



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

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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

Chittagong 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 Sakhawat Hussain inaugurated the system at a ceremony at Radisson Blu Chittagong 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.

Chittagong 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 Chittagong".

CPA Chairman Rear Admiral SM Moniruzzaman said global ports are rapidly embracing technology.

"Chittagong 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

Bank Asia

PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION

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		April to 30 June 2025	
	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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and a shared
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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 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.



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

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.

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 Abdulla 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 Dalio'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 Dalio'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 Dalio.

"History is seasonal, winter is here," writes the dismal prophet Howe. Dalio 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.

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Bengal Commercial Bank PLC has recently organised a "Half-Yearly Business Review Meeting 2025" at the bank's head office in the capital's Gulshan.

Tarik Morshed, managing director and CEO of the bank, presided over the meeting, according to a press release issued by the bank.

Morshed shared his views on the half-yearly business performance, provided necessary guidelines to achieve the bank's targets, and outlined a future action plan aligned with the bank's mission and vision.

KM Awlad Hossain, additional managing director and chief business officer; Md Rafiqul Islam, deputy managing director and chief technology officer; and Md Humayun Kabir, deputy managing director and company secretary, were also present, along with divisional heads and all branch managers of the bank.



Tarik Morshed, managing director and CEO of Bengal Commercial Bank PLC, poses for group photographs with participants of the "Half-Yearly Business Review Meeting 2025" at the bank's head office in Gulshan, Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: BENGAL COMMERCIAL BANK

Unilever Consumer Care posts Tk 24cr profit in Q2

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Unilever Consumer Care Ltd's profit grew in the second quarter of 2025, driven by operating efficiency and higher finance income despite the reimposition of technology and trademark royalties.

The fast-moving consumer goods company reported a profit of Tk 24.33 crore in the April-June quarter, up 28 percent year-on-year.

According to the recently published financial statements, the company's earnings per share stood at Tk 12.62 for the quarter, compared to Tk 9.83 a year earlier.

The multinational said its improvement was driven by better operating efficiency, a one-time gain from reassessing past obligations for technology and trademark royalties, and smart cash investments that led to much higher net finance income.

However, its performance for the first half of the year weakened, as the company's EPS fell to Tk 19.78 in the January-June period from Tk 21.44 in the same period of the previous year.

Unilever's net operating cash flow per share (NOCFPS) was negative Tk 23.57 for the six-month period, compared to a positive Tk 5.83 a year earlier.

The company attributed the decline in NOCFPS to the settlement of all outstanding usance payable at sight (UPAS) letters of credit, which led to significant cash outflows without new UPAS facilities being availed.

First commodity exchange

FROM PAGE B1
These samples will have to be approved by the BSEC as they will be the main instruments traded on the exchange, according to Rahman.

The port city bourse took the initiative to launch the commodity exchange in 2022, with the aim of narrowing the gap between producer and consumer prices.

Saiful Islam, president of the DSE Brokers Association of Bangladesh (DBA), said brokers are keen to support and join the new exchange.

"It should have been launched much earlier," he said.

However, the DBA president added that traders are still unfamiliar with such a market.

"A massive awareness campaign is necessary so that traders and investors properly understand both the risks and opportunities of commodity trading."

Islam, who is also a director of BRAC EPL Brokerage, a TREC holder of the CSE, sought dummy trading for at least three to six months.

"This market will be linked to international prices and involve various factors," he said.

In April 2022, the CSE appointed the Multi Commodity Exchange of India as a consultant to help develop rules and regulations. The CSE received its licence to operate the exchange in October 2023, but progress was somewhat stalled due to the absence of a

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Chinese investors expressed renewed interest in Bangladesh's key economic sectors during a series of high-level bilateral meetings held in Shanghai and Guangzhou last week.

They shared their thoughts when a Bangladesh delegation, led by Ashik Chowdhury, executive chairman of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) and the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority, visited the two Chinese cities from July 20 to 26.

A major highlight of the visit – during which they engaged directly with over 100 potential investors – was an investment seminar jointly organised by BIDA and the Embassy of Bangladesh in Shanghai on July 21.

Officials from Handa Industries

and New Tiger Energy were among the participants at the event, where they shared their experiences of operating in Bangladesh and praised the country's recent improvements in the investment climate.

Alongside the seminar, the delegation held more than 25 bilateral meetings with firms keen to explore new or expanded ventures in Bangladesh.

Sectors attracting the most attention included renewable energy, readymade garments, healthcare, and consumer electronics.

"We are encouraged by the positive engagement from Chinese companies," said Chowdhury.

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

stability and streamlined investment procedures. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive."

The Bangladesh delegation also included senior officials from Citibank NA, Eastern Bank, HSBC, and Standard Chartered Bangladesh, reflecting a coordinated public-private approach to investment promotion.

Beyond investor outreach, the team explored future collaboration with key Chinese business associations and members of the non-resident Bangladeshi community, according to a BIDA statement.

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.

Stocks snap eight-day rally

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The benchmark index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange closed lower yesterday, breaking its eight-day rally.

