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First commodity exchange may launch this year

WHAT IS A COMMODITY EXCHANGE?

A commodity exchange is a marketplace where raw materials such as oil, gold, wheat, and coffee are traded. Instead of exchanging physical goods, investors and businesses buy and sell contracts for future delivery at predetermined prices.

MAIN PRODUCTS OF THE EXCHANGE

Gold, cotton, crude palm oil, silver

FORMATION OF EXCHANGE

It will be a public limited company and a subsidiary of the CSE

Paid-up capital set at Tk 400cr; board to have 13 members

Existing CSE TREC holders eligible to act as commodity brokers

Each broker must have minimum paid-up capital of Tk 10cr

AHSAN HABIB

The Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) is working to launch the country's first-ever commodity exchange by the end of this year, initially trading in cotton, crude palm oil, silver, and gold.

"Although several tasks still need to be carried out by external parties, the CSE is trying its best to make it happen at the end of 2025," CSE Chairman AKM Habibur Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday.

A commodity exchange is a marketplace where raw materials such as oil, gold, wheat, and coffee are traded. Rather than exchanging physical goods, businesses and investors deal in contracts that promise delivery at a future date, based on agreed prices.

Producers like farmers and miners use these exchanges to lock in prices and manage risks. Meanwhile, traders seek to profit from price fluctuations. Major global platforms, such as the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and the London Metal Exchange, help set international benchmark prices for key commodities.

Talks about setting up a commodity exchange in Bangladesh began as early as 2007, but the initiative only gathered pace in 2020.

The government has now finalised the legal framework and published a gazette last week regarding the rules, regulations, and procedures for the market.

As this will be the country's first such exchange, Rahman said the CSE is prioritising large-scale training for intermediaries. The bourse will also

invite brokers to join the exchange.

The new exchange will operate as a public limited company, functioning as a subsidiary of the CSE.

It will have a paid-up capital of Tk 400 crore and a 13-member board of directors, including a chairman.

According to regulations, existing TREC (trading right entitlement certificate) holders of the CSE are eligible to become brokers for the commodity exchange.

The CSE has already called on them to apply for licences. Once applications are received, the port city bourse will forward them to the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) for final approval, Rahman said.

Each broker will need a minimum paid-up capital of Tk 10 crore. Like TREC holders, they will also need to comply with risk-

IPDC ডিপোজিট | ১৬৫১৯

based capital adequacy rules, maintaining enough capital to absorb potential losses in line with regulatory guidelines.

The CSE is making preparations to run acceptance tests with end-users to check if the system is ready for rollout. Once completed, it will move on to trial runs of commodity trading.

The CSE chairman said technical preparations, such as installing new software and hardware that are separate from those used for equity trading, are now going on.

At the same time, the CSE is drafting sample contracts, which set out the terms for delivery or receipt of specific quantities of commodities in future months.

READ MORE ON B3

Ctg port introduces digital payment

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Chattogram port on Saturday launched a digital payment system, enabling port users to pay bills online anytime and from anywhere, marking a major step towards digital transformation.

The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA), in partnership with Eastern Bank PLC (EBL), developed the system, which is expected to significantly reduce time, cost and hassles for port users.

Shipping Adviser Brig Gen (retd) M Sakawat Hussain inaugurated the system at a ceremony at Radisson Blu Chattogram Bay View.

He said the initiative demonstrates how a public-private partnership can work effectively.

The CPA, in partnership with Eastern Bank, developed the system, which will reduce time, cost and hassles

Hussain hoped that the digital system would ease the difficulties faced by users when making payments for services manually.

Chattogram City Corporation Mayor Shahadat Hossain said the launch is not merely about technology or convenience but reflects a bold step towards the vision of a "Smart Chattogram".

CPA Chairman Rear AdmiralSMMoniruzzaman said global ports are rapidly embracing technology.

"Chattogram port must adapt to remain relevant, competent and competitive in the maritime sector," he said.

Ali Reza Iftekhar, managing director of EBL, said the port has taken a bold step into the digital future by introducing a fully automated revenue collection and payment system powered by EBL.

