

Govt to import 1 lakh tonnes of rice to replenish stock

STAR BUSINESS REPORT



tonne, while the remaining 50,000 tonnes will be procured through international tender from Dubai-based M/S Credit One FZCO at \$355.99 per tonne.

Since the beginning of the current fiscal year, rice distribution – particularly under the Food Friendly Programme – has increased significantly, leading to a sharp decline in public food stock by nearly 700,000 tonnes over a three-month period.

As of October 21, the combined stock of rice and wheat stood at 1.46 million tonnes, down from a record high of 2.15 million tonnes on August 7.

Between July 1 and October 16 of the

current fiscal year, rice distribution under the Food Friendly Programme nearly doubled year-on-year, with 413,000 tonnes sold at subsidised rates to low-income households, compared to 232,000 tonnes during the same period last year.

In total, around one million tonnes of rice and wheat have been distributed through various government programmes during this period, up from 839,000 tonnes in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year.

Despite higher distribution, government imports of rice and wheat have remained low. As of October 5, only 50,000 tonnes of rice had been imported in the current fiscal year, with no wheat imports recorded so far.

In the previous fiscal year, the government imported a total of 1.3 million tonnes of rice and wheat, including 835,000 tonnes of rice.

The decision was approved at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase, chaired virtually by Economic Adviser Saleuddin Ahmed in Dhaka yesterday.

Under the G2G arrangement, 50,000 tonnes of rice will be imported from the Myanmar Rice Federation at \$376.50 per

Foreign banks top profits

FROM PAGE B1

Toufic Ahmad Choudhury, former director general of the Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM), said banks in financial trouble should focus on protecting depositors before spending on CSR.

In 2023, SCB's profit rose to Tk 3,300 crore. The foreign lenders said it plans to spend Tk 33 crore on CSR this year. By mid 2025, the bank had spent Tk 5.6 crore.

It is important to note here that the Bank has also spent more than Tk 47 crore across 2023 and 2024 in the agricultural sector and reported to a separate department of the Bangladesh Bank," SCB said in a written response to The Daily Star.

The foreign lender said its CSR spending difference with other banks is not due to "reduced commitment", but the result of their "strategic allocation approach". It was "guided by several principles, such as impact over expenditure, strategic allocation over volume, holistic value creation, and transparency, accountability, and compliance."

HSBC Bangladesh, the

most profitable bank in 2023, but one of the lowest CSR spenders next year. It earned Tk 2,335 crore in profit that year but spent less than Tk 20 crore on CSR, or about 0.85 percent, in 2024.

In 2024, SCB's profit maker with Tk 999 crore in 2023, spent only Tk 2.86 crore, or 0.29 percent, on CSR last year. It plans to spend Tk 1.89 crore in 2025 and has already disbursed Tk 1.54 crore in the first six months.

HSBC said it also funds projects through global programmes, such as the HSBC Water Programme, which spent Tk 45 crore in Bangladesh between 2012 and 2019, and the "English and Digital for Girls Education" initiative, which received \$0.35 million.

Another \$0.35 million went to a financial literacy project for cottage and micro-enterprises. The bank is now working with the Apparel Impact Institute to help decarbonise the garment sector and is funding a Tk 30 crore agriculture project launched in 2023.

"These are not included in the Bangladesh Bank report," HSBC said.

Even accounting for such initiatives, analysts say foreign banks' total social spending is low relative to their profits.

Citi Bangladesh said,

Citi Foundation and Citi Bangladesh jointly contribute significantly to CSR initiatives in the country; however, the local CSR spend is only reflected in Bangladesh Bank CSR Reports."

Since 1999, Citi Foundation has contributed more than \$5 million to NGOs in Bangladesh. It disbursed Tk 10.7 crore for food security projects in 2023, Tk 5.75 crore in 2024 for homelessness initiatives, and Tk 1.15 crore to help flood victims in August 2024.

"Although there is no specific regulatory mandate on the profit percentage contribution for CSR, Citi Bangladesh is committed to increasing the CSR budget and ensuring proper utilisation," it said.

Commercial Bank of Ceylon said it doubled its CSR budget in 2023, increased it by 40 percent in 2024 and by over 103 percent in 2025 for a special cause. It said it also makes special contributions to humanitarian and national causes.

OVERALL CSR SPENDING

Similar rules apply in Indonesia, Mauritius and Denmark, while in the UK and Spain, CSR forms part of corporate governance.

Referring to those global practices, Choudhury said the BB should follow international examples and hold multinational banks accountable for their low CSR spending.

FOREIGN BANKS CLAIM GREATER CONTRIBUTIONS

Standard Chartered Bangladesh (SCB) was the

Telcos, ISPs asked to boost fire safety measures

MAHMUDUL HASAN

The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has directed all telecom and internet service providers, including mobile operators, to strengthen fire safety measures across their infrastructures such as data centres and towers to ensure uninterrupted communication services amid a spate of fire incidents recently.

In an official directive issued on Monday, the telecom regulator said: "In view of recent unwanted fire incidents that caused extensive damage to important government and private installations and infrastructures, all telecom service providers are hereby directed to exercise due caution to maintain service continuity."

The commission asked operators to ensure that all fire prevention and extinguishing systems at data centres, network operation centres, and base transceiver station sites remain fully functional.

It also instructed licensees to maintain "adequate backup power and alternative network

management plans" to sustain operations during emergencies.

The BTRC further ordered companies to strengthen "personnel and property security, patrolling, monitoring, and surveillance" at all installations and to train emergency response teams for immediate action during fires or other accidents.

