

Star BUSINESS



Onion prices fall as 52,000 tonnes were imported in a month

SUKANTA HALDER and MOHAMMAD SUMAN

Bangladesh has imported over 52,000 tonnes of onions since the government's approval in December to stabilise supply and meet rising consumer demand.

Since December 7, the government has so far approved the import of 73,050 tonnes of onions, according to the data of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE).

The steady imports have led to a decrease in retail onion prices in the country, bringing some relief for consumers dealing with high inflation, which stood at 8.49 percent last month.

"All the onions imported so far have come from India," said Boni Amin Khan, additional deputy director for import at the plant quarantine wing of the DAE, which issues the phytosanitary certificates required for importing any plant into the country.

Last month, onion prices in the retail market surged past Tk 150 per kilogramme (kg) within a week. In response, the Ministry of Agriculture announced that only importers who had applied for import permits since August 1 would be eligible to import onions.

PRICES FALL AS SUPPLY INCREASES

Currently, imported onions are being sold at the retail level for Tk 65-Tk 72 per kg in different kitchen markets across Dhaka and Chattogram, according to the retailers.

For importers, including transportation and other ancillary expenses, the landed cost ranges between Tk 50 and Tk 52 per kg, they said.

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NBFI depositors may get money back before Ramadan

Says central bank governor, as the legal process to wind up nine non-banks begins this week

Liquidating NBFIs

FAS Finance, BIFC, Premier Leasing, Fareast Finance, GSP Finance, Prime Finance, Aviva Finance, People's Leasing and International Leasing

<p>They hold</p> <p>Total deposit of Tk 15,370cr</p> <p>Individual deposit of Tk 3,525cr</p> <p>Banks and corporate deposit of Tk 11,845cr</p>	<p>NBFI depositor repayment</p> <p>Govt has given verbal approval for about Tk 5,000cr</p> <p>Asset valuation will decide how much can be recovered</p>	<p>FIVE MERGING BANKS</p> <p>May see forensic audits to identify past irregularities</p> <p>Their officials linked to old scams may face dismissal</p>	<p>Depositor activity in last two days</p> <p>Withdrawals: Tk 107cr</p> <p>New deposits: Tk 44cr</p> <p>Total transactions: 13,314</p> <p>Highest withdrawals: Tk 66cr at EXIM Bank</p>
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STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Individual depositors of nine ailing non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) lined up for liquidation may get back their principal amounts before Ramadan in February, said Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur.

At a press conference at the central bank headquarters yesterday, Mansur said the legal process for liquidation would begin this week.

In December last year, the central bank moved to wind up the non-banks after its board approved their closure under the newly enacted Bank Resolution Ordinance 2025, the country's first comprehensive framework for resolving failing banks and non-banks.

The nine NBFIs are FAS Finance, Bangladesh Industrial Finance Company, Premier Leasing, Fareast Finance, GSP Finance, Prime Finance, Aviva Finance,

People's Leasing, and International Leasing.

According to central bank data, they hold Tk 15,370 crore in deposits, of which Tk 3,525 crore belongs to individuals and Tk 11,845 crore to banks and corporate clients.

According to central bank officials, the government has verbally approved around Tk 5,000 crore to repay the non-bank depositors.

"From this week, we are going to initiate the legal process to declare them non-viable and carry out asset valuations," Mansur said.

"This will determine whether they have negative or positive assets, and based on that assessment, a decision will be made on whether shareholders will receive anything or not," he added.

MERGING BANKS MAY FACE FURTHER AUDIT FOR SCAM LINKS

The five banks currently being

merged will undergo further forensic audits to identify officials involved in irregularities and scams during the previous regime, Mansur said.

He said those found responsible are likely to lose their jobs.

Over the past two days, the governor said depositors of the merging banks withdrew Tk 107 crore, while fresh deposits of Tk 44 crore were made.

"A total of 13,314 transactions took place over the last two days... The volume of withdrawals is much lower than what we had anticipated," Mansur said.

Among the five banks, EXIM Bank recorded the highest withdrawals at Tk 66 crore.

The governor said that depositor confidence had not eroded entirely, as new deposits continued during the same period. "Those who place new deposits will be able to withdraw their money at any time," he added.

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Inflation rises to 8.49% in December

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN

Following months of a brief pause, inflationary pressures continued to rise in December for the second consecutive month.

Headline inflation reached 8.49 percent in the last month of the year, up from 8.29 percent in November and October's 39-month low of 8.17 percent, according to data released by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) yesterday.

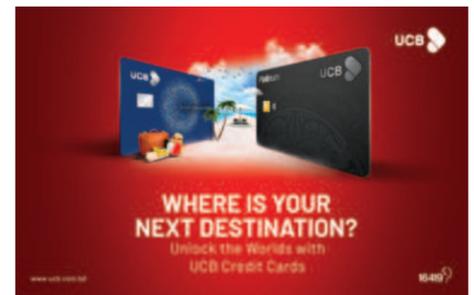
For low and fixed-income households in both rural and urban areas, the latest increase adds fresh pressure on the cost of food and non-food essentials.

Economists say inflation is turning red-hot again despite the central bank's tightened monetary stance, pointing to supply-side constraints rather than rising demand as the main driver of price increases.

While this view questions the effectiveness of the current high policy rate and calls for closer market monitoring, economists still support keeping lending rates elevated.

In December, food inflation climbed to 7.71 percent from 7.36 percent in November, adding pressure on household budgets as prices of essential items edged up.

Non-food inflation also increased slightly to 9.13 percent from 9.08 percent a month earlier.



BBS data showed that the consumer price index (CPI), which tracks changes in the cost of a basket of goods and services, rose in both rural and urban areas.

According to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB), prices of essential food items such as rice, flour, edible oil and lentils were higher in December compared to the same month last year.

Bangladesh has been facing persistent inflation for nearly three years. Consumer prices remained above 9 percent until May 2025 and have stayed above 8 percent since then, raising questions about the effectiveness of recent economic policies.

However, in index terms, food inflation showed a slight easing in December. The food CPI declined to 142.88 in December from 146.66 in November, although it increased on a year-on-year basis, BBS data showed.

"Inflation remains very high, and the data show no clear sign of a lasting decline,"

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