READ MORE ON B3

Rooftop solar plan needs pilot run: CPD

CPD'S SUGGESTIONS

Revise net metering guidelines

Introduce feed-in tariff

Make rooftop solar panels mandatory for industries

Establish one-stop digital service platform

Support local manufacturing

Develop centralised database

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) yesterday urged the government to select around 450-500 rooftops of government buildings, schools and hospitals

for piloting a "National Rooftop Solar Programme" (NRSP) before expanding it.

Such piloting should be based on radiation impacts, availability of finances in different

READ MORE ON B3

Probe high rice prices, says Planning Commission

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Spiralling prices of rice, central to the daily diet of millions of Bangladeshis, are emerging as the principal driver of food inflation, defying broader disinflationary trends and prompting calls from policymakers for a deep dive into the cause.

According to the Planning Commission's General Economics Division (GED), the impact of rice on food inflation rose to 50 percent in June from 40 percent in May. In its July Economic Update and Outlook, released yesterday, the GED noted that medium-grade rice alone accounted for a quarter of the total food inflation that month.

"Inflation in rice varieties has been steadily increasing over the last twelve months, with no sign of falling," the report observed.

READ MORE ON B3

PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION

Bank Asia

This is for information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of Bank Asia PLC. in its 560th meeting held at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, 27 July 2025 in the Bank's Board Room at Bank Asia Tower (Level-10), 32 & 34, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215, has approved the unaudited financial statements of the Bank for the second quarter ended on 30 June 2025 and disclosed the following financial indicators of the Bank:

Particulars	January to 30 June 2025		January to 30 June 2024	
	Taka (Solo)	Taka (Consolidated)	Taka (Solo)	Taka (Consolidated)
Net Asset Value (NAV) (Crore)	3,388.48	3,385.13	3,095.52	3,090.55
Net Asset Value (NAV) per Share*	26.42	26.39	24.14	24.10
Net Operating Cash Flow per Share (NOCFPS)**	40.14	40.79	26.25	26.32

Particulars	January to 30 June 2025		January to 30 June 2024		April to 30 June 2025		April to 30 June 2024	
	Taka (Solo)	Taka (Consolidated)	Taka (Solo)	Taka (Consolidated)	Taka (Solo)	Taka (Consolidated)	Taka (Solo)	Taka (Consolidated)
Earnings per Share (EPS)	2.28	2.29	2.21	2.26	0.98	0.99	1.65	1.68

* The issuance of bonus shares led to an increase in the statutory reserve, and an increase in the revaluation reserve against government securities contributed to a higher Net Asset Value per Share (NAV) compared to the previous year.

**Net Operating Cash Flow per Share (NOCFPS) increased due to higher cash inflows resulting from an increase in deposits and a decrease in loans and advances.

The details of un-audited financial statements of the Bank for the second quarter ended on 30 June 2025 will also be available on the website of the Bank at www.bankasia-bd.com

Dated: Dhaka
July 27, 2025

Bank Asia PLC.
Corporate Office: Bank Asia Tower
32 & 34 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue
Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215

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Linde's Q2 profit rises 6%

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Linde Bangladesh reported a modest gain in its earnings for the April-June quarter of this year.

Its profit rose 6 percent year-on-year to Tk 10.69 crore in the period.

The industrial and medical gases producer posted basic and diluted earnings per share of Tk 7.03 in the second quarter of 2025, up from Tk 6.65 in the same quarter of 2024, according to a disclosure on the Dhaka Stock Exchange website yesterday.

The company's net operating cash flow per share plunged to Tk 4.08 for January-June 2025, from Tk 13.69 a year earlier, due mainly to payments under the workers' profit participation fund during the quarter, the disclosure said.

Its net asset value per share also slipped, as hefty dividend payouts outweighed the profit earned in the period.

Heidelberg's profit declines 6% in Apr-Jun

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Heidelberg Materials Bangladesh PLC reported a 6 percent fall in profit for the second quarter of the year, as tighter margins and lower sales volumes took a toll on its bottom line.

The cement manufacturer posted a profit of Tk 2.65 crore for the April-June period, compared to Tk 2.82 crore a year earlier.

Earnings per share edged down to Tk 0.47 from Tk 0.50 in the same quarter of 2024, according to its financial statements.

