

HSBC showcases growing business opportunities between Japan and Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Strengthening the Japan-Bangladesh trade corridor is crucial for the country's economic growth, said Mahbubur Rahman, secretary to the Ministry of Commerce, at a recent programme.

He made the remarks at a networking event, titled "Japan-Bangladesh Business Connections: Legacy and the Future", organised by the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC) Bangladesh at The Westin Dhaka, according to a press release.

Rahman welcomed HSBC's efforts to deepen the partnership.

The event celebrated the longstanding relationship between Japan and Bangladesh while emphasising the growing business engagement between the two nations.

Japan has been Bangladesh's largest bilateral development partner for over five decades, providing more than \$32 billion in official development assistance (ODA) since independence through grants, loans, and technical cooperation. Japanese support spans key sectors such as infrastructure, energy, transport, agriculture, health, education and human resource development.

Major ongoing projects include the Matarbari Deep-Sea Port and Power Plant, the Dhaka Mass Rapid Transit Development Project, the Jamuna Railway Bridge, and the expansion of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

With more than 350 Japanese companies operating in



Mahbubur Rahman, secretary to the Ministry of Commerce, and Karasawa Shinju, first secretary and head of economic cooperation at the Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh, attend the networking event, titled "Japan-Bangladesh Business Connections: Legacy and the Future", organised by the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC) Bangladesh at The Westin Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: HSBC

Bangladesh and bilateral trade approaching \$3.8 billion, economic ties between the two countries continue to strengthen.

The event brought together distinguished guests from Japanese and Bangladeshi businesses, policymakers, and industry leaders.

Nahian Rahman Rochi, executive member and head of business development at the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (Bida), presented insights on the Investment Climate of Bangladesh and outlined measures to simplify the investment framework to attract global investors.

ACI Motors seeks Guinness record by handing over 350 tractors

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ACI Motors Limited, a pioneer in agricultural mechanisation in Bangladesh, organised a tractor handover event at the Trade Fair Ground adjacent to the Gor-e-Shaheed Central Eidgah Maidan in Dinajpur.

The principal objective of the programme was to secure Bangladesh's inclusion in the Guinness World Records by achieving the highest number of tractor handovers in a single event, according to a press release.

During the event, 350 units of Sonalika tractors were simultaneously handed over to farmers.

Gaurav Saxena, director and chief executive officer of International Tractors Limited, attended the ceremony as the chief guest.

Subrata Ranjan Das, deputy managing director of ACI Motors Limited, presided over the inaugural session.

Over the past 18 years of partnership with Sonalika, ACI Motors has played a pivotal role in advancing agricultural mechanisation in Bangladesh. The company currently commands more than 50 percent of the country's tractor market, proudly maintaining its leadership position.

The occasion also sought to celebrate this success and to inspire renewed enthusiasm within the nation's agricultural sector.

Although agriculture is often described as the backbone of Bangladesh's economy, a perceptible lack of motivation among farmers remains. Recognising this, ACI Motors considers it its duty to contribute to the sector's development and to inspire farmers across the country.

In line with this commitment, the initiative aims to showcase Bangladesh's progress in agricultural mechanisation on the global stage, underscoring that the nation's farmers and farming practices are of world-class standard and deserving of international recognition.

This world record attempt stands as both a proud gift from Bangladesh's farmers to the nation and a tribute from ACI Motors to the country's industrious farming community.

ACI Motors reaffirmed its dedication to continuing this historic journey towards the advancement and modernisation of agriculture in Bangladesh.

Md Rafiqul Islam, deputy commissioner of Dinajpur, and Md Asif Uddin, chief business officer of ACI Motors, along with other senior officials, Sonalika tractor owners, and drivers, were also present.

Prime Bank customers to get discounts on flat purchases from GLG Assets



Md Shoriful Islam, managing director of GLG Assets Limited, and Mamur Ahmed, senior executive vice-president and head of branch distribution of Prime Bank PLC, pose for photographs after signing the agreement at the bank's corporate office in Gulshan, Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: PRIME BANK

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank PLC has entered into a strategic partnership agreement with GLG Assets Limited, a Dhaka-based real estate developer, to offer discounts on flat purchases for its customers.

Mamur Ahmed, senior executive vice-president and head of branch distribution at Prime Bank PLC, and Md Shoriful Islam, managing director of GLG Assets Limited, signed the agreement at the bank's corporate office in Gulshan, Dhaka yesterday, according to a press release.

Under the agreement, Prime Bank customers will enjoy special price benefits from GLG Assets, enabling them to access premium residential properties with added financial convenience.

Through this partnership, Prime Bank has reinforced its commitment to delivering lifestyle-driven financial solutions that add value to customers' aspirations and enhance their overall banking experience, the release added.

Joarder Tanvir Faisal, executive vice-president and head of cards and retail assets at the bank, Ruhul Amin, deputy general manager of the realtor, along with other senior officials from both organisations, were also present.

Robi's profit surge

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can make from its turnover - stood at 18.9 percent, more than double Robi's 8 percent, despite the latter's higher growth rate.

"Both companies' turnovers declined, which signals the overall weakness in the economy," said Asif Khan, president of CFA Society Bangladesh.

"Grameenphone's efficiency has been historically high, leaving little room for further improvement. Robi, on the other hand, benefited from efficiency gains, allowing profits to rise despite lower revenue."

In a statement yesterday, Grameenphone, however, said its revenue in the July-September quarter grew 1.4 percent year-on-year, with cost increases limited to 1 percent despite inflation above 8 percent.

It said the overall economic climate still remains stagnant, and growth across markets is slower than what the company had anticipated.

"Despite these external challenges... we are back to growth, with stable margins and solid execution across our key business areas," said Otto Magne Risbakk, chief financial officer of Grameenphone.

Although net profits were affected by higher depreciation and amortisation costs arising from capitalisation impacts, along with some cost increases from new site deployments and rooftop leases, GP's profit margin is still strong, he added.

GP CEO Yasir Azman added that the company expects short-term economic momentum ahead of the national election to lift telecom demand: "We expect to capture renewed customer demand

and reinforce our role in national connectivity."

Data show that it is getting higher revenue from its larger customer and network base.

The company's lease revenue rose by 4 percent to Tk 173 crore in the nine-month period, while for Robi, the figure went up slightly to reach Tk 45 crore.

Robi's Managing Director and CEO Ziad Shatara said the third quarter of the year faced some headwinds from the extended monsoon, which impacted telecom spending by subscribers.

"Nonetheless, we are pleased with the strong momentum in our cost-efficiency programme, which continues to provide us with the flexibility to sustain growth. We remain confident in our trajectory going forward," Shatara said.

BSC's new ship

FROM PAGE B1
"During bunkering, the charterer will inform us about the cargo, loading port, and discharging port. But the (charging of the) fare for the vessel has started from this morning," said the MD. The BSC initiated the process of purchasing two bulk carriers of the same carrying capacity through an international tender floated in June this year.

Eight companies purchased tender documents, but only three submitted bids. Of these, two proposals were considered technically acceptable.

After thorough evaluation, the

proposal from US-based Hellenic Dry Bulk Ventures LLC received final approval. On August 12, the Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase approved the proposal to purchase the two ships for \$76.69 million, equivalent to Tk 936 crore.

The unit price of each vessel is \$38.349 million, which is 4.60 percent less than the estimated cost, said BSC officials.

This marks the first time that the BSC is using its own funds to finance such an acquisition.

The company was able to receive the vessels in a short period because

of its decision to purchase ships that were under construction or nearing completion.

The BSC MD said they took the decision to purchase under-construction ships with the aim of taking delivery within a short period.

"If we place an order with any shipbuilder, it takes two to three years or more to complete the purchase process and build a ship," he said.

Mentioning that 75 percent of the second ship has already been constructed, Malek hoped for another vessel, MV Banglar Nobjatra, will be added to the BSC fleet within December.



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১.	সম্মুখায়/বিভাগ:	তথ্য ও সম্প্রচার মন্ত্রণালয়।																																								
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৫.	নিলামকৃত দ্রব্যের নাম:	বাংলাদেশ টেলিভিশন ঢাকা কেন্দ্রের অভ্যন্তরে ভাড়াভুক্ত অচল ঘোষিত সাংগঠনিক কাঠামোভুক্ত ০২ টি কার, ০১টি জীপ ও ০১টি মাইক্রোবাস, ০৩টি অটোরিক্সা (সিএনজি), ০২টি ওবি/ডিএসএনজি এবং ০১টি মোটরসাইকেল যেখানে যে অবস্থায় আছে সে অবস্থায় নিলামে বিক্রির নিমিত্তে দরপত্র আহ্বান সংক্রান্ত।																																								
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২১.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর নাম:	এস. এম. নুরুল আমিন।																																								
২২.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর পদবী:	সহকারী পরিচালক (যানবাহন)																																								
২৩.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর ঠিকানা:	বাংলাদেশ টেলিভিশন, ঢাকা কেন্দ্র, যানবাহন শাখা, রামপুরা, ঢাকা-১২১৯।																																								
২৪.	কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ছাড়াই যেকোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ/ব্যক্তি/প্রত্যাহারের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।																																									

এস. এম. নুরুল আমিন
সহকারী পরিচালক (যানবাহন)
বাংলাদেশ টেলিভিশন
রামপুরা, ঢাকা।
ফোন- ০২৫৫১৩১০৭

GD-2258

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Resilient Urban and Territorial Development Project (RUTDP)
LGED-RDEC Bhaban (Level-05), Agargaon
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar
Dhaka-1207
www.lged.gov.bd

RFB No: 46.02.0000.564.07.098.25- 498 Date: 27 October 2025

Corrigendum Notice for IFB No.: ICB/2025-26/08

Country: Bangladesh
Name of the Project: Resilient Urban and Territorial Development Project (RUTDP)
Contract Title: Pavement Grinder (Milling Machine)
IDA Credit No. 7588-BD and 7589-BD
Contract Package No. RUTDP/PMU/G-13

The bid submission date will be December 22, 2025 instead of November 24, 2025 and Bid Opening date will be December 22, 2025 instead of November 24, 2025. The others Terms and Conditions will be remained unchanged.

(Md. Mahiz Uddin)
Project Director (Routine Charge)
RUTDP, LGED, Dhaka
LGED-RDEC Bhaban (Level-05),
Agargaon, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar,
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GD-2262

Education system failing to produce skilled human resources

Speakers tell DCCI discussion

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The country's education system is failing to produce skilled human resources in line with the demands of the industrial sector, said speakers at an event yesterday. Therefore, a coordinated effort between the education and industrial sectors is essential for developing a skilled workforce, they added.

They made this remark at a discussion titled "Smart Human Capital Development in the Context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution," organised by the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) on its premises in Dhaka.

Mahtab Uddin Ahmed, president of the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Bangladesh, said only 20 percent of graduates get jobs matching their qualifications, while around 2

million remain unemployed. He underscored the importance of promoting technical education and changing the societal mindset towards vocational training.

Professor Shams Rahman, vice-chancellor of East West University, said the current education system is not adequately aligned with industry demands and thus coordinated efforts between the education and industrial sectors are crucial to producing skilled human resources.

In a keynote presentation, M Niaz Asadullah, visiting professor of economics at the University of Reading, referred to a 2019 study conducted by the government's *Aspire to Innovate* programme and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Due to the advancement of information

technology, around 5.38 million jobs might be lost in Bangladesh's readymade garments, food and agriculture, furniture, tourism, and hospitality sectors by 2030, he said.

He stressed the need to enhance workers' technological skills through rigorous training.

He also called for modernisation of the education system, wider use of advanced technologies in technical education, and ensuring budget allocations for implementing skills development programmes.

Nazneen Kawshar Chowdhury, executive chairman of the National Skills Development Authority (NSDA), highlighted that there was a lack of coordination among government agencies involved in conducting training programmes, as well as limited awareness regarding the

importance of skills development.

She mentioned that during the initial phase, the NSDA primarily focused on establishing legal, physical, and administrative structures and now is focusing on training for human resource development.

In addition, she informed that initiatives have been undertaken to teach the Japanese language with government and academic support to send 100,000 skilled workers to Japan.

Besides, she stressed the need for training programmes to upskill women.

Muhammad Masroor Ali, a professor in the computer science and engineering department at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, pointed out that a significant disparity remains in education quality between urban and rural areas.

Al-Arafah Islami Bank MD removed

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Farman R Chowdhury, managing director of Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC, has been removed from his post over irregularities and lapses in governance and oversight.



Farman R Chowdhury
executive director and spokesperson of the Bangladesh Bank, confirmed the development.

