Govt to distribute vitamin-enriched rice in 300 upazilas

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government has decided to distribute six varieties of rice enriched with vitamins and minerals in 300 upazilas in order to reduce malnutrition and strengthen nutrition security for the public.

This information was announced through a press release issued by the food ministry yesterday.

In the current fiscal year, under the government's Food Friendly Programme, a total of 9.90 lakh tonnes of rice will be distributed to 55 lakh rural poor and extremely poor families across the country at a rate of 30 kg per month per family for six months at a price of Tk 15 per kg. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Food Planning and Monitoring Committee, chaired by Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed.

Over the past five fiscal years, an average of 32.32 lakh tonnes of food grain was distributed through the public sector, while 35.08 lakh tonnes were distributed in fiscal year 2025-26, according to the press release.

Due to the steady increase in demand for food grain and the expanding scope of food security, poverty alleviation and social safety net programmes, a decision has been made to increase the government's safety stock of food grain from the existing 13 lakh tonnes to 14 lakh tonnes during normal times and 15 lakh tonnes during disaster periods.

Additionally, a decision has been made to construct new food warehouses in the three hill districts to ensure the swift and uninterrupted storage and distribution of food grain in remote hilly areas during natural disasters, emergencies and temporary disruptions to communication systems.

A decision has also been made to increase the current food grain storage capacity by 30 lakh tonnes by 2030.

Govt to go for direct purchase of eight LNG cargoes

STAR BUSINESS REPORT



PHOTO: REUTERS/FILE

The government has given in-principle approval to directly procure eight cargoes of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to meet emergency domestic energy needs.

The approval came at the 24th meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs yesterday, where four separate proposals from the Energy and Mineral Resources Division were approved.

Of the seven proposals discussed at the meeting, the committee approved the procurement of the eight LNG cargoes through the Direct Procurement Method (DPM), instead of open tendering, to ensure quick delivery of the fuel.According to meeting sources, two cargoes each will be procured from four international companies: Blackcube International Ltd (UK), Global Fuel Supplies Pte Ltd (Australia), Plentitude Energy Sdn Bhd (Malaysia) and Maxwell International SPC (Oman).

Official documents said the direct procurement route was chosen to safeguard national energy security and avert a potential gas supply crisis.At the same meeting, the committee approved a proposal to import 5,000 tonnes of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) from Speed Marketing Corporation, a concern of Speed Group, under the DPM to help stabilise the domestic market.

The LPG will be procured at Saudi Aramco's contract price plus $97 per tonne on a cost-and-freight basis.

Meanwhile, the Energy and Mineral Resources Division withdrew its proposal seeking approval for the Draft Bangladesh Onshore Model Production Sharing Contract 2026 (Plain Lands).

Bangladesh, Australia reaffirm stronger trade ties

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh and Australia have reaffirmed their commitment to expanding bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, skills development and research, with both sides stressing the need for more structured and long-term collaboration to support economic growth and institutional capacity building.

The commitment came during a meeting between Commerce Minister Khandakar Abdul Muktadir and Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Susan Ryle at the Ministry of Commerce in Dhaka yesterday.

According to officials, discussions focused on strengthening trade negotiation capacity, promoting research collaboration and expanding cooperation in education, agriculture, livestock and investment.

During the meeting, the commerce minister said the government is planning to introduce institutional, long-term training programmes for government officials involved in international trade, with particular emphasis on World Trade Organization (WTO) laws and trade negotiations.

To support the initiative, the government has undertaken plans to establish a research and study centre that would eventually serve as a regional hub for knowledge sharing, policy research and capacity building, he said.

The minister also highlighted the importance of improving the professional capacity of Project Directors (PDs), noting that the effective implementation of national development projects depends largely on their competence. The government is therefore considering specialised training programmes to strengthen their skills, he added.

Responding to the proposal, High Commissioner Susan Ryle expressed Australia's interest in supporting long-term institutional capacity development.

She said previous training initiatives had been conducted on a limited scale, but discussions are now underway to develop more structured and sustained programmes covering trade negotiations, the legal aspects of international agreements and public policy formulation.She also indicated that other development partners could be involved in the initiative.

The meeting also reviewed Bangladesh's trade prospects following its graduation from the least developed country (LDC) category, including future market access strategies and the country's position within the global trading system.Both sides agreed on the importance of maintaining regular dialogue on these issues.

Christmas apparel shipments

FROM PAGE B1

Major international buyers and retail clients of Evince include Levi's, Armani, Zara, H&M and C&A.

Parvez, a former president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), said buyers "were a bit cautious in placing the work orders as it happens in times of general elections in any country".

Bangladesh held its national election in February. Official data show exports to both the European Union, Bangladesh's largest export market, and the United States, its largest single-country market, recorded negative growth during the January-May period.

Eurostat data showed Bangladesh's garment exports to the EU fell 18.89 percent year-on-year to €7.28 billion in January-May.

