

Bank Asia launches service for low value cross-border payment

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Bank Asia Limited has launched a "Swift Go" service through JPMorgan Chase Bank, NA to facilitate low value (up to \$10,000) cross-border payments for small and medium enterprises.

The Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) has introduced this service for easy as well as direct transfer of payment within four hours (maximum) of the same day with detailed tracking of receipt and payment by the beneficiary and payee.

Shafiuzzaman, president and managing director (current charge), inaugurated the service at Bank Asia Tower in Karwan Bazar, Dhaka on August 31, said a press release.

Sazzad Anam, executive director and head at JPMorgan Chase Bangladesh Office, Arpita Ghosh, country manager for Bangladesh at SWIFT, ANM Mahfuz, additional managing director of Bank Asia, Md Zia Arfin, head of international division, and other senior officials from both organisations were present.



Shafiuzzaman, president and managing director (current charge) of Bank Asia, inaugurates the "Swift Go" service through JPMorgan Chase Bank, NA to facilitate low value (up to \$10,000) cross-border payments for small and medium enterprises, at Bank Asia Tower in Karwan Bazar, Dhaka on August 31.

PHOTO: BANK ASIA



Mohammed Monirul Moula, managing director of Islami Bank Bangladesh, attends a discussion on "Compliance of Shariah in Banking Operations" for its clients at Islami Bank Tower in Dhaka recently.

Dhaka Mercantile Co-Operative Bank wins award

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Dhaka Mercantile Co-Operative Bank Ltd has recently been awarded "The Bizz Europe Award 2023" by a US-based organisation The World Confederation of Business (Worldcob) for its excellent performance in the business sector, especially microcredit in Bangladesh.

Group Captain (retd) Abu Zafar Chowdhury, chief adviser of the bank, received the award on behalf of the organisation at Corinthia Hotel in Portugal's Lisbon, said a press release.

Brigadier General (retd) Md Mahmudur Rahman Khandker, director, Mohammed Didar Uddin, manager of corporate branch in Dhaka, and Md Wahiduzzaman, senior investment officer of Savar branch, were present.



Group Captain (retd) Abu Zafar Chowdhury, chief adviser of Dhaka Mercantile Co-Operative Bank, poses for photographs after receiving an award on behalf of the organisation in Lisbon, Portugal recently.



Shwakatul Alam, executive director (current charge) of Bangladesh Bank Barishal office, attends a skills development training organised by United Commercial Bank for agricultural entrepreneurs at Barishal Club auditorium in Barishal district recently.

PHOTO: UNITED COMMERCIAL BANK

Meghna Bank launches toll-free call centre

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Meghna Bank has recently launched a toll free call centre (short code) in a bid to bring banking services closer to its customers.

Sohail RK Hussain, managing director and CEO of the bank, inaugurated the toll-free call centre at the lender's head office in Gulshan, said a press release.

"Today's launch of Bangladesh's first toll-free call centre is a testament to our commitment to bringing banking services closer to our customers. This initiative aligns perfectly with our vision of becoming the bank of choice for the people of Bangladesh," said Hussain.

The toll free call centre can be reached by dialing 16735 and will operate 24/7, ensuring round-the-clock access to banking support and information.

It will serve as a dedicated platform for customers to address their inquiries, seek assistance, and receive information about a wide array of banking services.



Sohail RK Hussain, managing director of Meghna Bank, attends the launching ceremony of a toll-free call centre at the bank's head office in Gulshan recently.

PHOTO: MEGHNA BANK

India's factory activity hits 3-month high

REUTERS, Bengaluru

India's factory growth accelerated at the fastest pace in three months in August, driven by strong growth in new orders and output, according to a private survey that however also showed job creation was at a four-month low.

That is good news for Asia's third-largest economy, which grew 7.8 percent in April-June, slightly above a Reuters forecast of 7.7 percent, led by robust demand, and was expected to remain a bright spot in the global economy.

The Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index, compiled by S&P Global, jumped to 58.6 last month from 57.7 in July, the highest since May and confounding a Reuters poll expectation for a drop to 57.5.

This marked a sustained expansion, with 26 months above the 50-mark separating growth from contraction, the longest stretch since March 2020 when pandemic-induced lockdowns were imposed.

Asia's third-largest economy grew 7.8 percent in April-June led by robust demand.

