

star BUSINESS



Govt plans 31% hike in food subsidy in FY26 budget



BUDGET FOR FY26

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and ASIFUR RAHMAN

The government plans to raise the food subsidy allocation by 31 percent to Tk 9,500 crore in the upcoming fiscal year, aiming to ensure access to affordable food for poor and low-income households.

In the current fiscal year (FY) 2024-25, the food subsidy budget was initially set at Tk 7,200 crore before being revised to Tk 8,059 crore.

Finance ministry officials said the figure may rise even further, due mainly to an increase in rice imports and increased distribution.

Officials said the government has widened its food distribution efforts through food-friendly schemes such as the Open Market Sale (OMS) programme and operations under the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB).

In the next fiscal year, the number of beneficiary families under these programmes is likely to increase to 55 lakh from the current 50 lakh.

Moreover, each family will receive 30 kilogrammes of rice per month at Tk 15 per kg for six months, an extension from the current five-month duration.

The Gini index is projected to rise to **36.1** amid inflation and job losses

WB says extreme poverty to hit **9.3%** in 2025, pushing **30** lakh more below the poverty line

Number of subsidised rice recipients to go up to **55** lakh in FY26; distribution extended to six months



TAKEAWAYS

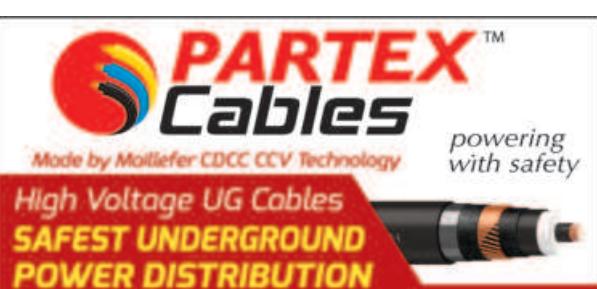
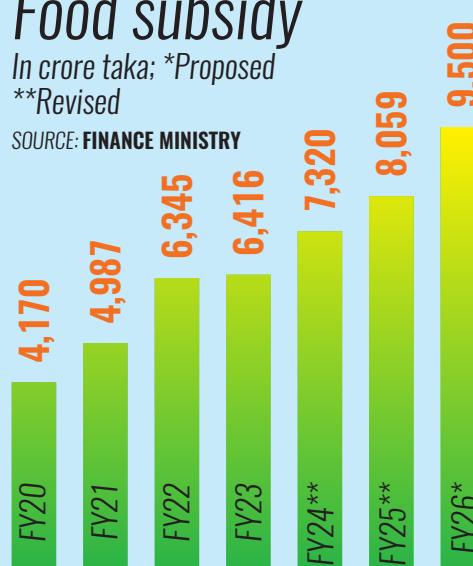
FY25 food distribution under safety nets fell due to absence of local representatives

Govt imported **7.09** lakh tonnes of rice this year, which may rise to **9** lakh tonnes in FY26

Food subsidy

In crore taka: *Proposed
**Revised

SOURCE: FINANCE MINISTRY



These programmes currently cover 256 upazilas across all eight divisions, targeting areas identified as the poorest by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) survey.

Although the government expects inflation to ease in the coming year, officials concede that prices may continue to strain household budgets, especially as food inflation has remained above 9 percent since March 2023.

According to the latest Bangladesh Development Update by the World Bank released in April, the national poverty rate is projected to climb to 22.9 percent this year.

Extreme poverty, measured by the international threshold of \$2.15 per day, is forecast to rise to 9.3 percent, pushing another 30 lakh into extreme poverty.

The report shows that extreme poverty increased from 5.5 percent in 2023 to 7.7 percent in 2024.

It also said that inequality is likely to worsen, with the Gini index – used to measure income disparity – rising from 35.5 to 36.1.

The World Bank attributed this trend to persistent inflation and job losses, which have hit low-income families the hardest.

"Vulnerable populations are likely to face worsening social and economic disparities due to the ongoing economic slowdown," the report added.

In addition to rice, the government also distributed essential food items

such as eggs, lentils, soybean oil, and vegetables through the TCB in the current fiscal year.

For FY25, the authorities set a target of distributing 30 lakh tonnes of rice and wheat.

Between July last year and May 15 this year, 26.85 lakh tonnes were distributed, less than the 27.92 lakh tonnes delivered over the same period the year prior, according to the Ministry of Food.

Of the total food distributed this fiscal year, 21.31 lakh tonnes were channelled through food-friendly programmes and the OMS, up from 19.9 lakh tonnes in the previous year.

However, food ministry officials said the distribution of relief under social safety net programmes slowed in rural areas due to absence of elected local government representatives.

READ MORE ON B3

Don't believe speculation, forex rate will be stable: governor

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur advised remitters not to believe in speculation, stating that the exchange rate would be stable from now on.

