	: P.15.2: Performance Budgeting: Measures to Improve Allocative and Operational Efficiency	7 EOI Publication Date	: 7/8/2025	8 Key Information	Procurement Method Applied Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS)	9 Funding Information	Budget and Sources of Fund GoB	10 Development Partner (if applicable)	: None	11 Particular Information	Project/Program Code Not applicable	12 Project/Program Name	: Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS)	13 EOI Closing Date & Time	: 28/08/2025, 12:00 pm (Local Time)	Information of the Applicant:		14 Brief Description of the Assignment To arrange and deliver customized training—contextualized for Bangladesh—to support efficient and effective budget planning and execution with expertise in public financial management (PFM) special focus on performance budgeting.		Experience, Resources & Delivery Capacity required		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>a) Qualification and Experiences</td> <td>1. The training provider should have internationally recognized brand Legacy, rich history and strong alumni that will help the client in determining its capacity; 2. Wide range of knowledge and experiences in conducting trainings, preferably more than 05 years in the relevant fields; 3. Extensive professional experience in conducting and managing trainings for the civil servants in particularly in Public Financial Management; 4. Should have sufficient expert faculties/resource persons to provide specialized trainings.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b) Required Financial Capability</td> <td>Adequate financial capacity to execute the training mentioned above.</td> </tr> </table>		a) Qualification and Experiences	1. The training provider should have internationally recognized brand Legacy, rich history and strong alumni that will help the client in determining its capacity; 2. Wide range of knowledge and experiences in conducting trainings, preferably more than 05 years in the relevant fields; 3. Extensive professional experience in conducting and managing trainings for the civil servants in particularly in Public Financial Management; 4. Should have sufficient expert faculties/resource persons to provide specialized trainings.	b) Required Financial Capability	Adequate financial capacity to execute the training mentioned above.	15
Description																																										
1 Ministry/Division	: Finance Division, Ministry of Finance																																									
2 Agency	: Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS)																																									
3 Procurement Entity Name	: Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS)																																									
4 Procurement Entity District	: Dhaka																																									
5 EOI for Selection of	: Consulting Firm/Training Institution/Academic Institution (International)																																									
6 EOI Ref. No.	: P.15.2: Performance Budgeting: Measures to Improve Allocative and Operational Efficiency																																									
7 EOI Publication Date	: 7/8/2025																																									
8 Key Information	Procurement Method Applied Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS)																																									
9 Funding Information	Budget and Sources of Fund GoB																																									
10 Development Partner (if applicable)	: None																																									
11 Particular Information	Project/Program Code Not applicable																																									
12 Project/Program Name	: Strengthening Public Financial Management Program to Enable Service Delivery (SPFMS)																																									
13 EOI Closing Date & Time	: 28/08/2025, 12:00 pm (Local Time)																																									
Information of the Applicant:																																										
14 Brief Description of the Assignment To arrange and deliver customized training—contextualized for Bangladesh—to support efficient and effective budget planning and execution with expertise in public financial management (PFM) special focus on performance budgeting.																																										
Experience, Resources & Delivery Capacity required																																										
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>a) Qualification and Experiences</td> <td>1. The training provider should have internationally recognized brand Legacy, rich history and strong alumni that will help the client in determining its capacity; 2. Wide range of knowledge and experiences in conducting trainings, preferably more than 05 years in the relevant fields; 3. Extensive professional experience in conducting and managing trainings for the civil servants in particularly in Public Financial Management; 4. Should have sufficient expert faculties/resource persons to provide specialized trainings.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b) Required Financial Capability</td> <td>Adequate financial capacity to execute the training mentioned above.</td> </tr> </table>		a) Qualification and Experiences	1. The training provider should have internationally recognized brand Legacy, rich history and strong alumni that will help the client in determining its capacity; 2. Wide range of knowledge and experiences in conducting trainings, preferably more than 05 years in the relevant fields; 3. Extensive professional experience in conducting and managing trainings for the civil servants in particularly in Public Financial Management; 4. Should have sufficient expert faculties/resource persons to provide specialized trainings.	b) Required Financial Capability	Adequate financial capacity to execute the training mentioned above.																																					
a) Qualification and Experiences	1. The training provider should have internationally recognized brand Legacy, rich history and strong alumni that will help the client in determining its capacity; 2. Wide range of knowledge and experiences in conducting trainings, preferably more than 05 years in the relevant fields; 3. Extensive professional experience in conducting and managing trainings for the civil servants in particularly in Public Financial Management; 4. Should have sufficient expert faculties/resource persons to provide specialized trainings.																																									
b) Required Financial Capability	Adequate financial capacity to execute the training mentioned above.																																									
15																																										