The directive added that all employees must receive basic firefighting and fire-safety awareness training.

Service providers have been asked to report their safety management initiatives to the commission's Engineering and Operations Division by October 30, 2025, and to submit fire safety compliance certificates for all KPI-considered establishments by the same date.

The circular was sent to the chairpersons, managing directors, and chief executive officers of all mobile operators, international long-distance operators, submarine cable companies, satellite operators, nationwide telecommunication transmission networks, international internet gateways, tower companies, and internet service providers.

Interbank dollar price crosses

FROM PAGE B1

Last year, the overall CSR spending by banks fell to an eight-year low. Total spending dropped by 33 percent year-on-year to Tk 615 crore, marking the second consecutive annual decline since a record Tk 1,142 crore in 2022.

Almost half of the total was used for disaster management, including winter relief and flood aid.

Banks also donated heavily to various foundations and the Prime Minister's Relief and Welfare Fund under the previous government.

Some bankers said these contributions were made under "political pressure".

Setting aside those issues, former BIBM director general Choudhury said questions remain over how local banks select CSR projects.

"Their spending should be inclusive. Many banks fund causes linked to the localities of their board members. But CSR should have a lasting impact on education, healthcare and the environment," he added.

"There is no demand-supply gap," he said, adding that the supply of foreign currency remains adequate.

A senior official of a Chittagong-based import-oriented conglomerate, seeking anonymity, said there is no valid reason for the dollar rate to increase, but banks

have raised it. He alleged that banks tend

to hike the dollar rate in the last quarter of every year to boost profits.

In May this year, the BB introduced a market-based exchange rate regime as part of the conditions set by the International Monetary Fund. Industry insiders had feared a sharp rise in the exchange rate under the new system, but it has remained stable until recently.

Auction full 'golden spectrum'

FROM PAGE B1

The reserve price, set by the regulator as the minimum bid, should reflect market realities rather than short-term revenue goals.

"Spectrum pricing should prioritise long-term socio-economic benefits over immediate fiscal returns," GSMA said.

Setting aside those issues, former BIBM director general Choudhury said questions remain over how local banks select CSR projects.

"Their spending should be inclusive. Many banks fund causes linked to the localities of their board members. But CSR should have a lasting impact on education, healthcare and the environment," he added.

Globally, average prices for low-band spectrum have fallen by about 75 percent over the past decade, showing a shift toward policies that promote affordability and inclusion, the letter said.

"The 700 MHz auction cannot be viewed in isolation," it said. "Operators must balance new investments with existing financial obligations and the need to sustain affordable services in a price-sensitive market."

To help long-term planning, GSMA asked BTRC to clarify the terms of the 2026 renewal process.

"Predictability will help operators plan strategically for future investments, including the 700 MHz band," it said.

Bangladesh Election Commission		Out of Country Voting (OCV) System Development & Implementation (SDI) Project		Re-Invitation for Tender					
Nirbahan Bhaban, Agargaon Dhaka-1207									
Procurement of Security Key for Multifactor Authentication including integration of it with OCV System									
ECS/OCV-SDI/54/86 Date: 22/10/2025, Package: GD-4									
KEY INFORMATION									
1. Procurement Method I Open Tender Method (OTM) National									
FUNDING INFORMATION									
8. Budget and Source of Funds GoB (Development Budget)									
9. Development Partners (if applicable) N/A									
PARTICULAR INFORMATION									
10. Project Name (if applicable) Out of Country Voting (OCV) System Development & Implementation (SDI) Project									
11. Tender Package No. GD-4									
12. Tender Package Name Procurement of Security Key for Multifactor Authentication including integration of it with OCV System									
13. Date 23 October 2025									
14. Tender Last Selling Date and Time 29 October 2025 04:00 PM									
15. Tender Closing Date and Time 30 October 2025 02:00 PM									
16. Tender Opening Date and Time (within one hour of Tender Closing) 30 October 2025 03:00 PM									
17. Name & Address of the office(s) Address K M Ariful Islam, Assistant Project Director, OCV-SDI Project, Room No.610 (floor-6), Nirbahan Commission Bhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.									
20. NO CONDITIONS APPLY FOR SALE, PURCHASE OR DISTRIBUTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS									
21. Receiving Tender Document & Opening Tender Document Receiving tender document: Room # 303(Floor-03) Opening tender document: Room # 303(Floor-03) Nirbahan Bhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207									
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER									
22. Eligibility of Tenderer									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The firm must have minimum 5 (five) years of general experience. The firm must have minimum 3 (Three) years of specific experience in the domain of Cyber Security Solutions & Services providing business. Tenderer must have completed at least 1(One) Contract with minimum Tk-50 lac contract value completed over a period of last 3 (Three) years. (Documentary evidence must be provided in the form of Completion Certificate). Other requirements are described in tender document. 									
23. Price of Tender Document (Tk) 1,000/- (One Thousand Taka Only.)									
24. Package No Identification of Package Location									
25. Package GD-4 Dhaka 1,00,000/- (One Lac only) Maximum 15 days									
26. The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all the Tenders or annul the Tender proceedings according to PPA-2006 and PPR-2008									
27. Payment Terms									
28. Submission of Bid									
29. Bid Submission Date									
30. Bid Submission Time									
31. Bid Submission Place									
32. Bid Submission Format									
33. Bid Submission Document									
34. Bid Submission Address									
35. Bid Submission Date									