The company cited "lower margin per tonne and lower volume" as reasons behind the decline. Heidelberg's product line includes ScanCement and RubyCement.

The company's net operating cash flow per share (NOCFPS) stood at negative Tk 10.14 in the January-June period, a drop from Tk 15.08 a year ago.

Prime Bank records 32% profit growth in H1 2025

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank PLC has reported a 32 percent year-on-year growth in net profit after tax (NPAT) for the first half of 2025, reaching Tk 410 crore, up from Tk 311 crore during the same period last year, according to a press release.

The bank disclosed the figures in its unaudited half-yearly financial results for the period ending June 30, 2025.



The board of directors approved the financial statements at a meeting held yesterday.

Earnings per share (EPS) stood at Tk 3.53, compared to Tk 2.68 in the same period of the previous year.

The net asset value per share rose to Tk 35.29 from Tk 29.83, while the net operating cash flow per share increased to Tk 17.10, up from Tk 8.46.

As of June 2025, the bank's total assets stood at Tk 59,605 crore, with loans and advances amounting to Tk 33,472 crore. Prime Bank's capital-to-risk weighted assets ratio stood at 17.72 percent at the end of the first half of 2025.

NRBC Bank arranges town hall meeting in Rajshahi

STAR BUSINESS DESK

NRBC Bank PLC has recently organised a "Town Hall Meeting 2025" at a hotel in Rajshahi.

Md Ali Hossain Pradhania, chairman of the bank, attended the event as the chief guest, according to a press release.

In his address, Pradhania emphasised that there is no alternative to good governance in banking operations.

He underscored the importance of strict compliance with rules and regulations across all areas of activity.

To that end, he highlighted the need to maintain loan quality, recover classified and written-off loans, and mobilise no-interest and low-interest deposits.

Md Touhidul Alam Khan, managing director and chief executive officer of the bank, presided over the meeting.



Md Ali Hossain Pradhania, chairman of NRBC Bank PLC, attends the bank's "Town Hall Meeting 2025" at a hotel in Rajshahi recently. PHOTO: NRBC BANK

EXIM Bank organises half-yearly managers' conference

STAR BUSINESS DESK

EXIM Bank PLC organised its "Half-Yearly Managers Conference 2025" at the bank's head office in the capital on Saturday.

Md Nazrul Islam Swapan, chairman of the bank, attended the conference as the chief guest, according to a press release.

In his address, Swapan advised all branch

managers to work collectively to achieve the desired outcomes by addressing the current challenges facing the banking sector.

Abdul Aziz Zumma, managing director (current charge) of the bank, presided over the conference. He discussed the bank's overall current activities and outlined a clear action plan to attain the targeted goals.

Md Zoshim Uddin Bhuiyan, Maksuda Khanam, and Md Moidul Islam, deputy managing directors of the bank, were also present, along with all regional managers, branch managers, second officers, GB in-charges, investment in-charges, foreign trade in-charges, and divisional heads of the head office.



Md Nazrul Islam Swapan, chairman of EXIM Bank PLC, addresses the bank's "Half-Yearly Managers Conference 2025" at its head office in the capital on Saturday. PHOTO: EXIM BANK

Citizens Bank holds training on marketing, business development



Alamgir Hossain, managing director of Citizens Bank PLC, poses for group photographs with participants of the training programme on "Capacity Building for Marketing and Business Development" at the bank's training academy in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: CITIZENS BANK

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Citizens Bank PLC has organised a training programme on "Capacity Building for Marketing and Business Development" at the bank's training academy in the capital recently.

Alamgir Hossain, managing director of the bank, inaugurated the programme as the chief guest and delivered a valuable speech on various aspects of banking operations and business development in the current macroeconomic context, said a press release.

Md Abdul Latif, deputy managing director of the bank; Md Waheed Imam, senior executive vice-president and company secretary; and Md Saiful Islam, chief financial officer, were also present, alongside heads of divisions and branches from across the country participated in the training programme.

Young entrepreneurs

FROM PAGE B4

of finished leather goods to align with international buyer demands. "Value addition is the future," Mursalin said.

But challenges remain—rawhide perishability, price competitiveness, and high production costs due to the need to import the chemicals used in the process.

