

Prime Bank launches 'SME Debit Card' with int'l remittance facility

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Prime Bank PLC has unveiled Bangladesh's first-ever "SME Debit Card" equipped with an international remittance facility, enabling small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to execute seamless cross-border online payments for business purposes.

The card may also be used domestically for point-of-sale (PoS) transactions, automated teller machines (ATMs), and online payments.

Proprietorship entities are eligible to obtain this debit card, while SMEs registered as partnerships or limited companies may apply for SME prepaid cards.

Nawshad Mustafa, director of the SME and Special Programmes Department at Bangladesh Bank,

and Md Nazrul Islam, additional director of the same department, attended the launching ceremony held at Prime Tower in Nikunja, Dhaka yesterday, according to a press release. M Nazeem A Choudhury, deputy managing director of Prime Bank PLC, presided over the event.

Addressing the occasion, Choudhury remarked, "Prime Bank has consistently been at the forefront of empowering SMEs through innovative financial solutions. The SME Debit Card with international remittance capability marks yet another milestone in enabling Bangladeshi entrepreneurs to compete confidently in the global digital marketplace."

The launch follows a recent circular from Bangladesh Bank permitting SMEs to make



Nawshad Mustafa, director of the SME and Special Programs Department at Bangladesh Bank, and M Nazeem A Choudhury, deputy managing director of Prime Bank PLC, attend the launch of the "SME Debit Card" at Prime Tower in Nikunja, Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: PRIME BANK

international business payments online.

Under this initiative, verified SME clients registered with the SME Foundation may now carry out business-related payments

abroad. The SME Debit Card can be reloaded for bona fide business expenses of up to \$600 per transaction, with a ceiling of \$3,000 per calendar year.

Mamur Ahmed, head of

distributions at Prime Bank; Mohammad Aminur Rahman, head of SME; and Joarder Tanvir Faisal, head of cards, along with other senior officials, were also present.



Ahsan Zaman Chowdhury, managing director and chief executive officer of Trust Bank PLC, poses for group photographs with officials during the celebration at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: TRUST BANK

Trust Bank celebrates deposit milestone of Tk 50,000cr

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Trust Bank PLC has celebrated reaching the milestone of Tk 50,000 crore in deposits at a ceremony held at its head office in Dhaka recently.

Ahsan Zaman Chowdhury, managing director and chief executive officer of Trust Bank PLC, attended the event as the chief guest, according to a press release.

While addressing the gathering, Chowdhury expressed his appreciation for the collective efforts of employees and customers, saying, "We are proud to reach this remarkable milestone of Tk

50,000 crore in deposits."

"With our continued focus on digital transformation and tailored product offerings, I am confident that Trust Bank will achieve its next milestone even sooner," he added.

The celebration marked a moment of pride for Trust Bank, reflecting strong customer confidence, steady growth, and the bank's commitment to providing modern, technology-driven banking solutions across Bangladesh, the release said.

Deputy managing directors, senior executives, and branch managers of the bank were also present.

Meghna Bank partners with Saudi Arabia-Bangladesh Business Summit

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Meghna Bank PLC has partnered as the silver sponsor with the "Saudi Arabia-Bangladesh Business Summit 2025".

Organised by the Saudi Arabia-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SABCCI), the three-day summit is currently taking place at Sheraton Dhaka in the capital's Banani area, with the aim of strengthening bilateral trade, investment, and business collaboration between the two friendly nations.

As an active member of SABCCI, Meghna Bank PLC has set up an exhibition booth at the summit to showcase its range of innovative, customer-centric banking products and services.

Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, politician and businessman, inaugurated the bank's stall at the summit. Uzma Chowdhury, businesswoman and chairperson of Meghna Bank PLC, was also present.

Through its participation, Meghna Bank reiterated its commitment to enhancing cross-border business cooperation and contributing to sustainable economic growth between Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh, the release added.

Md Sadiqur Rahman, managing director and CEO (current charge), and Kazi Farhana Zabin, head of the liability and wealth management division, along with other senior officials of the bank, were also present.



Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, a politician and businessman, and Uzma Chowdhury, a businesswoman and chairperson of Meghna Bank PLC, pose for group photographs at the launch of the bank's stall at Sheraton Dhaka in the capital's Banani yesterday.

PHOTO: MEGHNA BANK

NCC Bank arranges entrepreneurship development programme in Mymensingh



Md Kawsar Matin, executive director of Bangladesh Bank's Mymensingh office, poses for group photographs with participants of the "Entrepreneurship Development Programme" in Mymensingh yesterday.

PHOTO: NCC BANK

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NCC Bank PLC, in collaboration with Bangladesh Bank, has organised a month-long "Entrepreneurship Development Programme" in Mymensingh under the Skills for Industry Competitiveness and Innovation Program (SICIP).

The initiative is implemented by the Finance Department of the Ministry of Finance with

funding from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Md Kawsar Matin, executive director of Bangladesh Bank's Mymensingh office, attended the closing ceremony as the chief guest yesterday, and distributed certificates among 25 participating entrepreneurs, according to a press release.

In his speech, Matin said the initiative aims to foster new entrepreneurs and accelerate

inclusive economic growth. He expressed his gratitude to NCC Bank PLC and all stakeholders for arranging such a valuable training programme and hoped the entrepreneurs would utilise the knowledge gained to expand their new and existing businesses.

Md Nazrul Islam, programme director of SICIP and additional director of the SME and Special Programmes Department at Bangladesh Bank, and Md Ayub Ali, joint director and deputy programme director of SICIP, were present as special guests.

Md Zakir Anam, deputy managing director of NCC Bank PLC, handed over loan sanction letters amounting to Tk 3.9 million to 23 of the 25 trained entrepreneurs.

At the end of the programme, an "Entrepreneur Fair" was also inaugurated, where the trained entrepreneurs showcased their products at various stalls.

Sharif Mohammad Mahsin, senior vice-president and head of SME at NCC Bank PLC; AKM Badrul Hasan, head of the Mymensingh region; and Mohammad Faizur Rahman, head of business and branch manager of the Mymensingh branch, along with other senior officials of NCC Bank and Bangladesh Bank, were also present.

Guardian Life, CliniCall team up to safeguard remitters



Parvez Ahmad, co-founder and chief operating officer of CliniCall Limited, and Sheikh Rakibul Karim, additional managing director and acting chief executive officer of Guardian Life Insurance Limited, pose for photographs after signing the agreement at the life insurer's head office in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: GUARDIAN LIFE INSURANCE

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Guardian Life Insurance Limited has signed an agreement with health-tech company CliniCall Limited to introduce an innovative insurance and healthcare package exclusively designed for Bangladeshi remittance workers and their families.

Sheikh Rakibul Karim, additional managing director and acting chief executive officer of Guardian Life Insurance Limited, and Parvez Ahmad, co-founder and chief operating officer of CliniCall Limited, signed the agreement at the insurer's head office in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

Commenting on the partnership, Karim said, "This collaboration reflects our shared commitment to delivering sustainable and accessible solutions for remittance workers."

"This initiative is a symbol of appreciation and respect for our brothers and sisters who tirelessly support their families and contribute to our national economy from abroad," he added.

Ahmad said, "We are delighted to

combine medical services with Guardian's trusted insurance solutions. Through our shared mission, we aim to ensure that those in need experience accessible and affordable healthcare with financial security."

The partnership seeks to address the pressing health and financial protection challenges faced by millions of remittance earners who contribute significantly to the country's economy.

The newly launched package offers a comprehensive range of benefits, including life and health insurance coverage, unlimited doctor consultations through CliniCall, financial protection in case of job loss, and holistic healthcare support for families in Bangladesh.

Abdul Halim, head of microinsurance digital channel and ADC at the insurer; Md Naushadul Karim Chowdhury, vice-president of microinsurance digital channel and ADC; Saad M Milkan, head of business at the health-tech company; and Shaba Shams, head of technology, along with other senior officials from both organisations, were also present.