He also warned foreign exchange aggregators not to hold on to foreign currency, reminding them that they cannot hold onto it for more than five days.

"The market will fix the rate and we are working as a facilitator for the market," he said yesterday while addressing as the chief guest of a roundtable on the country's foreign exchange market and the central bank's recent decision to go for a market-based exchange rate.

National business newspaper Daily Bonik Barta organised the roundtable.

"We were waiting for macroeconomic stability before allowing the exchange rate to be determined by market forces. And this was the right time," Mansur said.

However, in terms of macroeconomic stability, the most important topic remains reining in inflation, which has hovered above nine percent since March of 2023.

"Right now, the most important thing for us is to bring down inflation to 3 or 4 percent. I believe by August, inflation will come down to around 7 percent. By the end of the year, I think it will come down to around 5 percent," he said.

Mansur also acknowledged that there has been a lot of discussion about making the exchange rate market-based, something the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other international organisations have been suggesting for a long time.

"But the question was: when would we do it? This has been under discussion for a long time."

He added that many people believed the interim government wouldn't be able to meet the IMF's requirements. "It's true that the previous government couldn't meet any of them. But we have met all of them," he said.

He also said he was against restricting imports of luxury goods.

READ MORE ON B3

External debt doubles in seven years

But economy has grown fast enough to keep overall burden in check

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Bangladesh's external debt soared to \$103 billion by the end of December 2024, doubling from \$51 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2016-17, as the sharp increase in borrowing coincided with a rapid expansion of the economy.

During the period, the country's gross domestic product (GDP) grew from \$223 billion in FY17 to \$450 billion in FY24, show the latest figures of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

Despite the rise in debt, the debt-to-GDP ratio remained almost unchanged, edging down slightly from 22.9 percent in FY17 to 22.8 percent in FY24.

Economists say this stability suggests that strong economic growth has effectively absorbed the additional debt, keeping the overall burden in check.

According to them, the debt doubling reflects a period of aggressive borrowing, largely to fund infrastructure and energy projects.

"While such investments can support long-term growth, the pace of debt accumulation, against a backdrop of global interest rate hikes and weakening foreign exchange reserves, raises questions about sustainability," said Professor Selim Raihan, an economics professor at Dhaka University and also the executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (Sanem).

The central bank's latest report also shows a shift in borrowing patterns. While the government continues to account for the majority of external debt, which is around \$84 billion, the private sector's share has grown to \$19 billion.

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BPO summit to begin on June 21

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A two-day BPO Summit Bangladesh 2025 is set to begin for the sixth time on June 21 at Senapranjan in the capital, bringing together firms in the business process outsourcing (BPO) sector.

This year's summit carries the theme "BPO 2.0: Revolution to Innovation", signalling a transformative era of innovation-driven growth for Bangladesh.

It is being jointly organised by the Bangladesh Association of Contact Center and Outsourcing (BACCO), the ICT Division, the Business Promotion Council under the Ministry of Commerce, and the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC).

A press conference announcing the summit was held at the ICT Division yesterday.

Opening the event, Musnud-e-Ahmed, joint secretary general of BACCO, presented an overview of the summit's past successes, outlining how previous editions contributed to job creation, global partnerships, and sector growth.

He highlighted that this year's summit would feature participation from 30 local and international IT/BPO companies showcasing their innovations in customer service and experience.

The 2025 summit is expected to become a global platform for dialogue and collaboration.

Nine seminars and workshops on emerging information technology trends will feature insights from internationally renowned experts and information technology-enabled service (ITES) buyers.

In addition, career counselling sessions will

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Application Deadline: **June 4, 2025**

Govt to allow rawhide exports despite tanners' objections

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Although tanners have voiced opposition, the government will allow rawhide exports during the Eid-ul-Azha season with the aim of fostering demand and ensuring better prices for traders at the field level, Commerce Secretary Mahbubur Rahman said yesterday.

He added that the decision was made because, over the past few years, many rawhide traders have been getting low prices and feeling discouraged from investing in the business due to low demand and mismanagement.

A few years ago, traders even threw away rawhides as they did not receive adequate prices from seasonal traders.

The commerce secretary held a meeting at his office with the tanners, wholesalers, and senior government

officials of different ministries, departments, and agencies yesterday to fix the prices of rawhides ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, expected to be celebrated on June 6.

The commerce ministry is scheduled to announce the prices on Sunday, the secretary said at the meeting.

He also said the government would distribute 30,000 tonnes of salt for free to different orphanages and madrasas to facilitate the preservation of rawhides.

After the meeting, Bangladesh Tanners Association (BTA) President Shaheen Ahmed said he opposed the government's decision to allow the export of rawhides as they are a value-added product for Bangladesh, meaning they can be processed domestically into higher-value goods rather than being exported in raw form.

