

ICAB holds conference on women in leadership and governance

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) yesterday organised a conference, titled “Women in Leadership and Governance 2026”, at the Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel in Dhaka.

The conference brought together policymakers, corporate leaders, regulators, development partners and members of leading professional bodies to advance dialogue on leadership, governance and board diversity.

Abdul Moyeen Khan, a lawmaker and standing committee member of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), inaugurated the conference as the chief guest, according to a press release.

In his remarks, Khan highlighted women’s significant contribution to

Bangladesh’s economic and social progress and emphasised the need for greater representation of women in corporate leadership and boardrooms.

Rasheda K Chowdhury, former adviser to the caretaker government, and Barrister Jahrat Adib Chowdhury, a member of parliament, attended the programme as guests of honour.

Presented by Global Innovation & Leadership Centre (GILC), the conference reflected ICAB’s commitment to leadership development, governance readiness and inclusion.

Zareen Mahmud Hosein, chairperson of GILC and council member of ICAB, said, “Stronger leadership is built through partnership. This conference demonstrates what becomes possible when institutions come together with a shared purpose.”



Abdul Moyeen Khan, a lawmaker and standing committee member of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), attends the conference, titled “Women in Leadership and Governance 2026”, organised by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB), at the Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel in Dhaka yesterday. PHOTO: ICAB

Mercantile Bank launches trade finance analytics software

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mercantile Bank PLC has launched its new trade finance analytics (TFA) software, a foreign trade-based reporting and monitoring solution, at its head office in Dhaka recently.

The newly deployed system is designed to provide the bank with an advanced, automated framework to streamline foreign trade reporting and strengthen monitoring capabilities across its network.

Mati Ul Hasan, managing director of

the bank, inaugurated the software as the chief guest, according to a press release.

The event was held in a hybrid format, allowing both physical and virtual participation.

Participants included members of the bank’s senior management team, the TFA software steering committee, and the project implementation team.

Officials from the bank’s international division, authorised dealer (AD) branches, and central trade processing centre (CTPC) units also attended the session.



PHOTO: MERCANTILE BANK

Mati Ul Hasan, managing director of Mercantile Bank PLC, poses for a group photograph during the launching ceremony of the bank’s new Trade Finance Analytics software and its go-live programme at its head office in Dhaka recently.

Shahjalal Islami Bank clients to receive discounts at Perfect Global Health

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Shahjalal Islami Bank PLC has signed an agreement with Perfect Global Health, a Dhaka-based healthcare consultancy firm, to provide enhanced healthcare facilities to its customers.

Kaysar Kader Salim, chief executive officer of the healthcare consultancy company, and Md Shafiul Islam, assistant vice-president of the bank, signed the agreement at the bank’s corporate head office in Dhaka on Sunday, according to a press release.

Under the deal, the bank’s cardholders will be able to access special services and enjoy up to 10 percent discount on healthcare treatments at selected

hospitals in India, Thailand, Malaysia, Turkey and China through Perfect Global Health.

Md Jafar Sadeq, deputy managing director of the bank, attended the event.

AKM Hasan Rahim, head of human resources division of the bank; Md Khirkil Nowaz, head of retail business; SM Mohiuddin, head of retail investment department; Shamsul Arifin Ferdose, manager of Airport Road branch; KM Harunur Rashid, head of public relations and Bank Foundation; and Parvez Kamal Rubel, marketing manager of the healthcare consultancy firm, alongside senior officials of both the organisations, were also present at the signing ceremony.



Kaysar Kader Salim, chief executive officer of Perfect Global Health, and Md Shafiul Islam, assistant vice-president of Shahjalal Islami Bank PLC, pose for a photograph after signing the agreement at the bank’s corporate head office in Dhaka on Sunday. PHOTO: SHAHJALAL ISLAMI BANK

Shimanto Bank offers subsidised home loans for govt employees



PHOTO: SHIMANTO BANK

Ferdous Rowshan Ara, additional secretary (administration and planning wing) of the Finance Division, and Md Nurul Azim, managing director and CEO of Shimanto Bank PLC, pose for a photograph after signing the memorandum of understanding at the Secretariat in Dhaka recently.

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Shimanto Bank PLC has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Finance Division of the Ministry of Finance to provide home loans

at a subsidised rate for government officials and employees.

Md Nurul Azim, managing director and CEO of Shimanto Bank PLC, and Ferdous Rowshan Ara, additional secretary (administration and planning

wing) of the Finance Division, signed the MoU at the Secretariat in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

Under the MoU, all permanent government officials and employees will be eligible to avail home loans under a special scheme offered by Shimanto Bank PLC. A portion of the loan interest will be subsidised by the government, while the remaining portion will be borne by the borrower.

Mohammad Abul Hashem, additional secretary of the Planning, Development and Reform Wing of the Finance Division, presided over the signing ceremony.

Mohammad Golam Kabir, deputy secretary of the Housing Building Loan Branch (additional charge) of the Finance Division; TS Shamim Siddiky, deputy secretary of House Building Loan Cell-2 (additional charge); Md Sahidul Islam, head of business; and Mohammad Masud Sajjad, head of retail assets and liabilities at Shimanto Bank PLC, along with senior officials from both institutions, were also present at the ceremony.