"Imported inputs and lack of bonded warehouse facilities make it difficult to compete with countries like Pakistan," he explained.

"Still, more leather engineering graduates are entering this field, and with the right policy support—such as export-linked chemical subsidies—we can do much better," said Mursalin.

All in all, over 130 local and foreign companies participated in the fair, including exporters of leather goods, footwear, machinery, and raw materials. The vigour of the exporters gives hope, especially because the sector's earnings from sales abroad

have slightly dropped to \$345 million in the fiscal year 2024-25 from \$353 million in the preceding year.

Md Mizanur Rahman, general secretary of the BTA, expressed optimism over the young entrepreneurs in this sector.

"These young entrepreneurs are innovative and well-educated. They understand quality, global trends, and what the market demands. We support their growth—because they represent the next generation of leadership in our sector," he said.

He said as Bangladesh eyes a bigger stake in global leather exports, the rise of technically trained, self-driven entrepreneurs could be the missing link between potential and performance.

From micro-factories in Hazaribagh to export shipments bound for Europe and Southeast Asia, the transformation is already underway, he added.

The debt supercycle

FROM PAGE B4

debt or debt growth, especially for countries with a reserve currency." The veteran hedge fund manager's "big debt cycle" lasts around 80 years (roughly the same periodicity as Howe's revolution). Over the course of Dalió's cycle, sound money gives way to government-issued fiat money, the private sector takes on too much debt, at which point the government steps in to bail out borrowers, and total debt keeps on rising.

As the cycle nears its end, a country is typically beset by chronic fiscal deficits. Low domestic savings and current account deficits render it dependent on foreign lenders. As lenders become wary, the average maturity of the public debt shortens. The central bank finds it impossible to set interest rates at the level which balances the needs of both creditors and borrowers. Once interest rates rise, governments' debt servicing costs become increasingly onerous. Government finances come to resemble a Ponzi scheme, with new debt being issued to service old borrowing.

That pretty much describes the

situation which several advanced economies, including Britain, France and the United States, find themselves in today.

The investment conclusions from Dalió's historical study are unsurprising. Owning government bonds at the end of a debt supercycle is not a good idea. Faced with a crisis, central banks usually bail out their governments. When inflation picks up, currencies depreciate on the foreign exchanges. Real assets are a safer bet. Stocks tend to decline into the crisis but generally recover their losses in the aftermath. Gold shines, beating bonds on average by 71 percent during crisis periods, according to Dalió.

"History is seasonal, winter is here," writes the dismal prophet Howe. Dalió does not think a debt crisis is imminent, but believes one is likely to arrive within the next decade. Bondholders are forewarned. On the bright side, it's possible that by then a more resolute generation of parliamentarians will have started work on fixing the Palace of Westminster.

Hossain Khaled appointed chairman of City Bank

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Hossain Khaled, a director of City Bank PLC, has been appointed as the new chairman of the bank.



Hossain Khaled

The appointment was confirmed at a meeting of the bank's board of directors held at its head office in Dhaka yesterday, according to a press release.

Khaled is a sponsor director of City Bank and previously served as its vice-chairman for seven years. He is also a member of the board's executive committee and risk management committee.

In addition, he serves as chairman of two of the bank's subsidiaries: City Brokerage Limited and City Hong Kong Limited.

He currently holds the position of group managing director at the Anwar Group of Industries.

He is a former four-term president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, former co-chairman of the Bangladesh Better Business Forum, and the founding president of the Bangladesh Chapter of the Entrepreneurs' Organization.

He obtained his bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Toledo, Ohio in the US, and did an MBA in international banking from Texas A&M University.

Dollar advances

REUTERS, New York

The US dollar advanced on Friday, bolstered by solid economic data that suggested the Federal Reserve could take its time in resuming interest rate cuts, while tariff negotiations showed more clarity that eased some uncertainty in the market.

The US currency showed little reaction to data showing new orders for key US-manufactured capital goods unexpectedly fell in June while shipments of those products increased moderately. That suggested business spending on equipment slowed considerably in the second quarter.