READ MORE ON B3

Prime Bank, Coracle to help streamline student visa processes for Germany

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank PLC has entered into a strategic partnership agreement with Coracle GmbH, a provider of blocked account services in Germany, to streamline and accelerate the visa application process for Bangladeshi students aspiring to pursue higher education in Germany.

Md Nazeem A Choudhury, deputy managing director of the bank, and Sheikh Hafeez Maeen, director and country representative for Bangladesh at Coracle, signed the agreement at the bank's corporate head office in the capital's Gulshan recently, according to a press release.

As part of this collaboration, Coracle

GmbH will issue a confirmation certificate of fund receipt on the same day the transaction is made or within the shortest possible timeframe based on the SWIFT message received from Prime Bank PLC.

This certificate is a mandatory requirement for the German visa interview and is ordinarily issued only once the funds have been credited to the student's blocked account in Germany.

Asad bin Rashid, head of student banking at the bank; Md Mohamad Rabib Hasan, chief bancassurance officer; and Nafis Uddin Mehran, product manager and business lead (student banking), along with other senior officials from both organisations, were also present.



Sheikh Hafeez Maeen, director and country representative for Bangladesh at Coracle, and Md Nazeem A Choudhury, deputy managing director of Prime Bank PLC, pose for photographs after signing an agreement at the bank's corporate head office in the capital's Gulshan recently.

PHOTO: PRIME BANK

Mastercard announces winners of Ramadan Grocery Campaign 2025



PHOTO: MASTERCARD

Sohail Alim, director of Mastercard Bangladesh, poses for group photographs with winners of "Ramadan Grocery Campaign 2025" at a function in Dhaka recently.

Bengal Commercial Bank strikes deal with Emerging Credit Rating

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Bengal Commercial Bank PLC has signed an agreement with Emerging Credit Rating Limited (ECRL), a prominent credit rating agency.

Tarik Morshed, managing director and CEO of the bank, and Arifur Rahman, chief executive officer of ECRL, signed the agreement at the bank's head office in Gulshan, Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

KM Awlad Hossain, additional managing director of the bank; Md Rafiqul Islam, deputy managing director; and Md Anisur Rahaman, chief financial officer, attended the signing ceremony.

NKA Mobin, executive president of ECRL, and Md Mamun-Ul-Haque Mullik, assistant general manager for business development, were also present, along with senior officials from both organisations.

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mastercard, the global digital payment service provider, has announced the winners of its "Ramadan Grocery Campaign 2025", honouring cardholders with the highest spending at participating partners and seven leading supermarket chains across the country - Shwappo, Unimart, Agora, Meena Bazar, Lavender, Prince Bazar, and The Daily Shopping.

A total of 96 winners were awarded prizes, including home appliance vouchers valued at up to Tk 50,000, as well as a variety of gadget and grocery

vouchers, said a press release.

The campaign, titled "Grocery Means Mastercard", encouraged cardholders to use their Mastercard debit, credit, or prepaid cards to shop at partner supermarkets throughout the holy month of Ramadan.

Sohail Alim, director of Mastercard Bangladesh, attended the award ceremony.

Jubaer Hossain, lead of merchant and commerce at Mastercard, was also present, along with senior officials from partner banks and the participating super store chains.



Arifur Rahman, chief executive officer of Emerging Credit Rating Limited, and Tarik Morshed, managing director and CEO of Bengal Commercial Bank PLC, pose for photographs after signing an agreement at the bank's head office in Gulshan, Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: BENGAL COMMERCIAL BANK

Bank Asia organises training on 'business communication and etiquette'



Salim Solaiman, adjunct faculty at the Bangladesh Institute of Management, poses for photographs with participants of the training programme titled "Business Communication and Etiquette" at the Bank Asia Institute for Training and Development in Lalmatia, Dhaka on Wednesday.

PHOTO: BANK ASIA

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Bank Asia PLC organised a daylong training programme titled "Business Communication and Etiquette" at the Bank Asia Institute for Training and Development on Wednesday in Lalmatia, Dhaka.

Officials from various branches within the Dhaka zone, along with representatives from the bank's corporate office, participated in the session.

Salim Solaiman, adjunct faculty at the Bangladesh Institute of Management (BIM), conducted the training as the designated resource person, according to a press release issued by the bank.

The programme was designed to enhance employees' knowledge and proficiency in professional communication and business etiquette.

Senior officials of the bank were also present.

Global Islami Bank opens sub-branch in Kadamtali

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Global Islami Bank PLC opened a sub-branch in Kadamtali of Chattogram yesterday, reaffirming its commitment to providing modern banking services.

Ataus Samad, managing director (acting) of the bank, inaugurated the sub-branch as the chief guest, according to a press release.

Among others, Mohammad Nasir Uddin, head of the special recovery cell at the bank, and Mohammad Akhtar Hossain, head for the Chattogram zone, were also present.



