

Bangladesh's growth is powered by agriculture: BB governor

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Agricultural loans are not only boosting farmers' productivity but also driving rural development and improving living standards, said Bangladesh Bank Governor Ahsan H Mansur at a programme yesterday.

"As far as Bangladesh has progressed, it has done so hand in hand with agriculture. The nation's future growth will also be rooted in this sector," he added.

Mansur was speaking as chief guest at the "Agricultural Entrepreneurs' Assembly and Skills Development Training", organised by United Commercial Bank PLC (UCB) in Cox's Bazar. Nearly 300 agricultural entrepreneurs from the district attended the daylong event.

"Agriculture is more than a livelihood;

it is the backbone of our economy and the nation's food security. Supporting agricultural entrepreneurs and providing easy access to loans is our top priority," he said.

"We aim to ensure that loans reach genuine farmers, banking services are more accessible, and farmers benefit fully from digital banking."

He cautioned that insufficient support could hamper both production and market systems. "Adequate assistance and loan facilities for agricultural entrepreneurs are vital to strengthening the rural economy," he stressed.

Sharif Zahir, chairman of UCB, said, "We are committed to sustainable agricultural development and empowering entrepreneurs for the country's prosperity. Training programmes like this will enhance their financial capacity."



Ahsan H Mansur, governor of Bangladesh Bank, attends the programme, titled "Agricultural Entrepreneurs' Assembly and Skills Development Training", organised by United Commercial Bank PLC, in Cox's Bazar yesterday. PHOTO: UCB

Prime Bank signs payroll banking deal with Progressive Life



Zakariya Ahad, former chairman and sponsor director of Progressive Life Insurance Company Limited, and M Nazeem A Choudhury, deputy managing director of Prime Bank PLC, pose for photographs after signing the agreement at the bank's head office in Gulshan, Dhaka recently. PHOTO: PRIME BANK

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank PLC has recently signed a payroll banking agreement with Progressive Life Insurance Company Limited dedicated to ensuring a future of its policyholders.

M Nazeem A Choudhury, deputy managing director of Prime Bank PLC, and Zakariya Ahad, former chairman and sponsor director of Progressive Life Insurance Company Limited, signed the agreement at the bank's head office in the capital's Gulshan, according to a press release.

Under the agreement, Prime Bank will provide a modern, secure, and convenient payroll management system for the employees of Progressive Life Insurance Company Limited.

This strategic partnership is expected not only to enhance the employee experience but also to open avenues for future collaboration between the two organisations. Mamur Ahmed, senior executive vice-president and head of distributions; Hasina Ferdous, head of payroll banking; and Dhiman Barman, relationship officer, attended the event.

Mohammad Saidul Amin, managing director of Progressive Life Insurance; Abdullah Al-Mansur, senior executive vice-president and company secretary; Md Gaziur Rahman Bakhtiar, executive vice-president and head of human resources division; Shakhawat Hossain, chief financial officer; and Alima Akter Khanam, senior executive officer, along with other senior officials from both organisations, were also present.

Mastercard, Islami Bank launch digital payment ecosystem at Rajshahi University

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Global digital payment solution provider Mastercard, in collaboration with Islami Bank Bangladesh PLC, has launched the country's first fully cashless university campus at Rajshahi University under Bangladesh Bank's "Cashless Bangladesh" initiative.

The transformation will allow students, faculty, and visitors to conduct quick, secure, and convenient digital transactions across campus facilities, significantly reducing reliance on cash and accelerating the adoption of smart financial services.

Prof Mohammad Main Uddin, pro-vice-chancellor (administration) of Rajshahi University, inaugurated the digital payment ecosystem as the chief

guest, according to a press release.

As part of the initiative, Rajshahi University is being equipped with digital payment tools such as Point-of-Sale (POS) machines and Bangla QR, ensuring that all campus transactions from cafeterias and bookstores to administrative offices can be completed digitally.

In addition, an exclusive debit card for students was launched at the ceremony, offering them a convenient and secure means of managing their daily financial needs.

Mohammad Jamal Uddin Mazumder, additional managing director of Islami Bank Bangladesh PLC, said: "This reflects our ongoing commitment to driving digital transformation, fostering financial inclusion, and empowering students and faculty with seamless, secure payment solutions that enhance their daily lives."



Prof Mohammad Main Uddin, pro-vice-chancellor (administration) of Rajshahi University, inaugurates the digital payment ecosystem, launched jointly by Mastercard and Islami Bank Bangladesh PLC, on the university campus recently. PHOTO: MASTERCARD

Sonali Bank announces results of 100-day special programme



Md Shawkat Ali Khan, managing director and chief executive officer of Sonali Bank PLC, declares the results of the 100-day special programme at the bank's head office in Dhaka yesterday. PHOTO: SONALI BANK

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Sonali Bank PLC has announced the evaluation results of its 100-day special programme.

Md Shawkat Ali Khan,

managing director and chief executive officer of Sonali Bank PLC, declared the results at the bank's head office in Dhaka yesterday, according to a press release.

Khan Iqbal Hossain, deputy managing director of the bank, presided over the event.

Among the general managers' offices (GMOs), GMO Chattogram North secured first

place, followed by GMO Jashore in second and GMO Rangpur in third.

