



Naba-E Zaheer, managing director of Mir Group, presents a house made of environment-friendly Mir-branded concrete hollow blocks to Md Idris Ali as a gift for planting a record number of about 500,000 trees at the age of 60 years at Faridpur upazila, Pabna recently. Prof Md Golam Hossain, upazila chairman, and Kamruzzaman Mazed, mayor of Faridpur municipality, were present.

Retail banking needs a paradigm shift

FROM PAGE B4 4) Obtaining an information advantage. Leading banks gather structured and unstructured information from sources such as credit scores and cross-channel bank customer interaction data etc.

5) Enabling innovation and the capabilities required to foster it. Innovation will be the most critical factor driving sustainable top and bottom-line growth in banking over the years.

6) Proactively manage risk, regulations, and capital with rules being more complex and regulators being less flexible, leading banks need to take an approach that is pragmatic, proactive, and increasingly integrated into "business as usual."

Every bank needs to develop a view of the future landscape and the uncertainties surrounding it. They also need a clear picture of their unique strengths and challenges. And every bank needs to develop its posture against this evolving and uncertain future. Every bank needs a clear strategy.

There are currently 61 scheduled banks operating in Bangladesh. So, none of these banks should forget that their clients now have at least 60 other options, and the one that can serve its clients best will get a more significant share of business.

Banks need to invest in their people and products continuously and, more importantly, in the processing and delivery platform. Many banks are shifting to

branchless banking, prioritising digital products and platforms so that they can serve clients without visiting branches.

Now more than ever before, customers are leaning towards alternative service delivery channels. The 32 per cent growth in the number of monthly internet banking customers and 40 per cent growth in the monthly number of internet banking transactions over January 2020 to January 2021 proves that.

Leading banks are now promoting alternate channels to their existing customers through advanced ATM and CDM machines, especially for smaller deposits and withdrawals to ensure contactless services instead of over-the-counter services.

Many local banks are also trying to increase efficiency by using automated token systems at their branches. Instant collateral-free credits at the point of sales and through mobile wallet platforms are also being tested as an alternative to lengthy and manual credit processing.

Moreover, the rise of fintech in the global financial service industry highlights the need for retail banking to redefine as well as repackaging their product and service offerings leveraging modern technologies like artificial intelligence, blockchain, and big data analytics or risk falling behind the curve.

The author is a financial service partner with PwC. This piece is an excerpt of a lecture at a workshop on retail banking attended by executives from private sector banks and financial institutions.

DBL Group gets \$22.7m IFC loans

FROM PAGE B4 The family-run DBL Group, comprising 28 companies, started operations in the apparel sector in 1991 and has interests in other industries, including ceramic tiles, dredging, telecommunications, and manufacturing of semiconductors.

"Bangladesh's garment industry is vital for the country's economy and delivering on its ambitions to transform into an upper middle-income country," said Hector Gomez Ang, IFC's regional director for South Asia.

To remain competitive, the industry needs to evolve to higher value-added products and adopt modern technologies, which are even more critical given the impacts of Covid-19.

Even before the pandemic, the industry was beginning to stagnate in terms of innovation and value addition.

"So, we hope this investment will serve as a demonstration model for others to move upmarket and remain competitive," he added.

IFC has been financing the local garment sector, which contributes more than four-fifths of Bangladesh's export earnings.

However, about 85 per cent of exports from Bangladesh come from only low-value garment products. Till date, IFC has invested in five garment manufacturers in Bangladesh, providing more than \$90 million largely in the form of debt financing.

The latest investment marks IFC's second engagement with DBL Group.

In 2013, IFC provided \$10.5 million to Color City, another dyeing and finishing company belonging to the group.

Westin Dhaka wins awards

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The Westin Dhaka recently won an award at "Haute Grandeur Global Excellence Awards 2021" for "providing best hotel service in Asia and best business hotel in the city with best culinary experience", said a press release.

The upscale hotel said it got recognitions on a number of categories. Its "Seasonal Tastes, All Day Buffet Dining" won "Global Restaurant of the year 2021" for "Best Wedding Cuisine on a Global Level, Best Asian Cuisine, Best Hotel Restaurant, Best International Cuisine and Best Luxury Family Restaurant".

Farm loan disbursement rises in Jul-Sep

FROM PAGE B1

Akhter said farmers were chiefly good clients and they repaid loans on time despite facing unexpected difficulties. Emranul Huq, managing director of Dhaka Bank, echoed her, saying that diversification in farms has had a good effect on the agriculture loan disbursement.

Many farmers now cultivate different types of flowers and fruits, which were previously unusual, he said.

Banks are also showing eagerness in disbursing farm loans among them, Huq said.

On top of that, lenders now try to disburse more loans in the farm sector as the repayment trend of the funds is better than that of the industrial sector.

"We have to give out a large amount of loans to a client in the industrial sector. If the borrower becomes defaulter, the entire bank will face dire consequence," he said.

So, disbursing loans to the farm sector is more secure than the industrial one, which is why banks are gradually preferring farmers, Huq said.

Mohammad Shams-Ul Islam, managing director of Agrani Bank, said the central bank imposed penalties on banks which failed to fulfil their annual farm loans disbursement target.

This has also had a positive impact on the disbursement. Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank, said private banks had recently improved their capacities for disbursing farm loans.

The managements of the lenders have also beefed up monitoring on their farm loan disbursement programmes.

Corrigendum Notice: Thakurgaon-01/2021-22. Tender ID No., Old Value, New Value, Remarks. Tender publication date: 27.09.2021, Tender closing date: 25.10.2021. This is an online tender where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal & no offline or hard copy will be accepted.

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