"The dollar regained some ground the past two days, after being on the defensive earlier in the week ... supported mostly by an encouraging set of US economic data that argues for continued patience at the Fed," said Elias Haddad, senior markets strategist at Brown Brothers Harriman in London.

The greenback was set for its biggest weekly drop in a month, ahead of more tariff dialogue and central bank meetings next week, while sterling dipped after softer-than-expected British retail sales data.

Both the Fed and the Bank of Japan are expected to hold rates steady at next week's policy meetings, but traders are focusing on the subsequent comments to gauge the timing of the next moves.

Chinese businesses keen to invest in Bangladesh

Ashik Chowdhury says after China visit

Officials from Handa Industries

“These interactions allowed us to highlight recent policy progress in Bangladesh – particularly regarding currency

Discussions also began on establishing Bida's first overseas office in East Asia, aimed at providing dedicated support for investor facilitation in the region, the statement read.

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

British American Tobacco Bangladesh Company was the worst performer, dropping 7 percent.

operate the exchange in October 2023, but progress was somewhat stalled due to the absence of a

"Before launching such an exchange, a detailed plan should have been in place," he said. "It requires proper storage and preservation systems to prevent wastage."



He said the unified platform is secure and it offers multiple payment options, including card payments, electronic fund transfers from any bank, corporate transactions via EBLConnect, as well as traditional over-the-counter payments at EBL branches nationwide.

They proposed introducing a feed-in tariff system, where renewable energy generators, like

The CPD stressed that financing remains one of

The CPD also emphasised the importance of multi-stakeholder

"It will require the government or Bangladesh Bank to approve a special loan scheme for the National Rooftop Solar Programme with no more than 3 percent interest rate for a 15-year tenure," said Uddin.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Department of Environment
Implementing Ecosystem-based Management in Ecologically Critical Areas in Bangladesh Project
Poribesh Bhaban, E/16, Agargaon Administrative Area
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
www.doe.gov.bd

Invitation for Tender

1 Ministry/Division	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.					
2 Agency	Department of Environment (DoE)					
3 Procuring entity name	Project Director.					
4 Procuring entity code	1450301-223053500					
5 Procuring entity district	Dhaka					
6 Invitation for	Transport Hiring					
7 Invitation Ref No.	22.02.0000.045.14.005.25-146					
8 Date	27 July 2025					
KEY INFORMATION						
9 Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM) NCT.					
FUNDING INFORMATION						
10 Budget and source of funds	GEF through UNDP					
11 Development partner	UNDP					
PARTICULAR INFORMATION						
12 Project code	223053500					
13 Project name	Implementing Ecosystem-based Management in Ecologically Critical Areas in Bangladesh Project.					
14 Tender Package No.	SD-10					
15 Tender package name	Transport Hiring					
16 Tender publication date	28 July 2025					
17 Tender last selling date	17 August 2025					
18 Tender closing date and time	18 August 2025 at 12:00pm					
19 Tender opening date and time	18 August 2025 at 12:30pm					
20 Name & addresses of the offices	Tender Document Selling, Receiving & Opening: Office of the Project Director, Implementing Ecosystem-based Management in Ecologically Critical Areas in Bangladesh Project, Department of Environment, 8th Floor, Room: 903, Poribesh Bhaban, E/16, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.					
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER						
21 Eligibility of tenderer	a) The minimum number of years of general experience of the Tenderer in contracting industries in public sector as Prime Contractor/Sub Contractor/Management Contractor shall be 5 years. b) The minimum specific experience as a Prime Contractor in providing vehicle rental service of at least ONE contract of similar nature, complexity and methods/technology completed over a period of last three (03) years each with a value of at least Tk. 36,00,000/- (thirty-six lac) only shall be required. c) The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. credit line(s) of the Tenderer shall be Tk. 36,00,000/- (thirty-six lac) only.					
22 Tender document	Information is available in tender documents					
24 Price of tender document	=1000.00 (Taka one thousand only) cash only, non-refundable					
23	Lot No.	Package No.	Identification of tenderer	Location	Security amount (Tk.)	Completion time in weeks/months/days
	Single	SD-10	Transport Hiring	Division of Dhaka, Khulna and Chittagong for Project area.	=1,12,000/- (one lac twelve thousand) Taka only	48 months (Contract period may be extended if performance is satisfactory)
24	Designation of official inviting tender			Project Director.		
25	Address of official inviting tender					
26	Contact details of official inviting tender			Phone: +222218460, Email: fmmunni@yahoo.com		
27	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any/all tender(s) without assigning any reason whatsoever.					