"The PMI results for India painted a vibrant picture of the nation's manufacturing landscape in August. Robust and accelerated increases in new orders and production suggest... strong contribution to second quarter (fiscal) economic growth," noted Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at S&P Global.

"Companies' strategic focus towards a global orientation were evident via a sharp and quicker expansion in international sales. Export-centric tactics should help ensure that production remains on an upward path in the coming months."

New orders and output, indicators of demand strength, expanded at the fastest pace since January 2021 and October 2020, respectively. Export orders accelerated to the fastest rate in 10 months.

But that did not translate into faster employment generation. Job creation, while remaining positive for the fifth straight month, slowed to the lowest level since April.

PRICES OF KEY ESSENTIALS IN DHAKA CITY			
	PRICE (SEP 2, 2023)	% CHANGES FROM A MONTH AGO	% CHANGE FROM A YEAR AGO
Fine rice (kg)	Tk 60-Tk 72	-2.22 ↓	-5.04 ↓
Coarse rice (kg)	Tk 48-Tk 50	-2 ↓	-9.26 ↓
Loose flour (kg)	Tk 45-Tk 50	-6.86 ↓	-6.86 ↓
Lentil (kg)	Tk 95-Tk 100	2.63 ↑	-9.3 ↓
Soybean (litre)	Tk 155-Tk 160	-3.08 ↓	-8.7 ↓
Potato (kg)	Tk 42-Tk 45	14.47 ↑	61.11 ↑
Onion (kg)	Tk 80-Tk 90	36 ↑	100 ↑
Egg (4 pcs)	Tk 50-Tk 53	5.1 ↑	32.05 ↑

SOURCE: TCB

Third tea auction centre

FROM PAGE B4

Sujan, Local Lawmaker of Panchagarh-1 Majharul Haque Prodhan and Senior Secretary of Commerce Ministry Tapan Kanti Ghosh spoke at the event.

The event was chaired by the Deputy Commissioner of Panchagarh Md Jahurul Islam.

At least 12,079 acres of land are under tea cultivation across five northern districts, namely Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat and Dinajpur.

Last year, a total of about 1.78 crore kgs of processed tea worth Tk 260 crore were produced from

plain land tea gardens, accounting for 19 percent of overall cultivation in the country, as per data of the Bangladesh Tea Board.

Tea cultivation in the flatlands of Panchagarh began in the late 1990s thanks to effective directives from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina along with the favourable weather and soil conditions.

However, tea cultivation soon expanded to other nearby districts. In the last two decades, the northern region including Panchagarh and Thakurgaon have emerged as the second largest tea producing area after Chattogram and Sylhet.

US jobless rate jumps

FROM PAGE B4

The report followed news this week that job openings dropped to the lowest level in nearly 2 1/2 years in July.

The labor market is slowing in response to the US central bank's hefty rate hikes to cool demand in the economy.

"This is probably the final nail in the coffin for the chances of another rate hike by the Fed in September," said Christopher Rupkey, chief economist at FWDBONDS in New York.

Nonfarm payrolls increased by 187,000 jobs last month after rising by 157,000 in July. Job growth averaged 150,000 per month over the past three months, sharply down from 238,000 in the three months through May.

Economists polled by Reuters had

forecast payrolls would increase by 170,000 jobs last month. Employment gains, however, remain well above the roughly 100,000 jobs per month needed to keep up with the increase in the working-age population. The share of industries adding jobs was the highest in seven months, indicating underlying strength in the labor market.

A strike by Hollywood actors resulted in a decrease of 17,000 jobs in the motion picture and sound recording industries last month. The bankruptcy of trucking firm Yellow in early August led to 37,000 job losses in the truck transportation industry. Without these one-time drags, payrolls would have increased by about 241,000 in August.

India's rice area grows

FROM PAGE B4

Farmers had planted 19 million hectares with oilseeds, including soybeans, by Friday, against 19.2 million hectares a year earlier.

Corn was planted on 8.3 million hectares, up from 8 million hectares a year earlier. The cotton area was slightly smaller at 12.3 million hectares, while pulses planting fell

by 8.5 percent from a year ago to 11.9 million hectares.

The Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare keeps updating the provisional sowing figures as it gathers more information from the state governments. The planting figures are also subject to revision depending on progress of the June-September monsoon season.