

## bKash gets NRB Day Award

STAR BUSINESS DESK

MFS company bKash has been honoured with the "NRB Day Award 2023" in the financial services sector for its contribution to ensuring easy, safe and time-saving digital transactions for everyone.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen handed over a crest to Maj Gen (ret) Sheikh Md Monirul Islam, chief external and corporate affairs officer of the mobile financial services provider, at a city hotel recently, read a press release.

Scholars Bangladesh Foundation and Centre for NRB Foundation, a platform for the Bangladeshis worldwide, organised the awards ceremony, marking "NRB Day" on December 30.

The foundation also awarded seven entrepreneurs and enterprises who returned from abroad and contributed to various sectors, including education, health, industry, technology, financial services, agriculture and culture.

Iwama Kiminori, Japanese ambassador to Bangladesh, Atiur Rahman, professor emeritus of the University of Dhaka, ME Chowdhury Shamim, founder and president of Scholars Bangladesh Foundation and Centre for NRB Foundation, were among those present.



Maj Gen (ret) Sheikh Md Monirul Islam, chief external and corporate affairs officer of bKash, receives a crest from AK Abdul Momen, minister for foreign affairs, at a city hotel recently. PHOTO: BKASH

## ICAB gets new Dhaka region chairman

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Ramdas Howlader, a supervisor, general ledger, inter-company, revenue and accounting policy at Chevron Bangladesh, has been elected as chairman of the Dhaka regional committee (DRC) of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) for a one-year term.

Howlader, a fellow member of the ICAB, qualified as a Chartered Accountant in the session May-June 2012, the institute said in a press release.

Before moving to his current role, the last 16 years of his career at the integrated energy company handled a distinct range of portfolios, including treasury, taxation, accounts payable, internal control, SOX and performance management.

He worked for Deloitte (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) as a senior audit staff and the International Centre for Diarrheal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr) as senior cost and planning officer.

Howlader obtained his bachelor's and master's degrees in accounting from Jagannath University.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Moin Uddin Riad, vice-president, treasury and investor relations of Robi Axiata Ltd, was elected as secretary of the ICAB at the 44th annual general meeting of the DRC.

As a fellow member of the institute, Riad qualified as CIMA (UK) and also worked for Rancon Motors Ltd.

He has worked in different capacities in his 19-year career.

He obtained his bachelor's degree in law from National University and master's degree in accounting from Jagannath University.

Md Anwaruzzaman, Khandaker Mamun, Md Mijanur Rahman, Md Habibur Rahman, Mohammad Refaul Karim Chowdhury, Mahmudur Rahman, and Md Golam Fazlul Kabir are the other members of DRC-ICAB.



Meheriar M Hasan, chairperson of BRAC Bank, and Selim RF Hussain, managing director and CEO, jointly inaugurate a relocated Banani 11 branch in the capital's Banani yesterday. PHOTO: BRAC BANK

## BRAC Bank opens branch in Banani

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BRAC Bank opened a relocated Banani 11 branch in the capital's Banani yesterday.

Meheriar M Hasan, chairperson of the bank, and Selim RF Hussain, managing director and CEO, jointly inaugurated the branch, the bank said in a press release.

"We are excited to welcome our customers to our new premises, where we will continue to deliver exceptional service with even greater comfort and convenience," said Hussain.

"BRAC Bank will remain committed to its vision of providing the best banking experience in Bangladesh, and this latest expansion is a testament to its ongoing efforts in this direction," he added.

Among others, Md Mahiul Islam, deputy managing director and head of retail banking of the bank, Sheikh Mohammad Ashlaque, head of branches, and Brig Gen (ret) Md Amin Akbar, head of general services, were also present.

## National Bank opens two sub-branches

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National Bank Ltd recently launched two sub-branches -- in Banorupa under Rangamati branch and in Bandartila under Agrabad branch -- in the Chattogram region.

Prabir Kumar Bhowmik, senior vice-president and head of Chittagong region of the bank, inaugurated the sub-branches as chief guest, the bank said in a press release.

Moniruzzaman Mohsin Rana, director of the Rangamati Chamber of Commerce, Saiful Karim, assistant vice president and manager of Rangamati branch, and Abdullah Al Mamun, in-charge of Bonorupa sub-branch, were present.

Among others, ATM Emdadul Haque, vice-president and manager of Agrabad branch, and Abdur Rahman, in-charge of Bandartila sub-branch, were also present.



Prabir Kumar Bhowmik, senior vice-president and head of Chattogram region of National Bank Ltd, inaugurates sub-branches at two different places of the Chattogram region recently. PHOTO: NATIONAL BANK

PRICES OF KEY ESSENTIALS IN DHAKA CITY			
	PRICE (JAN 1, 2024)	% CHANGES FROM A MONTH AGO	% CHANGE FROM A YEAR AGO
Fine rice (kg)	Tk 60-Tk 75	-1.46 ↓	1.50 ↑
Coarse rice (kg)	Tk 48-Tk 50	-3.92 ↓	0
Loose flour (kg)	Tk 45-Tk 50	0 ↑	-20.83 ↓
Lentil (kg)	Tk 105-Tk 110	0	4.88 ↑
Soybean (litre)	Tk 155-Tk 160	3.28 ↑	-9.22 ↓
Potato (kg)	Tk 55-Tk 65	37.93 ↑	215.79 ↑
Onion (kg)	Tk 80-Tk 100	-21.74 ↓	116.87 ↑
Egg (4 pcs)	Tk 42-Tk 45	8.75 ↑	19.18 ↑

SOURCE: TCB



Akkas Uddin Mollah, chairman of the executive committee (EC) of Shahjalal Islami Bank PLC, presides over the 866th meeting of the EC at its corporate head office in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: SHAHJALAL ISLAMI BANK

## Shahjalal Islami Bank holds EC meeting

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Shahjalal Islami Bank PLC recently organised the 866th meeting of its executive committee (EC) at its corporate head office in Dhaka.