For the fiscal year 2025-26, apparel exports to the EU declined 3.31 percent to $19.06 billion, according to the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB).

The US market also showed a downward trend.

Garment exports to the United States fell 5.75 percent year-on-year to $4.01 billion during January-June, according to the US Office of Textiles and Apparel (OTEXA). However, exports to the US rose 5.74 percent year-on-year to $763.57 million in June alone.

Kutubuddin Ahmed, chairman of Envoy Legacy and Sheltech Group, said the slowdown is affecting all major garment-exporting countries because demand in Western markets has weakened.



PHOTO: STAR/FILE

"Because of the slowdown in export trend, the Christmas shipment will also be low this season to some extent," he said.

Sharif Zahir, chairman of Ananta Group, said shipments of woven garments are normal this season, but demand for knitwear is lower.

Ramzul Seraj, managing director of Elite Garments Ltd, which exports to the United States, said his company has been facing at least 10 percent lower exports this season than during the same period last year because buyers delayed placing work orders.

BGMEA President Mahmud Hasan Khan said he expects exports by the end of the current fiscal year to match or slightly exceed last year's level, although shipments have slowed in recent months.

"Because it is expected that the gas supply situation will improve soon. And the factories will be able to go into production in full swing as the government has been taking measures. The government's stimulus package will also play a positive role in the business," said Mahmud.

Requesting anonymity, a major European buyer recently suggested Bangladesh shift from producing basic garments to higher-value products and diversify its product range.

The buyer said Bangladesh's top five products, including T-shirts, trousers, formal shirts, sweaters and underwear, account for 78 percent of the country's garment exports.

Md Fazlul Hoque, managing director of Plummy Fashions Ltd, said, "Following the Trump tariff, competition in the global supply chain has become more intense as all the major global players such as China, Vietnam, India and Pakistan are sending the same goods to the same markets."

Mostafa Q Sobhan Rubel, chief executive officer of Dragon Group, said shipments to North American markets, including the United States and Canada, are normal, but exports to Europe have slowed this season.

Policy uncertainty

FROM PAGE B1

"Deregulation is a journey.

We have just started," Rehan said.

He said the budget addressed concerns raised by the ICT and telecom industries, which the government sees as a key driver of growth and central to its ambition of making Bangladesh a global technology hub.

On electric vehicles, Rehan said the transition would be gradual as charging infrastructure could not be developed overnight, while the government remained committed to supporting the shift.

He added that Bangladesh's challenge lay in tax collection rather than tax rates. Although tax rates are high in some sectors, the country's tax-to-GDP ratio remains around 6.6 percent, among the world's lowest.

The government would gradually expand the tax net through continued consultation with businesses, he said.

Tanvir Ghani, special assistant to the prime minister, underscored the need for banking sector reforms to make banks more resilient and efficient.

He said the financial sector should better support businesses while improving customer service, adding that discussions on reforms were continuing.

Nahina Rahman Rochi, an executive member of Bida, said the budget reflected close collaboration between government agencies and the private sector.

He said 14 of the 17 sectoral and policy recommendations submitted by Bida to the finance ministry had been incorporated into the budget, while around 63 percent of the agency's 19 deregulation proposals had also been accepted.

"This kind of collaboration is quite unique in government, where two agencies work together to deliver practical outcomes," he said.

According to a Bida presentation, the budget includes tax cuts, duty exemptions and export incentives to strengthen domestic manufacturing, attract foreign investment and support the capital market.

Among the measures, leather-sector SMEs will receive a 10 percent export incentive, while advance tax on leather products has been reduced to 0.5 percent from 5 percent.

The pharmaceutical industry will benefit from duty exemptions on 51 active pharmaceutical ingredient raw materials and nine anti-cancer drug inputs, while import duties on dialysis filters, vascular stents and several cardiac devices have been withdrawn.

Edible oil manufacturers using domestically produced oilseeds will receive a 10-year tax holiday, and zero-duty facilities have been expanded for selected industrial machinery and medical manufacturing equipment.

The budget also removes restrictions on foreign investment in the ICT sector, allows businesses in free trade zones to operate without separate bonded warehouse licences, and offers tax incentives for electric vehicle manufacturers alongside lower corporate tax rates for listed companies with higher public shareholding and greater use of banking channels, according to the Bida presentation.

Gold hits 7-week peak

REUTERS

Gold rose for a fourth session on Thursday and touched its highest level in seven weeks, helped by a softer dollar, while market participants assessed the chances of the Strait of Hormuz reopening.

Spot gold was up 0.2 percent at $4,254.98 per ounce by 0636 GMT, after earlier hitting its highest level since June 18.

Tight monetary policy

FROM PAGE B1

The MPC's minutes credit the tight policy since mid-2024 with helping bring inflation down, strengthening the external sector, stabilising the exchange rate under a market-based system, and improving the overall effectiveness of monetary policy. But the committee said that phase has run its course.

