

StanChart Saadiq Bangladesh wins award

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Standard Chartered Saadiq Bangladesh has won an award at Digital CX Awards 2022 in the category of digital customer experience across the financial services ecosystem.

The award was presented by Singapore-based news, business intelligence and research organisation The Digital Banker, said a press release.

"This achievement is a sign that our digital journey is headed in the right direction," said Sabbir Ahmed, managing director and country head of retail banking at Standard Chartered Bangladesh.

40 entrepreneurs get loan from Midland Bank

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Midland Bank in collaboration with Usha Foundation, a non-government organisation, disbursed a loan of Tk 1 crore, out of Tk 4.50 crore, among 40 entrepreneurs of Jamdani Cluster in Narayanganj.

Md Ahsan-uz Zaman, managing director of Midland Bank Ltd, handed over the cheques to the borrowers at the foundation's conference hall at Tarabo of Rugganj Thana in Narayanganj, a press release said.

Md Sharafat Ullah Khan, deputy general manager for SME and Special Programmes Division at Bangladesh Bank, Md Tajul Islam, executive director of Usha Foundation, Md Javed Tareq Khan, head of institutional banking division at Midland Bank and Md Ahsan Jamil Hossain, head of SME Banking Division, were present.



Bamboo baskets are high in demand during the litchi and mango season in Dinajpur, enabling safe transportation of the squishy fruits. Each basket can sell for Tk 80 to Tk 400 depending on the size, enabling good earnings for local people. The photo was taken at a litchi market in Dinajpur recently.

PHOTO: KONGKON KARMAKER

Resurging US inflation puts Fed on track for more big rate hikes

AFP, Washington

Red-hot US inflation is showing few signs of cooling, putting the Federal Reserve on track to continue its aggressive interest rate increases to help cool high prices that are challenging Joe Biden's presidency.

The hoped-for signs of relief for American families did not materialize in May as consumer prices hit a new four-decade high, rising 8.6 per cent and topping what economists thought was the peak in March.

With Russia's war on Ukraine continuing to pressure global fuel and food prices, and amid ongoing supply chain uncertainties due to Covid-19 lockdowns in Asia, analysts now say the expected easing of inflationary pressures will take much longer to materialize.

The US central bank already had signaled plans for more big increases in the benchmark borrowing rate this week and next month, but chances are rising that the Fed might have to be even more aggressive -- which increases the risk the economy might tip into a recession.

The latest inflation report -- the last

major data point before the Fed's policy meeting Tuesday and Wednesday -- also douses hopes central bankers will be able to call a ceasefire in September ahead of key congressional elections, where Biden's Democrats are widely expected to suffer damaging losses.

Prices continued to rise last month for a range of goods, including housing, groceries, airline fares and used and new vehicles, setting new records in multiple categories, according to the Labor Department data.

Energy has soared 34.6 per cent over the past year, the fastest since September 2005, while food jumped 10.1 per cent, and the cost of fuel oil more than doubled, jumping 106.7 per cent, the largest increase in the history of CPI, which dates to 1935.

The CPI surge "raises the probability of even more aggressive Fed rate hikes to tamp down on inflationary expectations," said Mickey Levy of Berenberg Capital Markets. If the policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee decides on a giant step -- three quarters of a point rather than the expected half-point increase -- it would

be the first 75 basis point rate hike since November 1994.

Diane Swonk of Grant Thornton indicated such a move is possible.

"They are behind the curve and eager to catch up," she said on Twitter. "Fed has to reduce demand to meet a supply-constrained world. Ugly in many ways."

Economists at Barclays are now calling for a 0.75-point increase, though Ryan Sweet at Moody's says chances are low, and Karl Haeling at LBBW expects three more half-point hikes.

Biden is facing growing political backlash as high prices increase the pain for American families, who are seeing daily records at the gas pump and higher grocery bills due to the fallout from Russian leader Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

Unlike his predecessor Donald Trump, who relentlessly attacked the Fed and its chair Jerome Powell, Biden has publicly endorsed the central bank's efforts.

Biden, who blames "Putin's Price Hike" for the acceleration in inflation, said Washington "must do more -- and quickly -- to get prices down here in the United States."

Rokia Afzal Rahman, AK Azad re-elected ICC Bangladesh vice-presidents



Rokia Afzal Rahman



AK Azad

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Rokia Afzal Rahman, chairman of Arlinks, and AK Azad, managing director of Ha-Meem Group, have been re-elected vice-presidents of the International Chamber of Commerce Bangladesh for a two-year term (April 2022 to March 2024).

Rahman is a former caretaker government adviser and president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka and the Women Entrepreneurs Association in Bangladesh, said a press release.

Azad is a former president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Bangladesh Chamber of Industries and Dhaka University Alumni Association.

BRB Hospitals offers discounts to IBBL cardholders

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Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd (IBBL) recently signed a memorandum of understanding with BRB Hospitals enabling up to 25 per cent discount at the hospital for the bank's cardholders, officials and their family members.

JQM Habibullah, the bank's deputy managing director, and Md Monsur Ali, the hospital's director, signed the deal at the hospital, said a press release. Md Maksudur Rahman, senior executive vice-president of the bank, Md Mizanur Rahman Bhuiyan, executive vice-president, and Mofizur Rahman, director of BRB Group, were present.