Bank Asia unveils QR code-based cash withdrawal service 'Scan to Cash'

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Bank Asia PLC has launched "Scan to Cash", an advanced QR code-based cash withdrawal service for its customers.

With this facility, customers can easily withdraw cash from any Bank Asia branch without using a cheque or debit card, according to a press release.

Under the "Scan to Cash" service, a unique QR code is displayed at the cash counter of every Bank Asia branch. To make a withdrawal, customers simply open the Bank Asia Smart app on their smartphone, scan the QR code, enter the desired amount, and authenticate the transaction using a one-time password (OTP).



Once the authentication is complete, the teller hands over the cash, and the customer's account is instantly debited to reflect the withdrawal amount.

Customers can make up to five transactions per day, with a daily withdrawal limit of Tk 300,000. The new service ensures a time-saving, convenient, and seamless banking experience.

As part of its commitment to customer-centric digital banking, Bank Asia's "Scan to Cash" marks a milestone in expanding secure, smart, and hassle-free financial services, the release added.

Yen slides to 2-month low against dollar

REUTERS, Tokyo

The yen weakened to a two-month low against the dollar on Tuesday as attention in Japan turned to who may join the administration of fiscal dove Sanae Takaichi after her party leadership victory.

With the yen also trading at an all-time low against the euro, Japan's finance minister said authorities were watching out for excessive moves in currency markets. Takaichi, expected to become Japan's next prime minister, chose former premier Taro Aso as vice president of her ruling party.

The euro remained on a fragile footing following the resignation of France's prime minister and statements by European Central Bank officials that a rate cut may be necessary. Traders will be on watch for speeches from Federal Reserve policymakers later in the day as a US government shutdown squelches other data signals.

As markets await more clarity on how Takaichi will structure her government, Japanese officials may try to talk the yen down from recent extremes, said Bart Wakabayashi, the Tokyo branch manager of State Street.

"We'll see if the expected policies that she is tied to will come through," Wakabayashi said of Takaichi. The 150 yen per dollar mark is "a very important level, psychologically and economically."

Shipping line raises fees

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For refrigerated containers, the surcharges will be \$40 for a 20-foot container, \$60 for a 40-foot container, and \$90 for a 40-foot high-cube container.

For hazardous goods, the surcharges will be \$140 for a 20-foot container, \$215 for a 40-foot container, and \$305 for a 40-foot high-cube container.

Businesses have expressed concern over the impending increase in import and export costs due to the surcharges following the port's tariff hike.

The chairman of the Bangladesh Shipping Agents Association (BSAA) sent a letter to the senior secretary of the

Ministry of Shipping and the chairman of the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) on Sunday.

In it, he urged reconsideration of the newly imposed port tariff and its implementation timeline, saying the sharp increase and abrupt implementation would severely hurt trade competitiveness and the country's economy.

BSAA Chairman Syed Mohammad Arif told The Daily Star yesterday that not only CMA CGM but also all other foreign shipping lines would soon follow suit to impose additional surcharges for containers to and from Chattogram.

Exporters may not be directly affected by this additional

surcharge as foreign buyers usually bear the transportation costs, but importers would be affected directly.

"Although foreign buyers will bear the additional charges, this will eventually have an impact on Bangladeshi exporters," opined Khairul Alam Suzan, former vice-president of the Bangladesh Freight Forwarders Association (BAFFA).

Following the hike in charges at the port and the ICDS, these additional surcharges by the MEOs would further increase the costs of the country's foreign trade, he said.

The readymade garment sector will suffer the most, as they will count the additional surcharges

twice — when importing raw materials for their factories and when exporting finished products, he said.

M A Salam, a director of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), said the surcharges pose a threat to the competitiveness of the country's RMG sector in the global market.

The country's RMG exports are already suffering from additional tariffs imposed by the US, pointed out Salam, who is also the managing director of the Asian Group.

He hoped that the government would reconsider the decision to hike the port's tariffs for the sake of the country's exports.