Global inflation has largely normalised, the panel noted, international commodity prices have stayed broadly stable, and the taka-dollar exchange rate has held steady, sharply reducing the imported inflation Bangladesh faced earlier.

"Persistent domestic inflation is now driven primarily by structural and supply-side factors, including food supply disruptions, administered energy prices, market inefficiencies, and distribution bottlenecks, rather than excessive aggregate demand," the minutes stated.

"Consequently, further monetary tightening would likely yield limited additional benefits for inflation while imposing increasing costs on growth and employment," it added.

The committee also flagged exceptionally weak private sector credit growth "taking into account the combined effects of elevated borrowing costs and energy constraints" will continue to dampen investment and business confidence.

Weighing the trade-offs, the MPC judged that a modest cut from 10 percent to 9.5 percent would carry limited inflationary risk while supporting industrial production, employment, and broader economic activity.

"The committee therefore endorsed a more balanced monetary policy approach that supports both price stability and economic recovery," the minutes said.

To improve the responsiveness, transparency, and effectiveness of monetary policy in a rapidly changing environment, the panel also recommended that the BB set monetary policy on a quarterly basis, rather than the current semiannual schedule.

South Korea deal

FROM PAGE B1

at around $492 million, resulting in a trade deficit of nearly $411 million.

The FBCCI said the CEPA would allow nearly 97 percent of Bangladeshi products, covering around 8,428 tariff lines, to enter the South Korean market duty-free.

"The agreement will make Bangladeshi products more competitive in the South Korean market and help diversify the country's exports," Fazlul said.

He said the ready-made garment (RMG) sector would be the biggest beneficiary of the agreement. Exports of leather and leather goods, footwear, pharmaceuticals, agricultural products and other non-traditional items are also expected to rise.

According to the FBCCI, South Korea imports around $12 billion worth of apparel annually from global suppliers, but Bangladesh currently accounts for only about 3 percent of that market.

The business body said the CEPA would help Bangladeshi exporters secure a larger share of South Korea's apparel market by improving price competitiveness.

The agreement is also expected to enhance technical cooperation and encourage greater investment and industrial collaboration between the two countries, Fazlul added.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
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Invitation for (OTM) Tendering Method Notice -2026-2027.

1	Ministry/ Division	Local Government Division
2	Implementing Agency	Department of Public Health Engineering
3	Project/Program Name	Project of Safe Water Supply Through Out The Country
4	Description of works:	

TID	Name of work
1315930	Installation of 266 Nos Shallow Tube well And 20 Nos Deep Tube well (100x38) with Submersible Pump at Pabna Sadar (150 Nos.), Chatmohor (88 Nos.) And Ishwardi (28+20 Nos.), Upazila in Pabna District under Safe Water Supply Throughout The Country Project during FY 2026-2027.
1315900	Installation of 296 Nos Shallow Tube well (100x38) with Submersible Pump at Atgharia (40 Nos.), Faridpur (48 Nos.), Bhangura (48 Nos.), Santhia (80 Nos.) And Sujanagar (80 Nos.) Upazila in Pabna District under Safe Water Supply Throughout The Country Project during FY 2026-2027.
1315844	Construction of 44 Nos. Community Based Water Supply scheme by installing 100mm x 50mm dia tubewell with 1.5 HP Submersible Pump under Project for Safe Water Supply Throughout the Country (PSWSC) project at Bera (22 Nos.) And Ishwardi (22 Nos.) Upazila in Pabna District during FY 2026-2027.

5	Name, Designation & Official Inviting Tender	Md. Atiqul Islam, Executive Engineer, DPHE, Pabna Division, Pabna.
6	This is an online Tender, where only e-tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details on the website: WWW.eprocure.gov.bd	06/08/26 (Md. Atiqul Islam) Executive Engineer, DPHE Pabna Division, Pabna Tel No: 02588845754

GD-1912

Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Narail
www.eed.narail.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice No. 513-06/2026-2027 Date: 06/08/2026

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the following works Under EED, Narail District as mentioned below.

SL. No	Tender ID No.	Package No	Identification of Package	Procurement Method	Tender Document last Selling / Downloading Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time
01	1309378	NARAIL/REP/GOVT/ 2024-25/WR-15	Overall Repair & Renovation Works Of College Temple & Auditorium At Lohagara Govt. Adarsha College Under Lohagara Upazila, Narail District.	LTM	17/08/2026 (16:00)	18/08/2026 (13:00)

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be acceptable in the National e-GP system portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender A1 & A2 renewed up to FY.2025-26 enlistment Category Contractor of Education Engineering Department under Narail District who are registered in the National e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) will be eligible. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Document from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches up to 12:00 on 18/08/2026. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender(s) without assigning any reason what so ever.

(Arunava Roy)
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Narail.

GD-1911