India considers curbing fridge imports

REUTERS, New Delhi

India is considering restricting imports of refrigerators to promote local manufacturing, two industry sources told Reuters on Thursday, potentially freezing out shipments from Samsung Electronics Co and LG Electronics Inc in the \$5 billion market.

The sources, who declined to be named as the talks were private, said the government was considering mandating that importers seek a licence from the authorities, replacing the existing free-import regime.



Towfika Aftab, chairperson of the board of directors of Citizens Bank, presided over its first annual general meeting at the bank's head office in Dhaka on Saturday. Masuduzzaman, Mohammed Iqbal, Mohammad Abdul Salam, Chowdhury Mohammed Hanif Shob, Shafia Alam, Sk Md Iftekharul Islam, and Rakibul Islam Khan Huq, directors of the bank, and Mohammad Masoom, managing director, were present.

PHOTO: CITIZENS BANK

Rebranded McDonald's

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could provide a test of how successfully Russia's economy can become more self-sufficient and withstand Western sanctions. On Sunday, scores of people queued outside what was once McDonald's flagship restaurant in central Moscow. The outlet sported a new logo -- a stylised burger with two fries -- plus a slogan reading: "The name changes, love stays".

The queue was significantly smaller than the thousands of people who thronged to the original McDonald's opening there in 1990 during the Soviet era.

Vkusno & tochka's menu was smaller and did not offer the Big Mac and some other burgers. A double

cheeseburger was going for 129 roubles (\$2.31) compared with roughly 160 under McDonald's and a fish burger for 169 roubles, compared with about 190 previously.

The composition of burgers has not changed and the equipment from McDonald's has remained, said Alexander Merkulov, quality manager at the new company.

was acquired on credit from Dubai-based intermediary Coral Energy last month.

The Sri Lankan government has also approached Moscow's envoy in Colombo to help secure direct supplies of Russian oil, Energy Minister Wijesekera said.

Sri Lanka defaulted on its \$51 billion foreign debt in mid-April and has since opened talks with the

International Monetary Fund for a bailout.

The United Nations has issued an appeal for \$47 million to buy essential food for 1.7 million Sri Lankans in the next four months.

The worst economic crisis since the country gained independence in 1948 has sparked widespread protests calling for President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to step down.

Use monetary policy

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surge in subsidy bills," Mansur said.

The revenue generation target for FY23 has been set at Tk 370,000 crore for the National Board of Revenue (NBR).

This means the tax administration will require its collection to raise by about 28 per cent in FY23, compared with the actual growth rates ranging between 13 per cent and 15 per cent per year.

Revenue shortfall in FY23 will be about Tk 40,000 crore, according to Mansur.

Syed Ershad Ahmed, president of AmCham, said the size of the budget might have been larger.

According to him, the biggest issue is revenue collection. "Since our revenue collection is going down, the budget could not be bigger."

As a result, the government has to borrow from the banking system.

"If there is pressure on banks, it also falls on businesspeople."

It's a big challenge," Ahmed said, calling on the government to accelerate reforms of the revenue

administration to raise more revenue.

The businessman says Bangladesh has a lot of policies but the country can't implement them, so investors do not get benefits.

"If foreign investors are harassed and not given a comfort zone, a red signal goes out of the country," he added.

Planning Minister MA Mannan said the NBR's capacity has to be enhanced to increase revenue collection.

"If the revenue is not increased, all development activities will be stalled."

AB Mirza Md Azizul Islam, a former caretaker government adviser, said although the proposed budget target is acceptable, implementation will be difficult.

He said the allocation for social safety net programmes is very low in proportion to the budget.

"In the wake of the pandemic and Russia-Ukraine war, income inequality in Bangladesh has increased, but there is no roadmap to reducing it in the new budget," Islam added.

needed," Islam added.

While presenting a keynote paper, Md Imdadul Haque, vice-chancellor of Jagannath University, termed the BAB, which was set up in 2006, as well-equipped. "But we need to strengthen the BAB to make it more competitive in the international market," he said.



Mirza Elias Uddin Ahmed, managing director of Jamuna Bank Ltd, and Altaf Hossain Sheikh, joint secretary for finance and accounts at Bangladesh Bridge Authority, signed an agreement on money management of the toll of Padma Bridge at the latter's headquarters in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: JAMUNA BANK

Jamuna Bank in charge of money management of Padma Bridge toll

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Jamuna Bank Ltd recently signed an agreement with the Bangladesh Bridge Authority for the money management of the toll to be collected at the Padma Multipurpose Bridge.

Altaf Hossain Sheikh, joint secretary for finance and accounts at the Bridge Authority, and Mirza Elias Uddin Ahmed, managing director of Jamuna Bank, penned the deal at the former's

headquarters in Dhaka, a press release said.

Under the agreement, the bank will be in charge of money management of the toll of Padma Bridge, the largest communications infrastructure in Bangladesh.

Md Monjur Hossain, secretary of the Bridges Department and executive director of the Bridge Authority, and Nur Mohammed, chairman of Jamuna Bank Ltd, were present.



Aziz Al Kaiser, chairman of City Bank, virtually presided over its 39th annual general meeting yesterday. The meeting announced 12.50 per cent cash and 12.50 per cent stock dividends. Hossain Khaled, vice-chairman, Salim Mahmud, independent director, Mashrur Arefin, managing director, and Md Mahbubur Rahman, additional managing director, also attended the meeting.

PHOTO: CITY BANK