The DSE50, the main index of the bourse, lost 37.21 points, or 0.69 percent, to settle at 5,354.82. The other indices also experienced drops before the end of the day's trading. The Shariah-compliant DSES declined 0.69 percent to 1,164.55. The DS30, comprising blue-chip shares, lost 1.51 percent to close at 2,058.14.

Turnover, a key gauge of investor participation, was Tk 865.04 crore, down from Tk 951.78 crore in the previous session.

A total of 237,521 trades were executed, while block transactions amounted to Tk 9.22 crore across 28 scrips.

Market breadth was negative, with 117 stocks advancing, 232 declining, and 50 remaining unchanged.

Among A category scrips, 82 gained, 107 lost, and 31 remained unchanged.

The B category saw 19 stocks rise and 62 fall, while there was no activity in the N-category.

Segment-wise performance was mixed. In mutual funds, 4 issues advanced and 14 declined.

Corporate bonds saw just one issue decline, while the government bond market also saw one issue fall.

Among individual performers, Provati Insurance Company topped the gainers' list with a 9 percent rise, while British American Tobacco Bangladesh Company was the worst performer, dropping 7 percent.

Ctg port introduces digital payment

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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.



Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain, adviser to the Ministry of Shipping, inaugurates the digital payment system, jointly launched by the Chittagong Port Authority and Eastern Bank PLC, at the Radisson Blu Chattogram Bay View in the port city on Saturday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Rooftop solar plan needs pilot run: CPD

FROM PAGE B1

The think tank called for urgent, multisectoral reforms to increase the generation of renewable energy and recommended exempting all sorts of customs and import duties, VAT and taxes on solar panels, batteries and inverters.

The CPD recommended updating the existing net metering guidelines to reflect current investment costs, grid capacity and demand.

Net metering is a billing system that allows individuals or businesses with on-site renewable energy generation, like solar panels, to receive credit on their electricity bills for any excess electricity they send back to the grid.

The policy allows the consumer to connect rooftop solar to the grid but caps the net metering limit at 70 percent of the load sanctioned for that facility.

This will help generate specific data and subsequently determine the full potential for generating solar power in a region and, afterwards, throughout the country, she added.

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

those with solar panels, receive a set price for each unit of electricity they produce and send to the grid.

The briefing highlighted coordination failures among the state-run Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority (Sreda), Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB), and various electricity distribution companies.

These institutions often operate independently, with limited communication, collaboration, or information sharing, delaying approvals and creating unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles.

To overcome this, the CPD recommended a unified institutional framework that would align efforts among the key actors involved in rooftop solar panel deployment.

It also stressed the need for institutional capacity building and training programmes for utility service officials, engineers and inspectors to expedite project approvals and inspections.

The CPD stressed that financing remains one of

the most critical barriers to scaling rooftop solar power generation.

Many banks are reluctant to provide loans to residential or small-scale commercial consumers due to a perceived lack of repayment guarantees and absence of property documentation.

To address this, the CPD called for a financing framework that includes concessional loans, interest subsidies and credit guarantee schemes.

The government and Bangladesh Bank should play a more proactive role in facilitating affordable green financing, it said.

The CPD urged the government to support local manufacturing of key components such as solar panels and inverters, which could be done through tax holidays, import duty waivers on raw materials, and export incentives.

The think tank recommended establishing a centralised database to track rooftop solar installations, monitor real-time performance, and assess environmental and economic impacts.

The CPD also emphasised the importance of multi-stakeholder

engagement, including collaborations among private sector developers, financial institutions, local governments and civil society.

During the briefing, Md Nasir Uddin, a member of the Bangladesh Sustainable and Renewable Energy Association, a platform of businesses and NGOs, delivered another presentation.

In it, he suggested going for public-private partnerships (PPP) for the rooftop solar panel installation process.

There is only one such PPP project in the country, generating 1 MW since March 2024. Working with West Zone Power Distribution Company, the roof owner has been saving around Tk 1.5 lakh a month, he said.

"We can expand this financing process to engage more of the private sector in this sector," he said.

"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.

Probe high rice prices

FROM PAGE B1

Headline inflation has been on a downward trajectory since December 2024, bringing it closer to the Bangladesh Bank's target of 7.8 percent by June 2025, as outlined in the current monetary policy.

Food inflation, too, has fallen for seven consecutive months, standing at 7.39 percent in June.

Yet rice, the nation's most essential staple, appears immune to the broader trend.

Yesterday, the price of coarse rice, the benchmark used to monitor rice prices, was up 4.55 percent from the previous month, trading at Tk 55.10 per kilogramme, according to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

"The yield of Boro paddy did not impact overall rice prices at all," the GED pointed out, suggesting that despite improved supply, retail prices remained high.

The economic update, citing a US Department of Agriculture report

on Bangladesh, said the average price of coarse rice reached its highest in November 2024 in the last decade.

As per the GED, several factors are likely to have contributed to the persistent price rises: higher costs of fertiliser, seeds, labour, and irrigation; post-harvest losses; rising transport costs; market volatility; and hoarding driven by expectations of further increases.

