

City Bank, UNFPA sign deal to empower women in healthcare

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The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has signed a partnership agreement with City Bank PLC under the Komlaphul Pharmacy Initiative to train young women as pharmacy associates across Bangladesh.

Catherine Breen Kamkong, UNFPA representative in Bangladesh, and Mashrur Arefin, managing director and CEO of City Bank PLC, signed the agreement at a ceremony in Dhaka yesterday, according to a press release.

Kamkong said the partnership with City Bank was a powerful example of how the private sector can play a transformative role in empowering women while expanding access to essential sexual and reproductive health services.

"By investing in young women as pharmacy associates, we are investing in healthier families, stronger communities, and a more equitable society in Bangladesh," she added.

Arefin noted that financial inclusion must go hand in hand with social inclusion.

"This initiative with UNFPA is not just about training young women for jobs, but about creating pathways to dignity, independence, and leadership in their communities."

"By supporting women to become pharmacy associates, we are enabling them to transform both their own lives and the lives of countless others through improved access to healthcare and trusted counselling," he said.

"This aligns with our vision of building a more inclusive and sustainable Bangladesh," he added.

This is the first collaboration between UNFPA and City Bank, marking a milestone in advancing women's



Mashrur Arefin, managing director and CEO of City Bank PLC, and Catherine Breen Kamkong, UNFPA representative in Bangladesh, pose for photographs after signing the agreement at a ceremony in Dhaka yesterday. PHOTO: CITY BANK

empowerment and improving access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services in underserved communities.

The initiative builds on UNFPA's successful pilot Komlaphul Pharmacy intervention with relevant directorates of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The pilot demonstrated that female pharmacists and associates are more trusted by women and girls, provide better counselling on SRH issues, and help expand access to essential services.

Building on that success, City Bank is scaling up the project to create employment for women, foster

inclusivity, reach marginalised populations, and ensure lasting community impact through improved access to SRH services.

Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman, additional managing director and chief financial officer of City Bank; Mahia Juned, additional managing director and chief operating officer; Shahriar Jamil Khan, head of brand and marketing; Vibhavendra Singh Raghuvanshi, chief of health at UNFPA; Gulalek Soltanova, communications specialist; and Md Azmal Hossain, programme analyst (urban health), along with other senior officials from both organisations, were also present.

BRAC Bank rolls out nationwide financial literacy initiative

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BRAC Bank PLC has launched financial literacy awareness programmes in educational institutions across all 64 districts of Bangladesh, with the aim of educating and empowering young people.

The initiative, undertaken in alignment with Bangladesh Bank's "Youth Festival 2025" (Tarunner Utsab 2025), underscores BRAC Bank's commitment to fostering responsible financial habits among the youth, according to a press release.

Commenting on the programme, Tareq Refat Ullah Khan, managing director and chief executive officer of BRAC Bank, said: "We believe financial literacy is one of the most powerful skills a young person can acquire. By introducing these concepts early in their lives, we are preparing the next generation of leaders and professionals to become financially responsible citizens."

He added: "We sincerely thank Bangladesh Bank for spearheading this impactful initiative, which will not only benefit individuals but also reinforce the long-term stability of Bangladesh's financial system."

Through interactive sessions conducted by expert BRAC Bank trainers, students were introduced to key topics including the importance of savings, the benefits of investment, prudent use of banking services, and overall financial responsibility.

bKash strikes deal with Gulf Exchange to facilitate remittances from Qatar



Ali Ahmed, chief commercial officer of bKash Limited, and Ahmad Ali Al-Sarraf, chief executive officer of Gulf Exchange, sign the agreement at the exchange house's headquarters in Doha recently. PHOTO: BKASH

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Bangladesh's leading mobile financial service (MFS) provider bKash Limited has entered into a strategic partnership with Gulf Exchange, a premier financial institution in Qatar, to strengthen cross border remittance facilities for the Bangladeshi diaspora.

Ahmad Ali Al-Sarraf, chief executive officer of Gulf Exchange, and Ali Ahmed, chief commercial officer of bKash Limited, signed the agreement at the exchange house's headquarters in Doha, according to a press release. Al-Sarraf said the partnership underscored Gulf Exchange's commitment to delivering innovative, customer-focused financial solutions.

"By integrating with bKash's trusted and far-reaching platform, we can offer our Bangladeshi customers a faster, safer, and more convenient channel to send money home," he added.