Ataus Samad, managing director (acting) of Global Islami Bank PLC, inaugurates the Kadamtali sub-branch in Chattogram yesterday. Syed Sadat Ahmed, managing director of ABN Group; Mohammad Nasir Uddin, head of special recovery cell at the bank; and Mohammad Akhtar Hossain, head for the Chattogram zone; among others, were also present.

PHOTO: GLOBAL ISLAMI BANK



Mohammad Ali, managing director and CEO of Pubali Bank PLC, inaugurates the relocated Islamic banking corporate branch of the bank in the capital's Paltan on Wednesday. Md Shahnewaz Khan, deputy managing director of the bank, Dewan Jamil Masud, general manager and head of Islamic banking wing, and M Shahnawaz Chowdhury, general manager and head of audit and inspection division, among others, were also present.

PHOTO: PUBLI BANK

Premier Bank launches bancassurance services

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Premier Bank PLC has launched its new bancassurance services, marking a pivotal advancement in the bank's strategic initiative to integrate insurance offerings into its banking operations.

This endeavour is undertaken in collaboration with Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of Bangladesh and Pragati Insurance Limited.

Mohammad Abu Jafar, managing director and CEO of the bank, inaugurated the service as the chief guest at the bank's head office in the capital's Banani, said a press release.

On this occasion, Jafar reiterated their commitment to building a robust Bancassurance platform and delivering superior value-added services to customers.



He also added that this partnership will enable customers of Premier Bank PLC to conveniently access a wide array of life and non-life insurance products directly from its branch network, thereby ensuring streamlined services, professional consultation, and hassle-free claims processing.

Syed Nowsher Ali, additional managing director of the bank; Saswata Ray, managing director and CEO of LIC Bangladesh; and Papia Rahman, deputy managing director of Pragati Insurance Limited, attended the programme as special guests.

Fahim Ahmad Ashraf, senior executive vice-president and head of ICC division; Shamim Murshed, senior executive vice-president and head of consumer banking division; Mohammad Al-Amin, senior executive vice-president and head of CRM; Md Ahsan Ul Alam, senior executive vice-president and head of agent banking division; Md Tareq Uddin, executive vice-president and head of brand marketing and PR division; were present.

Among others, Abu Md Sabbir Hassan Chowdhury, executive vice-president and head of IT division; Mohammad Ihsrat Hossain Khan, executive vice-president and head of Islamic banking division; Mohammad Akram Hossain, company secretary; and Nurul Alam, head of bancassurance, were also present.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF FAMILY PLANNING LOGISTICS & SUPPLY UNIT (5TH FLOOR) 6, KAWRAN BAZAR, DHAKA 1215, BANGLADESH.				
Invitation for Re-Tender (OTM/NCT, Goods)				
Memo No: 59.11.0000.302.07.44.2025- 1664 E-Tender is invited in the national e-GP portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following goods:				
Tender ID No. & Package No.	Tender Package name	Date & Time of Tender Publication	Last Downloading/Selling Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time
ID No: 1115173 MFSTC/GR-II	Procurement of MSR-Infusions.	22 May, 2025, Time: 13:45 PM	03 June, 2025, Time: 17:00 PM	04 June, 2025, Time: 12:30 PM
2. The interested tenderers may visit the National e-GP portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) to get the details of the tender.				
3. This is an online tender where only e-tender (online tender) will be accepted through the national e-GP portal and no off-line/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-tender please register on e-GP portal.				
4. The fees for downloading the e-tender documents from the national e-GP portal have to be deposited online through any schedule bank of Bangladesh registered by the CPTU.				
5. Further information & guidelines are available in the national e-GP portal & e-GP help desk (Help Desk: helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).				

(Marzia Haque)
Director (Logistics & Supply)
Logistics & Supply Unit
Directorate General of Family Planning
Phone: 02-55012349
e-mail: dirlsdgp@gmail.com

