

Confidence Cement opens new plant in Narsingdi

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Confidence Cement Dhaka Limited has embarked on a new phase of nationwide expansion with the commencement of operations of its newly established factory in Palash, Narsingdi.

Built with world-renowned German vertical roller mill (VRM) technology and A-grade clinker, the plant has an annual production capacity of 1.8 million metric tonnes, enabling the company to ensure a seamless supply of cement across the country.

To mark the milestone, the cement manufacturer recently organised a grand launch programme at Sheraton Dhaka in the capital's Banani, according to a press release. While inaugurating the programme as the chief guest, Rezaul Karim, chairman (emeritus) of Confidence Cement Dhaka Limited, recalled the early days of the company's journey.

"When we planned to establish a cement factory in Sitakunda, Chattogram, in 1994, the country lacked adequate financial resources,

engineering expertise, appropriate technology and skilled manpower. Despite these limitations, our academic background in engineering, along with determination, courage and integrity, inspired us to take on this formidable challenge," he said.

In his remarks, Imran Karim, chairman of Confidence Group, said the new Narsingdi plant, combined with advanced technology and a strong distribution network, has positioned the company to expand its reach more extensively across the country.

Jahir Uddin Ahmed, chief executive officer of Confidence Cement Dhaka Limited, said "This nationwide expansion initiative will further strengthen our relationships with distributors, retail partners and customers."

Rupam Kishore Barua, vice-chairman of Confidence Group; Salman Karim, Md Khalid Islam and Md Alamgir Kabir, directors; Newaz Mohammad Iqbal Yusuf, chief financial officer; and Nasir Ul Alam Sumon, chief marketing officer, were present at the event.



Rezaul Karim, chairman (emeritus) of Confidence Cement Dhaka Limited, inaugurates the company's new plant in Narsingdi through a programme at Sheraton Dhaka in Banani recently.

PHOTO: CONFIDENCE CEMENT

Dollar sinks in Asian trade

AFP, Hong Kong

The dollar fell in Asian trade Monday amid speculation US officials could join their Japanese counterparts to help support the yen after a recent sell-off, while equities started the week on a mixed note.

Reports that the Federal Reserve Bank of New York had checked in with traders about the yen's exchange rate sparked a surge in the Japanese currency, according to Bloomberg, pushing it up more than one percent to 153.89 per dollar -- its strongest level since November.

The yen has been sliding amid worries about Japan's fiscal position, the central bank's decision not to hike interest rates further and expectations that the US Fed will hold off cutting its own borrowing costs this week.

The last time Japanese authorities stepped in to support their unit was in 2024 when it hit 160 to the greenback.

The prospect of authorities stepping into financial markets saw the dollar retreat across the board, with the euro, pound and South Korean won also well up while the Singapore dollar hit an 11-year high.

That in turn sent gold prices surging more than two percent and past \$5,000 for the first time.

Talk of joint intervention was fanned Monday by top currency chief Atsushi Mimura, who said Tokyo "will continue responding appropriately against FX moves, working closely with US authorities as needed, in line with the joint statement issued by the Japanese and US finance ministers last September".

His remarks came a day after Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi warned: "We will take all necessary measures to address speculative and highly abnormal movements."

Stephen Innes at SPI Asset Management said: "Early Asia saw the dollar pushed lower as rate-check chatter swirled around the Fed, and intervention-tinged language out of Tokyo reminded the market that yen weakness is no longer a free carry."

"In thin early Asian liquidity, the yen jumped, and that was enough to knock the broader dollar back into the Asia open."

Lloyd Chan, at MUFG, added: "The balance of risks may point toward dollar vulnerability and heightened two-way volatility in USD/JPY as markets navigate intervention uncertainty and evolving policy expectations around BoJ policy stance and Japan Prime Minister Takaichi's fiscal policy."

The weakening dollar helped send gold to a peak of \$5,111.07 per ounce. Silver broke \$100 Friday and spiked above \$109 Monday.

Akij Essential launches 'Protibare Biya Bari' campaign for Chinigura rice



Faria Hossain, chairperson of Akij Resource Group, and Sheikh Jasim Uddin, managing director, inaugurate the campaign, titled "Protibare Biya Bari" for its premium fragrant Chinigura rice, at Akij House in Dhaka on Sunday.

PHOTO: AKIJ RESOURCE GROUP

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Akij Essential, the consumer goods brand of the country's business conglomerate Akij Resource Group, has launched a new campaign, titled "Protibare Biya Bari" for its premium fragrant Chinigura rice, aiming to bring the taste and ambience of wedding feasts into everyday home cooking.

Faria Hossain, chairperson of Akij Resource Group, and Sheikh Jasim Uddin, managing director, inaugurated the campaign at a function held at Akij House in Dhaka on Sunday, according to a press release.

Addressing the event, Hossain said every household in Bangladesh experiences a unique festive spirit through cooking, with wedding feasts

representing its highest expression.

"Through this campaign, we want consumers to enjoy the special taste, aroma and joy of weddings even in their daily meals.

We never compromise on the quality and purity of Akij Essential Chinigura rice," she said.

In his remarks, Jasim Uddin said the company sources BR 34 rice from Dinajpur, which is renowned for Chinigura.

"The rice is processed at Akij Essential's factories using modern Swiss-made machinery," he added.

