

BOOK REVIEW: OGROJATRAR OGRODOOT

# The human stories behind the Pathao brand



MD TAJDIN HASSAN

Ogrojatrar Ogrodot is a tribute to the unsung heroes—riders, drivers, entrepreneurs, and employees—whose resilience and determination have not only built Pathao but also played a pivotal role in driving Bangladesh's digital transformation forward.

Beyond corporate strategies and growth figures, Ogrojatrar Ogrodot shines a light on the real architects of Pathao's success—its riders, drivers, entrepreneurs, and employees.

The book speaks to the impact of the platform on ordinary people, from students earning extra income through gig work to women breaking societal norms by stepping into ride-sharing and delivery jobs. These deeply personal accounts reinforce a universal truth: behind every thriving startup lies the aspirations, struggles, and perseverance of real people.

#### Leadership in the face of crisis

The early chapters provide a deeper understanding of leadership decisions that shaped Pathao's journey, offering insights into the strategic mindset of CEO Fahim Ahmed and co-founder Shifat Adnan. Their vision and resilience were instrumental in guiding the company through its most challenging times.

One of the defining periods in Pathao's history was the Covid-19 crisis, a time of uncertainty and financial strain. Unlike many companies that resorted to layoffs, Pathao's leadership took a different approach. Rather than cutting jobs, executives chose to reduce their own salaries, demonstrating

commitment to their workforce. This decision, driven by the belief that people are the backbone of the organisation, ultimately played a crucial role in Pathao's recovery and return to profitability.

Fahim highlights three transformative decisions that propelled Pathao's success. The first was a bold leadership transition, bringing fresh perspectives and renewed energy to the company. The second was the ambitious expansion beyond major cities, recognising an untapped demand for digital services in semi-urban and rural areas. Though risky, this move proved highly rewarding. The third, and perhaps most innovative, was Pathao's entry into fintech. By integrating digital payment solutions, credit offerings, and instant pay services, the company positioned itself at the forefront of Bangladesh's financial technology revolution.

The chapter also offers a deeply personal reflection on the July 2024 uprising, an event that left a profound impact on Fahim. He voices his concerns about the country's increasing brain drain and stresses the need for political stability to inspire young talent to build a future in Bangladesh rather than seeking opportunities abroad. With his wife being a university professor, he found himself closely involved with student movements, witnessing their passion and struggles firsthand.

One of the book's most poignant moments is Fahim's recollection of the tragic passing of Abu Sayed. Through his journal entries, he captures the emotions of those tumultuous days, reflecting on his efforts to support students by offering shelter, supplies, and guidance in articulating their demands. Looking back, he expresses a deep sense of gratitude for standing with the youth, reinforcing his belief in resilience, unity, and the power of collective action.

#### Pathao's true builders: the people

As the book progresses, it shifts focus to the people

who have helped build Pathao from the ground up—ordinary individuals whose lives have been transformed by the platform.

One particularly inspiring story is that of Toya Mart, a small business founded by a couple who initially made just Tk 240 in daily profit from two orders. Despite this modest start, they persevered, gradually expanding their operations with Pathao's support. Today, their business has grown into a 5,200 sq. ft. operation in the country's largest port city, employing 55 people.

combined with the right platform, can turn dreams into reality.

The book also tells the story of Mahmudul, a young man who once aspired to be a cricketer but found himself navigating the corporate world instead. In late 2020, he joined Pathao's Courier team and quickly distinguished himself by introducing new services catering to merchants dealing in liquid and perishable goods outside Dhaka. His favorite quote, "Everybody wants to go to heaven, but no one wants to die," reflects a common



Their journey is a testament to the impact of digital platforms in empowering small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Another remarkable story is that of Jubayer, a determined dreamer who aspired to build his own business but faced skepticism from his family. With difficulty, he secured a Tk 5 lakh investment to start a cloud kitchen. Thanks to the continuous support of the Pathao Food team, his business thrived, and he now owns three cloud kitchens. The same family members who once doubted his abilities now seek his advice, proving that persistence, when

societal mindset—people desire success but hesitate to take the necessary risks. Mahmudul, however, embraced the challenge, proving that real progress begins with action.

