

Ispahani Centre signs lease deal with YKK Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The newly built Ispahani Centre, a nine-storey commercial complex at Ispahani Moor in Lalkhan Bazar, Chattogram, has signed a lease agreement with YKK Bangladesh Pte Ltd.

Under the agreement, YKK Bangladesh's sales office will be located on the fifth floor of the building and operate their business activities.

Shinobu Nakayama, administrative coordinator of YKK Bangladesh Pte Ltd,

and Ali Ispahani, director of the Ispahani Group, signed the agreement at a ceremony held at the Avenue Hotel in the port city recently, according to a press release.

Established in 2001, YKK Bangladesh Pte Ltd is a subsidiary of Japan based YKK Group and manufactures zippers and buttons for the apparel industry.

Designed to host a curated mix of office, retail and dining tenants, Ispahani Centre underscores the Ispahani Group's focus on developing planned, multi-use commercial spaces in Chattogram.



Shinobu Nakayama, administrative coordinator of YKK Bangladesh Pte Ltd, and Ali Ispahani, director of the Ispahani Group, exchange signed documents of the lease agreement at the Avenue Hotel in Chattogram recently. PHOTO: ISP AHANI GROUP

Latif Hasan appointed DMD of United Commercial Bank

STAR BUSINESS DESK

United Commercial Bank PLC (UCB) has appointed M Latif Hasan to the post of deputy managing director (DMD) and head of structured corporate.

Hasan will lead the structured corporate division, concurrently, of the bank.



M Latif Hasan

Prior to joining UCB, he was serving at Habib Bank Limited (HBL), Bangladesh, as head of corporate banking, according to a press release.

With over three decades of experience in the banking industry, he brings deep expertise and strategic insight, which are expected to further strengthen UCB's corporate banking capabilities.

Over the course of his career, Hasan has held several senior leadership positions at both international and local banks.

He previously served at Standard Bank PLC, Citibank, N.A.; Eastern Bank PLC; and Prime Bank PLC, working in different capacities.

His professional strengths include corporate relationship management, business development, credit and risk management, finance, and banking operations.

Hasan obtained his master's degree in finance from the University of Dhaka and an MBA from Victoria University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia.

He is a CSA (Credit Skill Assessment)-certified professional from Omega Performance, the US.



PHOTO: BATA BANGLADESH

Faria Yasmin, managing director of Bata Bangladesh, and actress Sabila Nur, the brand's ambassador, jointly inaugurate the footwear maker's new retail store at Meridian Kohinoor City Shopping Mall in Chattogram yesterday.

Bata opens new retail store in Chattogram

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Bata Bangladesh has opened a new retail outlet at Meridian Kohinoor City Shopping Mall in Chattogram, marking another step in the footwear maker's expansion of its modern retail network.

The 5,200-square-foot store, located on Level-6 of the mall, features Bata's latest store design with enhanced product displays and a wide range of footwear for men, women and children.

Faria Yasmin, managing director of Bata Bangladesh, and actress Sabila Nur, the brand's ambassador, jointly inaugurated the store, according to a press release.

To mark the launch, Bata hosted a programme, titled "Meet & Greet with Sabila Nur", offering shoppers an interactive experience and strengthening the brand's engagement with customers

in Chattogram.

The new outlet underscores Bata Bangladesh's continued focus on expanding its retail footprint while upholding its commitment to comfort, quality and style.

The footwear maker said the opening reflects its broader goal of delivering a more elevated, global-standard shopping experience for customers across the country. Kohinoor Kamal, chairperson of Meridian Group, and Akib Kamal, director, attended the event as special guests.

Elias Ahmed, finance director; Arfanul Hoque, retail director; Nusrat Hasan, head of marketing; and Md Saidur Rahman, chief of I&D and franchise, along with other officials from Bata Bangladesh and Meridian Kohinoor City, were also present.

Prime Bank, LifePlus partner to expand digital healthcare services

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank PLC has recently signed an agreement with LifePlus Bangladesh Ltd, a sister concern of the Labaid Group, to expand digital healthcare access for Prime Bank customers through an integrated digital platform.

Joarder Tanvir Faisal, head of cards and retail assets of Prime Bank PLC, and Sharif Md Abid, chief executive officer of LifePlus Bangladesh Ltd, signed the agreement at Prime Aspire on Gulshan Avenue in Dhaka, according to a press release.

Under the partnership, Prime Bank

customers will be able to directly access the LifePlus app through the MyPrime Internet Banking Portal, enabling them to conveniently avail a wide range of healthcare services.

The collaboration aims to simplify access to digital healthcare solutions and promote better health management for customers.

AZM Fouz Ullah Chowdhury, senior vice president and head of digital channels of the bank, and Md Al-Hasib, head of business of LifePlus Bangladesh Ltd, along with senior officials from both organisations, were also present at the event.



PHOTO: PRIME BANK

Sharif Md Abid, chief executive officer of LifePlus Bangladesh Ltd, and Joarder Tanvir Faisal, head of cards and retail assets of Prime Bank PLC, pose for a photograph after signing the agreement at Prime Aspire on Gulshan Avenue in Dhaka recently.