Shahid Abrar Fahad Avenue Corporate Branch topped the ranking among GM-headed corporate branches.

In the principal offices (POs) category, PO Gopalganj took first place, while PO Rajbari and PO Bhola secured second and third positions respectively.

Among all branches, the heads of Poradah Branch in Kushtia, Parerhat Branch in Pirojpur, and Bakerganj Branch in Barisal East were recognised as the best three branch managers. In addition, the top three branch managers were selected under each principal office.

The 100-day special programme was launched on February 4, with the MD and CEO announcing the initiative to run from February 5 to May 15, 2025.

Premier Bank opens relocated Kolakopa branch

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Premier Bank PLC has recently opened its relocated Kolakopa branch at Nawabganj Bazar on College Road in Nawabganj upazila of Dhaka, aiming to provide modern, best-in-class services to its customers.

Md Sazzad Hossain, independent director and chairman of the risk management committee of Premier Bank PLC, inaugurated the branch as chief guest, according to a press release.

Sayed Abul Hashem, deputy managing

director and chief financial officer; Syed Shafiqat Rabbi, executive vice-president and head of GSD; and Md Tareq Uddin, executive vice-president and head of brand marketing and communications, attended the event.

Md Hamidullah, professor of DN College in Nawabganj; Manabendra Dutta, former principal of Government Dohar-Nawabganj College; Md Amir Hossain, advocate; along with senior officials, branch managers, and local businesspersons, were also present.



Md Sazzad Hossain, independent director and chairman of risk management committee of Premier Bank PLC, inaugurates the bank's relocated branch at Nawabganj Bazar, Nawabganj in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: PREMIER BANK

Eastern Bank opens sub-branch in Munshiganj

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Eastern Bank PLC has opened a new sub-branch at Zom Zom Tower on Bhagyakul Road in Sreenagar, Munshiganj.

M Khorshed Anowar, deputy managing director and head of retail and SME banking at Eastern Bank PLC, inaugurated the sub-branch as chief guest yesterday, according to a press release.

Abu Sayeem Muhammad Jafar Imam, branch area head for Sylhet and Narayanganj; and Md Tariqul Islam, branch manager; along with other senior officials of the bank and local businesspeople, were also present.



M Khorshed Anowar, deputy managing director and head of retail and SME banking of Eastern Bank PLC, inaugurates the bank's new sub-branch at Zom Zom Tower on Bhagyakul Road in Sreenagar, Munshiganj yesterday. PHOTO: EASTERN BANK

Akhteruddin Mahmood appointed DMD of Bank Asia

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Akhteruddin Mahmood has been appointed as deputy managing director (DMD) and chief human resources officer of Bank Asia PLC, with effect from September 14, 2025.

Before joining Bank Asia, Mahmood was serving as head of human resources at BRAC Bank PLC, where he played a defining role in shaping the bank's people strategy, strengthening organisational culture, and spearheading transformative HR practices, according to a press release.

With more than two decades of leadership experience spanning the banking and fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sectors, Mahmood is widely recognised for his expertise in organisational development, talent management, leadership training, and the strategic alignment of people initiatives with corporate objectives.

His people-centred approach to leadership has consistently fostered high-performing teams and cultivated inclusive, future-ready workplaces.

The appointment underscores Bank Asia's commitment to advancing its people strategy in line with business ambitions and further consolidating its leadership team.

Mahmood holds an executive MBA as well as a bachelor's degree in aviation.

City Bank offers Guardian Life policies via Citytouch

STAR BUSINESS DESK

City Bank PLC customers can now purchase Guardian Life Insurance Limited policies directly through the bank's mobile banking application, Citytouch.

The new feature allows users to browse products, buy policies instantly, and submit claims anytime, anywhere, all through a single platform, according to a press release.

Commenting on the initiative, Sheikh Rakibul Karim, additional managing director and acting CEO of Guardian Life Insurance Limited, said: "By integrating advanced technology and digital innovations, we are delivering fast, reliable, and hassle-free services. This partnership empowers customers to manage all their protection needs online with ease."

Md Arup Haider, deputy managing director and head of retail banking at City Bank PLC, added: "City Bank was the first bank to introduce bancassurance in the market. We continue to lead in bringing digital solutions to the local banking sector. Introducing insurance products directly through our mobile app is a natural progression, offering our customers a broader range of financial solutions."

Pran eyes \$2m orders

FROM PAGE B4

While Pran has a global presence in 148 countries, Malaysia remains among its most lucrative markets. In fiscal year 2024-25, the company earned around Tk 750 crore from food and beverage exports to Malaysia alone.

The growth suggests Bangladeshi products are ready for wider regional expansion. Malaysia's strategic location and strong halal infrastructure

make it an ideal launchpad for neighbouring markets where demand for certified products is rising.

"Malaysia is a halal hub. Success here signals readiness for markets like Indonesia, Brunei, and beyond," said Parvez Hira, head of sales at Piacloe Foods.

Local entrepreneurs are also finding Bangladeshi foods good for business. One such entrepreneur is Sharon, who manages four

outlets in Kuala Lumpur and its outskirts that sell a wide range of Bangladeshi food and beverage products.

"In the beginning, customers were sceptical. They thought, 'Bangladesh is a low-income country, how good can their food be?' But after trying the products, their mindset changed. The quality is there, and the prices are better than many European brands," she said.