While he may not have become a cricketer, he has impacted lives in his own way, bringing solutions and smiles to many.

#### Pathao - Not just a typical workplace

In a country like ours, where employees often take jobs as shackles, which bind them from doing things in innovative ways, which bind them to be kind to others due to the monotonous

responsibilities. Organisations like Pathao sail against the tides and empowers the souls who contradict with such rigid narratives, rather go beyond and solve bigger problems. Women like Radhika Afreen Oni show us that no matter how tiny you think your footsteps are, with continuous persuasion, your impact can be gigantic.

Dreamers like Tarikul Islam Nehal show us that no boundary is an actual boundary, rather it's your own imagination blocking you from doing something big. Solver such as Javid Malek breaks down to us how sharing happiness with others can have larger returns left for you, ending up making you the happiest person. These magical stories tell us we do not lose when we give, rather we gain more and more from numerous other earthly or spiritual sources, the sorts of energies and feelings which often remain untold.

#### Conclusion: a legacy of inspiration

Ogrojatrar Ogrodot is more than just a corporate chronicle—it is a collection of 25 human-centered stories that celebrate resilience, ambition, and the power of opportunity.

Among all these inspiring narratives, one of the most iconic is "Pathao and Me", Fahim Ahmed's personal journey with the company. His story, like the many others in this book, serves as a reminder that startups are not just about technology or business models—they are about people, vision, and the courage to keep moving forward.

As Bangladesh continues to embrace digital transformation, Ogrojatrar Ogrodot will remain as a symbol of hope and courage for aspiring entrepreneurs, innovators, and changemakers. It is a book that does not just document the past but also inspires the future—a legacy that will be followed for years to come.

The writer is currently the chief business officer at The Daily Star. He is also an IVLP Exchange alumni member of the U.S State Department.

## HSBC recognised as 'Best Trade Finance Bank' in Bangladesh

### STAR BUSINESS DESK

The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC) has been awarded as the "Best Trade Finance Bank" for the seventh year in Bangladesh and the eighth year globally at the Euromoney Trade Finance Survey 2025.

The bank has also been nominated as the market leader in product, technology, and client service in the country, said a press release.

In this regard, Vivek Ramachandran, head of global trade solutions at HSBC, commented, "Trade is in the DNA of the bank. We're one of the few institutions that run trade as an end-to-end product organisation."

Sharing his remarks on this win, Md Mahbub ur Rahman, chief executive officer of HSBC Bangladesh, stated, "It's an honour to be recognised by our clients as the number one trade finance bank in Bangladesh."

"I look forward to building on this track record as we grow our business and support Bangladesh's continued economic expansion," he added.

Ahmad Rabiu Hasan, country head of global trade solutions at HSBC Bangladesh, also added, "This is a testament to our team's unwavering commitment and relentless hard work, motivating us to continuously innovate and provide best-in-class services."

This year, more than 13,000 corporates worldwide contributed to the survey, where HSBC stood out as a trusted banking partner with its industry expertise and innovative solutions, effortlessly helping clients navigate their financial journey and unlock their full international potential.

The Euromoney Trade Finance Survey is among the most comprehensive benchmarking studies of the world's banks, representing the views of thousands of clients from over a hundred countries.

With its extensive global footprint, cutting-edge digital capabilities, and customer-centric approach, HSBC continues to set the industry standard in the financial landscape.

This incredible recognition reflects HSBC's commitment and excellence in making banking safer and simpler for everyone.