Rd 27.7.2025
Farhana Mustari
Project Director

GD-1664

Singer to begin trial export of wire harnesses

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Singer Bangladesh Ltd yesterday said that its board had approved the trial export of wire harnesses to its sister company Beko Romania, marking the official start of its export operations.

This move follows the launch of commercial production at Singer's new home appliance plant in the Japanese Economic Zone in Narayanganj.

In the second quarter of this year, Singer reported a loss due to higher production costs that squeezed its gross profit margin.

According to financial statements, Singer posted a loss of Tk 31 crore for the April-June period, compared with a profit of Tk 25.71 crore in the same quarter last year.

Loss per share stood at Tk 3.11, a decline from earnings per share of Tk 2.58 recorded in the second quarter of 2024.

Despite a 15.4 percent rise in turnover during the quarter, the company's

In the second quarter of this year, Singer reported a loss due to higher production costs that squeezed its gross profit margin

gross profit margin fell as it struggled to offset climbing production costs.

"The selling price could not be increased or adjusted to absorb the increased average product cost, which led to a decrease in gross profit margin in order to remain competitive," the company said in the statements.

Singer pointed to various promotional offers and discounts, among other reasons, for the rise in product costs.

Operating profit fell by 5.1 percent year-on-year, with operating expenses jumping 14 percent. The increase was driven by heavier spending on advertising and sales promotions, higher bank charges, warranty claims, and demurrage fees.

Singer said its net finance costs soared by 175.1 percent, fuelled by a 15.9 percent increase in short-term borrowings. Rising interest rates added further pressure.

Additionally, foreign exchange movements worsened the situation as the euro depreciated by 4.2 percent against the taka since May 2025.

Singer Bangladesh and Beko Romania are both subsidiaries of Arçelik AŞ, based in Turkey.



Emerging leather entrepreneurs showcase their products at the 9th Bangladesh Leather & Footwear Expo organised by the Bangladesh Tanners Association at the International Convention City Bashundhara recently. The event offered an opportunity for young entrepreneurs to connect with buyers and build export pathways.

PHOTO: STAR

Young entrepreneurs bootstrapping the leather sector

JAGARAN CHAKMA

From setting up micro-factories in Hazaribagh to attending international expositions, a new generation of leather entrepreneurs is trying to bring fresh momentum to one of Bangladesh's most promising sectors for exports.

With technical expertise, business insight, and a strong sense of commitment, they are transforming the leather goods industry—from one once burdened by environmental and compliance challenges to a sector of new opportunities.

The vibe was evident at the 9th Bangladesh Leather & Footwear Expo, organised by the Bangladesh Tanners Association (BTA) at the International Convention City Bashundhara from last Thursday to Saturday.

Several emerging entrepreneurs stood out with inspiring stories of determination and innovation.

Among them was Forida Yesmin Bithi, chief executive officer (CEO) of Deer Leather Goods and Footwear Ltd.

A leather engineering graduate, Bithi transitioned from a technical background into entrepreneurship in 2020 with just Tk 3 lakh, two machines, and one assistant.

Today, she leads a team of nine and manufactures belts, wallets, office bags, handbags, shoes, and sandals. Her products, once catering mainly to local clients, are now reaching Malaysia and Italy via export intermediaries.

She proudly informed that her company is now capable of producing leather goods worth around Tk 12 lakh per month.

"This business has potential, and I believe it will continue to grow," she said.



This year marked her third appearance at the expo. "This platform is vital for visibility—it helps small entrepreneurs like us connect to bigger markets," she added.

Another inspiring figure is Md Tasnim Alam Shahin, founder and CEO of 3 Tech.

Nearly two decades in the industry, Shahin originally aspired to study leather technology, but family responsibilities pushed him toward business.

With Tk 5 lakh in support from his family, he founded 3 Tech in 2007.

His breakthrough came with an order for jackets from Novartis, followed by partnerships with brands like Bata.

