

# The Daily Star

Friday, April 16, 2021

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

Home » Front Page

12:00 AM, April 16, 2021 / LAST MODIFIED: 03:19 AM, April 16, 2021

## 35 lakh families to get cash aid

*Govt plans to provide Tk 2.5k to each family before Eid via mobile banking services*



Shafia Khatun drives a battery-run rickshaw as a trader sits on top of vegetables being carried in it on a street in the capital's Mirpur-1 yesterday. The 45-year-old woman used to work as a house help but the pandemic left her jobless. She has been driving this rickshaw on rent to make ends meet. Thousands like her have been forced into changing their profession to survive after the Covid-19 struck the country in March last year. Photo: Amran Hossain

Rejaul Karim Byron ,



Wasim Bin Habib

---

The government is going to provide another round of cash assistance to nearly 35 lakh poor families facing income losses and hardship amid the ongoing nationwide lockdown.

Each family will receive a one-off cash support of Tk 2,500 before the Eid-ul-Fitr through mobile financial services, say finance ministry officials.



---

**For all latest news, follow The Daily Star's Google News channel.**

The Finance Division on April 8 sent a proposal to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for approval. "Once approved, we will start disbursing money," said a top official of the division, seeking anonymity.

The official further said Tk 900 crore has been earmarked for providing the financial aid to 34.97 lakh families that got Tk 2,500 each in cash support under a Tk 1,258-crore stimulus package last year during the countrywide shutdown imposed in the wake of the first Covid wave.

At that time, the government with inputs from field-level officials prepared a list of 50 lakh families in need of financial support. The target beneficiaries included rickshaw-pullers, day labourers, construction workers, farmers, shop employees, people working at small businesses and transport workers.

The PM inaugurated the fund disbursement on May 14 last year. But the distribution of money was stopped midway following allegations of anomalies in the list of beneficiaries with names of solvent people found in it.

Later, the Finance Division cross-checked all the names, using multilayer scrutiny and databases, and struck 14.32 lakh names off the list. It finalised the list with 34,97,353 names as beneficiaries.

Talking to this newspaper, a Finance Division official said the allocation of Tk 900 crore has been made from the government's Tk 10,000-crore emergency fund for the pandemic.

The poor and the marginalised people are having a hard time as the entire country has been put under a lockdown for a week starting from Wednesday morning, forcing them to stay indoors.

The strict restrictions are aimed at curbing the rapid rise in virus infections and deaths.

Yesterday, the country hit the grim milestone of 10,000 deaths from Covid-19 with the virus claiming 94 lives in 24 hours till 8:00am.

The government may extend the ongoing restrictions which would severely affect the lives and livelihoods of the poor and the marginalised people.

At a pre-budget meeting with Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal on April 11, economists made various suggestions, including sending money through digital payment methods to the ultra-poor who would face financial hardship during the lockdown.

In her address to the nation on the eve of Pahela Baishakh, the PM stressed that her government is always with the people, and said she had directed the authorities concerned to provide necessary assistance to the poor and low-income people.

#### OTHER ASSISTANCE

Alongside cash aid to the poor, the government will provide financial assistance to the farmers who suffered loss of Boro crop due to the nor'wester and heatwave that swept the country in the first week of this month.

An estimated 30,000 hectares of Boro crop in both plain and haor areas of several districts were affected, dashing the hopes of a bumper harvest.

To relieve the farmers from the economic distress, the government will give them one-time cash support of Tk 5,000 each. The Finance Division sent a proposal to the Prime Minister's Office last week, primarily allocating Tk 100 crore for an estimated one lakh affected farmers, according to a finance ministry official.

The agriculture ministry has been asked to prepare a list of farmers along with their phone numbers. Once prepared, the Finance Division will start sending money to the mobile banking accounts of the farmers, the official mentioned.

Besides, the finance ministry allocated an additional Tk 800 crore for Test Relief, General Relief (GR), Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF), and Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programmes.

The original allocation for these schemes was Tk 1,216 crore. The main aim of injecting additional funds is to give temporary relief to the rural people facing hardship due to the lockdown.

The Test Relief programme creates employment opportunities for the rural poor through implementation of small rehabilitation projects and provides them with foodgrains in

exchange for work. Foodgrains are also distributed among the extremely poor people under the VGF programme.

The Finance Division has asked the disaster management and relief ministry to use its Tk 20-crore disaster fund to provide food assistance to the poor during the lockdown.

The disaster ministry will give the money to district administrations that will prepare food packets containing rice, lentil and oil, and distribute those among the poor and destitute people.

If the ongoing lockdown is extended further, around 75,000 tonnes of rice will be sold at a subsidised rate in all 11 cities across the country through Open Market Sale. Rice will be sold at Tk 10 a kg, said a finance ministry official.

"The move will give some cushion to the urban poor," observed the official.

Also, state-run Trading Corporation of Bangladesh will sell essentials at subsidised prices. The finance ministry will give the commerce ministry Tk 100 crore as subsidy for this purpose.

**Stay updated on the go with The Daily Star Android & iOS [News App](#). [Click here](#) to download it for your device.**

**The Daily Star Breaking news alert on your phone**

Grameenphone:

Type START <space> BR and send SMS it to 22222

Robi:

Type START <space> BR and send SMS it to 2222

Banglalink:

Type START <space> BR and send SMS it to 2225

*Find more information on SMS subscription*

---

**LEAVE YOUR COMMENTS** COMMENT POLICY

---