Bank Asia aims to give half of its loans to SME, retail

Says Managing Director Sohail RK Hussain

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bank Asia PLC plans to increase its lending to retail and small and medium enterprises (SME) to about 50 percent of its total loan portfolio, according to its Managing Director Sohail RK Hussain.

"We have extensive experience in the SME sector and are now placing stronger focus on it," he said while addressing a press conference at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka to mark the bank's 25th anniversary yesterday.
"We believe that both the retail and

SME sectors will experience rapid growth in the near future," Hussain added.

"Bank Asia aspires to take its services to the doorsteps of marginalised people and thereby expand financial inclusion while prioritising the retail and SME sectors."

Reflecting on the bank's journey and sharing future plans, Hussain said Bank Asia has continuously opened new doors and opportunities in the banking sector for the past 25 years.

Simplifying agriculture and SME loans, expediting government social safety allowance disbursements, pioneering the Income Sharing Ratio (ISR) model in Islamic banking, launching the Pioneer payment gateway, and introducing agent banking and micro-merchant services are many of the accomplishments that the bank has had by consistently embraced innovation.

Additionally, by implementing voice banking, Bank Asia has ensured it stays aligned with the evolving needs of its customers, setting new benchmarks in banking services, he said.

Bank Asia launched the country's first agent banking service in 2014, making

areas and underserved communities. Established on November 27, 1999, Bank Asia quickly became one of the prominent commercial banks in the country, earning it a reputation for operational excellence

and customer-centric services. Starting with corporate banking, the bank



Sohail RK Hussain, managing director of Bank Asia, speaks at a press conference at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon in Dhaka marking the bank's 25th anniversary yesterday.

Islamic windows and more than 5,000 agent outlets. It also supports more than 50,000 micro-merchants, ensuring banking services across the country.

The lender expanded into the stock market through a concern called Bank Asia Securities, which operates 12 branches. Besides, the bank has two money exchange houses in London and the US.

Bank Asia's outstanding loans for sustainable finance initiatives stood at Tk 10,445 crore as of September 30, accounting for around 36 percent of its total advances. Its total green finance amounts to about Tk 1,489 crore.

We have established a robust agent banking network spanning 64 districts, with more than 5,000 agent outlets and 28,000 micro-merchants," Hussain said. The bank has a total of 70 lakh

customers, including beneficiaries of 32 government social safety net programmes.

Hussain said agent banking now facilitates more than 1 lakh transactions

worth about Tk 250 crore per day. "Almost 50 percent of the transactions are done by women. We want to increase

the amount of daily transactions to Tk 1,000 crore by the next two-and-a-half years," he added. Bank Asia expanded its global footprint

by establishing two international operations BA Exchange UK Ltd and BA Express USA Inc -- between 2011 and 2014.

Many stock investors lose money for a lack of knowledge **ICB** chairman says

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Many small investors avail margin loans to buy shares and earn quick profits from the stock market in Bangladesh, according to Abu Ahmed, chairman of the Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB).

However, they often make poor decisions for lacking adequate knowledge on market dynamics as well as the companies they seek to invest in, he said.

As such, investors often receive low dividends and end up losing their capital, thereby eroding their confidence in the market.

Ahmed was speaking at an event, styled "Prospects and challenges of Bangladesh capital market", organised by the Bangladesh Merchant Bankers Association at the Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel in Dhaka on Monday.

Furthermore, he said focus should be placed on reducing the corporate tax rate for listed companies as good companies will not enter the market without incentives.

Along these lines, he suggested that the National Board of Revenue should introduce a tax rebate for companies that provide higher dividends to shareholders.

Khondoker Rashed Magsood, chairman of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC), said there is a huge scope for reforms in the stock market.

Shipping Corporation repays Tk 475cr

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) repaid Tk 475.25 crore to the interim government as the first instalment of a loan it received from the government and Exim Bank of China in 2016 to purchase ships.

Representatives of the BSC handed over the cheque to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at his office in the capital yesterday, said a press release.