Akkas Uddin Mollah, chairman of the EC, presided over the meeting, where committee members discussed various issues related to investment in different sectors.

Mohammed Younus, chairman of the bank, Mosleh Uddin Ahmed, managing director and CEO, and Md Abul Bashar, company secretary, attended the meeting.

Among others, Fakir Akhtaruzzaman, vice-chairman of the committee, and Md Sanaullah Shahid, Mohiuddin Ahmed and Khandaker Sakib Ahmed, directors of the bank and members of the committee, were also present.

## China needs more policy

FROM PAGE B4

at 50.3 in December compared with 50.4 in November, according to the NBS.

Considering the country's strong counter-cyclical and cross-cyclical adjustments as well as seasonal service needs, Zhou anticipates continued expansion in nonmanufacturing activities in the coming months.

Zhou emphasized that prioritizing effective demand and encouraging consumption will remain crucial for reinforcing the world's second-largest economy. He added that the country should optimize policy tools to address the uneven recovery among different segments.

Zheng Houcheng, chief macroeconomist at Yingda Securities, said the latest figures indicate that China's broader economy is still facing pressures.

"Against that backdrop, we think the country may set an annual growth target of around 5 percent next year. A further reduction in the reserve requirement ratio as well as policy rate cuts will be likely in the

first quarter of next year," Zheng said.

Despite facing challenges like a property market slump and risks associated with local government debts, Zhu Guangyao, the former vice minister of finance, said China's economy will likely expand by around 5 percent next year, given its potential growth rate standing at 5 percent to 6 percent.

Speaking at a seminar held by the China Center for International Economic Exchanges on Friday, he said that China still possesses many favorable conditions and advantages in new fields such as green development and digital economy, which will play a key role in driving China's healthy and sustainable development in the next few years.

Zhu's views were echoed by Zhang Yongjun, deputy chief economist at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges, who told China Daily that fostering new growth drivers and promoting high-quality development will be key to bolstering the world's second-largest economy next year.

## China's president hails 'resilient' economy

AFP, Beijing

President Xi Jinping said Sunday the Chinese economy had grown "more resilient and dynamic" in 2023, despite financial figures continuing to disappoint as the post-Covid recovery stalls.

He also promised in a bullish New Year's address to the nation that China would "surely be reunified" -- a reference to the self-ruled island of Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its own and has pledged to seize.

Xi has endured a challenging 2023 at the helm of the world's second-largest economy, with his administration struggling to sustain an economic rebound since rapidly dumping its onerous zero-Covid policy a year ago.

But Xi said on state broadcaster CCTV the economy had "weathered the storm" and become "more resilient and dynamic than before", hailing the promotion of "high-quality development" and emerging industries such as electric vehicles, lithium batteries and solar panels.

consolidate and enhance the positive trend of economic recovery, and achieve long-term economic stability."

Yet he also acknowledged some hardship, saying "some companies are facing operating pressure (and) some people are encountering difficulties in employment and living conditions".

"All of these things concern me greatly," he said.

"Our goal is both ambitious and yet very simple. In the end, it is to help people live better lives."

Record youth unemployment and a persistent debt crisis in the crucial property sector have hemmed in China's growth this year.

Official figures released on Sunday showed a decline in nationwide factory activity deepened in December, the third straight month of contraction.

Analysts have said Beijing may

struggle to achieve its stated annual growth target of around five percent, the lowest such ambition in years.

Xi briefly mentioned Taiwan, weeks before the democratic island heads to the polls on January 13.

Beijing has escalated its pressure campaign against Taiwan this year and tensions are high, with independence-leaning candidate Lai Ching-te leading opinion polls.

Xi declared in his Sunday speech "the motherland will surely be reunified".

"Compatriots on both sides of the (Taiwan) Strait should be bound by a common sense of purpose to share in the glory of national rejuvenation," he said.

Xi has said China would never rule out the use of force to bring Taiwan under its control.

Taipei officials have repeatedly raised concerns about election interference and misinformation,

claims dismissed by Beijing as "hype".

Xi sent new year greetings to Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier Sunday in which he hailed strengthening ties with Moscow in 2023, according to an official foreign ministry readout.

The two longtime allies have drawn closer in recent years even as Western countries have turned their backs on Russia over its invasion of neighbouring Ukraine.

Xi said "the material and public opinion foundation of our relationship has become stronger", according to CCTV.

"In the face of changes unseen in a century and a turbulent regional and international situation, China-Russia relations have maintained healthy and stable development and moved steadily in the right direction," Xi said.

"Under our joint leadership, political mutual trust between the two sides has further deepened, strategic coordination has drawn closer, and mutually beneficial cooperation has continued to achieve new results," he was quoted as saying.