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs Supporting Implementation of Mother and Child Benefit Programme Bangladesh Enhancing Investments and Benefits for Early Years (BEIBEY) Project Paribahan Pool Bhaban (7th Floor), Room No. 810 Secretariat Link Road, Dhaka https://mowca.gov.bd			
Corrigendum Notice			
This is to inform all concerned that the following corrections has been made in the tender notice for "Invitation for Tender" to the office Memo No. মার্শিল/SIMCBP/NCS-১/৫/২০২৫.৪৪ Dated: 06/05/2025 and Tender document, for the Tender package name "Service Provider Firm for Hiring Vehicles and Transport Facilities":			
SL. No.	Description	As mentioned in original tender notice	To be replaced as corrected
1	2	3	4
Tender Notice			
17	Tender last selling date	25 May, 2025 Time: 4:00pm	03 June, 2025; Time: 4:00pm
18	Tender closing date and time	26 May, 2025; Time: 2:00pm	04 June, 2025; Time: 2:00pm
19	Tender opening date and time	26 May, 2025; Time: 2:30pm	04 June, 2025; Time: 2:30pm
25	Tender security and completion time	Tender security: Tk. 2,16,000.00 Completion time: 36 months	Tender security: Tk. 1,50,000.00 Completion time: 12 months
Tender document			
ITT 11.1(b) of TDS	Specific experience minimum value	Tk. 60,00,000.00 lac	Tk. 40,00,000.00
ITT 12.1(a) of TDS	Average Annual Turnover	Tk. 1,29,00,000.00 lac	Tk. 80,00,000.00
ITT 12.1(b) of TDS	Liquid Asset	Tk. 25,00,000.00	Tk. 15,00,000.00
All other terms & conditions will remain unchanged. This corrigendum will be a part and parcel of the said tender.			
Keween 20/05/2025 Dr. Prakash Kanti Chowdhury Project Director (Joint Secretary) Supporting Implementation of the Mother and Child Benefit Programme (SIMCBP) MOWCA			



BUDGET
FOR FY26

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

About 20,000 workers currently receive direct social safety net benefits, which is inadequate to cover even a fraction of the nearly 40 lakh workers in the country's garment industry, let alone the entire workforce — highlighting major gaps in coverage and sparking calls for urgent policy reforms to safeguard employees.

Amid the ongoing structural transformation of the economy, there is a pressing need to design targeted policies that extend social protection coverage to both formal and informal workers, said Abdullah Nadv, research director at Unnayan Shamannay (UnSy).

He made the remarks while

delivering a presentation at a discussion centring on the proposed budget for FY26, styled "National Budget for Social Protection", held at the UnSy office in the capital yesterday.

Nadv added that while social safety net efforts have traditionally focused on rural, agriculture-dependent households, this approach now requires reevaluation as significant socioeconomic shifts have taken place over the past decade.

According to Abdul Majid Pramanik, joint director at the Rural Development Academy, Bogura, to adapt to climate change, it is essential to allocate funds within social safety net programmes for citizens who are particularly vulnerable.

He also suggested formulating a long-term social protection strategy to address climate challenges, adding that the nearly 1

crore people living in the country's char (riverine island) areas have an urgent need for dedicated social safety net programmes.

He also said that several pilot initiatives undertaken by both the government and non-government

There is a pressing need to design targeted policies that extend social protection coverage to both formal and informal workers, an expert says

actors — have already shown success in improving the lives and livelihoods of char dwellers, and that scaling up these efforts could ensure more comprehensive protection for these communities.

Farhana Zaman, a professor in the Department of Sociology at

Jagannath University, said she has extensive experience working on disaster management and visits the coastal belt whenever the opportunity arises.

"These communities are still food-insecure. The allocation I observed for them was significantly lower than what is actually needed," she said.

Starvation also continues to persist, she added. "Women manage to eat only two meals a day. If their children ask for extra food, they simply cannot provide it. As a result, mothers often reduce their own food intake," she added.

To address this issue, it is essential to develop an accurate database and enhance coordination among the relevant ministries, she said.

Ishrat Sharmin, president of the Centre for Women and Children Studies, believes that special policy attention must be given to improving the quality of life

for women and children living in urban areas, and this should be reflected in the national budget through targeted allocations for social protection.

Mahfuz Kabir, research director at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, said it is crucial to ensure that the allocated funds are effectively reaching the intended beneficiaries.

He believes that correcting errors in the beneficiary-selection process would enable optimal use of resources, thereby ensuring citizens' right to social protection.

However, instead of focusing solely on annual budget cycles, he suggests that it would be more effective to move forward based on medium- to long-term policy strategies.

Md Mahabub Hasan, senior research associate at UnSy, moderated the event.

Don't believe speculation

FROM PAGE B1

"Global commodity prices are now low. We are getting many advantages. I am not in favour of putting restrictions on importing luxury goods. Instead, I would increase taxes," he said, adding, "People who can afford them will buy them, and those who can't, won't. If we restrict people who can afford it, they'll just go abroad and buy the product there. Then we lose out anyway."

Although he pointed out some shortcomings, Mansur opined that people could now stop worrying about losing money due to exchange rates.

"We haven't developed a forward market here yet. If we had, it would have been good. Now, if dollars come into the Bangladeshi market, their value won't fall. People can invest without worrying about losing money due

to exchange rate changes. If we can ensure this, there will be no risk in the market."

He said many Bangladeshis have "hundreds of crores of dollars abroad".

"Why don't they bring the money here? Because they worry whether their money will be safe in Bangladesh. They don't have this worry when they're abroad. To fix this, we need to think seriously about our political economy."

Mansur concluded by saying the exchange rate would be liberalised further.

"All dues have been paid. When foreign investors want to take their profit out of the country, we won't stop them. We'll only talk about tax policies, nothing beyond that."