The chief adviser hailed them for setting examples for others by continuing to make profit.

"They are examples for statevned companies." Yunus said.

The BSC took the loan to ministry, Tk 1,457 crore to strengthen its fleet. were present.

The loan deal enabled the BSC to add commercial ships to its fleet for the first time in 27 years in the financial year 2018-19.

Of them, five ships are now carrying goods across different oceans using the Bangladesh flag.

The BSC is supposed to repay the government a total of Tk 2,425 crore, which includes the principal amount and interest of the loan, in several instalments over a period of 13 years.

Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, adviser to the finance, Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain, adviser to the shipping ministry, Mohammad secretary to the shipping purchase six ships, including three Mahmudul Malek, managing bulk carriers, at a cost of more than director of the BSC, among others,

BB rejects reappointment of ICB Islamic Bank MD

Contacted, Abdullah said the allegations were yet to be proven. "That is why I am at work till now," he

He said the board of directors had appealed against the central bank decision and requested keeping him as managing director.

ICB Islamic Bank had taken shape from the ruins of Oriental Bank in 2008. The bank's origins can be traced back to 1987 when it was operating under the moniker Al-Baraka Bank.

In 1994, it became a "problematic bank" and the central bank introduced the practice of appointing observers to errant banks to bring discipline. In 2004, it started operating as a scheduled commercial bank under a new name, Oriental Bank.

In June 2006, the central bank dissolved the board of directors of Oriental Bank after detecting massive

Labour reforms

FROM PAGE B1

with Bangladesh, pledging continued support for economic stability, human rights, and independent trade unions to benefit workers and industries alike.

The American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham) hosted a networking dinner at The Westin Dhaka on Monday in honour of the delegation.

During the programme, AmCham presented findings of a research titled "Development of Labor Conditions in Bangladesh for Sustainable Growth", which it had conducted recently, covering improvements and areas for further development.

মন্ত্ৰনালয়/বিভাগ

Lower revenue collection narrows fiscal space

international development partners so far this year, compared to \$2.8 billion in loan pledges a year ago, according to the Economic Relations Division (ERD).

Razzaque suggested the NBR speed up customs activities, streamline port operations and expand the tax net. He also advocated for revenue reform measures through automation.

He said the focus should not solely be on achieving revenue growth but rather on ensuring implementation

In the first four months of FY25, value-added tax declined year-onyear, while income tax and customs duties witnessed slight growth.

Duty collection from international trade increased by 0.84 percent to Tk 32,671 crore as political turmoil led to a decrease in imports.

Meanwhile, income tax receipts increased by 1.78 percent to Tk 101,281 crore. The collection of valueadded tax, the largest revenue source, fell by 4.87 percent to Tk 36,729 crore.

Energy deficit, regulatory barriers

between our two nations. This partnership is pivotal for fostering greater FDI and economic growth, said Zaved Akhtar, president of FICCI.

"By working together, we can create a robust and forward-looking economic cooperation model that will benefit both Japan and Bangladesh.' Atsushi Hirakuru, president of

the JCIAD, said collaborative efforts reflect their shared commitment to fostering sustainable economic growth.

Yuji Ando, country representative of JETRO Bangladesh, shed light on the growing interest among Japanese SMEs in expanding their businesses to Bangladesh.

He shared a report that said 45.5 percent of SMEs in Japan plan to expand operations within the next 1-2 years, with Bangladesh emerging as a

top destination, chosen by 61.2 percent. are focused on diversifying industries However, Ando also highlighted and

dissatisfaction with the business environment, which 70.8 percent of respondents believed is an area that needs improvement.

Ando emphasised the need to address issues such as customs clearance procedures, lack of transparency across the board, and local procurement practices. Additionally, he noted that

production costs in Bangladesh were competitive and around 60 percent lower than in Japan.

Ichiguchi Tomohide, representative of JICA Bangladesh, outlined ongoing projects such as the "Multi-layered Connectivity in the Bay of Bengal (MIDI)", which he identified as pivotal for enhancing Bangladesh's investment climate.