Arief Hossain Khan, executive director and spokesperson of the Bangladesh Bank, confirmed the development. Khan told The Daily Star that the bank's board had recommended Chowdhury's removal, which the central bank later approved.

In April this year, Chowdhury, along with three other officials, was sent on forced leave for three months.

Snail-paced G2G economic zones

FROM PAGE B1

goodwill rather than institutional efficiency.

"The projects are progressing, but the speed is not what it could be," a senior Beza official said, preferring anonymity, adding that success now depends more on getting essential utilities such as gas, water, and electricity than on diplomatic ties.

Major General (Retired) Md Nazrul Islam, executive member (Planning and Development) of Beza, said the Japanese Economic Zone in Araihaazar, Narayanganj, is "progressing at a satisfactory pace," with core infrastructure nearing completion.

"The first phase is done, and the second phase, which focuses on physical infrastructure, is moving forward at a good speed," he told The Daily Star.

The 1,000-acre project has been divided into two phases. Power, gas, and water connections are nearly ready, and complications over the Sylhet Bypass Road have been resolved.

With a \$78 million investment, Singer Bangladesh has already begun operations in the Japanese Economic Zone. Islam said they expect to ensure continuous electricity and gas connections at the economic zone by December this year. "Once these are resolved, major investments will start materialising," he added.

"If we can ensure reliable utility services like gas, water, and electricity, there will be no need to invite investors. They will come on their own," he commented.

CHINESE ECONOMIC ZONE NEARING LAND LEASE

The Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone in Anwara area of Chattogram is at the final stage of its land lease agreement.

Islam said that although it is called the Chinese Economic Zone, Bangladesh holds more than 30 percent of the total share.

The process, involving legislative

vetting and multi-agency approval, is almost complete. Contractors for infrastructure work have also been shortlisted.

"If there are no election-related delays, I am hopeful that by December the land agreement process will be finalised smoothly, allowing official preparations to begin right after," he added.

The Anwara zone is being developed as a major industrial hub, targeting sectors such as leather goods, light engineering, electronics, readymade garment accessories, and furniture.

TWO MORE CHINESE ZONES PLANNED

The government plans two additional zones for Chinese investors, complementing the Anwara project.

Under a G2G deal, PowerChina will develop the Chandpur Economic Zone-1 on 3,038 acres in Matlab north.

Chinese-owned Leez Fashion Industries Ltd will privately develop the Bhola Eco-Development Economic Zone in Bhola Sadar and Daulatkhana.

The Bhola project expects to attract \$1.8 billion in investment and create 40,000 jobs in garments, electronics, and ceramics.

Chandpur's investment will follow a feasibility study, prioritising renewable and agro-based industries due to limited connectivity.

Beza has submitted the long-delayed Anwara Economic and Industrial Zone proposal for Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) approval.

TWO INDIAN ZONES SCRAPPED

In contrast, the government has cancelled two Indian Special Economic Zones (SEZs) due to a lack of progress and investor interest, according to Beza officials.

In 2019, Bangladesh approved a Tk 845 crore project to develop a 1,000-acre SEZ in the Bangladesh National

Special Economic Zone (formerly Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Shilpa Nagar) for Indian investors.

Beza signed an agreement with Adani Ports & SEZ Ltd and prepared a joint venture plan in 2022. But Adani did not respond to Beza's operational framework. Two other Indian firms withdrew bids just before the February 2024 tender deadline.

Efforts to ease India's Line of Credit (LoC) conditions, which require 65 percent sourcing from India, also failed. Another proposed site near Mongla Port has been idle for more than two years.

Since the fall of the Awami League-led government in August last year, there has been no further contact with India, and Adani reportedly raised no objection to the cancellation.

Saleh Ahmed, executive member (investment promotion) at Beza, said the land allocated for the Indian projects would now be reassigned.

"We sent several letters to the Indian authorities through the Economic Relations Division but received no response," he said.

"In the absence of any progress or communication, there was no alternative but to cancel the land allocation," Ahmed added.

M Masrur Reaz, chairman of Policy Exchange Bangladesh, expressed concern over the lack of progress in most SEZs except the Japanese one.

He attributed the weak performance to the G2G model, which he said often lacks private-sector efficiency and is weighed down by geopolitical and diplomatic complications. Reaz argued that SEZs work best under public-private partnership models.

Citing India and China-led zones, he noted that shifting strategic priorities, such as health and river management, have sidelined economic collaboration, further slowing progress in these bilateral initiatives.

and semiconductors, and called for a short-term strategic plan to guide future economic direction.

Mohammad Hasan Arif, vice chairman of the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), said Bangladesh has fallen into a "collective weakness" and must overcome it.

He proposed forming an independent export and investment promotion agency similar to Japan's JETRO or South Korea's KOTRA to attract foreign investment and boost exports.

Nakibur Rahman, Jamaat-e-Islami's US spokesperson, said most remittance money goes into non-productive assets like land and housing.

He urged creating systems to channel remittances into investment, saying attractive options for expatriates could boost growth and employment.

Other speakers at the event included Abul Kasem Khan, chairperson of BUILD; accountant Snehshish Barua; Jyoti Rahman, executive editor of Counterpart; and Waseem Alim, CEO of Chaldal.

BNP to abolish Financial Institutions

FROM PAGE B1

"The bureaucracy should focus on implementing policy rather than making it, as overlapping roles have long hindered efficiency and accountability. Rather, we will reduce their excessive control. Power will be decentralised in all areas of governance. Policy-making authority will remain with policymakers, not bureaucrats," he said.

Meanwhile, during a panel discussion at the event, energy expert M Tamim said, "We are currently facing a severe energy crisis. Over the past 15 years, there has been no investment in developing domestic energy sources."

Instead, he added that investment has gone into power plants—about 30 billion dollars spent—because that's where the most opportunities for corruption existed.

Professor Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir of Dhaka University's Department of Development Studies said that the previous government's growth model had, in fact, created poverty and unemployment.

"Behind the so-called stories of

economic miracles lay harsh realities, which are now coming to light," he said.

"Due to rising inflation, people's purchasing power has fallen, and poverty and unemployment have increased," Titumir continued.

"Bangladesh now stands at a historic crossroads," he added. "Either we accept stagnation, or we move toward unprecedented prosperity. For that, a new economic model is essential."

Masrur Reaz, chairman of Policy Exchange Bangladesh, said that the country's investment environment has lagged due to the absence of long-term planning.

"Bangladesh has no national investment policy and therefore lacks proper coordination between foreign and domestic investments," he said.

Monzur Hossain, a member of the Planning Commission's General Economics Division, said Bangladesh must focus on both the supply and demand sides of investment.

He stressed creating opportunities in sectors like manufacturing, electronics, automobiles, defence,

and competitive investment beyond traditional investment promotion. Similarly, merging the PPP Authority could complicate project structuring, which involves financial and legal modelling skills.

Still, many in the private sector view the plan as a much-needed attempt to simplify the country's business climate.

"Bringing all investment and regulatory agencies under one roof will enhance efficiency, reduce duplication, lower compliance costs, ensure accountability and improve transparency," said Asif Ibrahim, former BUILD chairman.

"A cohesive branding strategy," he added, "would strengthen Bangladesh's global investment image, attract higher-quality FDI, and help build a more agile, transparent,

Govt plans to merge

FROM PAGE B1

"We've studied what went wrong with the previous merger," said Rochi. "This time, we're following a phased and consultative approach with international expertise and political buy-in."

CONCERNS AND POTENTIALS

Policy experts say the new merger can succeed only if it goes beyond institutional restructuring.

"This reform has potential," said M Masrur Reaz, chairman of Policy Exchange Bangladesh. "But execution, not intent, will determine its impact. Merging logos is easy. Building a better system is hard."

He noted that agencies such as Beza and the hi-tech park authority manage land and infrastructure projects that require technical

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Project Director
Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project
Directorate of Technical Education
Plot-F-4/B, Agargaon, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
www.asset-dte.gov.bd

Memo No.: 57.03.0000.051.07.881.25-3758

Date: 27 October, 2025

Request for Bids Goods (Two-Envelope Bidding Process)

Country: Bangladesh

Name of Project: Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project

Contract Title: Supply, installation and commissioning of Full Mission Engine Room Simulator, Liquid Cargo Handling Simulator & High Voltage Simulator for Ship Building and Marine Technology of Institute of Marine Technologies

Credit No.: 6874-BD

IFB Reference No.: CP-GD-34.

- The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for *Supply, installation and commissioning of Full Mission Engine Room Simulator, Liquid Cargo Handling Simulator & High Voltage Simulator for Ship Building and Marine Technology of Institute of Marine Technologies*.
- The Directorate of Technical Education, represented by the Project Director, ASSET Project now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for *Supply, installation and commissioning of Full Mission Engine Room Simulator, Liquid Cargo Handling Simulator & High Voltage Simulator*.
- Bidding will be conducted through international competitive procurement using a Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" July 2016, revised February 2025 ("Procurement Regulations"), and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.
- Bids will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation process set out in the bidding documents. The following weightings shall apply for **Rated Criteria (including technical and non-price factors): 60% and for Bid cost: 40%**.
- Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from **Mir Zahid Hasan**, Project Director (Additional Secretary), ASSET Project, DTE, *Implementing Agency*, E-mail: pd@asset-dte.gov.bd and inspect the bidding document during office hours. 0900 to 1700 hours BST (GMT+6:00 hr.) at the address given below.
- The bidding document in English may be purchased by interested eligible Bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of BDT 18,000.00 (equivalent US\$ 150.00). The method of payment will be through **Check/Account No: 0200017915446, Agrani Bank PLC, Paribesh Bhaban, 11130, SWIFT Code: AGBKBDH001, Routing No: 010261442**. The document will be sent through email or, the document may be purchased by interested party from the Office of the Project Director, ASSET Project through cash/check.
- Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **14:00 hour BST (GMT+6:00), 15 December 2025. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected.** The outer Bid envelopes marked "ORIGINAL BID", and the inner envelopes marked "TECHNICAL PART" will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend, at the address below on **14:30 hour BST (GMT+6:00), 15 December 2025**. All envelopes marked "SECOND ENVELOPE: FINANCIAL PART" shall remain unopened and will be held in safe custody of the Purchaser until the second public opening.
- All Bids must be accompanied by a **"Bid Security" of BDT 2,000,000.00 or US\$16,700.00**.
- Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful bidder's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the bidding document.
- The address referred to above is:

27.10.2025.

Mir Zahid Hasan

Project Director (Additional Secretary)

Office of the Project Director

Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET) Project

Directorate of Technical Education

4th Floor, Agargaon, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207

Phone: 880-2-41024953

E-mail: pd@asset-dte.gov.bd

Website: www.asset-dte.gov.bd

Bank Asia's nine-month profit tops 2024 total

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bank Asia posted a 71 percent year-on-year surge in profit for the first nine months of the 2025 financial year, driven by higher investment income.

The private commercial bank logged Tk 351 crore in net profit in the January-September period of the current financial year, surpassing its full-year earnings in 2024, according to its financial statements published yesterday.

The bank posted Tk 277 crore in net profit last year, while its earnings stood at Tk 205 crore in the first three quarters of 2024.

Bank Asia became the second lender after BRAC Bank to report higher profits in the first three quarters than in the full year of 2024.

BRAC Bank's profit stood at Tk 1,536 crore in the January-September period of this year, up from Tk 1,432 crore recorded in 2024.

Bank Asia said its operating profit rose due to higher investment income, which helped offset the decline in interest income and the rise in operational expenses. This ultimately lifted its earnings per share.

Premier Bank posts Tk 541cr loss in Q3

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Premier Bank Ltd reported a sharp loss in the July-September quarter as rising interest expenses eroded earnings.

The bank posted a consolidated loss of Tk 541 crore for the quarter, compared with a profit of Tk 54 crore in the same period a year earlier.

Consolidated loss per share stood at Tk 4.39, against earnings per share of Tk 0.44 in July-September 2024.

The bank said the decline was mainly due to higher interest expenses.

For the nine months to September, consolidated net operating cash flow per share (NOCFPS) was negative Tk 22.73, compared with negative Tk 4.66 in the same period of 2024.

The deterioration reflected lower interest income received in cash and higher interest paid, according to the financial statement.

As of September 30, 2025, sponsors and directors held 23.92 percent of the shares, institutions 22.06 percent, foreign investors 0.29 percent, and the public 53.73 percent.



The environment ministry has imposed 12 conditions on tourism in Saint Martin's island, including limit on visitor numbers, travel schedules, and bans on single-use plastics and disruptive activities.