The event was moderated by Dewan Hanif Mahmud, editor and publisher of

Bonik Barta.

Other speakers at the event said that the "Forex Stabilization Fund" would have to be raised to at least \$2 billion to avoid market volatility.

They added that specific facilities must be offered to remitters to encourage them to send money through official channels.

Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said what is important now is close market monitoring to ensure that exchange rate fluctuations are not too frequent.

"Otherwise, investors might lose confidence. On the other hand, if the value of the taka drops too much, inflation could rise. Additionally, banks must publish both the maximum and minimum exchange rates on their websites," she added.

Syed Mohammad Kamal, country head of MasterCard, said it is important to inform our expatriates that dollar prices will not increase; it will remain stable.

"Many are under the impression that since the exchange rate has been left to the market, the dollar's value might go up. But that won't happen. The current situation is actually very favourable for the economy.

With Eid approaching,

expatriates will begin sending remittances, which

will place the economy in an even stronger position."

Masru Reaz, chairman of the Policy Exchange Bangladesh, Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank, Uzma Chowdhury, director of Pran-RFL, and Syed Abu Naser Bukhtear Ahmed, chairman of Agrani Bank, also spoke at the event.

Govt plans 31% hike

FROM PAGE B1

Programmes such as Food for Work, Vulnerable Group Feeding, and Vulnerable Group Development saw reduced delivery, with a total of 5.55 lakh tonnes distributed up to May 15 — down from 7.5 lakh tonnes in the same period last year.

The government has also had to ramp up rice imports as local production fell due to recurrent floods and natural disasters.

So far this fiscal year, 11.5 lakh tonnes of food, including 7.09 lakh tonnes of rice, have been imported. Officials expect rice imports to reach 9 lakh tonnes in the next fiscal year.

By comparison, the government did not import any rice during the same period last year but brought in 7.84 lakh tonnes of wheat.

External debt doubles

FROM PAGE B1

Public sector borrowing rose 6.2 percent year-on-year by December 2024, continuing a trend that began in 2020. Private sector debt also climbed 7.3 percent over the same period.

During the 2020-2024 period, both the public and private sectors had sustained demand for external financing.

Ashikur Rahman, principal economist at the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI), said that external debt stood at just \$20 billion in FY2009-10.

"Bangladesh borrowed heavily when global interest rates were low, using the funds mainly for infrastructure," he said.

"Private firms also benefited from low-cost loans. But now, with interest rates rising and concessional options disappearing, we should tread more carefully, even if debt risk remains moderate," added Rahman.

The economist said the country is still within a safe zone, with external debt repayments amounting to 5.5 percent of combined export and remittance receipts.

"But if borrowing continues at this pace, the margin for safety will shrink," he commented.

Selim Raibhan also echoed similar views.

He said, "Much of the new debt has yet to yield visible economic returns, and Bangladesh's narrow export base, dominated by garments, limits its ability to generate the foreign exchange needed for debt servicing."

He said that the key challenge now is to ensure that future borrowing is more strategic, with clear economic returns and improved governance.

While the country's debt-to-GDP ratio remains within comfort levels, the debt-service-to-exports ratio has climbed to 13.9 percent, underscoring growing repayment pressures.

Bangladesh is also shifting away from concessional loans, exposing it to increased volatility in global financial markets, especially if interest rates rise further or the local currency Taka weakens.

Interest payments on foreign loans are projected to rise 65 percent by 2027, driven by higher global rates and an expanding loan portfolio.

A finance ministry report estimates these payments will hit \$2.21 billion (around Tk 26,000 crore) by then. The taka has already lost 35 percent of its value against the US dollar in the past two years.

Private firms, especially in textiles, telecoms, and pharmaceuticals, have tapped into foreign credit under relaxed borrowing rules. But with rising global uncertainty and currency risks, economists caution against overexposure.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

প্রকল্প পরিচালক, সওজ এর কার্যালয়
সাপোর্ট টু জয়দেবপুর-দেবগ্রাম-ভুলতা-মদনপুর
সড়ক (চাকা-বাইপাস) পিপিপি প্রকল্প

সড়ক ও জলপথ অধিদপ্তর

ঝুক-বি, লেভেল-২, সড়ক ভবন, তেজগাঁও, ঢাকা

ই-মেইলঃ dhakabypassppp@gmail.com

স্মারক নং-৩৫,০১,০০০০,২৬৪,০৭,০২৩,২০-৭৭১৩

তারিখঃ ২২ মে ২০২৫

পুনঃ নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি (২য় আহ্বান)

এতদ্বাৰা সকল শ্ৰেণীৰ আহারী প্ৰতিষ্ঠান/বাসিন্দাৰ নিকট হতে তফসীলে বৰ্ণিত তালিকা ও শৰ্ত অনুসৰীয়া জৰুৰীভূত নিলাম বিজ্ঞয়ের উদ্দেশ্যে সীলনোহৰকৃত খামে নিলাম কোটেশন আহ্বান কৰা যাচ্ছে, যাৰ বিবৰণ নিম্নলিখিত

নিলাম কোটেশন বিজ্ঞপ্তি (২য় আহ্বান)

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তারিখঃ ২২ মে ২০২৫

BPO summit

FROM PAGE B1

target students and young professionals, introducing them to lucrative career opportunities within the BPO industry.