"This demands further investigation into whether there is an actual shortage of supply or disruptions in the supply chain in the market," it stated.

Economy recovering, but slowly

Beyond food prices, the GED offered a mixed assessment of Bangladesh's broader economic outlook.

In the economic update, it stated that the first month of the fiscal year (FY) 2025-26 indicates promise for rebounding economic activity, despite ongoing challenges.

Advertisement



Universal Menswear Ltd. Launches Rooftop Solar Power Project, Reinforcing Its Leadership in Sustainable Manufacturing

Dhaka, July 26, 2025—Universal Menswear Ltd. (UML), the largest formalwear manufacturing plant in South East Asia, has commissioned an 814 kWp rooftop solar power system at its facility in Adamjee EPZ, further solidifying its commitment to sustainability and clean energy.

Fully operational since July 5, the solar system is expected to generate approximately 950 MWh of clean energy annually and reduce carbon emissions by an estimated 637 tons per year. The project follows UML's achievement of LEED Gold Certification in August 2023.

"This project reflects our long-term vision to operate responsibly while maintaining excellence in manufacturing," said Mr. Sharif Zahir, Managing Director of UML.

Established in 2010, UML produces up to 350,000 men's suits each month and employs over 6,000 people. With an annual turnover of USD 100 million, it is widely regarded as the premier high-quality formalwear manufacturer in the region, proudly serving global brands such as Moss Bros, Marks & Spencer, H&M, Calvin Klein, Ben Sherman, Kenneth Cole and Zara. UML's solar initiative sets a bold example for private sector leadership in sustainability and innovation.

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Department of Environment	
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8	Date
9	Procurement method
10	Budget and source of funds
11	Development partner
12	Project code
13	Project name
14	Tender Package No.
15	Tender package name
16	Tender publication date
17	Tender last selling date
18	Tender closing date and time
19	Tender opening date and time
20	Name & addresses of the offices
21	Eligibility of tenderer
22	Tender document
23	Price of tender document
24	Information for tenderer
25	Designation of official inviting tender
26	Address of official inviting tender
27	Contact details of official inviting tender
	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any/all tender(s) without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Farhana Mustari

Project Director

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 AS, 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 expos, 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

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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 onshore, 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.

The writer is senior director of Lion City Advisory Limited

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.

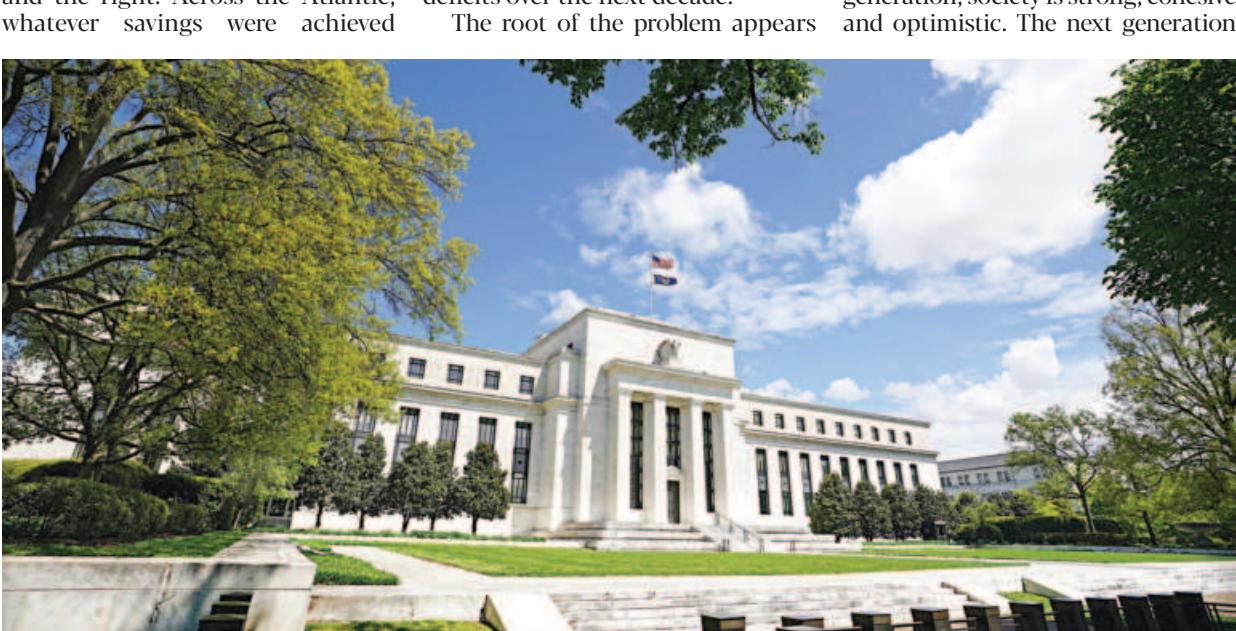
The root of the problem appears

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.

PHOTO: REUTERS/FILE

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