

Pubali Bank raises Tk 500cr thru fifth subordinated bond

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Pubali Bank PLC has raised Tk 500 crore through its fifth subordinated bond with the assistance of UCB Investment Limited, a concern of United Commercial Bank PLC.

UCB Investment Limited, one of the leading investment banks in Bangladesh, acted as the arranger of the bond.

According to a press release, this marks the fourth milestone transaction between UCB Investment and Pubali Bank PLC.

The bank organised a programme at its head office in Dhaka to mark the closing ceremony of the transaction.

The proceeds from the bond issuance will strengthen Pubali Bank's Tier-II capital base, enabling the bank to expand its lending capacity, serve a wider customer base and contribute to the country's overall economic development.

Mohammad Ali, managing director and chief executive officer of Pubali Bank PLC, and Tanzim Alamgir, founding managing director and chief executive officer of UCB Investment Limited, along with other senior officials from both organisations, were present at the programme.



Mohammad Ali, managing director and chief executive officer of Pubali Bank PLC, and Tanzim Alamgir, founding managing director and chief executive officer of UCB Investment Limited, pose for a photograph at the closing ceremony of the Tk 500 crore transaction at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: PUBALI BANK

BRAC Bank launches multicurrency SME business debit, credit cards



Tareq Refat Ullah Khan, managing director and chief executive officer of BRAC Bank PLC, attends the launch of Visa multicurrency SME business debit and credit cards at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: BRAC BANK

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BRAC Bank PLC has launched Visa multicurrency SME business debit and credit cards to enable small and medium enterprise (SME) customers to carry out authorised business-to-business (B2B) local and foreign currency transactions, supporting smoother business operations.

Tareq Refat Ullah Khan, managing director and chief executive officer of BRAC Bank PLC, inaugurated the cards as the chief guest at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

Speaking at the event, Khan said, "SMEs are at the heart of Bangladesh's economic growth. With the launch of the Visa Multicurrency SME Business Debit

and Credit Cards, we are addressing a real, practical need, empowering SMEs to transact globally with greater confidence, transparency and regulatory alignment."

"We are thankful to Bangladesh Bank for providing the framework that makes this possible," he added.

Sabbir Ahmed, country manager for Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan at Visa, said digital payment solutions play a critical role in enabling SMEs to connect with global markets.

"Our partnership with BRAC Bank reflects a shared commitment to supporting SMEs through secure, reliable and globally accepted payment solutions that simplify cross-border transactions and open new opportunities for growth," he added.

Meghna Bank holds annual business conference

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Meghna Bank PLC recently organised its "Annual Business Conference 2026" at a hotel in Dhaka.

Uzma Chowdhury, chairperson of Meghna Bank PLC, inaugurated the conference as the chief guest, according to a press release.

Syed Mizanur Rahman, managing director of the bank, presided over the event, which was also attended by Habibur Rahman, independent director and member of the executive committee and risk management committee.

During the conference, the bank's officials rolled out the budget and congratulated all concerned on the

previous year's success.

Meghna Bank reiterated its commitment to its strategic vision for 2026, focusing on digital transformation, sustainability, regulatory compliance and long-term growth.

Rashedul Alam, head of the human resources division, moderated the programme.

Md Sadiqur Rahman, additional managing director; Momtazul Karim N Ahmed, deputy managing director; Sajib Kumar Saha, chief financial officer; IQM Abdul Jalil, chief risk officer; and Tamvir Shams, head of operations, along with the senior management team and all branch and sub-branch managers as well as division and department heads, were also present.



Uzma Chowdhury, chairperson of Meghna Bank PLC, poses for a group photograph with participants of the bank's "Annual Business Conference 2026" at a hotel in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: MEGHNA BANK

Eastern Bank, icddr,b renew deal for biohazardous waste management initiative



Asadulghani, head of the Biosafety Unit for Phase III of the Biohazardous Waste Management programme at icddr,b, receives a financial aid cheque from Ahmed Shaheen, additional managing director of Eastern Bank PLC, at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: EBL

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Eastern Bank PLC (EBL) and icddr,b have renewed their partnership for the third consecutive year, reaffirming their joint commitment to improving public health and environmental sustainability in Bangladesh.

As part of the partnership, the bank provided financial assistance to icddr,b under the

existing memorandum of understanding (MoU) at the former's head office in Dhaka yesterday, according to a press release.

Ahmed Shaheen, additional managing director of Eastern Bank PLC, handed over project funding cheques to Asadulghani, head of the Biosafety Unit for Phase III of the Biohazardous Waste Management programme at icddr,b, and Md Al Fazal Khan, head of the

Matlab Health Research Centre, to support icddr,b's Matlab Hospital.

Under Phase III of the Best Practices in Sustainable Solid Biohazardous Waste Management initiative, EBL will continue funding the programme in 2026.

The new phase will focus on strengthening institutional capacity, operational systems and national coordination to ensure the safe and sustainable management of biohazardous waste across healthcare facilities nationwide.

The initiative will also support knowledge and technology transfer and help government health facilities implement updated national guidelines.

In parallel, EBL is extending CSR support to icddr,b's Matlab Hospital, which provides free treatment to thousands of patients annually and plays a vital role in maternal, child and diarrhoeal care.

Armana Ahmed, head of fund development at icddr,b; Naser Azad, manager of donor relations; Laila Farzana, coordinator of development; Md Abdullah Al Mamun, company secretary of the bank; and Md Maskur Reza, head of business information systems, among others, were also present.