PHOTO: MD SOHEL

Tourists can visit St Martin's from Nov, but it 'really' opens in Dec

MOKAMMEL SHUVO

Saint Martin's, one of the most coveted tourist spots in the country, is set to reopen next week after months of closure. Tourists will once again be able to enjoy the serene beauty of Bangladesh's only coral island. But the news has brought little excitement for the host community, even though tourism remains one of their main sources of livelihood. For them, the season does not truly begin until December.

While the government will allow tourists to visit, no one will be permitted to stay overnight in November, according to a notification issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change on October 22. The announcement came with 12 conditions, including a ban on single-use plastics.

Besides, the number of daily visitors has been capped at 2,000 this season as part of the government's new conservation plan for the island.

Ship operations have also come under stricter regulatory control. To operate any vessel to Saint Martin's, the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) will require prior approval from the ministry. Tickets must be purchased through the Bangladesh Tourism Board's official web portal, which has yet to become operational. Each visitor must carry a travel pass and a QR code; tickets without QR codes will be considered invalid.

Full tourism operations, including overnight accommodation, will be allowed in December and January before the island is closed again in February.

By any standard, November doesn't offer much enthusiasm to resort operators. After all, few tourists are willing to travel for half a day just for a few hours of sightseeing.

"We're getting lots of phone calls from tourists asking if they can stay in November, but as it's not allowed, we can't take any bookings," said Taiyabul Ullah, who manages

the family-run Mermaid Saint Martin Resort on the island's north beach. "It's not much of a season if people can't even stay."

"December-January is our main season. We will start preparing, including renovation and decoration works, from mid-November. Essentials like bed sheets and supplies will also be bought around that time. It'll be a waste if we prepare too early," he added.

For islanders who depend almost entirely on visitors, the November schedule effectively shrinks the tourism window to two months.



"Many families here live entirely off the tourism season," Ullah said. "If we only get business in December and January, that income doesn't stretch for the rest of the year. Life becomes very difficult."

During the peak months, around eight to ten cruise ships usually operate between Cox's Bazar and Saint Martin's Island. Two of them are run by the Karnaphuli Group, managed by Hossainul Islam Bahadur. But for now, he says, operations remain uncertain.

"We haven't yet made a final decision about November operations," Bahadur said. "If a ship leaves the BIWTA jetty in Cox's Bazar at 7:00am, it reaches the island at around 2:00pm. Our ships take about seven hours, but some others take nearly ten hours. A same-day round trip is almost impossible."

"Tourists are also not interested in such short trips; it's not practical. Moreover, the registration website for tourists hasn't been

launched yet, so we're in a bit of uncertainty," he added. Bahadur hopes to resume full cruise services when the season truly kicks off in December and January.

Some cruise operators from Chattogram offer overnight packages on specific days, where tourists sleep onboard anchored ships near the island. But locals say those numbers are small and aren't nearly enough to sustain the hundreds of small resorts, restaurants, and shops.

MD Sohel, owner of Green Beach Resort on the island, said, "We don't expect many tourists to come in November. But we're fully preparing for December and January."

But there are things to fear even during the full season.

"Allowing only 2,000 overnight tourists per day will limit business for small, locally owned resorts like mine. Most visitors prefer staying in large resorts built by outside investors near the beach," he said. "The island has accommodation capacity for about 8,000 to 10,000 people. Smaller resorts will likely have to offer discounts to attract guests, which might make it difficult to cover expenses," he added.

However, the government has time and again clarified its stance on protecting the natural habitat of the island. Environmentalists have long warned that uncontrolled tourism — especially unregulated hotel construction, waste dumping, and coral extraction — has caused serious damage to the island's delicate ecosystem.

Zamir Uddin, director of the Department of Environment in Cox's Bazar, said officials will strictly monitor tourism activities to ensure they follow ministry guidelines.

"The Ministry of Tourism is working on setting up the online registration process for visitors," he said. "All operations will be closely regulated to protect the island's ecosystem."

For now, the host community is waiting. As the first permitted boats prepare to sail in early November, most resort owners are keeping their doors shut, watching the waves roll in and the skies clear.

Future of banking

PARVEZ MURSHED

The global banking industry is undergoing transformative change. This shift, driven by technology and artificial intelligence (AI), is reshaping many long-established banking practices. Here are some of the key trends shaping the sector worldwide.

Trade finance, for instance, is evolving into automated digital platforms that enable seamless transaction processing. These platforms connect enterprise clients and their entire ecosystems, like suppliers, distributors and others, to banks and funders, reducing the cost of financing. They may be bank-led or independent marketplaces providing funding opportunities for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

With the rise of the internet and mobile banking, visiting a physical branch may soon become a thing of the past. Millennials and Gen Z, who are mobile-first and constantly online, prefer to carry out all their transactions through apps. In Bangladesh, with its large young population, banks should act now to engage this generation through digital channels. For those who still rely on cash, ATMs and cash deposit machines can facilitate basic transactions without the need to visit branches.

Cash is costly for banks to manage. One solution could be introducing a small transaction charge, such as 0.15 percent for deposits or withdrawals above

a certain threshold, say Tk 10,000, and setting a cap on the number of monthly cash transactions. Small retailers often reject card payments due to the 2 percent fee, which eats into their slim margins. A pilot scheme could waive charges for card and QR code-based transactions for several years to help retailers transition from cash to digital payments more affordably.

As Bangladesh moves towards a cashless economy, there is a strong case for introducing a "Digital Taka." A central bank issued digital currency (CBDC) would make 24/7 fund transfers possible while ensuring the trust and stability lacking in privately issued digital currencies or stablecoins. Bangladesh could also explore bringing in worker remittances through global banks with 24/7 cross-border USD clearing capabilities.

Most banks still rely on manual, paper-based account opening. This is outdated, especially when the National ID already includes a photograph. The entire process should be digitised so that customers can open accounts directly through a mobile app by filling in the required fields.

Artificial intelligence and emerging technologies are also transforming banking operations. Blockchain is being used in documentary trade transactions, while digital signatures through tools like DocuSign simplify account opening and contract signing. Optical character recognition (OCR) converts manual documents into a digital format swiftly, and AI helps detect fraud and identify emerging credit risks early. Moving from physical servers to cloud-based systems can also cut technology costs significantly.

The writer is a former Asia head of supply chain finance at Citibank, NA, and former head of product and platform solutions at TASconnect, a Standard Chartered Ventures portfolio company. He can be reached at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/parvez-murshed-a818508>.



United Power profit rises 47% on lower costs

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

United Power Generation and Distribution Company's profit grew 47 percent for the year ended June 30, 2025, buoyed by stable foreign exchange rates, higher production, and lower finance costs.

The company's consolidated earnings per share rose to Tk 20.66 from Tk 14.01 a year earlier, which the power producer attributed to increased output, bulk tariff gains, and reduced financing expenses, according to a recent price-sensitive information disclosure.

The net operating cash flow per share surged to Tk 18.61 from a negative Tk 0.88 in the previous year, reflecting substantial cash collections from outstanding receivables, the company said.

The board recommended a 65 percent cash dividend for shareholders, up 5 percentage points from 2024.

As of September 30, 2025, sponsors and directors held 90 percent of the shares, institutions 7.40 percent, foreign investors 0.01 percent, and the public 2.59 percent, as per Dhaka Stock Exchange data.

The company, part of United Group, is one of Bangladesh's leading private power producers. It operates multiple plants, including Dhaka and Chattogram EPZ units, supplying electricity to industries and contributing to the national grid.

REUTERS, Timos

Government borrowing is unsustainable in the United States and much of Europe. There is also huge pressure to increase spending on climate, defence and ageing populations. Some mixture of higher taxes and inflation will ultimately be unavoidable.

Global public debt as a percentage of output has been rising almost without a break since the mid-1970s. It will reach over 100 percent of GDP by 2030, the highest level since World War Two, according to a forecast by the International Monetary Fund.

The problem is that governments are spending more than they are raising in taxes. Borrowing can only be sustainable if it is stable or falling as a percentage of gross domestic product. But that is only true if the annual budget deficit as a proportion of output is equal or less than nominal growth — an economy's growth rate before adjusting for inflation.

Among the Group of Seven rich countries, the United States, France and the United Kingdom have the biggest problems. Their governments' deficits are forecast to be 7.4 percent, 5.4 percent and 4.3 percent of GDP this year respectively, according to the IMF. Meanwhile, their economies' sustainable nominal growth rates are probably no more than 4 percent, assuming both growth

and inflation of 2 percent. With debt at 121 percent, 113 percent and 101 percent of GDP respectively in 2024, something will have to change.

The other G7 countries' debts are not on an upward path because their annual deficits are more or less under control. But

Japan's debt at 237 percent of GDP and Italy's at 135 percent are uncomfortably high. Only Germany and Canada are in reasonable shape.

An unsustainable debt load does not necessarily lead to a financial crisis. Rich countries typically have a lot of rope with

which to hang themselves. This is especially true of countries which print their own currencies, such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Japan. It is less so of France and Italy, which must live by the monetary policy set by the European Central Bank.

But even if the day of reckoning is not round the corner, borrowing cannot rise forever. The problem is that there are few easy ways to bring it under control.

The best option would be to increase growth. But unless artificial intelligence provides a miraculous boost to their economies, rich countries seem more likely to slow down in the coming years — not least because US President Donald Trump is undermining the world trading system with his tariffs.

Another option is to cut government spending. But there is massive public resistance to this. Just look at how France is unwilling to put up the age at which its citizens receive pensions.

In fact, "structural headwinds" could boost public spending by around 3 percent of GDP in coming years, according to Erik Nielsen, senior advisor at Independent Economics.

The biggest items are ageing populations which push up pension and healthcare costs, defence spending, climate-related outlays, and infrastructure.

Rich country debt will spur tax and price hikes



PHOTO: AFP/FILE

A customer buys grocery at a store in Montpellier, a city in southern France. Many euro zone countries with unsustainable debt loads are most likely to end up raising taxes.

Star BUSINESS

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INSIDE



URBAN GROWTH and Real Estate

TAGABUN TAHARIM TITUN

Bangladesh's major cities from Dhaka and Chattogram to Gazipur, Rajshahi, and Khulna are experiencing rapid expansion. Fueled by heavy infrastructure investment and a booming middle class, their skylines are rising as housing and mixed projects multiply. Government planning reflects this growth: the new Dhaka Detailed Area Plan (2022-2035) covers 1,528 sq km. The plan specifically includes fringe areas such as Tarabo, Bhulta and Purbachal to the east, Tongi-Gazipur to the north, Narayanganj to the south and Savar to the west. Flagship developments illustrate the trend: for example, the massive Purbachal township alone offers about 25,000 residential plots, and authorities plan 12,600 new rental apartments in Gazipur to extend the capital's housing capacity.

Growing middle-class housing demand

Bangladesh's swelling middle class is the chief driver of housing demand. In Dhaka and other cities, rising incomes have fueled a shift from standalone homes to vertical apartments. Many mid-income families now enter the market via smaller units or even second-hand flats, which can be 20-30% cheaper than new ones. "Second hand apartments in Dhaka are often priced 20-30% lower than new constructions, making them accessible to a wider audience," as stated by Khan Tanjeel Ahmed, General Manager of Business Intelligence at Bproperty.

Recent industry reports from national developer associations point to a persistent gap in mid

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Rising middle class fuelling HOUSING MOMENTUM

M. Nazeem A. Choudhury, Deputy Managing Director, Prime Bank PLC.



TDS: How are interest rate changes and new regulations influencing the market?

MNC: Rate adjustments have encouraged more financial discipline among both buyers and developers, fostering long-term market stability. Meanwhile, the Detailed Area Plan (DAP) is reshaping urban growth through stricter planning and compliance. Though it demands adaptation, it ensures sustainability and better-organised development, improving the overall quality and reliability of new housing.

TDS: Which financing products or schemes are gaining traction?

MNC: Our Sustainable Finance portfolio

Bangladesh's green transition, not just a participant. Prime Bank offers preferential rates to projects achieving recognised green building certifications, encouraging developers to adopt energy-efficient design, solar systems, and advanced waste management. Smart housing — integrating digital connectivity and modern security — is another focus, ensuring that our financing supports enduring, high-value assets.

TDS: What challenges do developers and buyers face in accessing finance, and how are you addressing them?

MNC: Land documentation and lengthy approvals remain key obstacles.

better living quality at lower costs, drawing families away from city centres. Prime Bank's growth strategy targets exactly these emerging regions — financing developers and homeowners in high-potential zones that align with the government's decentralised urbanisation vision.