Jamuna Bank signs MoU with Microcredit Regulatory Authority



PHOTO: JAMUNA BANK

Md Nure Alom Mahadi, executive director of the Microcredit Regulatory Authority, and AKM Atiqur Rahman, deputy managing director and chief information officer of Jamuna Bank PLC, pose for a photograph after signing the memorandum of understanding at the former's head office in Agargaon, Dhaka recently.

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Jamuna Bank PLC has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Microcredit Regulatory Authority (MRA) of Bangladesh to enhance institutional cooperation and expand modern banking services.

AKM Atiqur Rahman, deputy managing director and chief information officer of Jamuna Bank PLC, and Md Nure Alom Mahadi, executive director of the Microcredit Regulatory Authority, signed the MoU at the latter's head office in Agargaon, Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

Under the agreement, Jamuna Bank will provide payroll banking services and install a cash recycling machine (CRM) at the MRA premises to ensure smooth salary disbursement, efficient cash management, and improved banking convenience for MRA officials and employees.

The partnership reflects Jamuna Bank's commitment to technology-driven banking solutions and its continued focus on digital transformation and institutional efficiency. The collaboration marks another step forward in the bank's journey towards digital transformation and inclusive banking, the release added. Other senior officials from both organisations were also present.

Digital ambitions

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He added, "There is no clear plan for employing the thousands of computer science graduates entering the job market, even as the tech sector faces job cuts. Both parties mention AI, but neither addresses the risks it brings."

NCP & CPB PROPOSE CITIZEN-CENTRIC APPROACHES

The NCP envisions a citizen-centric digital state, creating 1.5 million digital economy jobs in BPO, freelancing, remote work, data services, cybersecurity, and customer support, supported by digital hubs in all 64 districts.

A unified NID-based digital ID will act as a single gateway to all public services, while government services will be fully digitised, paperless, and trackable.

The party also plans a secure national data infrastructure,

cashless payments, a central bank digital currency (CBDC), fair digital taxation, and data-driven social protection to underpin an accountable and inclusive digital Bangladesh.

The CPB prioritises science, technology, and ICT for national development, emphasising public welfare over corporate profit and surveillance.

Within six months, it will launch a National Science, Technology, and Research Policy linking education, research, and industry, with public research funding allocated transparently through peer review.

ICT and AI will follow human-centred ethical guidelines, supporting reskilling, strengthening data protection, and building digital infrastructure that safeguards citizens' rights.

Jamuna Electronics holds partners' meet in Cox's Bazar

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Jamuna Electronics and Automobiles Limited (JEAL) recently organised a three-day "Partners Meet 2026" in Cox's Bazar.

Dealers and business partners of the automobile company from across the country took part in the event to further strengthen relationships between the company and its partners.

Monika Islam, director of Jamuna Group, inaugurated the programme as the chief guest, according to a press release.

At the event, Salim Ullah Salim, marketing director of Jamuna Electronics, said, "This event is not just an ordinary gathering; it is a strong bridge of connection with our business partners. To achieve our dreams, we must all work together."

Salim added that Jamuna Electronics would strengthen its brand promotion and marketing activities in the future and provide full support to help partners increase sales.



PHOTO: JAMUNA GROUP

The awarded partners of Jamuna Electronics and Automobiles Limited pose for a group photograph with crests at the "Partners Meet 2026" programme in Cox's Bazar recently.

Farm pledges look achievable

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Without a shift in approach, he said, agriculture will continue to face long-term structural problems.

Agricultural economist Jahangir Alam Khan said meeting the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on food and nutrition would require annual agricultural growth of at least 4 percent.

None of the manifestos explains how that target would be achieved, he notes. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the agriculture growth rate stood at 1.79 percent in fiscal year (FY) 2024-25, the lowest level recorded in the past 11 years.

Khan expressed concern over rising dependence on agricultural imports and criticised the absence of a clear import substitution strategy.

Farming land is shrinking by around 0.2 percent each year, and more than half of farmland is losing fertility, yet manifestos offer no concrete plan for either intensive cultivation or soil restoration to

tackle these issues, he said.

"Most parties rely on generic promises – such as lowering input costs or introducing precision agriculture – without offering timelines, strategies or realistic assessments," said M Asaduzzaman, former research director at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

The manifestos completely overlook the fact that around 50 percent of the farmers in the country own less than one acre of land, he added.

"Advanced farming techniques are mentioned, but there is little explanation of how landless or marginal farmers would benefit from these," Asaduzzaman also said that Bangladesh has the lowest land productivity in South Asia, yet no manifesto presents a clear plan to address it.

Water management remains largely unaddressed by the political parties. Despite abundant rainfall,

Bangladesh depends heavily on groundwater for irrigation, unlike many other countries, he stated.

A top official of a prominent agribusiness company in the country is of the opinion that the issues highlighted by political parties are largely realistic and achievable if implemented properly.

Bringing up the "Farmer's Card" as an example, the official said the measure could quickly improve access to loans and subsidies for water and electricity, with an immediate impact on farmers' lives.

Munjer Alam, an agri-entrepreneur from Chapainawabganj, said critical areas such as food processing have been overlooked in the manifestos. More attention in those areas could quickly raise incomes and create rural jobs.

"Educated youth are increasingly entering agriculture, but current policies offer little guidance or opportunity for their meaningful engagement," he added.