The company now employs 35 workers. Prior to the pandemic, it annually exported goods worth over Tk 2 crore.

"The pandemic slowed us down," Shahin acknowledged. "But with the right policies and quality focus, Bangladesh's leather sector

can thrive globally again," he said.

Meanwhile, Tahmina Akter Shammi, managing director of ARLENS Leather, brought with her the experience of an entirely different field.

Previously a World Bank project staffer focusing on export readiness in non-readymade garment (RMG) sectors, she shifted to leather after seeing its global promise.

She launched ARLENS Leather in early 2024 with minimal investment and now operates a small-scale production unit in Hazaribagh.

Her products—backpacks, wallets, and accessories—are sold wholesale and retail, generating modest exports via buying houses. Monthly production is worth around Tk 4 lakh.

"I reinvest all profits. For me, it's about creative freedom and building something of my own," Shammi said.

Golam Mursalin, managing partner of Collagen Bangladesh, is part of the growing community of leather technologists entering the sector.

On attaining BSc and MSc degrees in leather engineering, Mursalin started his career at Reliance, a Chinese company, and later joined a Chinese buying house.

In 2017, he began his own business processing hides for export. "My capital was my knowledge and labour," he recalled.

Collagen Bangladesh now operates with four partners—each a leather technologist—and supplies finished leather to top local exporters while directly exporting to Poland.

In 2023, they expanded into production arrangements specialising in small batches

READ MORE ON B2

CSE's futures market may transform financial system

ERSHAD HOSSAIN

Bangladesh is on the cusp of a major shift in its financial sector as the Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) prepares to introduce the country's first exchange-traded, cash-settled derivatives platform. Backed by the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) under the Commodity Exchange Rules, the initiative will roll out futures contracts on gold, cotton, and crude oil within a regulated framework. These contracts will be cash-settled and cleared through a central counterparty, aiming to improve transparency, efficiency, and access for a broad range of market participants.

Gold, with deep cultural and investment significance across South Asia, plays an outsized role in Bangladesh's informal market. Although official imports stand at just Tk 45 crore annually, the Bangladesh Jewellers Association (Bajus) estimates actual demand at 20 to 40 tonnes, worth \$3 to \$6 billion. Yet the market has lacked legal and digital avenues for hedging or speculation. Gold futures will offer jewellers, investors, and traders a long-awaited tool to manage price volatility without needing physical delivery. This move will strengthen market integrity and support financial inclusion.

I recommend that CSE introduce USD/BDT futures, which would address a critical gap in managing currency risk. The interbank foreign exchange market is thin, with daily turnover averaging only \$20 to \$40 million, mostly short-term swaps. Annual volumes are estimated at just \$5 to \$10 billion. Regulatory constraints and limited retail participation make it hard for businesses and investors to hedge exposures. USD/BDT futures, cash-settled in local currency and traded offshore, would offer a compliant and efficient way to manage foreign exchange risks.

CSE could further consider DSEX 30 Index futures to strengthen the capital market infrastructure. The absence of short-selling and hedging options limits risk management strategies, deters institutional activity, and pushes retail investors towards volatile small caps. Index futures tracking the top 30 Dhaka Stock Exchange companies would allow both retail and institutional players to hedge, arbitrage, and engage in market-making, deepening market activity and promoting stability.

CSE's derivatives platform is being developed in partnership with India's Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), under a 2022 agreement endorsed by BSEC. The initial offering includes futures on gold, cotton, and crude oil, with plans to expand into agriculture and energy contracts. The goal is to encourage transparent price discovery, provide hedging tools, and widen participation by removing the need for physical delivery or warehousing.

A key pillar of this initiative is the clearing infrastructure. While CSE initially considered acting as its own clearinghouse, global practice advises against it due to systemic risks. Instead, Central Counterparty Bangladesh Limited (CCBL), a licensed entity set up in 2019, will fulfil this role. CCBL will novate trades, manage initial and variation margins, and facilitate settlement through the central bank's RTGS system and designated banks. A default fund and layered loss mechanisms are in place to contain systemic shocks.

Preparations are underway, including final regulatory approvals, upgrades to CCBL systems, alignment with BSEC and Bangladesh Bank protocols, and pilot testing with selected participants.