TDS: What digital solutions or partnerships are improving housing finance?

MNC: We're investing in digital platforms that let customers apply, track, and repay loans online. By digitising documentation, we aim for near-paperless processing and faster service. Our advanced data-analytics tools already enhance credit scoring and risk assessment, and we're developing predictive models to identify default risks early. This combination of speed and precision will enable higher loan volumes, especially in the SME segment.

TDS: What's your outlook for 2025-26?

MNC: The outlook is strong. A growing middle class, steady remittances, and normalising interest rates are set to stabilise the market and boost volumes. Prime Bank aims to lead the affordable-housing segment by focusing on compliant developers and infrastructure-linked growth corridors. Our priority is sustainable expansion — financing projects that strengthen communities and the wider economy.

Sustainability, digitalisation, and decentralised growth are no longer buzzwords — they define the next chapter of Bangladesh's housing finance.

“Our edge lies in speed, certainty, and responsibility — delivering housing finance that is faster, fairer, and built for the future.”

Bangladesh's housing market is in transition squeezed by rising costs but energised by new demand from middle-income and semi-urban buyers. With sustainability, digitalisation, and decentralised growth shaping the next phase, banks are rethinking how they lend and whom they serve. The Daily Star spoke with M. Nazeem A. Choudhury, Deputy Managing Director of Prime Bank PLC, on how the institution is driving inclusive and sustainable growth in housing finance.

TDS: What trends are you seeing in

housing and construction finance demand?

M. Nazeem A. Choudhury: Demand has become polarised. The high end apartment market has slowed, while middle-income buyers are prioritising value and speed, preferring ready-to-move-in flats in the 900-1,200 sq ft range. Persistent inflation and higher living costs have pushed many toward smaller, efficient homes and fuelled a lively secondary market. Construction finance remains steady, but mainly for reputed, compliant developers with proven sales performance.

is expanding rapidly, supported by Bangladesh Bank's green housing schemes. Women's housing finance, often paired with educational and professional support, is outperforming expectations. Most excitingly, our SME Developer Financing model — based on regional cluster partnerships — is unlocking new housing markets in suburban and secondary cities, reinforcing our commitment to decentralised economic growth.

TDS: How is Prime Bank supporting sustainable or smart housing projects?

MNC: We see ourselves as a driver of

We've built a specialised legal and due-diligence team to fast-track title verification and reduce legal delays. For buyers, while registration costs stay high, we maximise loan eligibility and stretch repayment tenures to preserve affordability. Our edge lies in speed and certainty — delivering faster approvals through simplified internal processes.

TDS: How is demand shifting between urban and semi-urban areas?

MNC: Infrastructure megaprojects like the Metro Rail and new expressways are unlocking the potential of semi-urban corridors. These areas now offer

Urban Growth and Real Estate

FROM PAGE J1

income housing across urban centres, with demand concentrated in affordable and mid market segments. REHAB has noted that supply remains skewed toward high end developments in a few pockets, while many middle income households still find formal housing options limited. In Chattogram in particular, apartments remain notably cheaper than in Dhaka, contributing to robust demand there as well. This dynamic is echoed in regional cities: Rajshahi developers report that growing numbers of professionals and businesspeople are choosing apartment living, greatly expanding the pool of potential buyers. However, rising costs threaten affordability: in Rajshahi many note that COVID-19 and surging construction prices have pushed property prices “beyond affordability” for some buyers. In short, a “burgeoning middle class” has raised demand even for luxury units near central business districts, pushing developers to cater to both upscale and budget markets.

Gated communities and mixed-use projects

Developers are emphasising amenities, safety and convenience. Many new projects are gated or organised as planned communities with security, parks, and onsite services. Mixed use developments that combine residential units with offices, retail and leisure spaces are increasingly common, reflecting the middle class preference for convenience and lifestyle.

Beyond marketing, mixed use models can improve urban efficiency by reducing commute times and concentrating infrastructure investments. Planning authorities such as RAJUK and several private developers have begun highlighting sustainability measures in new projects, including storm water management and dedicated public spaces to improve liveability. In regional hubs buyers increasingly demand practical features such as parking, playgrounds and reliable water supply, prompting developers to include these in project design.

Shift of development outside Dhaka

Expansion is especially visible outside Dhaka's core. New highways and bridges are opening up districts for housing. The Padma Bridge is a prime example: by linking 21



southern districts to the capital, it triggered a “housing boom” along the Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga expressway. Plots and gated neighborhoods now sprawl on both sides of this route, catering to buyers from Barisal and Khulna who want greener, affordable homes within an hour of Dhaka. Similarly, Dhaka's planned extensions cover Gazipur, Narayanganj, Savar and other towns. The government's plan for 12,600 flats in Gazipur highlights this trend. As Kamrul Ahsan Rubel, Senior Marketing Manager at Building For Future observes, “Dhaka is expanding in all directions, particularly along the Dhaka-Sylhet, Purbachal and Dhaka-Mawa highways. People from Chattogram tend to settle in Purbachal, while those from southern Bengal are increasingly drawn to Dhaka's periphery”. Chattogram's market is likewise moving outward: major industrial projects like the Bangabandhu Industrial City and the Karnaphuli Tunnel are boosting housing in adjoining subdistricts Mirsarai, Anwara, Sitakunda. Even Rajshahi has seen its skyline transform: once mostly low-rise, it now has high towers, driven by in-migration from nearby districts and new developments. Similarly, Cumilla's housing market has boomed

following major highway upgrades, shifting the city's character toward mid-rise projects. The expansion reflects a broad trend: planners project Bangladesh's urban population will surge from about 2 crore today to roughly 12 crore by around 2033, emphasising why cities are racing to add new housing.

Market dynamics and finance

Housing finance remains a key determinant of real estate growth. Banks and non bank lenders have scaled mortgage offerings, but high interest rates and stringent lending criteria still limit uptake for many middle income borrowers. Developers have therefore adapted by offering more staged payment structures and collaborating with mortgage providers to expand affordability. The second hand market continues to play a stabilising role by giving price conscious buyers alternative pathways into ownership.

As Bangladesh's cities evolve into modern, connected hubs, real estate remains both a barometer and a catalyst of progress. The challenge now lies in ensuring that this urban transformation remains inclusive, sustainable, and resilient — so growth uplifts not just skylines, but the quality of urban life itself.

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HOUSING FINANCE TRENDS

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Tareq Refat Ullah Khan, Managing Director & CEO, BRAC Bank PLC.



Home loans are being redesigned to offer faster, more transparent, and environmentally responsible experiences. Significant investments in digital infrastructure will soon allow customers to apply for loans seamlessly through our website with minimal documentation.

Bangladesh's housing market is undergoing a significant transformation, with urbanisation, a growing middle class, and evolving financial landscapes reshaping demand. BRAC Bank's comprehensive suite of home loan solutions is designed to cater to diverse customer needs, from purchasing and constructing to renovating homes. They emphasise accessible financing with competitive rates, flexible repayment tenures, and tailored products.

The Daily Star (TDS): What trends are you seeing in home loan or construction finance demand in the last 2-3 years?

Tareq Refat Ullah Khan (TRUK): BRAC Bank has observed sustained demand over the past few years. Rapid urbanisation has been a major catalyst, expanding real estate activity beyond Dhaka and Chattogram to emerging



urban centres across the country. The growing middle class, driven by the aspiration of homeownership, has increasingly turned to formal banking channels for financing, attracted by trusted service and competitive rates. We have also witnessed a gradual shift from stand-alone homes to apartments, especially in metropolitan areas such as Dhaka, Chattogram, Sylhet, and Rajshahi, as property prices continue to rise.

TDS: How are interest rate movements and regulatory shifts affecting homeownership or construction projects?

TRUK: Home loans are long-tenure products, making them highly sensitive to interest rate fluctuations. The recent period of elevated rates has notably dampened demand, as borrowing costs remain high across many banks and NBFIs.

Additionally, regulatory constraints, such as the current loan-to-value cap of 70% for creditworthy borrowers and the maximum loan ceiling of BDT 2 crore, have stifled market growth. These factors, taken together, restrict affordability and discourage potential homeowners.

TDS: What products or schemes (e.g., green housing loans, women's housing finance, SME developer financing) are gaining traction?

TRUK: Affordable housing is emerging as a significant growth segment, with rising demand from middle-income families, young professionals, and underserved households in suburban and peri-urban areas. A promising new model is group or cooperative housing, where communities jointly develop residential clusters. This approach reduces per-unit cost, encourages shared infrastructure, and makes homeownership more accessible.

Demand is also expanding beyond major cities as land and construction

costs in Dhaka and Chattogram push buyers toward smaller towns.

BRAC Bank's "TARA Home Loan," dedicated to empowering women to own homes through formal financing and achieve financial independence.

TDS: How is the bank supporting sustainable or smart housing projects?

TRUK: At BRAC Bank, sustainability is deeply embedded in our lending philosophy, not merely a corporate obligation. We are actively developing frameworks to promote green and smart housing through both policy alignment and innovative financing solutions. Digital transformation plays a central role in this journey. Home loans are being redesigned to offer faster, more transparent, and environmentally responsible experiences. Significant investments in digital infrastructure will soon allow customers to apply for loans seamlessly through our website with minimal documentation.

TDS: How do you see urban vs. semi-urban housing demand evolving?

TRUK: Housing demand in Bangladesh is steadily expanding beyond major metropolitan centres into semi-urban and peri-urban areas. In cities like Dhaka and Chattogram, rising land prices and limited space have pushed many middle-income buyers toward nearby districts such as Gazipur, Narayanganj, Savar, and Cumilla, where property remains more affordable and infrastructure is rapidly improving.

TDS: Are there any innovative partnerships or digital solutions that have made housing finance easier?

TRUK: Innovation and partnerships lie at the core of our housing finance strategy. BRAC Bank is advancing digital solutions to simplify the borrowing journey and make home loans more accessible. Our Astha app, now serving over 10 lakh users, offers a full suite of digital banking features. We are developing a fully digital loan origination system that will enable customers to apply for home loans online with minimal paperwork. We also plan to leverage data analytics and alternative credit assessment tools to support first-time and underserved borrowers.

TDS: What is your outlook on the housing market in 2025-26, and how is your bank positioning itself to support that growth?

TRUK: The outlook for Bangladesh's housing market in 2025-26 is cautiously optimistic. As inflation stabilises and economic confidence returns, demand for affordable and mid-segment housing is expected to strengthen. A growing base of young professionals and expanding semi-urban development will continue to drive this momentum. BRAC Bank is strategically aligning to capture this growth by offering tailored home loan products for diverse segments, including salaried professionals, women borrowers, freelancers, and NRBs.








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SOLID GROUND: Why Property Still Feels Safe

TAGABUN TAHARIM TITUN

In Bangladesh's economic landscape, property has maintained its appeal as a haven for investment. At a time when markets fluctuate and new assets emerge, many still prefer land and flats. The reasons are simple but compelling: property does not vanish like digital assets, land is inherently limited and keeps prices stable, and generating rent offers income while guarding against inflation.

Assets with permanence

When you buy land or a flat you own something tangible. Unlike cryptocurrencies or purely digital assets, real property cannot disappear overnight by algorithm or hacking. A recent article in The Daily Star pointed out that the real-

When you buy land or a flat you own something tangible. Unlike cryptocurrencies or purely digital assets, real property cannot disappear overnight by algorithm or hacking.

estate sector in Bangladesh sees prices rise even during economic turbulence. "Their prices never go down despite inflation, recession or any other calamity," a market executive told the paper. This sense of permanence offers comfort. People know where their asset is. They can see it, measure it, use it. They can rent it, sell it, build on it. That level of control is missing with many abstract investments.

Limited land keeps value

Land is finite. In a densely populated country like Bangladesh, especially around cities such as Dhaka, this scarcity becomes a strength. The Financial Express recently noted that Dhaka's limited land supply has caused property prices to rocket. Analysts have pointed out that available large plots suitable for high-end buildings are rare, making developers raise prices. "The shortage of large plots suitable for modern buildings is a major factor driving up prices," an executive director told The Daily Star. As urbanisation proceeds and more people migrate to cities, the land pressure intensifies. As a result, property especially in desirable locations remains a preferred choice for those who expect assets to hold or gain value.

Bridging DREAMS AND DOORSTEPS

Syed Mahbubur Rahman, Managing Director and CEO, Mutual Trust Bank PLC.



