

Prime Bank, Vista Electronics partner to offer benefits for customers

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank PLC has recently entered into a partnership agreement with Vista Electronics Limited, a home appliance manufacturer in Bangladesh, to offer benefits to its customers.

Joarder Tanvir Faisal, head of cards and retail assets at Prime Bank PLC, and Lokman Hossain Akash, managing director of Vista Electronics Limited, signed the agreement at the bank's corporate office in Dhaka, according to a press release.

Under the agreement, Prime Bank customers will enjoy special discounts

on various products offered by Vista Electronics Ltd.

The partnership reflects Prime Bank's ongoing commitment to enhancing customer value by offering lifestyle benefits through strategic collaborations with reputed partners, the release added.

Hossain Mohammad Zakaria, head of customer propositions at the bank, and Sufia Noor Shilpi, assistant general manager and head of corporate sales at the electronics appliance manufacturer, along with other senior officials from both organisations, were also present.



Lokman Hossain Akash, managing director of Vista Electronics Limited, and Joarder Tanvir Faisal, head of cards and retail assets at Prime Bank PLC, pose for a photograph after signing the agreement at the bank's corporate office in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: PRIME BANK

Mahbub Anam elected BAPA president



Mahbub Anam



SM Shoab Hasan

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mahbub Anam, managing director of Lal Teer Seed Limited, and Syed Muhammad Shoab Hasan, managing director of Boyalkhali Agro-based Industries, have been elected president and general secretary, respectively, of the Bangladesh Agro-Processors' Association (BAPA) for a two-year term (2026-28).

Uzma Chowdhury, director of PRAN Agro Limited, and Moshirur Rahman, managing director of Paragon Agro Limited, were also elected senior vice-president and vice-president of the association, according to a press release.

Mohammad Delwar Hossain, chairman of the BAPA election board and deputy secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, announced the results following the association's biennial election held on March 15.

Mohammad Hashib Sarker and Sheikh Shamsul Arefeen, members of the election board and senior assistant secretaries of the ministry, assisted the chairman to hold the election.

Minhaj Ahmed, managing director of Ahmed Food Products (Pvt) Limited, was elected treasurer.

Anayet Rashid, director of Lalmai Food Products Limited; Kohinor Kamal, chairperson of Meridian Foods Limited; Mohammad Wahidul Islam, director of Kishwan Snacks Limited; Mohammad Babul Sareng, managing director of Majestic Enterprise (Pvt) Limited; Michael De, proprietor of Thai Food Products; Md Moin Uddin, director of Star Line Food Products Limited; Mohammad Al Imran, proprietor of Fahmida Consumer Products; Md Labu Hossain, proprietor of Habib Food Products; Md Mizanur Rahman, proprietor of Need Agro Foods; and Papon Rahman, proprietor of FA Food Products, were included in the 15-member executive committee of BAPA.

Aristopharma, bKash team up to enable direct stakeholder payouts



Ali Ahmed, chief commercial officer of bKash Limited, and Mohammad Sahid Hassan, deputy managing director of Aristopharma Limited, pose for a photograph after signing the agreement at the drug maker's head office in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: BKASH

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Aristopharma Limited, one of the country's leading pharmaceutical companies, has recently signed an agreement with bKash Limited, the leading mobile

financial service (MFS) provider in Bangladesh to disburse payments directly to its stakeholders through bKash.

The initiative is expected to simplify field-level financial management, making it more transparent and secure.

It will also support the development of a cashless ecosystem by reducing the risks associated with handling physical cash.

Mohammad Sahid Hassan, deputy managing director of Aristopharma Limited, and Ali Ahmed, chief commercial officer of bKash Limited, signed the agreement at the drug maker's head office in Dhaka, according to a press release.

As part of the agreement, Aristopharma will use bKash's "Disbursement Solution" to send payments directly to stakeholders' bKash accounts.

Recipients will be able to cash out funds from bKash agent points or ATM booths nationwide.

Alternatively, they can use their balances digitally for a range of services, including merchant payments, utility bill payments (gas, electricity and water), money transfers and mobile recharges.

They can also pay educational or government fees, open DPS accounts in banks, purchase travel tickets and make donations.

Ahmed Intiaz Hassan, director of Aristopharma; Md Maminul Islam, executive director and company secretary; Mohammad Siddiqui Alam Sikder, executive director; Masrur Chowdhury, head of business sales at bKash; and Md Somel Reza Khan, general manager of the business sales department, were also present at the event.

China's neighbours

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China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not immediately respond to questions from Reuters.

'A TRIED AND TESTED PLAYBOOK'

China's flagship Belt and Road infrastructure initiative has seen world leaders regularly congregate in Beijing to discuss 'win-win' cooperation but with the region now short on fuel and fertiliser, Southeast Asian capitals are instead looking for replacements from the likes of Russia.

"China won't want to create expectations it can't sustain. Beijing has no desire to be a regional energy backstop for an indefinite

period of disruption," according to Ruby Osman, a senior policy adviser at the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change.