A job fair will also be organised to collect CVs and connect qualified individuals with potential employers.

Special emphasis is being placed on the role of freelancers this year. Dedicated seminars will discuss the challenges they face and identify opportunities for growth, with the aim of formulating supportive policies.

A policy-focused seminar will also gather IT experts, top government officials, and industry leaders to explore necessary reforms for the ITES/BPO sector.

Addressing the press conference as chief guest, Secretary to the ICT Division Shish Haider Chowdhury said, "In this era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the ITES sector is a key driver of our

economy."

"The BPO industry is unlocking new employment avenues for our youth and enabling Bangladesh to compete globally through innovation," he said.

"The government is committed to supporting this sector through policy, infrastructure, and skills development. Initiatives like BPO Summit Bangladesh mark critical milestones in this journey," he added.

BACCO President Tanvir Ibrahim, who chaired the press conference, reflected on the organisation's journey.

"With over 400 member companies, BACCO has created more than 85,000 jobs and is currently generating over \$850 million in annual revenue," he said.

"Our goal is to reach \$1 billion in revenue and 100,000 sustainable jobs by 2025. This summit will be instrumental in achieving those milestones," he added.

Govt to allow

FROM PAGE B1

The Tk 10,000 crore that has been invested in domestic tanneries will be at risk of being left without enough rawhide if the government allows exports, he added.

Currently, 140 out of 154 tanneries are operational at the Savar Tannery Industrial Estate (STIE), where the inventory of unsold hides remains a problem.

This year, more than 85 lakh cows and goats may be slaughtered across the country, nearly 15 lakh fewer than last year. This is due to the current economic situation and also because many well-off people are not in the country due to political problems, he said.

Four state-owned banks, namely Sonali, Rupali, Janata, and Agrani, agreed to provide Tk 125 crore to tanners to purchase rawhide this Eid-ul-Azha, when more than 50

percent of the rawhides are collected each year.

However, Ahmed said the tanners wanted to borrow Tk 450 crore to finance rawhide purchases this season.

After applying salt, rawhide can be preserved for many months. This allows traders to send rawhides to tanneries gradually since the tanneries do not have the capacity to tan all rawhides at once.

The government proposed increasing prices by Tk 2 to Tk 3 for each square foot of rawhide this season at the traders' level compared to prices last year. However, Ahmed opined that prices should be the same as they were last year since the economic situation is not good.

The government set the price of cowhide at Tk 55-60 per square foot in the capital and Tk 50-55 in other areas last year.

Pashchimanchal Gas Company Limited

(A Company of Petrobangla)
Nalika, Sirajganj, Bangladesh.

Invitation for Tenders

Invitation for Hiring of one (1) Microbus and one (1) SUV for the Project of Installation of Smart Prepaid Gas Meters, SCADA & GIS at PGCL Franchise Area	

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Shipping Corporation posts 10% rise in Q3 profits

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) saw its profit rise in the third quarter of the fiscal year (FY) 2024-25 as revenue increased due to higher fares and vessel sales.

The company posted a profit of Tk 75.5 crore for the January-March period of this year, up 10 percent year-on-year.

The state-run shipping company reported earnings per share (EPS) of Tk 4.95 for the January-March quarter, up from Tk 4.47 in the same quarter of the previous fiscal year, according to a disclosure published on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) website.

BSC said its revenue for the first nine months of the current fiscal year increased due to higher fares in the international shipping sector and capital gains from the sale of two vessels, "MT Banglar Jyoti" and "MT Banglar Sourav".

The company's EPS stood at Tk 14.38 for the July 2024-March 2025 period, compared to Tk 11.05 during the same period a year ago.

The company's net operating cash flow per share was Tk 19.58 for the nine months, up from Tk 15.84 in the previous year.

Olympic to import biscuit production line worth Tk 13.19cr

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Olympic Industries Ltd will import a new multi-colour biscuit production line with standard accessories at a cost of around Tk 13.19 crore.

The company's board approved the decision at a meeting held on May 21, according to a disclosure posted on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) website yesterday.

The equipment, which has an annual production capacity of 9,048 tonnes, will be procured from Zhongshan Dingson Food Machinery, based in Guangdong Province, China, for \$1,081,500, equivalent to around Tk 13.19 crore, Olympic said.