Home loan demand remains resilient, led by middle-income buyers and peri-urban developers. Mutual Trust Bank PLC is streamlining access through digital approvals, flexible repayment models, and partnerships with developers—paving the way for smarter, more inclusive housing finance in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's housing finance market is evolving as affordability, technology, and smarter urban planning reshape how people buy and build homes. With growing demand among middle-income and semi-urban borrowers, banks are focusing on innovation and accessibility to sustain growth. *The Daily Star* spoke with Syed Mahbubur Rahman, Managing Director and CEO of Mutual Trust Bank PLC (MTB), about the emerging trends, challenges, and the bank's strategy for inclusive and technology-driven home financing.

TDS: What are the key trends in home and construction finance over the last few years?

SMR: Home loan disbursements have remained steady, with notable growth in the middle-income and salaried segments. Construction finance for small and medium-sized developers has also expanded, particularly in peri-urban areas where land is more affordable. Affordability has been enhanced by new shared land development models and flexible payment terms offered by developers. With customers becoming more informed and cost-conscious, banks are innovating to improve affordability, convenience, and speed.

TDS: How are interest rates and regulatory shifts affecting the market?

SMR: Recent interest rate movements and regulatory adjustments have created both opportunities and challenges. Bangladesh Bank's initiatives for prudent lending, rate



rationalisation, and loan restructuring have influenced borrowing appetite. However, higher interest rates and increased construction material costs have moderated the pace of new loan applications. In response, banks are offering flexible repayment options and promotional campaigns to maintain customer confidence.

TDS: What products or schemes are

gaining traction?

SMR: Home loans are straightforward products, mainly divided into two types: home equity loans for construction on owned land, and apartment purchase loans. Both are available through conventional and Islamic banking. Specialised products like green housing loans, women's housing finance, and SME developer

financing have yet to gain wide popularity, and their market penetration remains limited despite being available.

TDS: How is the bank supporting sustainable housing?

SMR: A regulatory guideline for green housing finance exists but needs refinement. The primary barrier is that constructing environmentally friendly homes incurs higher costs, making them unaffordable for many customer segments.

TDS: What are the main challenges for developers and buyers in accessing finance?

SMR: For developers, financing is made riskier by global economic uncertainty, rising construction costs, and political unrest. For buyers, access to finance is constrained by strict income assessments and stringent eligibility criteria. A significant challenge is the BDT 2 crore home loan ceiling, which is often insufficient due to escalating property prices, forcing buyers toward higher-interest NBFIs and hindering their financial planning. We believe authorities should reconsider this limit. At MTB, we categorise developers to structure financing accordingly and use TPA-based financing for buyers to improve accessibility.

TDS: How is housing demand evolving between urban and semi-urban areas?

SMR: Bangladesh's housing finance market is transforming due to rapid urbanisation and digitalisation, with demand remaining resilient. A recent trend shows a shift toward smarter, community-oriented solutions,

reflected in large condominium

projects. While urban housing demand will continue to rise, we see semi-urban and rural regions as the next frontier for affordable, self-owned housing, supported by improved connectivity and government incentives.

TDS: Are innovative partnerships or digital solutions making finance easier?

SMR: Technology integration, including paperless processing and digital loan approvals, is redefining the customer experience. These are complemented by strategic partnerships with developers and property solution providers for a seamless process. The next major leap is AI-driven credit assessment to enhance decision-making accuracy, though developing the required infrastructure for system-wide inclusion is a critical prerequisite.

TDS: What is your outlook for 2025-26, and how is MTB positioned for it?

SMR: At Mutual Trust Bank, we have introduced pre-approval platforms and data-driven tools to provide conditional approvals within 48 hours. Our vision for 2025-26 is to strengthen these capabilities while deepening collaboration with developers, fintech partners, and regulators. By combining innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability, we aim to make home ownership a more accessible reality for every aspiring Bangladeshi.



Solid Ground: Why Property Still Feels Safe

From Page J4

Rent income and inflation shield

Owning property often provides the dual benefit of potential appreciation and rental income. According to data compiled by the Global Property Guide, in Bangladesh urban households renting dwellings numbered around 45.9% in urban areas, and rents are rising steadily. That means landlords can collect cash flows while the property itself may gain in value. Moreover, in inflationary periods property tends to perform well because both the value of the asset and the rent can adjust upward. A blog of key investment reasons mentions that real estate offers both stable returns and inflation protection. In a country like Bangladesh where inflation

remains a concern, this feature of property appeals to many.

Why this matters now

In recent times when other asset classes face more visible swings, property remains somewhat insulated. The real-estate sector in Bangladesh contributed nearly 8% to GDP in 2022-23, indicating its size and significance. Demand remains backed by urbanisation, rising incomes, and migration to cities. Infrastructure growth also supports this: as new areas open up, land in those zones becomes attractive for both buyers and developers. While sales may dip temporarily due to interest rate or economic issues, the long-term structural case of property remains strong.

What to keep in mind

Even though property feels safe,

prudent investors still consider location, legal title and segment. Some parts of the market may be oversupplied or face regulatory delays. For example, recent reporting shows property sales in Dhaka have slowed due to high interest rates and other uncertainties. Therefore one should view property as a long-term proposition rather than a quick flip. Reliability, documentation and understanding of local market dynamics remain critical.

In a world of fast-changing assets, property in Bangladesh offers a grounded option. It does not vanish like crypto. Land is scarce and value tends to hold. Rent provides cash flow. For many individuals seeking stability, these features make land and flats a preferred choice even now.

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Money meets meaning through sustainable **HOME FINANCE**

Ahsan Zaman Chowdhury, Managing Director & CEO, Trust Bank PLC.



Sustainable housing is not just an environmental goal—it's a financial necessity. Greener homes are proving to be stronger, smarter, and lower-risk investments for the future.

Bangladesh's housing and construction finance sector is evolving rapidly amid rising urbanisation, economic pressure, and new sustainability goals. With housing demand shifting across cities and regions, *The Daily Star* spoke with **Ahsan Zaman Chowdhury**, Managing Director and CEO of Trust Bank PLC, on how the bank is adapting to support smart, inclusive, and environmentally responsible home financing nationwide.

TDS: What trends are you seeing in home and construction finance demand?

AZC: Despite inflation, currency volatility, and high interest rates, demand for home and construction loans remains strong, driven by rapid urban growth and an ongoing housing shortage. Dhaka, Chattogram, Sylhet, and Rajshahi are seeing rising demand for high-rise apartments, fueled by rural-to-urban migration and limited land supply. Non-Resident Bangladeshis continue to be a vital source of real-estate investment through remittances. Recently, falling steel and cement prices have improved project viability, though affordability challenges persist for middle-income buyers. Developers are adapting with smaller unit sizes, pre-sales models, and investments in green, mixed-use projects.

TDS: How are interest rate movements and regulations affecting the market?

AZC: Higher borrowing costs have reduced affordability for many households, leading some to postpone purchases. Developers



are also facing increased financing expenses, slowing new projects. At the same time, evolving regulations—stricter building codes, environmental standards, and land policies—are raising costs but encouraging sustainable practices. Supportive initiatives such as tax breaks, subsidies, and affordable housing schemes are key to balancing these effects and sustaining growth.

TDS: Which products or schemes are gaining traction?

AZC: Green, affordable, and women-focused housing finance are gaining ground. Green home loans incentivise energy-efficient construction, while women's housing finance addresses gender gaps—data shows women often have stronger repayment records.

We're also promoting housing microfinance and SME developer financing, extending credit to low-income and informal workers who typically lack access to conventional mortgages. These efforts expand financial inclusion and strengthen the housing ecosystem.

TDS: How is Trust Bank supporting sustainable or smart housing?

AZC: Through Bangladesh Bank's *Refinance Scheme for Environmentally Friendly Initiatives*, we finance certified green buildings and affordable housing at concessional rates—up to 20 years, capped at 5% interest. This approach helps both developers and buyers transition to sustainable construction. We also partner with institutions like

the World Bank and ADB for green project funding and integrate ESG standards into our lending framework. Sustainable housing is not only good for the planet—it's good business, as such assets carry lower long-term risks.

TDS: What challenges do developers and buyers face in accessing finance?

AZC: The biggest hurdles remain inadequate collateral, unclear land titles, and the lack of formal credit histories. Many first-time buyers also find documentation and approval procedures overwhelming. To ease this, we've streamlined processes using digital tools, introduced flexible tenors, and developed new credit-assessment methods for informal earners. We're also partnering with

AZC: Rising property prices and congestion in major cities are pushing demand toward semi-urban regions. Improved roads, infrastructure, and remote-work flexibility are making these areas more attractive. We're responding by financing more projects outside city centres and tailoring mortgage products to suit diverse lifestyles—balancing urban expansion with semi-urban growth to create more equitable housing access.

TDS: What role is digitalisation playing in home finance?

AZC: Technology is central to improving customer experience. Our digital platforms streamline application, verification, and sanction processes, cutting turnaround time. We're also exploring AI-based risk tools to enhance credit decisions.

TDS: What's your outlook for 2025–26?

AZC: The outlook is strong. With GDP projected to grow nearly 5% and inflation easing, purchasing power will improve. Remittances—over USD 30 billion last year—continue to fuel home investments, especially in secondary cities and emerging towns. Trust Bank is expanding affordable home loans, supporting mixed-use and sustainable developments, and entering new markets to help more Bangladeshis achieve homeownership.

“Our goal isn't just to provide loans—we want to make homeownership simple, inclusive, and accessible for every Bangladeshi family.”

development finance institutions to make loans more affordable. Our goal is to make homeownership simpler, more inclusive, and transparent.

TDS: How is demand shifting between urban and semi-urban areas?

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Rethinking how Bangladesh **BUILDS AND BORROWS**

Dr. Md. Touhidul Alam Khan, Managing Director and CEO, NRBC Bank PLC.



“The next wave of housing growth will come from semi-urban Bangladesh, powered by smarter finance and sustainable design.”

Bangladesh's housing and construction finance sector is poised for steady growth over the next two years. Dr. Md. Touhidul Alam Khan, Managing Director and CEO of NRBC Bank, stated in an interview with *The Daily Star* that this positive outlook is primarily driven by increasing demand from middle-income and semi-urban homebuyers. Despite facing challenges, NRBC Bank continues to expand its affordable housing portfolio, which currently stands at around Tk. 1,100 crore.

Additionally, the bank is preparing to launch specialized Green and Women Housing Finance products. Dr. Khan highlighted the bank's commitment to transparency, sustainability, and digital transformation as key strategies to strengthen its role in promoting inclusive and environmentally responsible housing finance.



costs, new urban planning rules such as revised Floor Area Ratio limits, and stricter bank lending criteria have raised project costs and slightly reduced new housing launches and construction finance demand.

TDS: How are interest rate movements and regulatory shifts affecting homeownership or construction projects?

MTAK: Bangladesh's housing and construction finance markets are being shaped by monetary tightening, regulatory reforms, and political shifts. To curb inflation, **Bangladesh Bank** raised the policy rate to 8.5% in May 2024 and removed the SMART rate ceiling, allowing market-based lending. These moves have increased borrowing costs for both homebuyers and developers, reducing affordability and slowing new disbursements. At the same time, regulatory changes and delays in urban project approvals have further disrupted timelines and weakened demand for construction finance.

TDS: What products or schemes are gaining traction?

MTAK: NRBC Bank prioritises affordable housing and flat purchase loans, particularly for projects by reputed, enlisted developers. While dedicated Green and Women Housing Finance products are still in development, both are key focus areas. The bank's Green Housing concept promotes solar power, rooftop or in-compound greenery, water recycling, and eco-friendly materials such as eco-blocks. NRBC Bank also finances

developer firms that meet strict due diligence and compliance standards. Its total home loan portfolio currently stands at around Tk. 1,100 crore.

TDS: What key challenges do developers or buyers face in accessing finance, and how are you addressing them?

MTAK: Accessing housing finance in Bangladesh remains difficult due to land verification issues, lengthy documentation, and high interest rates—now 12–14%—which raise

“Digitisation and transparency are at the heart of our strategy to make housing finance faster, fairer, and more accessible.”

costs for both buyers and developers. Liquidity shortages and reliance on short-term deposits limit long-term lending, while rising prices of steel, cement, and land reduce affordability.

TDS: How do you see urban versus semi-urban housing demand evolving?

MTAK: Urban centers will continue to see demand for smaller, well-located apartments catering to professionals and nuclear families. However, faster growth is expected in semi-urban and district towns due to better affordability, improved connectivity, and expanding infrastructure. NRBC

Bank is focusing on these emerging markets by tailoring loan products and risk assessment frameworks to match local income levels and property characteristics.

TDS: Are there any innovative partnerships or digital solutions that have made housing finance easier?