Md Humaun Kabir, managing director and CEO of Elevate Solutions Limited, and Kazi Rayhan Kabir, executive general manager and chief information technology officer of Uttara Bank PLC, pose for a photograph after signing the agreement at the bank’s head office in Dhaka on Sunday. PHOTO: UTTARA BANK

Uttara Bank partners with Elevate Solutions for SOC deployment

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Uttara Bank PLC has signed an agreement with Elevate Solutions Limited, a Dhaka-based software company, to implement a modern Security Operations Centre (SOC) powered by Microsoft Sentinel, a leading SIEM platform.

Kazi Rayhan Kabir, executive general manager and chief information technology officer of the bank, and Md Humaun Kabir, managing director and CEO of the software company, signed the agreement at the bank’s head office in Dhaka on Sunday, according to a press release.

Under the initiative, Elevate Solutions Limited will design, deploy and operate a centralised SOC to strengthen the bank’s cybersecurity framework.

The platform will enable real-time monitoring, advanced threat detection and faster incident response, enhancing protection of the bank’s digital infrastructure.

Nvidia unveils AI infrastructure deals with South Korea

AFP, Seoul

US chip titan Nvidia announced on Monday a raft of artificial intelligence deals in South Korea, where booming business for semiconductor companies is fuelling debate over how much of the profits go to workers.

Nvidia, the world’s most valuable company, unveiled with SK Telecom a “gigawatt-scale” AI data centre construction project, with the first facility set to come online in 2027.

It will support “AI services for enterprises and industries across Korea, with the vision to expand to greater Asia regions”, the companies said.

No figure was given for how much the pair will invest in the data centres, or for other new tie-ups that Nvidia touted with the likes of Naver, LG Group, Hyundai and Doosan Group, including on AI robotics.

The deals were unveiled after Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang spent the weekend eating barbecue and fried chicken with the country’s tech leaders in Seoul and appearing on a popular TV show.

Nvidia also said it would work with chipmaker SK hynix to develop advanced memory components that are needed to run AI systems but are currently in short supply.

Nvidia, the world’s most valuable company, unveiled with SK Telecom a “gigawatt-scale” AI data centre construction project, with the first facility set to come online in 2027

Their “multi-year technology partnership” will “sustain the global buildup of AI factories” by supporting supply for advanced memory chips, they said.

Lian Jye Su, a chief analyst at Omdia, told AFP that Nvidia’s new deals were “about strengthening existing relationships and further validating South Korea’s role in the global AI supply chain”.

Governments and companies are pouring hundreds of billions of dollars into AI infrastructure, creating a global memory chip shortage.

That has sent profits skyrocketing for manufacturers such as SK hynix and rival Samsung Electronics, whose union recently agreed a deal with management on bonuses.

The chair of SK Group, parent of SK Telecom and SK hynix, vowed last week to double production capacity of the silicon wafers used to make memory chips.

But Chey Tae-won also reiterated his prediction that shortages could persist until 2030.

Huang signed a memory chip display at the SK hynix booth at last week’s Computex trade show in Taipei, writing: “Please make more.”

Asked in Taipei about the labour dispute at Samsung, Huang said companies should pay workers “as much as possible”.

Under the union deal, struck to avert a strike, around 60 percent of Samsung’s domestic workforce is eligible to receive a bonus of roughly \$330,000 this year, based on a market estimate of operating profit.

BB rolls out Tk 8,000cr funds

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Refinancing support will be available for industries listed under the highest-priority and special development sectors in the Export Policy 2024-27. Priority will go to producers and exporters using domestically sourced raw materials, particularly in jute and leather.

Financing will be in the form of term loans or investments in local currency. The scheme will run for three years and may include a grace period of up to six months, BB stated in the circular.

Borrowers must maintain a satisfactory credit record. Defaulters will not qualify, and applications will be rejected if export proceeds are not repatriated through the formal banking channel.

Participating banks will also be required to collect updated CIB reports before applying for refinancing support.

According to the BB, many export-oriented industries possess strong growth potential but have failed to expand because of inadequate

access to financing. The refinance facility is expected to address this gap and encourage fresh investment in emerging export sectors.

COMPLIANCE AND MONITORING

To access either facility, scheduled banks must sign participation agreements with the BB and meet all risk management and regulatory requirements.

The central bank will monitor fund utilisation through reporting requirements and on-site inspections. Misuse of funds, submission of inaccurate information or non-compliance with scheme conditions could result in cancellation of refinancing facilities and financial penalties, the circulars said.

The central bank expects the two refinance programmes to strengthen access to finance for businesses, support job creation, stimulate production and help build a more diversified and resilient export sector at a time when Bangladesh is preparing for a more competitive global trading environment.

Govt to make

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“This move may set back the journey towards a cashless society. Many small vendors and marginal merchants are reluctant to enter the formal sector because they fear additional compliance requirements and administrative hassles,” said a market insider, requesting anonymity.

The insider added that making BINs mandatory for merchant accounts could discourage some businesses from using digital payment platforms altogether.

There are currently nearly 10 lakh merchant account holders across the country, according to industry sources.

The finance ministry official said

the government may also make BIN registration mandatory in several other areas, including opening and operating current or short-term deposit accounts with banks and non-bank financial institutions, obtaining loans, renewing trade licences, securing memberships in trade bodies, obtaining electricity and gas connections, and registering vehicles in the name of a business.

Officials familiar with the proposal said the requirement is intended to bring more businesses into the formal economy and improve the government’s ability to track commercial activities that currently take place outside the tax system.