Beijing will likely stick to its tried-and-tested playbook: imposing sharp, broad curbs on energy and energy-related exports before selectively resuming trade once officials are confident domestic demand can be met, she said.

Famine and scarcity remain deeply embedded in China's political consciousness, with the trauma of Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution still close enough to remember. "Only if China gets

more comfortable with its own exposure, then I would expect meaningful support," said Max Zenglein, senior economist at the Conference Board Asia. "I expect any support will be very transactional. Not a good position to be in if you are one of those countries, unfortunately."

Wang Jin, a senior fellow at the Beijing Club for International Dialogue, a think tank under China's foreign ministry, said Beijing could also benefit if the shock pushes trading partners to accelerate investment in green and nuclear energy, sectors where China leads after years of state-backed investment.

A riskier Mideast

FROM PAGE B4
A structurally higher oil price would change the upstream calculus for the world's energy giants.

This shift comes as the industry's appetite for new oil and gas investment has been strengthening. Over the past year, oil companies have significantly increased spending on exploration worldwide - from West Africa and the eastern Mediterranean to Brazil and Southeast Asia.

That was a sharp break from the prior decade, when shareholder pressure and fears of a rapid demand decline driven by the energy transition reduced upstream investment. Today, companies - spurred by new outlooks suggesting fossil fuel demand won't peak until next decade - are increasingly confident that more supply will be needed through the end of the decade.

Of course, exploration remains a high-risk, high-reward business requiring heavy upfront

investment. Projects can also often take more than a decade to progress from the first drilling campaign to production.

Still, higher long-term prices would expand the pool of economically viable reserves worldwide. And, importantly, the spiking risk premium in the Middle East is likely to push more capital toward regions previously deemed more risky or marginal.

Venezuela offers a case in point. Its oil industry reopened to Western companies after the US deposed President Nicolas Maduro in January, yet investment in the country has remained tepid given political uncertainty and concerns over the sector's dilapidated infrastructure.

In a more bullish price environment, however, Venezuela's vast resources could suddenly appear more appealing - particularly if the relative geopolitical risk gap between Venezuela and the Gulf shrinks.

Vietnam textile

FROM PAGE B4
In practice, export orders have not been significantly affected, but risks remain, particularly for shipping routes passing through the region to Europe and partly to the US East Coast.

Shipping companies have increased insurance premiums, adding costs, while importing materials such as cotton from the US takes longer due to rerouting, affecting production schedules.

Orders that previously took about two months including shipping now require up to one and a half months for transportation alone, causing disruptions. Although total production time remains unchanged, longer delivery times require careful adjustment of production schedules, Cam said.

He emphasised that textile enterprises must prioritise resilience amid uncertainty by maintaining financial flexibility, managing exchange rate and raw material risks, restructuring supply chains and upgrading value-added capabilities.

"In a context where high tariffs are becoming the

new normal, competitive advantage will belong to companies that control costs well, comply with origin requirements and ensure fast delivery," he said.

Lê Tiến Trường, Vinatex chairman, added that amid volatility in tariffs, geopolitics and logistics costs, businesses must remain proactive and flexible, developing specific action plans based on different scenarios. For the EU market, companies need to prepare for changing transport routes, rising logistics costs and longer delivery times. For the US market, they must anticipate continued pressure from buyers to adjust prices, especially as China maintains a low yuan, increasing competition.

Companies are advised to accelerate shipments during the 150-day period when an additional 10 percent tariff applies to optimise delivery plans and reduce policy risks. Maintaining balance across production, finance and markets will determine business resilience, allowing companies to retain market share, stabilise employment and achieve growth targets.

Iran inflation rate rises to 50.6%: statistics centre

AFP, Tehran

Iran's annual inflation rate rose to 50.6 percent by mid-March, up three percentage points from the previous month, the country's official statistics centre said on Sunday.

"The inflation rate for the twelve months ending in Esfand (from February 20 to March 20) reached 50.6 percent," the centre said in a statement carried by the official IRNA news agency.

The rate had stood at 47.5 percent in the previous month, covering the period from January 21 to February 19.

The rise in prices comes with Iran at war with the United States and Israel since February 28, when strikes that killed the country's supreme leader triggered a conflict that has since spread across the Middle East.

On March 20, Iran marked the start of the Nowruz holidays, the Persian New Year.

Pashchimanchal Gas Company Limited (A Company of Petrobangla) Head Office, Nalka, Sirajganj, Bangladesh.

দুর্নীতিকে না বলুন, নৈতিকতা বেনে চলুন

ছালানি নিরাপত্তা সর্বোচ্চ অগ্রাধিকার

Notice for Early Market Engagement (EME)

Memo No. 28.18.0000.000.087.14.0005.25/164

Date: 25/03/2026

Employer: Pashchimanchal Gas Company Limited

Project: Gas Sector Efficiency Improvement and Carbon Abatement Project

Contract title: Design, Supply, Installation & Commissioning of SCADA & GIS for 10 nos. Gas Stations with Necessary Hardware & Software.

