PRESS RELEASE

India hands over 1,000 metric tonnes of rice to Sierra Leone for the School Feeding Programme

Freetown, 3 November 2026:

The Government of India today handed over 1,000 metric tonnes of rice as grant assistance to the Government of Sierra Leone in support of its national School Feeding Programme. The rice was formally handed over by H.E. Mr. Norbu Negi, High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Sierra Leone, to Hon. Mr. Conrad Sackey, Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, at a ceremony held in Freetown.

The grant assistance was provided in response to a request from the Government of Sierra Leone. It reflects India's commitment to food security, child nutrition and better education in Sierra Leone.

Speaking at the ceremony, the High Commissioner conveyed warm greetings from the Government and people of India. He said that the rice is meant for the children of Sierra Leone, and that a meal at school helps children attend school regularly, learn better and stay healthy. He noted that India runs one of the largest school meal programmes in the world, PM POSHAN, which gives a hot cooked meal to more than 100 million children every school day.

The High Commissioner said that the assistance is in line with the vision of H.E. President Dr. Julius Maada Bio and with the Big Five Game Changers of Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan (2024-2030), in particular Feed Salone and Human Capital Development.

Highlighting the long-standing friendship between the two countries, the High Commissioner recalled that India has always stood with Sierra Leone in times of need. India supplied 40,000 tonnes of rice to Sierra Leone in 2008, gave US$ 50,000 for relief after the floods and mudslide of 2017, and provided 1,000 metric tonnes of rice and more than 7,000 kilograms of medicines worth nearly US$ 150,000 during the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, India also supplied 15 haemodialysis machines to strengthen kidney care in Sierra Leone.

The High Commissioner also spoke about India's wider development partnership with Sierra Leone. This includes a US$ 990,000 project under the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, carried out by UNDP, to set up and strengthen skills development centres for persons with disabilities in six districts. Under the ITEC programme, India offers 86 training slots every year to Sierra Leonean

government officials, and more than 200 officials have been trained in India in the last three financial years. India also offers 50 fully funded ICCR scholarships every year to Sierra Leonean students. Through Lines of Credit of about US$ 250 million, India is supporting projects in irrigation, drinking water supply, agricultural equipment, street lighting, power transmission and education, including the US$ 32 million University of Science and Technology project in Koidu.

Hon. Mr. Conrad Sackey expressed his appreciation to the Government and people of India for the generous assistance, noting that India's support aligns with the Government of Sierra Leone's flagship **'Feed Salone'** initiative, one of the key pillars of the **Big Five Game Changers**, under the leadership of H.E. Brig. (Rtd.) Dr. Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

The consignment was shipped from Nhava Sheva port in Mumbai in 40 containers and arrived in Freetown in June 2026. It has been delivered to the warehouse of the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education for distribution to schools across the country.

The assistance reflects the spirit of solidarity and South-South cooperation between India and Sierra Leone, and will contribute to the welfare of school children across Sierra Leone.

*****

High Commission of India
Freetown, Sierra Leone
3 November 2026