## Gold edges up

### REUTERS

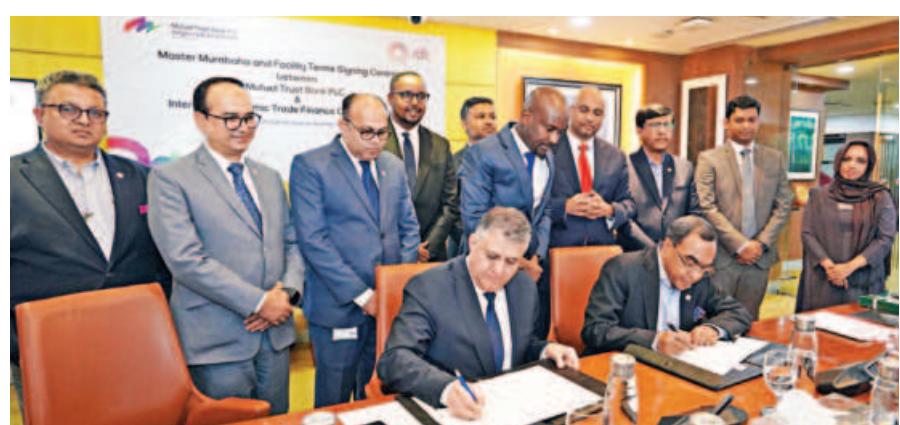
Gold prices edged higher on Wednesday, aided by a weaker US dollar and political uncertainty following the latest import tariffs announced by US President Donald Trump.

Spot gold firmed 0.1 percent \$2,918.83 an ounce as of 0955 GMT after rising nearly 1 percent on Tuesday. Prices hit a record high of \$2,956.15 on February 24 and have gained 11 percent so far this year.

US gold futures rose 0.3 percent to \$2,929.70.

"Uncertainty is food and water for gold and hence the bias on prices is to the upside," independent analyst Ross Norman said.

## Mutual Trust Bank signs murabaha deal with ITFC to boost trade finance for SMEs



Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director and CEO of Mutual Trust Bank, and Nazeem Noordali, officer-in-charge, CEO of the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation, sign a master mudarabaha agreement for finance support of the small and medium enterprises in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: MUTUAL TRUST BANK

### STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mutual Trust Bank PLC signed a master murabaha agreement with the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC), a member of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group, to strengthen trade finance support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and the private sector in Bangladesh.

Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director and CEO of Mutual Trust Bank (MTB), and Nazeem Noordali, officer-in-charge, CEO of ITFC, signed the agreement in Dhaka recently, the bank said in a press release.

Noordali emphasised the strategic importance of the partnership, stating, "We are proud to partner with Mutual Trust Bank to provide trade financing facilities that will support SME growth

and the import of essential commodities in Bangladesh."

"Private sector development is a cornerstone of the country's economic progress, and enabling SMEs to access trade finance is central to ITFC's strategy."

"This initiative will also help SMEs integrate into global value chains, fostering sustainable economic growth," he added.

Rahman expressed his enthusiasm for the agreement, saying, "The partnership with ITFC under this trade finance facility agreement is significant, especially given the current economic challenges faced by Bangladesh."

"This collaboration will enhance MTB's reputation among correspondent banks globally, highlighting its resilience, commitment to best practices, and dedication to sustainable growth," he added.

PRICES OF KEY ESSENTIALS IN DHAKA CITY			
	PRICE (MAR 5, 2025)	% CHANGES FROM A MONTH AGO	% CHANGE FROM A YEAR AGO
Fine rice (kg)	Tk 72-Tk 85	1.29 ↑	14.60 ↑
Coarse rice (kg)	Tk 50-Tk 58	-2.78 ↓	10.20 ↑
Loose flour (kg)	Tk 40-Tk 45	0	-10.53 ↓
Lentil (kg)	Tk 105-Tk 110	0	0
Soybean (litre)	Tk 182-Tk 190	5.98 ↑	21.97 ↑
Potato (kg)	Tk 20-Tk 30	0	-9.09 ↓
Onion (kg)	Tk 40-Tk 50	-10.00 ↓	-59.09 ↓
Egg (4 pcs)	Tk 40-Tk 45	-6.59 ↓	0

SOURCE: TCB

## Prime Bank launches 'Sadaqah Jariyah' account for ongoing charity

### STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank PLC yesterday launched a new Islamic banking product named "Sadaqah Jariyah" account that allows customers to donate to charitable causes continuously.