Country: Bangladesh

Project ID: P179009

The Pashchimanchal Gas Company Limited has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Gas Sector Efficiency Improvement and Carbon Abatement Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the Contract for the procurement of "Design, Supply, Installation & Commissioning of SCADA & GIS for 10 nos. Gas Stations with Necessary Hardware & Software".

This is to inform to all the concerned that a meeting on Early Market Engagement as per World Bank Procurement Regulations February 2025 for the procurement of "Design, Supply, Installation & Commissioning of SCADA & GIS for 10 nos. Gas Stations with Necessary Hardware & Software" under "Installation of Smart Prepaid Gas Meters, SCADA & GIS at PGCL Franchise Area Project" will be held on 15 April 2026 at 2:30 p.m. (BST) (UTC+6:00) at Conference Room, PGCL Head Office, Nalka, Sirajganj, Bangladesh on Hybrid Mode (Zoom Platform).

Interested Contractors / Vendors / Manufacturers are requested to visit Notice Board of PGCL Website (pgcl.gov.bd) for google link registration (starts: 01/04/2026 & closes: 13/04/2026) to attend the meeting. Attending the meeting physically is highly encouraged but those who are interested to attend the meeting on Zoom Platform will be provided zoom link / zoom id & password at their WhatsApp number or email address against google link registration.

Attending early market engagement is not mandatory to participate in the bidding later.

Agenda:

- 1) To inform about SCADA & GIS Procurement Package.
- 2) To get informed about different features of SCADA & GIS of different Manufacturers / Bidders / Vendors.
- 3) To get informed about previous experience of Manufacturers/Bidder/Vendor.
- 4) To get informed about financial strength of Manufacturers/Bidder/Vendor.

Engr. Debdeep Barua
Project Director

Installation of Smart Prepaid Gas Meters, SCADA & GIS at PGCL Franchise Area Project

PGPR-37/2025-2026 (3x8")

GD-665

Agrani Bank PLC.	
Information Technology & MIS Division Head Office, Dhaka-1000.	
INVITATION FOR ENLISTMENT (IFE)	
1	Procuring Entity Name Agrani Bank PLC., Information Technology & MIS Division, Head Office, 9/D, Dilkusha C/A, Motijheel, Dhaka.
2	Procuring Entity District All Over Bangladesh.
3	Invitation for Enlistment Category: Category 1: Server, Laptop, Projector, Printer, Scanner, Computer, UPS and related accessories. Category 2: Networking device and related accessories Category 3: Supply of Data Connectivity and Internet Connectivity. Category 4: Repairing of Server, PC, Printer, UPS etc.
4	Invitation Ref No. ABPLC/IT/IFE-04/126/2026-2027
5	Date 30/03/2026
6	Procurement Method Limited Tendering Method (LTM)
7	Application Closing Date and Time Date: 23/04/2026 Time: 4:00 PM
8	Name & Address of the Office(s) Information Technology & MIS Division, Agrani Bank PLC., Head Office (1st floor), 9/D Dilkusha C/A, Motijheel, Dhaka-1000.
-	Application Form Availability From Date: 06/04/2026 to Date: 22/04/2026 Time: During Transaction Hours (10:00AM-04:00PM)
-	Last Date of Application Submission Until Date: 23/04/2026 Time: 04:00PM
9	Eligibility of Applicant a. Must be an Authorized and valid Distributor/Partner/reseller Certificate of major item of respective category (category 1-3). b. Must have valid Trade License. c. Must have TIN & VAT Registration Certificate d. Must have Bank Solvency Certificate (Up to date) e. Minimum 3 years experience in respective field f. Affidavit Article of Association of the Firm (if applicable) g. Proof of e-GP Registration/e-GP ID (category 1-3). h. Other documents detailed in Application Form for Enlistment
10	Price of Application Form (Tk) 500.00 (Five Hundred) Taka Only (non-refundable) per set in the form of Pay Order favouring Agrani Bank PLC. Pay Order have to be submitted along with forwarding letter in their letter pad for collecting the Application Form.
11	Enlistment/Renewal Fee (Tk) Tk. 5,000.00 (Five Thousand) / Tk. 2,000.00 (Two Thousand) Taka Only (non-refundable) Enlistment/Renewal Fee (Tk.) must be submitted in the form of Pay Order in favor of Agrani Bank PLC. (After the Evaluation of Enlistment only enlisted/selected firm/Company shall be notified to submit enlistment/Renewal Fee.)
12	Enlistment Security (Tk) 25,000.00 (Twenty Five Thousand) Taka Only (refundable) for each category. Only selected firms after evaluation shall be notified to submit Enlistment Security i.e. 25,000.00 Taka Pay Order issued from any branch of Agrani Bank PLC favouring Agrani Bank PLC.
13	Name of Official Inviting Application Salim Reza
14	Designation of Official Inviting Application Deputy General Manager
15	Address of Official Inviting Application Information Technology & MIS Division, Agrani Bank PLC., Head Office (1st floor), 9/D Dilkusha C/A, Motijheel, Dhaka-1000.
16	Contact details of Official Inviting Application Phone No : 88-02-223390320 e-mail: salim@agrani.bank
17	The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all Applications