MTAK: NRBC Bank is actively digitizing its operations through e-KYC, online documentation, and paperless loan processing to ensure faster turnaround times and better customer experience. Partnerships with reputable developers help maintain project transparency and safety. While AI-based credit risk models are still under development, our ongoing digital initiatives have already enhanced the efficiency and accessibility of home loan processing.

TDS: What's your outlook on the housing market in 2025–26, and how is NRBC Bank positioning itself?

MTAK: We expect steady growth in 2025–26, led by affordable and semi-urban housing. NRBC Bank is expanding flat purchase loans, financing compliant developers, and automating digital processes to enhance efficiency. Upcoming initiatives include Green and Women Housing Finance products and AI-based credit assessment tools. The bank remains focused on inclusive, sustainable housing finance that supports both customer welfare and national economic growth.



The Daily Star (TDS): What trends are you seeing in home loan or construction finance demand in the last 2–3 years?

Dr. Md. Touhidul Alam Khan (MTAK): Over the past few years, demand for housing and construction finance has remained steady, driven by middle-income buyers and small developers supported by stable incomes and remittances. While luxury housing has slowed, semi-urban areas are seeing rising demand for small-scale construction and flat purchases. Most loan applications now come from middle-income borrowers seeking affordable housing amid urban migration. However, higher material



আমরা অঞ্চল

ব্র্যাক ব্যাংক হোম লোন

আপনার বহুল প্রতীক্ষিত বাড়ি নির্মাণ কিংবা ফ্ল্যাট কেনার স্বপ্নপূরণে আকর্ষণীয় ইন্টারেস্টে হোম লোন নিয়ে পাশে আছে ব্র্যাক ব্যাংক

- ফ্ল্যাট/বাড়ি ক্রয়, বাড়ি নির্মাণ ও টেকওভারের জন্য লোন
- সর্বোচ্চ ২ কোটি টাকা পর্যন্ত লোন সুবিধা
- বাড়ির মূল্যের ৭০% পর্যন্ত লোন
- চাকরিজীবী, ব্যবসায়ী, বাড়িওয়ালা ও স্বনির্ভর ব্যক্তির জন্য লোন সুবিধা
- সর্বোচ্চ ২৫ বছরের লোন পরিশোধের সুযোগ
- নির্বাচিত ডেভেলপারদের কাছ থেকে অ্যাপার্টমেন্ট কেনার জন্য ত্রিপর্যায় চুক্তির মাধ্যমে লোন সুবিধা



Beyond Tin Roofs: **BUILDING DIGNITY BRICK BY BRICK**

Mr. Mohammad Ali, Managing Director and CEO, Pubali Bank PLC.



TDS:
A r e

“Every brick-built home we finance replaces a tin roof with dignity — that’s the real measure of our success.” — Mr. Mohammad Ali, Managing Director and CEO of Pubali Bank PLC.

Bangladesh’s housing market is expanding beyond city centres, fuelled by strong demand from rural and semi-urban families seeking stability and comfort. Affordable home loans and digital access are transforming how people build and upgrade their homes, making ownership achievable for more Bangladeshis than ever before. To understand this shift toward inclusive housing finance, The Daily Star spoke with Mr. Mohammad Ali, Managing Director and CEO of Pubali Bank PLC.

The Daily Star (TDS): In the last two to three years, what trend have you observed in the demand for home loans, and what is driving it?

Mohammad Ali (MA): Our home loan portfolio has grown by over 40 percent, far outpacing the seven to eight percent growth in the overall real estate market. The main driver is our “Affordable Housing” scheme, focused on rural and semi-urban borrowers. We provide loans ranging from Tk 2 to 10 lakh to help people upgrade kacha or tin-shed houses into permanent brick homes. There is massive demand in this underserved segment.



TDS: How are changes in interest rates and government policies affecting home financing?

MA: Home loans are very low-risk assets for

banks, with default rates of just one to two percent. Because of that, banks, including ours, offer these loans at preferential rates, usually two percent lower than other loan types. As interest rates continue to decline, we expect housing loan rates to stabilize around nine to ten percent, making them even more attractive and affordable.

TDS: Which specific loan services

such as green housing, women’s housing finance, or developer financing are most popular?

MA: It depends on geography and customer type. Among urban, high-income clients, green and eco-friendly housing is gaining popularity. But for most people in rural and semi-urban areas, affordable housing loans dominate. It’s simple economics. A 1,000 square foot flat in a city costs Tk 40 to 50 lakh, while a family in a village can build their own home for Tk 10 to 12 lakh. We also see strong demand for renovation loans in cities and women-led loans linked to migrant remittances, where wives manage the financing while husbands send money from abroad.

TDS: What are the main challenges developers and individual buyers face

Pubali Bank PLC has expanded its home loan portfolio by over 40 percent through its Affordable Housing scheme, offering small-ticket loans to help families upgrade from tin-shed to brick-built homes.

innovative partnerships or digital solutions simplifying the loan process?

MA: Yes, very much. We have launched a web-based online application system where customers get an instant initial sanction—about 95 percent accurate—without visiting a branch. Our field officers then handle physical verification and document collection. This hybrid model has made the loan process faster and more convenient.

TDS: What’s your outlook for the housing market in 2025 and 2026, and how is your bank preparing?

MA: The housing market should grow

in securing financing?

MA: The biggest issue we deal with is fund diversion. Borrowers use loan money for other purposes like buying land instead of construction. For buyers, land documentation and ownership verification are major hurdles, as Bangladesh’s land records can be messy. There is also a gap between registered and market property values, which complicates valuation for financing.

by about 12 percent by 2025 and 2026, thanks to lower construction material costs. Our bank is targeting over 40 percent portfolio growth by expanding digital marketing, deploying 1,000 field officers, and focusing strongly on affordable housing. Beyond business, we see it as our social duty—helping families move from tin-shed to brick-built homes that offer comfort and protection from extreme heat.

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The Future of Living Minimal, Eco-Tech Homes

The Rise of Compact Living

In fast-growing cities like Dhaka, the traditional dream of a sprawling home is giving way to compact living. Smaller apartments are gaining popularity in response to limited land, rising property costs and urban density. These smaller living spaces align very well with smart and sustainable home principles: less space means lower utility demands, and it becomes easier to integrate smart systems and energy-saving features efficiently.

Technology, the Brain of Modern Living

Smart-home technology has become the cornerstone of modern living. From AI-powered assistants to advanced security systems with facial recognition, technology now enables homeowners to control nearly every aspect of their environment. Lighting, heating, and even kitchen appliances can be managed remotely through smartphones or voice commands. Smart lighting systems use motion sensors and natural-light detection to optimize energy use, enhancing convenience while reducing waste.

Energy-Saving Design: Building with the Planet in Mind

Beyond gadgets, the design and



structure of homes are evolving to conserve energy and minimise carbon footprints. Architects are integrating passive design techniques, like maximising natural light, using insulation materials, and orienting buildings to capture solar heat during winter and block it in summer. Solar panels and wind turbines are becoming common features in residential areas, helping homeowners generate

their own clean energy. Green roofs and rainwater harvesting systems further contribute to sustainability by improving air quality and conserving water. With governments around the world pushing for net-zero emissions, energy-efficient housing is not just a trend but a necessity.

Eco-Friendly Interiors

Inside the home, sustainability is merging seamlessly with style. Eco-friendly interiors focus on using materials that are renewable, recycled, or locally sourced. Low-VOC (volatile organic compound) paints, natural fibres, and responsibly sourced wood are becoming go-to choices. In Bangladesh, homeowners are embracing minimalism and multi-functional furniture to make smaller spaces feel larger and more streamlined, reflecting a preference for sleek, efficient design. Neutral and earthy colour palettes like beige, taupe, muted greens, and terracottas are also trending, creating a soothing environment and helping establish a connection with nature. Materials like cane and rattan are making a comeback, valued for their lightweight, breathable, and sustainable qualities.

Housing & Construction FINANCE OUTLOOK

Sohail R. K. Hussain, Managing Director, Bank Asia PLC.



Housing finance is more than a loan—it's an instrument of empowerment. Our goal at Bank Asia is to make homeownership inclusive, environmentally responsible, and digitally seamless. By combining technology with trust, we aim to build not just houses but a stronger and structured future for

Bank Asia shares insights on landscape of home loan and construction finance. Their strategic approach to fostering growth through innovative products, digital transformation, and a strong commitment to sustainable practices, align with the demographic shift, economic pressures, and a growing demand for housing finance.

The Daily Star (TDS): What trends are you seeing in home loan or construction finance demand in the last 2-3 years?

Sohail R. K. Hussain (SRKH): Over the last three years, the housing finance sector in Bangladesh has evolved in response to demographic shifts and rising urban aspirations. While the post-pandemic recovery spurred demand for homeownership, inflationary pressure and costlier raw materials have moderated high-end housing growth. The strongest momentum now comes from mid-income and semi-urban buyers seeking smaller, energy-efficient homes.

At Bank Asia, we have observed robust growth in affordable and mid-segment mortgage portfolios, supported by Bangladesh Bank's house building schemes for loans below BDT 75 lakh. Simultaneously, construction finance demand from small and medium developers is increasing.

TDS: How are interest rate movements and regulatory shifts affecting homeownership or construction projects?

SRKH: Bangladesh Bank's focus on taming inflation and improving liquidity governance is helping stabilise credit flow. At Bank Asia, we mitigate rate sensitivity through diversified funding sources, expanding CASA deposits, and leveraging our strong digital base to reduce operating costs—benefits that we pass on to customers.

TDS: What products or schemes (e.g., green housing loans, women's housing finance, SME developer financing) are gaining traction?

SRKH: Innovation remains at the heart of Bank Asia's product strategy. Working with the below sub-segments to create more focus

- Green Home Loan – incentivising eco-friendly projects (solar rooftops, rainwater harvesting, energy-efficient design).
- Women's Home Finance – preferential pricing and flexible documentation for female entrepreneurs and professionals.
- NRB Home Loan – allowing non-resident Bangladeshis to invest in housing through remittance-linked repayment solutions.
- SME Developer Finance – structured

facilities for small developers and construction supply-chain participants.

TDS: How is the bank supporting sustainable or smart housing projects?

SRKH: Bank Asia views sustainability not as compliance but as an opportunity here. We integrate ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) principles into credit appraisal and encourage green-certified materials, energy-efficient architecture, and waste-management features. We are financing smart housing ecosystems where digital meters, security, and automation reduce resource waste. Through partnerships with real-estate associations, IoT firms, and renewable-energy providers, we link financing incentives with measurable sustainability performance.



Additionally, our participation in Bangladesh Bank's Green Transformation Fund and climate-resilient infrastructure initiatives.

TDS: What are the key challenges developers or buyers face in accessing finance, and how are you addressing them?

SRKH: The key challenges for both developers and homebuyers in Bangladesh remain centred around limited access to long-term financing, procedural delays, and stringent documentation requirements. Developers often struggle with project-based funding due to inadequate collateral structuring and extended approval timelines, while buyers face complex eligibility assessments and property valuation inconsistencies.

To address these, Bank Asia is transitioning toward a fully centralised and standardised retail lending model, ensuring consistent credit assessment and efficient service delivery across all branches.

Bank Asia is addressing these challenges by embracing digital solutions for future transitions, including:

- Digitised property verification systems and linkage with municipal databases;
- Partnerships with REHAB and credit-rating agencies to assess developer reliability; and
- End-to-end digital loan processing, which has cut turnaround time by over 30 per cent.

TDS: Are there any innovative partnerships or digital solutions (apps, paperless processing, AI risk tools)

that have made housing finance easier?

SRKH: We've digitised the retail loan journey from application to approval through our advanced web-based lending platform. Customers can conveniently apply for any retail loan directly via our website, where our integrated internal software manages the entire process from initiation to approval, significantly reducing turnaround time. We are now in the process of incorporating home loans into this same digital platform, making the experience even more automated, seamless, and customer-friendly.

TDS: What's your outlook on the housing market in 2025-26, and how is your bank positioning itself to support that growth?

SRKH: While near-term rate pressure and inflation may test affordability, demographic growth, urbanisation, and remittance inflow will sustain long-term demand.

Bank Asia's strategy for 2025-26 focuses on:

1. Digitally scalable mortgage platforms to widen reach beyond metros;
2. Green and sustainable financing pipelines integrated with ESG metrics;
3. Partnerships with developers, tech providers, and municipal authorities to ensure responsible growth; and
4. Customer-centric innovation—aligning financial advice, insurance, and after-sales support within one ecosystem.