Ichiguchi said that JICA's efforts

improving significant challenges, such as frameworks, particularly in terms of permissions, regulations, and

> He underlined the significant role of infrastructure projects, such as the Matarbari deep sea port, in reshaping Bangladesh's manufacturing and logistics sectors.

> The seminar also featured a vibrant panel discussion moderated Hiroshi Uegaki, country Mitsubishi representative Corporation.

Tareq Rafi Bhuiyan (Jun), president chief of JBCCI, Mohammad Shariful Alam, country manager of Mitsui & Co Asia Pacific, Manabu Sugawara, director of FICCI and general manager of Marubeni Corporation, and Gintautas Dirgela, director of corporate affairs and communications at JTI, spoke as

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ

পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়



বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নংঃ রেশন-০৩/২০২৪-২৫

বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা পুলিশ রেশন স্টোরে ২০২৪-২০২৫ আর্থিক সালের ৩য় কোয়ার্টারের (জানুয়ারী/২৫ হতে মার্চ/২৫ মাসের) জন্য রেশন সামগ্রী ক্রয় এবং পরাতন খালি চটের/প্রাস্টিকের বস্তা (ছেডা-ফাটাসহ যেখানে যে অবস্তায় আছে) বিক্রয়ের নিমন্তে পিপিআর-২০০৮ এবং তৎপরবর্তা সংশোধন অনুসারে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তসাপেক্ষে সীলমোহরকৃত আলাদা আলাদা খামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচেছ।

ঃ স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রনালয়/জননিরাপত্তা বিভাগ

সন্থার নাম ও ঠিকানা পত্র আহবান			* 1 1	পুলিশ।			
	90	পুলি×	সুপা	র, বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জে	र्गा ।		
CONTRACTOR	90	জেলা পুলিশের রেশন সামগ্রী ক্রয় এবং পুরাতন খালি চটের/গ্লাষ্টিকের বস্তা নিলাম বিক্রয়।					
বান এর সূত্র	00	স্মারক নং-রেশন/২০২৪-২৫/৪১৫৭ /১ম, তারিখ:- ২৫/১১/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ।					
সম্পাদন পদ্ধতি	8	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (ওটিএম)।					
ং সোর্স অফ ফান্ড	98	সরকারী (জিওবি)।					
রের তারিখ	90	২৫/১১/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ।					
উল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	8	২১/১২/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।					
নর শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	00	২২/১২/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ ১২.০০ ঘটিকা।					
শার তারিখ ও সময়	90	২২/১২/২০২৪ খ্রি: ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা। দরপত্র দাতা/প্রতিনিধির উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেহ থাকে)।				রর উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেহ	
ায়নের তারিখ ও সময়	8	28/5	2/20	২৪ খ্রিঃ ১২.০০ ঘটিকা।			
দলিল বিক্রয়কারী অফিসের ানা দলিল গ্রহনকারী দপ্তর দলিল খোলার দপ্তর	90	ডিআইজি, চইগ্রাম রেঞ্জ অফিস এবং পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, বান্দরবান পার্বত্য পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা।				লয়, বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা।	
া/যোগানদার/সরবরাহকারীর	00	রেজি মোতা	ট্রশন বেক	সনদ (ছ) আর্থিক স্বচ্ছল ।		াগনাগাদ আয়কর সনদ (ঘ) ভ্যাট যোগ্যতা টেন্ডার সিডিউল	
গ্রেহ অথবা কাজের বিস্তারিত	00	৪ সংযুক্ত তালিকাঅনুযায়ী।					
কাজের বিবরণ	সিডিউলের মূল্য (অফেরতযোগ্য)			দরপত্র জামানত (ফেরতযোগ্য)	পরিমান	মেয়াদ কাল	
ন দানা মণ্ডর ডাল	900/-			3,00,000/-	৩৫,০০০ কেজি (আনুঃ)	জানুয়ারী/২৫ হতে মার্চ/২৫	
বিন তৈল সরবরাহ।	960/-		ģ	3,00,000/-	৩০,০০০ লিটার (আনুঃ)	জানুয়ারী/২৫ হতে মার্চ/২৫	
রে রক্ষিত খালি চট ও া বিক্রয়।	26	800/-		২০,০০০/-	মজুদ অনুসারে	জানুয়ারী/২৪ হতে ডিসেম্বর/২৷	
াদনকারীর বিবরণ:				· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·			
দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম			8	মো: শহিদুল্লাহ কাওছার, পিপিএম (বার)			
দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবী		8	পুলিশ সুপার।				
দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা			8	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, বান্দরবান পার্বত্য জেলা।			
	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম			ফোন-০২৩৩৩৩০২১২৮, ফ্যাক্স-০২৩৩৩৩০২১২৯			
	কারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা কারী কর্মকর্তার যোগাযোগ	কারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা কারী কর্মকর্তার যোগাযোগের মা	কারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা কারী কর্মকর্তার যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম	কারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা ৪ কারী কর্মকর্তার যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম ৪	কারী কর্মকর্তার পদবী ৪ পুলিশ সুপার। কারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা ৪ পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়	কারী কর্মকর্তার পদবী ৪ পুলিশ সুপার। কোরী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা ৪ পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, বান্দরবান পার্বত্য থে কারী কর্মকর্তার যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম ৪ ফোন-০২৩৩৩৩০২১২৮, ফ্যাক্স-০২৩৩৩৩০	