The launch of gold futures and the proposed introduction of USD/BDT and index derivatives will mark a milestone for Bangladesh's financial sector. By aligning with global standards and offering modern risk management tools, this initiative is set to enhance resilience, broaden participation, and support the development of a modern and inclusive financial ecosystem.

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The debt supercycle has reached its final leg

REUTERS, London

British politicians know that their workplace, the Palace of Westminster, is in a shambolic state. The 19th-century complex of buildings suffers from an infestation of vermin, falling masonry, leaking water from lead piping, and worn-out electric wiring. There's a constant danger of fire. Yet the occupants cannot summon up the will to tackle the problem. They shelved elaborate and costly renovation plans several years ago. Instead, the decaying structures are temporarily patched up. Yet the longer the delay, the higher the estimated costs of the building works and the greater the risk of a catastrophic incident. Parliament's Public Accounts Committee has warned.

There's another challenge that Britain's political class seem incapable of rising to. Since the pandemic, UK public borrowing has been on a sharp upward trajectory. By the end of last year, the national debt approached 100 percent of GDP and the fiscal deficit was over 5 percent. The Office for Budget Responsibility warns that if nothing changes the public debt will reach 270 percent of annual output over the next 50 years. A recent relatively minor act of fiscal restraint – the Labour government's

proposal to cut winter fuel payments to wealthier retirees – was reversed after it ran into fierce opposition from the party's own lawmakers. Last month, the state borrowed a further 21 billion pounds, its highest ever monthly net borrowing (aside from the pandemic year), and 3.6 billion pounds higher than the OBR had predicted.

Britain is hardly an outlier among the large, developed economies. France's public debt is even higher at 112 percent of GDP and last year's budget deficit was 5.7 percent of economic output. US public debt last year reached 121 percent of GDP and its fiscal deficit hovers around 7 percent. In its latest Fiscal Monitor, the International Monetary Fund exhorts governments to "put their fiscal house in order." In principle, sovereign insolvency is not inevitable. Governments could raise taxes, cut spending and act decisively to boost economic growth. If they took these tough measures, pesky fiscal deficits would gradually evaporate.

But the political resolve is lacking. Britain's OBR notes that "public expectations of what government can and should do in response to emerging threats and future emergencies seem to be rising." French Prime Minister François

Bayrou warns that his country is addicted to borrowing and just "one step away from the cliff." Yet France's latest, faintly comic, plan to reduce the fiscal deficit involves cancelling two national holidays, an act which is strongly opposed on both the left and the right. Across the Atlantic, whatever savings were achieved

by Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency have been completely overwhelmed by President Donald Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which the Congressional Budget Office predicts will add a further \$3.4 trillion to US deficits over the next decade.

The root of the problem appears

to be cultural. In his book, "The Fourth Turning is Here: What the Seasons of History Tell Us about How and When This Crisis Will End", demographer Neil Howe posits that human societies pass through multi-generational cycles. In the first generation, society is strong, cohesive and optimistic. The next generation

experiences an "awakening" in which established values come under attack. There follows an "unravelling" as institutions weaken, civic order decays and society becomes increasingly polarised. "Incompetent governance, ebbing public trust, and declining public compliance all feed on one another in a vicious cycle," intones Howe. The resolution finally comes with a "fourth turning" when a new civic order replaces the old one.

Howe's long cycle originates with the work of the 15th-century Arab historian Ibn Khaldun, who traced the rise and fall of ruling dynasties through changes in group cohesion. By Khaldun's fourth generation the founders' collective spirit has become widely despised, complex laws are evaded, vast riches are hoarded by the few and "destroyers" preside over the dynasty's collapse. Hard-nosed financial types may find this civilisational cycle somewhat nebulous. But it appears to complement the broadly accepted notion of a debt supercycle – a multidecade period in which total borrowings ratchet ever higher.

In his latest book, "How Countries Go Broke: The Big Cycle", Ray Dalio takes issue with "the insouciant belief that there's no limit to government



The Federal Reserve building is set against a blue sky in Washington. US public debt reached 121 percent of GDP last year and its fiscal deficit hovers around 7 percent.

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