QUICK REAL ESTATE CHECKLIST: 3 Must-Do Checks Before Booking a Flat

TANZIM AHMED

To secure a flat purchase in Bangladesh, a systematic due diligence process is essential. Before making any financial commitment, focus your investigation on three core areas: legal integrity, functional infrastructure, and contractual guarantees. This approach mitigates risk and ensures your investment is sound.

1. Verify Legal & Land Documents

A project's legitimacy is determined by its paperwork, not its marketing. Insist on inspecting the original copies of all legal documents.

- **Regulatory Approval:** Confirm the project has a valid approval letter from RAJUK or the relevant city development authority.
- **Land Title:** Scrutinise the chain of ownership through CS, SA, RS, and BS khatians. Verify the mutation is complete and land taxes are paid up to date.
- **Joint Ventures:** If applicable, review the

registered Power of Attorney between the landowner and the developer.

- **Document Consistency:** Ensure the dag and khatian numbers are identical across all land documents.

• **Encumbrance Check:** Verify the land is clear of any legal disputes, liens, or government acquisition notices.

Incomplete or "in-process" documentation is a major red flag. Proceed only when every legal requirement is met and verified.

2. Assess Utilities, Facilities & Build Quality

- **Utilities:** Confirm a dedicated residential electricity meter, a legal and reliable water source, and a clear gas supply plan (pipeline or cylinder protocol).
- **Parking:** Your deed must specify a designated and exclusively assigned parking space.

- **Core Amenities:** Ensure the lift and generator are fully operational and have a clear maintenance schedule.

• **Security:** Inspect for functional CCTV, controlled access points, and professional guard services.

To validate a developer's promises, visit one of their previously completed projects and speak directly with residents about their experiences with build quality and facility management.

3. Secure a Contractual Handover Timeline

Protect yourself from indefinite delays with a legally binding agreement.

- **Firm Date:** The contract must state a specific month and year for handover.
- **Penalty Clause:** A non-negotiable clause must be included that stipulates financial compensation for each month of delay.
- **Exit Clause:** The agreement needs to clearly define the refund policy in case of project abandonment or extreme delays.

This checklist is not a formality; it is your primary defence against financial loss and future complications. Thorough verification of legal documents, operational facilities, and contractual safeguards is the foundation of a secure real estate investment.



আপনার বাড়ির স্বপ্নকে সত্যি করতে

এমডিবি

হোম লোন



- ঋণের পরিমাণ ২০,০০০,০০০/= পর্যন্ত
- আকর্ষণীয় ইন্টারেস্ট রেট
- সহজ ও দ্রুত ঋণ প্রক্রিয়াকরণ

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Evolving Landscape of HOUSING MARKET SHIFT

Mr. Mashrur Arefin, Managing Director & CEO, City Bank PLC.

The housing market in Bangladesh is a dynamic sector, profoundly influenced by economic shifts, evolving consumer aspirations, and regulatory changes. As urbanisation continues and the middle class expands, understanding the trends, challenges, and innovations in

hesitant and understandably so. The upfront costs are higher, technical expertise is limited, and large-scale incentives haven't fully materialized yet. The intent is clearly there, but broader adoption will take time and the right kind of policy support.



within the ABB community, we view this as a clear opportunity. The direction is right; what's needed now is scale, partnership, and steady execution.

TDS: What are the key challenges developers or buyers face in accessing finance, and how are you addressing them?

MA: Affordability is still the biggest challenge for most homebuyers, and that's something we can't overlook. On the other side, developers are dealing with rising

Financing THE FUTURE HOME

Mohd. Rafat Ullah Khan, Managing Director (Current Charge), Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC.

With urbanisation reshaping how Bangladesh builds and lives, housing finance has become central to making homeownership accessible. Rising construction costs, shifting regulations, and new sustainability goals are changing how banks serve this demand. To understand these shifts, The Daily Star spoke with Mohd. Rafat Ullah Khan, Managing Director (Current Charge) of Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC.

The Daily Star (TDS): What trends are you seeing in home and construction finance demand?

Mohd. Rafat Ullah Khan (MRUK): Despite macroeconomic challenges like inflation, currency volatility, and tightened liquidity, demand has remained resilient. The rising US dollar increases construction material costs and property prices, but demand is sustained by salaried professionals and middle-income households. Key drivers include post-pandemic recovery, urbanisation, and steady remittances, which are fueling investment in semi-urban and suburban housing beyond traditional city centres.

TDS: How are interest rate movements and regulatory shifts affecting the market?

MRUK: The transition to market-based lending rates (like the

estate. We are also enhancing specialised facilities for women and SME developers to promote financial inclusion. Sustainable housing is another key focus, supported by our partnership with the Housing and Building Research Institute (HBRI) for affordable green solutions.

TDS: How is the bank supporting sustainable or smart housing projects?

MRUK: We offer special terms, such as lower profit rates and longer tenors, for certified green homes (LEED, EDGE, etc.). We also provide tailored finance to developers for green construction and to homeowners for installing energy-saving features like solar panels. Furthermore, we partner with institutions like the World Bank and ADB for intermediated funds and are incorporating ESG criteria into our lending decisions, viewing sustainable buildings as lower-risk assets.

TDS: What are the key financing challenges for developers and buyers, and how do you address them?

MRUK: The primary challenges include complex land documentation, inconsistent property valuations, high land



cash flow and ease the equity burden for our clients.

TDS: How do you see the evolution of urban vs. semi-urban housing demand?

MRUK: While urban demand remains strong, high prices are shifting growth to semi-urban areas and newly developing southwestern regions. We are catering to this with products like our Semi-Pucca Home Investment scheme, which has minimal documentation and no prior authority plan approval required. Our strategy addresses both urban vertical expansion (apartments) and semi-urban horizontal growth (individual homes) by expanding our network of branches and agent banking outlets into these areas.

TDS: Are there any innovative partnerships or digital solutions making finance easier?

MRUK: Digitalisation is central to our strategy. Our mobile app, 'AIBL i-Banking,' allows clients to manage their accounts seamlessly. We have also digitised our application, verification, and sanction processes, significantly reducing turnaround times. We are now exploring partnerships with FinTechs for pre-approved financing and cautiously adopting AI-driven tools to improve our risk assessment.

TDS: What is your outlook for the housing market in 2025-26?

MRUK: The outlook is highly optimistic, driven by projected GDP growth, accelerating urbanisation,

home loan and construction finance becomes crucial.

The Daily Star (TDS): What trends are you seeing in home loan or construction finance demand in the last 2-3 years?

Mashrur Arefin (MA): Home loan demand has stayed quite steady, although the pace of growth has naturally eased a bit because of inflation and higher construction costs. The desire for home ownership, especially among the middle-income segment, remains very strong. People still see a home as their most stable investment. On the construction side, developers are being more selective now, focusing on projects where the demand is visible and costs can be managed well. In many ways, the market is simply finding its balance after a few years of rapid expansion.

TDS: How are interest rate movements and regulatory shifts affecting homeownership or construction projects?

MA: The shift to a fully market-driven interest rate system has naturally brought a period of adjustment for everyone—borrowers, developers, and even lenders. As rates now move with market liquidity and demand, affordability has become a bigger consideration for many homebuyers, especially in the middle-income group. Developers are also recalibrating their project timelines and cost structures to fit the new reality.

TDS: What products or schemes (e.g., green housing loans, women's housing finance, SME developer financing) are gaining traction?

MA: There's definitely growing awareness around green housing. Buyers and even policymakers now recognize the long-term value of energy-efficient and environmentally responsible homes. But many developers are still a bit



On the other hand, affordable housing is gaining very strong momentum. As middle-income families expand, so does their aspiration to own a home within a reasonable cost. This segment has really become the heart of the housing market. The challenge for all of us—banks, developers, and regulators—is to strike the right balance between affordability and quality, so that homeownership remains both achievable and sustainable.

TDS: How is the bank supporting sustainable or smart housing projects?

MA: Large-scale financing for sustainable or smart housing is still in its early days. Bangladesh Bank has made some commendable moves through refinance schemes and policy guidance, but a truly coordinated industry-wide approach is still taking shape. Development partners like IFC have also been working to promote green and affordable housing, though progress has been slower than expected because of practical and structural challenges. Even then, there's a real sense of direction emerging. Awareness is growing, and more institutions now see sustainability not just as a social cause but as sound economics. At City Bank and

material costs and a shortage of long-term financing. Even the documentation and valuation process can sometimes feel a bit heavy for customers. Across the industry, we're working to make these processes easier with greater transparency, simpler repayment structures, and better-designed loan products. At City Bank, our focus is to help people own their homes without compromising on financial discipline.

TDS: What's your outlook on the housing market in 2025-26, and how is your bank positioning itself to support that growth?

MA: The outlook for 2025-26 looks promising. The demand for housing in Bangladesh isn't just an economic trend—it's rooted in people's aspirations, our growing urban centres, and the simple desire to build a better life. These are long-term, structural drivers that continue to give the market strength. Even as costs and interest rates adjust with time, the housing sector has shown an impressive ability to adapt and move forward. At City Bank, we'll keep our focus on affordable, green, and digitally enabled housing finance. The future of this market lies in making financing more inclusive, more sustainable, and simpler for our customers.

“Even with rising costs and tighter liquidity, housing demand in Bangladesh remains resilient — driven by urbanisation, remittances, and the growing aspirations of middle-income families.”

SMART model) has introduced volatility, impacting affordability and repayment capacity for middle-income borrowers. This has caused some to delay home-buying decisions. Concurrently, regulatory initiatives from Bangladesh Bank's Sustainable Finance Department are promoting green and energy-efficient housing with concessional profit rates. Our Home Investment scheme, operating under the HPSM (Hire Purchase under Shirkatul Melk) mode, is designed to make homeownership more affordable and convenient amidst these changes.

TDS: What specific products or schemes are gaining traction?

MRUK: Beyond our flagship products, we see strong growth in several segments. Financing for Non-Resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) is a high-growth area, as they invest foreign earnings in local real



prices, and difficulty proving stable income, especially for borrowers in the informal sector. To address these, we use a multi-tiered legal verification process for clear land titles, a comprehensive income assessment guideline, and offer flexible financing tenors and phased construction finance to manage

and supportive government policies. We expect steady property price growth, particularly in suburban zones. Al-Arafah Islami Bank is positioning itself to support this growth by strengthening our focus on green projects and affordable housing, in line with Islamic finance principles.

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NRBC BANK

এবার পূরণ হবে প্রতিটি মানুষের জন্য একটি স্বপ্নের গল্প নিজেদের একটি বাড়ি এবার হবে তাড়াতাড়ি

স্বপ্ন হোম লোন

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CLICK, CONNECT, OWN

Expanding access through digital partnerships

M. Shamsul Arefin, Managing Director, NCC Bank PLC.



“Digital partnerships are redefining how Bangladeshis access finance — by turning a long, paper-heavy process into a simple, connected experience.”

Bangladesh's home finance sector is showing impressive resilience despite global economic headwinds, with demand for housing and construction loans surging over the past three years. Rapid urbanisation, strong remittance inflows, and policy support are fuelling growth while digital innovation and green financing are reshaping how banks serve customers. To explore these trends and challenges, The Daily Star spoke with M. Shamsul Arefin, Managing Director of NCC Bank PLC.



Demand Drivers and Evolving Trends
Accelerating urbanization has made the dream of owning an apartment or constructing a home a tangible goal for many. Non-Resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) are an increasingly active segment, securing home loans as they plan their eventual return. The government's sustained focus on urban development and infrastructure projects has amplified demand for both residential and commercial properties. Concurrently, the sector is embracing technology and sustainable development practices, creating fertile ground for innovation.

Affordability Anchored by Rates and

Regulation
Affordability is anchored by the interplay of interest rates and regulatory support. While high rates can dampen demand, the banking sector has maintained competitive interest rates for home loans, aligning them with deposit rates to keep financing within reach. At NCC Bank, a core strategy is offering lower interest rates to ensure customer affordability. Supportive regulatory bodies have played a crucial role by continually refining guidelines to make home loans more accessible and customer-friendly, thereby encouraging broader homeownership.

Green Housing and Inclusive Finance

Beyond traditional offerings, specialized products like “Home Loan,” “Home Improvement Loan,” and “Abashan Loan” are gaining traction. NCC Bank PLC is actively promoting green housing projects to emphasize environmental protection. Under its “Abashan Loan” scheme, the bank offers special incentives, including reduced processing fees for customers who install solar panels. “We are committed to promoting environmentally responsible housing while keeping costs manageable,” a bank representative stated. This initiative aligns with an industry-wide push towards eco-friendly financing that fosters economic growth and social benefits like enhanced savings. NCC Bank is also planning further competitive offerings for sustainable housing projects.