গুনগতমান সিডিউলের শর্ত মোতাবেক হতে হতে। (ঙ) কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

বিপি নং-৭৭০৬১১৭৩৬৫ পুলিশ সুপার

ফোন-০২৩৩৩৩০২১২৮, ফ্যাক্স-০২৩৩৩৩০২১২৯ E-mail: spbandarban@police.gov.bd

Ensure predictability

collaborate with the government introducing relationship managers in promoting Bangladesh before at the Bida to ensure smooth services. potential investors and increase business opportunities.

"As a team, we have to work together. We are a team for the country. Be the brand ambassadors of the country, and it will encourage potential investors to come to

Bangladesh," he said. He also asked the executives to maintain transparency in businesses. "Help us identify issues and challenges so that we can address them," he said.

Lutfey Siddiqi, special envoy to the chief adviser on international affairs, termed the CEOs as the standard bearers in business. "There was a trust deficit in the past. We need to bridge that," he said.

Chowdhury Ashik Mahmud Bin Harun, executive chairman of the

Yunus urged the executives to Zones Authority, said they were

He added that he and Siddiqi would travel to Singapore next month to hold discussions with rating agencies.

Abdur Rahman Khan, chairman of the National Board of Revenue, spoke about the launch of a "National Single Window", which promises to provide a significant boost to the ease of doing business.

The user-friendly, electronic system streamlines and automates procedures for international trade-related permits, licences, certificates and customs declarations, said the NBR.

Zaved Akhtar, chairman and managing director of Unilever Bangladesh, Eric M Walker, managing director of Chevron Bangladesh, Yasir Azman, CEO of Grameenphone, and Md Mahbub ur Rahman, CEO of The Bangladesh, were also present.

Bida and Bangladesh Economic Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) in Bangladesh, were present.

Others present Muhammad Alauddin Ahmad, CEO of MetLife Bangladesh, Abdur Rashid, country managing director of SGS Bangladesh, MHM Fairoz, managing director and CEO of Singer Bangladesh, and Najith Meewanage, CEO of the Commercial Bank of Cevlon.

Rubaba Dowla, country managing director of Oracle Bangladesh, Manabu Sugawara, country head of Marubeni Corporation, Faisal Ahmed Chowdhury, chairman of Baraka Power, Mohammad Igbal Chowdhury, CEO of LafargeHolcim Bangladesh, Md Miarul Haque, managing director of DHL Worldwide Express Bangladesh Private, and Sumitava Basu, country head of Marico