The new production line will be installed and commissioned at the company's Madanpur factory in Narayanganj.

As of April 30, 2025, the shareholding structure of Olympic Industries stood at: sponsors and directors 32.38 percent, institutional investors 20.65 percent, foreign investors 34.21 percent, and the public 12.76 percent, according to DSE data.



Over 40 local manufacturers are exhibiting products at the three-day Toy Show 2025 that began yesterday at InterContinental Dhaka.

PHOTO: STAR

Toy industry: From import reliance to export growth

JAGARAN CHAKMA

In the heart of Dhaka, amid vibrant toy displays and the hum of industry conversations at InterContinental Dhaka, sector people were talking about a quiet revolution – one that could redefine Bangladesh's export landscape and lessen its long-standing reliance on imported toys.

The three-day Toy Show 2025, which kicked off yesterday, is an exhibition jointly organised by the Bangladesh Plastic Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BPGMEA), the Ministry of Commerce, and the government's Export Competitiveness for Jobs (EC4J) Project.

But beyond the cheerful toys and glossy stalls lies a deeper industrial vision.

Shamim Ahmed, president of the BPGMEA, summed it up aptly, "We are not just producing toys – we are rewriting Bangladesh's industrial narrative."

For decades, Bangladesh's plastic industry was viewed as a low-value, low-tech sector made up of small factories churning out household items or packaging materials. But that perception is rapidly changing.

According to Ahmed, even seasoned readymade garment (RMG) exporters are diversifying into plastic, eyeing a sector where innovation, employment, and export potential are growing.

"This is no longer a cottage industry. We're building an ecosystem, from resin production to advanced moulding, geared for global markets," he said.

Indeed, the numbers speak volumes. The domestic plastic toy market is already worth Tk 12,000 crore. Over 300,000 people are directly and indirectly employed in

the sector, supported by more than 152 factories scattered across the country.

As for exports, in FY17, plastic exports stood at a modest \$15.3 million. Fast forward to FY23 and that figure had skyrocketed to \$77 million, a nearly fivefold increase in just six years.

This annual growth trend of around 24 percent indicates the

Md Robiul Alam, an administrative officer of the company, proudly shared that their workforce of 10,000 workers, mostly female, was poised to grow further, with plans to set up three new factories in Dinajpur, creating 20,000 more jobs.

Zihan Plastic Industries, based in Keraniganj on the outskirts of Dhaka, produces 220 toy items

workers are incredibly efficient," he added. Beyond toys, the broader plastic industry is undergoing a transformative shift from import dependency to domestic production.

"These developments surprise many policymakers," Ahmed noted. "They still think of plastic as low-tech, but the ground reality is different. We're evolving fast," he said.

He also pointed to the Gujarat model in India, where polymer industries became export dynamos. "We can replicate that success, and perhaps even surpass it."

If each of the 152 factories has an average investment of Tk 50 crore, the cumulative investment in this sector already stands at an estimated Tk 7,600 crore.

With newer factories rising in Nilphamari, backed by foreign investment from places like Hong Kong, the horizon is only getting brighter. However, despite the widespread optimism, challenges persist, ranging from infrastructure gaps to regulatory inertia.

Many export-oriented companies, like Sonic, are barred from selling in the domestic market due to policy restrictions.

There's also a need for improved trade facilitation, better port logistics, and incentives for resin production.

Still, stakeholders are hopeful.

With targeted policy support, Ahmed believes Bangladesh can emerge as one of the top three plastic product-exporting countries globally within the next decade.

For Bangladesh, this isn't just about GDP numbers or trade surpluses. It's about jobs for women in rural factories, about young entrepreneurs seeing opportunity beyond garments, and about building a nation that makes, not just buys.

sector's resilience and potential, Ahmed added.

At the centre of this growth story is the toy industry. Once a niche segment, it is now emerging as a strategic export driver.

Over 40 local manufacturers are exhibiting products at the three-day Toy Show 2025 that began yesterday. The major players at the show include Sonic (Bangladesh) Ltd, Zihan Plastic Industries, RFL Group, and ACI Premio Plastics.

Sonic (Bangladesh), an export-oriented toy manufacturer established in the Export Processing Zone at Nilphamari, some 350 kilometres northwest of capital Dhaka, exported toys worth monthly in the local market.

"We employ over 500 people, 80 percent of whom are women. Toys are light work and our female

and is eyeing significant export expansion.

According to SM Nahidul Islam, general manager of the company, their export revenue jumped from \$100,000 last year to a projected \$250,000 this year.

"The domestic market itself is growing at a pace we never imagined," he said.

Kallan Biswas, senior manager (export) of ACI Premio Plastics, echoed similar optimism.

Exporting \$1.2 million annually to countries like Saudi Arabia, Bhutan, and India, the company also sells Tk 30 crore worth of toys monthly in the local market.

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