Ahmed described the collaboration as a milestone in expanding bKash's global remittance ecosystem. "Our aim is to make financial services simpler and more accessible for millions of Bangladeshis working abroad. This new channel ensures their hard-earned money reaches their families instantly and securely, while also contributing to the nation's economic growth," he said.

Under the arrangement, Bangladeshi expatriates in Qatar will be able to remit funds directly to bKash wallets in Bangladesh, granting beneficiaries instant access through the platform's secure digital network.

The settlements will be routed through a scheduled commercial bank in Bangladesh.

With competitive exchange rates, swift transfer times, and a seamless user experience, the service promises to be a reliable and convenient option for customers.



ICC Bangladesh President Mahbubur Rahman and other members of the visiting ICCB delegation pose for group photographs at the 14th World Chambers Congress of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) in Melbourne, Australia recently. PHOTO: ICCB

ICCB delegation attends World Chambers Congress in Melbourne

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A 10-member delegation of ICC Bangladesh, led by its president Mahbubur Rahman, travelled to Australia to attend the 14th World Chambers Congress of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) in Melbourne, according to a press release.

The delegation comprised Matior Rahman, chairman and managing director of the Uttara Group of Companies; AK Azad, vice-president of ICC Bangladesh; Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed, managing director of Saiham Cotton Mills Limited; Kutubuddin Ahmed, chairman of Envoy Textiles; Aatur Rahman, secretary general of ICC

Bangladesh; Anwar-ul Alam Chowdhury (Parvez), managing director of Evince Group; Simeen Rahman, chief executive officer of Transcom Group; Tanvir Ahmed, managing director of Green Textile Limited; and Mohammed Abdul Jabbar, managing director of DBL Group.

Organised by the International Chamber of Commerce and its World Chambers Federation, in association with the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the congress brought together more than 1,000 global leaders from business, government, and chambers of commerce to deliberate on economic growth and international cooperation.

Prime Bank, BFIU organise anti-money laundering training in Moulvibazar

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Prime Bank PLC recently organised a daylong training programme on the "Prevention of Money Laundering and Combating Financing of Terrorism (AML & CFT)" under the initiative of the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) in Moulvibazar.

A total of 90 bankers from various scheduled banks in the district took part in the training. Prime Bank acted as the lead bank, according to a press release.

Mostakur Rahman, director of BFIU, inaugurated the event as the chief guest.

Sajjad Hossain, additional director of BFIU; Md Imanur Hasan, joint director; and Md Mustiqul Islam, deputy director, conducted the training sessions as expert resource persons.

The sessions covered a wide range of topics, including provisions of the Money Laundering Prevention Act 2012 (MLPA) and the Anti-Terrorism Act 2009 (ATA), Know Your Customer (KYC) and Customer Due Diligence (CDD) procedures, transaction monitoring

techniques, regulatory compliance, and measures to prevent both credit-backed and trade-based money laundering.

Md Ziaur Rahman, deputy managing director and chief anti-money laundering compliance officer of Prime Bank PLC, chaired the programme.

The bank also recognised the top performers. Md Iqbal Hossain, deputy managing director of Prime Bank, and Md Humayun Kabir, head of Sylhet region, along with other senior officials from both organisations, were also present.



Mostakur Rahman, director of the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit, poses for group photographs with participants of the training programme, organised recently by Prime Bank PLC and BFIU, in Moulvibazar. PHOTO: PRIME BANK

Trust Bank launches entrepreneurship training in Rangamati

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Trust Bank PLC, in collaboration with Bangladesh Bank and the Ministry of Finance, has launched a one-month "Entrepreneurship Development Training Programme" under the SICIP Project at the Centre for Integrated Programme and Development (CIPD) on Technical Training Centre (TTC) Road in Rangamati.

A total of 25 local youths are taking part in this hands-on training to develop business acumen, leadership, and innovation, equipping them to contribute to building a self-reliant

Bangladesh, according to a press release.

Hosne Ara Shikha, executive director of Bangladesh Bank, recently inaugurated the programme as the chief guest. Brig Gen (retd) Mohammad Shamsuzzaman, senior executive vice-president and principal of the Training Academy at Trust Bank PLC, presided over the event.

Mohammad Wasim, joint director and deputy programme director (programmes) at the central bank, and Md Mahboob Hossain, senior executive vice-president and head of business at Trust Bank PLC, along with other senior officials from both institutions, were also present.