Addressing Market Challenges
Both developers and buyers face hurdles. Buyers often encounter scrutiny over property quality and market value, sometimes revealing discrepancies between asset value and desired loan amounts. Repayment capacity, especially amidst fluctuating interest rates, and a lack of documented income for informal sector workers

can also hinder access to finance. Developers grapple with volatile construction material costs and high inflation, which can escalate project expenses beyond initial loan estimates. NCC Bank mitigates these issues through comprehensive assessments by its team of home loan experts. They conduct meticulous property document scrutiny, guide customers through the process, and offer competitive interest rates to help manage the impact of inflation and ensure sustainable repayments.

The Rise of Semi-Urban Living
A significant demographic shift towards semi-urban areas is reshaping housing demand. Congestion and high costs in major cities are driving a growing population, primarily from the mid-income segment, towards semi-urban locales that offer more space, lower density, and affordable land. Crucially, improvements in infrastructure—including roads, utilities, and public transport—enhance their appeal. Developers are capitalizing on lower land prices and strong growth potential in these areas.

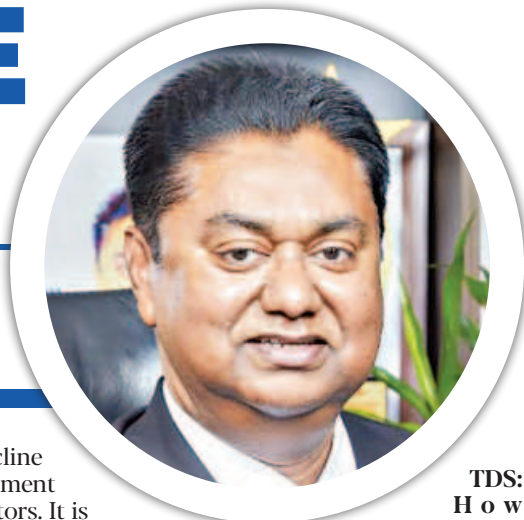
Digital Transformation and

Accessibility
To enhance efficiency, digital solutions are becoming pivotal. NCC Bank PLC has partnered with FinCoach Bangladesh Limited, an online financial marketplace, to streamline its financing process. This collaboration allows customers to apply for home loans conveniently and quickly through a digital platform, advancing paperless processing and customer accessibility.

Strategic Outlook for 2025-2026
Looking ahead to 2025-2026, NCC Bank PLC maintains an optimistic outlook on the housing market. The bank is strategically positioning itself to support this growth by broadening its home loan offerings to cater to diverse customer segments. Key initiatives include forging agreements with top-tier developers to expand apartment financing, enhancing its digital marketing presence, and leveraging all sourcing channels to reach a wider customer base.

Shariah-Compliant RESIDENCE

Mosleh Uddin Ahmed, Managing Director, Shahjalal Islami Bank PLC.



The housing sector in Bangladesh continues to face unique challenges and evolving demands. Shahjalal Islami Bank PLC leverages interest rate movements, the growing importance of semi-urban housing with Shariah-compliant products and digital solutions to support a diverse range of customers and foster sustainable growth in the market.

The Daily Star (TDS): What trends are you seeing in home loan or construction finance demand in the last 2-3 years?
Mosleh Uddin Ahmed(MUA): In the last 2-3 years, due to political turmoil, there has been a significant decline in the other investment sectors of Bangladesh. But as the dwelling place is a basic need of people, we do

not observe any sharp decline in house building investment like other investment sectors. It is also true that there is no increasing growth in this sector, but we may say that a constant growth is achieved.

TDS: How are interest rate movements and regulatory shifts

Urban housing demand is much higher than that of semi-urban housing. But as our labour force in abroad is rising, semi-urban housing is also growing through their remittance income. Besides the political turmoil affect the urban housing is affected much more than the semi-urban housing. As we observe all over Bangladesh that semi semi-urban housing is growing significantly.



affecting homeownership or construction projects?

MUA: In the last 2-3 years, the profit rate has moved from 9% per annum to 14% per annum. Such movement affects the large-scale developer construction, and it has also affected the personal level construction. On the other hand, regulatory shift has almost no effect on this sector.

TDS: What products or schemes (e.g., green housing loans, women's housing finance, SME developer financing) are gaining traction?

MUA: At present, we do not have specific products such as Green Housing Loans or Women's Housing Finance in our portfolio. However, we offer similar Shariah-compliant investment products that promote inclusiveness, sustainability, and ethical growth in housing investment. We also encourage our clients to include several sophisticated technologies, like solar panels, to have green energy.

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Driving Growth, Sustainability and Innovation in HOUSING FINANCE

Md. Ahsan-uz Zaman, Managing Director & CEO, Midland Bank PLC.



Through offerings like the Digital Secured Loan and Digital Secured Credit Card, customers benefit from hassle-free, paperless financing. MDB is also gearing up to launch a digital LOS, Digital Nano Loan, and other innovative solutions that promise quicker approvals, improved accessibility, and a better customer experience.

The landscape of housing finance in Bangladesh is continuously evolving, marked by significant trends in demand, regulatory shifts, and a growing emphasis on sustainable and innovative solutions. Midland Bank's home loan supports a wide range of homeownership aspirations, aligning with the bank's commitment to facilitating housing finance.

The Daily Star(TDS): What trends are you seeing in home loan or construction finance demand in the last 2-3 years?

Md. Ahsan-uz Zaman (MAZ): In the post-pandemic period, Bangladesh's housing finance market has experienced a steady upward trend, reflecting economic resilience and growing aspirations for homeownership. Demand for home loans and construction finance has notably increased over the last three years, driven by rising urbanisation, stable interest rates, and supportive government policies. Within the banking industry, the portfolio dedicated to home loans has increased in both quantity and worth.

At Midland Bank PLC., the upward trend is distinctly visible in the number of home loan accounts rose year to year, while the sanctioned limit increased from BDT 242.8 million to BDT 353.3 million as of October 2025. This growth highlights customers' confidence in MDB's diverse home finance solutions, such as MDB Home Loan, MDB Amar Bari, and MDB Saalam Home Finance.

TDS: How are interest rate movements and regulatory shifts affecting

homeownership or construction projects?

MAZ: In recent years, upward interest rate cycles and tighter regulatory directives have significantly shaped Bangladesh's homeownership and construction financing landscape. The repo rate now stands at 10% after successive hikes to curb inflation, raising borrowing costs across sectors. Simultaneously, Bangladesh Bank introduced Interest Rate Corridor (IRC) framework to better align lending rates with market conditions and control

green housing loans, women's housing finance, SME developer financing) are gaining traction?

MAZ: Bangladesh's banking sector is witnessing a growing shift toward sustainable and inclusive housing finance. Products like green housing loans, women-focused home financing, and SME developer loans are gaining strong traction, driven by post-pandemic recovery, rising urban housing demand, and policy encouragement for eco-friendly and inclusive growth. Financial institutions

financing.

TDS: How is the bank supporting sustainable or smart housing projects?

MAZ: Bangladesh's banking industry is increasingly embracing sustainable and smart housing finance to support eco-friendly urban development. Through green financing, energy-efficient home loans, and digital solutions, banks are helping reduce environmental impact while promoting inclusive growth. MDB is trying to align the loan products to make homeownership more accessible and environmentally responsible, aligning with Bangladesh's broader sustainability and smart city development goals.

TDS: Are there any innovative partnerships or digital solutions (apps, paperless processing, AI risk tools) that have made housing finance easier?

MAZ: The banking sector in Bangladesh is progressively adopting digital solutions and forming strategic alliances to streamline housing finance. Financial institutions are integrating AI-driven Nano Loan offerings, Digital Loan Origination Systems (LOS), Automated Collection and Recovery Systems, and partnerships with fintech companies to improve efficiency, shorten processing times, and enhance risk management. These advancements have made it quicker, more transparent, and more convenient for individuals to access home loans, tackling issues such as delays in documentation and complicated approval processes.

Midland Bank PLC. is one of the

leaders in digital evolution.

Through offerings like the Digital Secured Loan and Digital Secured Credit Card, customers benefit from hassle-free, paperless financing. MDB is also gearing up to launch a digital LOS, Digital Nano Loan, and other innovative solutions that promise quicker approvals, improved accessibility, and a better customer experience. MDB also runs different digital journeys (e.g. campaign with bikroy.com).

TDS: What's your outlook on the housing market in 2025-26, and how is your bank positioning itself to support that growth?

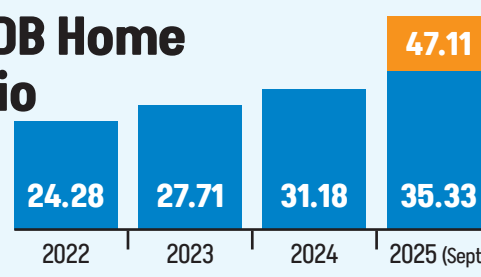
MAZ: Bangladesh's housing finance sector is poised for strong growth in 2025-26 and beyond, driven by rising urbanisation, expanding semi-urban areas, and increasing middle-class demand for quality housing. Banks are gearing up to meet this surge with innovative financing solutions and supportive regulatory frameworks, creating significant opportunities for both developers and homebuyers.

Midland Bank PLC. is strategically positioning itself to support this growth through tailored home finance products. Complemented by digital solutions and inclusive financing initiatives, these offerings ensure faster, customer-friendly access to housing finance, contributing to sustainable urban and semi-urban development across Bangladesh.

Year wise MDB Home Loan Portfolio

in BDT Crore

YEARLY PREDICTION DISBURSED LIMIT



inflation, to promote affordability and market discipline.

At Midland Bank PLC., we remain committed to enabling homeownership through competitive schemes. Under MDB Home Loan, MDB Amar Bari, MDB Saalam Home Finance, MDB Saalam Amar Bari we offer up to 70% financing of property value, with interest structures aligned to market and regulatory norms. We also offer MDB Nirman and MDB Saalam Nirman facility.

TDS: What products or schemes (e.g.,

are increasingly aligning lending strategies with sustainability goals and Bangladesh Bank's green banking directives.

In Bangladesh's banking sector, products like green housing loans, women-focused home finance, and SME developer financing are gaining notable traction. Through MDB Niman and MDB Saalam Nirman, the Bank supports SME developers, while gradually expanding into green home finance initiatives such as solar panel and eco-friendly construction

Shariah-Compliant Residence

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For instance, we have included semi-pacca house building products to spread such investment in the rural areas of the country. Our home finance facilities under HPSM cater to a wide range of customers while encouraging responsible home ownership and asset-backed investment. We also emphasise financing for women entrepreneurs and small business owners through our SME and Retail Investment Schemes.

TDS: What are the key challenges developers or buyers face in accessing finance, and how are you addressing them?

MUA: Developers primarily face hurdles related to documentation and compliance, often delaying project approvals, along with equity and collateral constraints. Project risk and cash flow mismatches further complicate financing continuity. Additionally, a limited understanding of Islamic financing modes sometimes creates reluctance.

For buyers, the main obstacles include high property prices and

an affordability gap. Lengthy approval processes are being streamlined through simplified procedures. As per the rules of the regulatory body client could not demand more than Tk. 2.00 crore in this sector. Besides client's participation should be a minimum of 30% of the purchase price. But in areas like Gulshan, Banani, and Baridhara, the price of a flat is much higher. In those areas, demand for house finance is also higher, but for regulatory reasons, we cannot provide house finance of more than 2.00 crore. Vague agreement between the land owner and the developer regarding flat distribution. The bank advises performing a complementary deed or a correction deed to remove such vague distribution.

TDS: Are there any innovative partnerships or digital solutions (apps, paperless processing, AI risk tools) that have made housing finance easier?

MUA: Our clients can impose a standing instruction to deduct their instalment from their savings and current accounts. They can also pay the instalment

from anywhere through our 141 branches around the country. They can observe their investment account statement through our instantly updated app by sitting their home. Besides, the client may pay their instalment by using our digital app Shajalal Touch Pay. We are in under process of introducing paperless processing of housing finance.

TDS: What is your outlook on the housing market in 2025-2026, and how is your bank positioning itself to support that growth?

MUA: Expected house building growth in Bangladesh for 2025-2026 is mixed, with the broader construction sector predicted to slow due to political and economic factors. However real estate market is still projected to grow, driven by urbanisation, population growth and demand for modern and sustainable housing. As a secured investment, our bank will also emphasise increasing its market share of house building through reducing the rent rate, by signing MOUs with different prominent developers and by marketing.



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