Bengal Commercial Bank holds annual business conference



Md Jashim Uddin, chairman of Bengal Commercial Bank PLC, poses for a group photograph with participants of the bank's "Annual Business Conference 2026" at a hotel in Cox's Bazar recently. PHOTO: BENGAL COMMERCIAL BANK

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Bengal Commercial Bank PLC recently organised a two-day "Annual Business Conference 2026" at a hotel in Cox's Bazar.

This year, the bank set the theme as "Building Tomorrow's Bank Today", according to a press release. Md Jashim Uddin, chairman of Bengal Commercial Bank PLC and president of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry, inaugurated the conference as the chief guest.

In his speech, Jashim Uddin emphasised sustainable growth in the cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises (CMSME) sector, accelerated technological development, and strengthened teamwork and collaboration to achieve the bank's goals for 2026.

He inspired the management to work as one unified team, reinforcing the values of integrity, innovation and

excellence.

Tarik Morshed, managing director and chief executive officer of the bank, presided over the conference.

In his speech, he shared an overview of the bank's overall business performance in 2025, highlighting capital adequacy, controlled non-performing loans, strong corporate governance, a solid financial foundation and the bank's long-standing reputation.

He also presented new business opportunities and a forward-looking action plan for 2026.

The bank awarded top-performing branches and head office divisions in recognition of achieving business targets and outstanding performance in 2025.

Md Iqbal Hossain Chowdhury, director of the bank, and KM Awlad Hossain, additional managing director and chief business officer, were also present, along with deputy managing directors, divisional heads and managers from all branches of the bank.

Gold falls

REUTERS

Gold and other precious metals fell on Thursday as geopolitical tensions and safe-haven demand eased after US President Donald Trump backed down from new tariff threats and proposals to annex Greenland by force, while a firmer dollar also pressured prices.

Spot gold was down 0.8 percent to \$4,796.75 per ounce, as of 0524 GMT, after scaling a record peak of \$4,887.82 in the previous session.

US gold futures for February delivery lost 0.8 percent to \$4,799.90 per ounce.

"Reversal of comments by the US President was one factor that eased geopolitical tensions, and so we see a retracement in prices," said ANZ commodity strategist Soni Kumari.

Trump abruptly stepped back on Wednesday from threats to impose tariffs as leverage to seize Greenland, ruled out the use of force and suggested a deal was in sight to end a dispute over the Danish territory that risked the deepest rupture in transatlantic relations in decades.

The dollar firmed, while Wall Street indexes also jugged higher on news of Trump's reversal on tariffs. A stronger dollar makes greenback priced metals more expensive for overseas buyers.

Meanwhile, US Supreme Court justices signalled scepticism toward Trump's unprecedented bid to fire Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook in a case with the central bank's independence at stake.

Traders await November's Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) data, the Fed's preferred inflation gauge, and weekly jobless claims, due later in the day, for further cues on monetary policy trajectory.

The US Fed is broadly expected to maintain interest rates steady at its January meeting despite Trump's calls for cuts.

German economy staying in slow lane in early 2026

REUTERS, Frankfurt

The German economy ended last year with momentum building but first quarter growth is likely to be modest, with inflation stabilising at 2 percent, the Bundesbank said in a monthly economic report on Thursday.

Germany's economy, Europe's biggest, became stuck in stagnation in recent years as industry suffered a big recession and US tariffs ate deep into exports, putting recovery bets squarely on the government's spending spree.

"The somewhat more pessimistic expectations of companies recently suggest that economic output is likely to grow only moderately in the first quarter of this year," the central bank said.

"However, the easing of fiscal policy should provide a stronger boost later in the year."

Exports are still weak but industry appears to have bottomed out, households are spending more given big wage gains, and domestic demand is up sharply, likely driven by the government's efforts to beef up defence spending, the report said.

While the outlook is far better than any time in recent years, the recovery could take longer and the government is expected to cut its own growth forecast for this year to 1.0 percent from 1.3 percent, a source familiar with the projections told Reuters earlier this week.

Surging memory chip prices

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TrendForce said last year that Dell and Lenovo were planning price hikes of as much as 20 percent early in 2026.

Shares of all Raspberry Pi, Xiaomi, Dell, HP Inc and Lenovo fell in the last three months of 2025, with Xiaomi posting the biggest drop with a 27.2 percent decline.

HP CEO Enrique Lores said in November the company would raise PC prices due to "significant" memory chip costs, while

Raspberry Pi CEO called the cost surge "painful" in a December blog post announcing price increases for its devices.

The weaker demand outlook could also hamper sales at electronics focused retailers such as Best Buy, which had already warned last year that tariff-driven price increases could dissuade potential buyers.

Apple will report earnings on January 29, while Dell is slated to report on February 26. Xiaomi usually reports in

late March.

Some analysts said Apple, with its scale, pricing power and deep supplier network, is better positioned to weather the memory chip price surge than its smaller rivals.

The company typically holds prices of its flagship iPhone lineup in the US steady between its September launch events. Last year, it absorbed the hundreds of millions of dollars in tariff-related costs, instead of passing them on to customers.

Indian refiners

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BPCL and India's oil ministry did not respond to Reuters requests for comments.

The United States, already seeking to narrow its trade deficit with India, doubled import tariffs on Indian goods to 50 percent last year to punish it for heavy purchases of Russian oil.

State-run Hindustan Petroleum, Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals and private refiners HPCIL-Mittal Energy Ltd have already

stopped buying Russian oil.

India's Russian oil imports fell to their lowest in two years in December, while Opec's share of imports hit an 11-month high, trade data showed.

Apart from the Middle East, Indian refiners have also increased purchases from regions such as Africa and South America.

Indian refiners have also boosted purchases of US oil to partly replace Russian oil and narrow the trade deficit with Washington, while also scouting for Venezuelan oil.