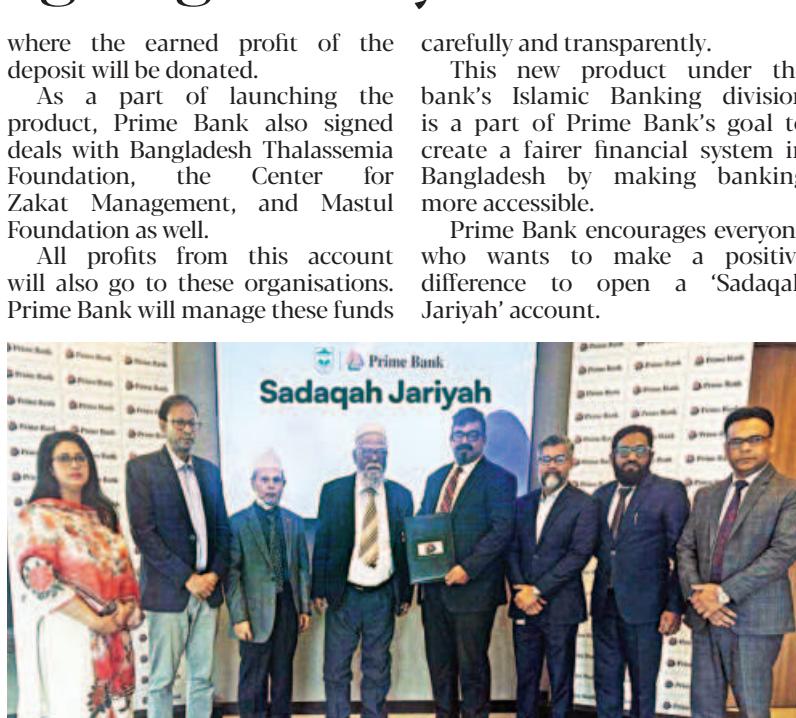
This special account lets people make donations in memory of loved ones or for themselves, helping their contributions live on.

Md Nazeem A Choudhury, deputy managing director of the bank, inaugurated the account in Dhaka, according to a press release.

Commenting on this new product, Choudhury said, "The 'Sadaqah Jariyah' account is a meaningful way for people to support charitable causes and ensure that their generosity continues."

With the highest profit rates available, the account makes sure that donations keep supporting society through approved charities. Customers can choose to donate either in instalments or all at once.

Recently, the bank signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Dhaka Ahsan Mission,



Md Nazeem A Choudhury, deputy managing director of Prime Bank, poses for photographs after inaugurating the bank's new Islamic banking product named "Sadaqah Jariyah" account in Dhaka yesterday.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Chattogram City Corporation Tigerpass, Chattogram www.ccc.gov.bd					
Memo No: 46.11.1600.001.31.202.25.392					
e-Tender Notice-SEC/IT/2024-25/01					
e-Tender is invited in the national e-GP system Portal ( <a href="http://www.eprocure.gov.bd">http://www.eprocure.gov.bd</a> ) for the procurement of following works:					
Sl no	Package No	Name of works	Tender ID	Procurement Method	Tender Document last selling / downloading Date and Time
1	CCC/Sec-IT/Comp/24-25/GR-001	Procurement/ Supply of Computer, Printer, UPS and Photocopier for Regional Executive Officer's office and other department/ Section under Chattogram City Corporation for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025.	1082155	Open Tendering Method (OTM)	23-Mar-2025 12:00:00
Tender Closing & Opening Date and Time					
23-Mar-2025 14:00:00					
This is an online Tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal ( <a href="http://www.eprocure.gov.bd">http://www.eprocure.gov.bd</a> ) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents of following packages from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank branches up to particular date and time specified on the tender notice.					
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk ( <a href="http://www.helpdesk.eprocure.gov.bd">http://www.helpdesk.eprocure.gov.bd</a> )					
CCC/PRD-61/24-25 (5x4)					
GD-580					

Mohammad Ashraful Amin  
Secretary  
Chattogram City Corporation  
Tigerpass, Chattogram