"Our robust quality control system ensures superior grain quality, long-lasting aroma and a soft, fluffy texture after cooking, recreating the feel of wedding cuisine at home," he said.

Dutch-Bangla Bank holds managers' conference

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Dutch-Bangla Bank PLC recently organised a two-day "Managers' Conference-2026" in Dhaka to review the bank's overall performance in 2025 and outline business plans and strategies to achieve its targets for 2026.

Branch managers from all 243 branches across the country participated in the conference, according to a press release.

Abul Kashem Md Shirin, managing director and CEO of Dutch-Bangla Bank PLC, presided over the event. In his address, Shirin critically reviewed the strategies adopted to achieve the

bank's business targets in 2025.

He congratulated the branch managers and their teams for earning an operating profit of Tk 2,704 crore and for meeting their respective targets during the year. He also urged managers who fell short of their targets in 2025 to make all-out efforts to achieve the goals set for 2026.

Shirin emphasised expanding the bank's business in 2026 by leveraging its largest online banking platform Fast Track, customer relationship management (CRM) system, ATM network, mobile banking wallet Rocket, agent banking network, point-of-sale (POS) terminals and NexusPay.



Abul Kashem Md Shirin, managing director and CEO of Dutch-Bangla Bank PLC, poses for a group photograph with participants of the bank's "Managers' Conference-2026" in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: DUTCH-BANGLA BANK

IBA celebrates completion of first EBD batch



Khaled Mahmud, professor of the Institute of Business Administration, and M Nazeem A Choudhury, deputy managing director of Prime Bank PLC, pose for a group photograph with participants of the Entrepreneurship & Business Development (EBD) Programme on the institute's campus in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: PRIME BANK

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The Institute of Business Administration (IBA) of the University of Dhaka recently celebrated the successful completion of the first batch of its Entrepreneurship & Business Development

(EBD) Programme at the institute's campus in Dhaka.

The programme, conducted in association with Prime Bank PLC, was designed to equip aspiring entrepreneurs with advanced business knowledge and practical skills to support

sustainable growth and innovation, according to a press release. Khaled Mahmud, professor of the Institute of Business Administration, inaugurated the ceremony, highlighting the importance of structured entrepreneurial education in developing capable and future-ready business leaders.

The event also featured addresses by Prof Md Mohiuddin, Prof Mohammad Ridhwanul Haq, coordinator of the Management Development Programme (MDP), and Prof Sheikh Morshed Jahan, who elaborated on the vision, objectives and long-term impact of the EBD programme in nurturing entrepreneurial talent.

Representing Prime Bank PLC, M Nazeem A Choudhury, deputy managing director, underscored the importance of strong industry-academia collaboration and reaffirmed the bank's commitment to supporting entrepreneurial development through initiatives such as the EBD programme.

The ceremony concluded with a certificate distribution session, marking the successful completion of the programme and celebrating the achievements of the participants, the release added.

bKash, APBn hold workshop to curb misuse of MFS ahead of polls



Md Ali Hossain Fakir, additional inspector general of police (IGP) and chief of the Armed Police Battalion, poses for a group photograph with participants of the workshop, jointly organised by the APBn and bKash Limited, at the APBn headquarters in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: BKASH

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Leading mobile financial service (MFS) provider bKash Limited has organised a day-long workshop with the Armed Police Battalion (APBn) to raise awareness and prevent the misuse of mobile financial services ahead of the upcoming national election.

About 40 APBn officials took part in the workshop, held recently at the APBn headquarters in Dhaka, according to a press release.

The workshop featured in-depth discussions on identifying and preventing digital transaction-based crimes, as well as using intelligence and data analysis to bring criminal syndicates to justice.

Md Ali Hossain Fakir, additional inspector general of police (IGP) and chief of the Armed Police Battalion, attended the event as the chief guest.

The chief guest said such preparations would play a crucial role in preventing

potential digital transaction-based crimes during the national election.

The sessions focused on various crime patterns involving the misuse of MFS platforms, techniques for identifying criminal networks through data analysis, and advanced strategies for monitoring digital transactions.

Participants were also briefed on the use of technology to recover stolen money, prevent fraud and kidnapping-related transactions, and ensure rapid coordination with bKash officials during emergencies.

Through the training, law enforcement officials enhanced their technical knowledge and skills to combat digital financial crimes, while strengthening coordination and information-sharing mechanisms between the two organisations.

Md Nazibur Rahman, former additional IGP of Bangladesh Police and adviser to bKash Limited, attended the programme as a special guest.

Al-Arafah Islami Bank hosts annual business conference

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC recently organised its "Annual Business Conference 2026" at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka.

Khwaja Shahriar, chairman of Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC, inaugurated the conference as the chief guest, according to a press release.

In his speech, Shahriar said opportunities have been created to improve the quality of investments, strengthen risk management and enhance provisioning capacity—factors directly linked to the bank's profitability, asset quality and overall capability.

"In 2026, the foundation of the bank's business strategy will rest on three pillars – good governance, discipline and responsible growth," he said.

"To achieve this, the bank is intensifying its business process re-engineering activities and further strengthening centralised credit and risk functions. At the same time, emphasis is being placed on expanding digital and automation-driven structures," he added.



PHOTO: AL-ARAFAH ISLAMI BANK

Khwaja Shahriar, chairman of Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC, inaugurates the bank's "Annual Business Conference 2026" at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka recently.