Prime Bank partners with Health Panda for healthcare benefits

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank PLC has signed an agreement with Health Panda Limited, an international healthcare facilitation company operating in Bangladesh and the official partner of Fosun Health, to provide healthcare benefits to its priority banking customers.

Nahreen Quayyum, senior vice-president and acting head of priority banking of the bank, and Tajria Rishta Rahman, head of business development of the healthcare facilitation company, signed the agreement at the bank's corporate office in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

Under the agreement, Prime Bank priority banking customers will enjoy attractive discounts on a wide range of healthcare services offered by Health Panda in China and Malaysia, enabling them to access quality healthcare solutions at preferential rates.

The partnership reflects Prime Bank's continued commitment to enhancing the lifestyles and wellbeing of its priority banking customers through meaningful value-added partnerships.

Prime Bank's priority banking is designed to deliver a premium banking experience through personalised financial solutions, dedicated relationship management, and a range of exclusive lifestyle, travel, wellness, and healthcare privileges, the release added.

Among others, Hossain Mohammad Zakaria, head of customer propositions of the bank; Tamim Husyn, executive director; and Sanji S Gazi, general manager of the healthcare company, as well as senior officials from both organisations, were present at the signing ceremony.



Tajria Rishta Rahman, head of business development at Health Panda Limited, and Nahreen Quayyum, senior vice-president and acting head of priority banking at Prime Bank PLC, pose for a photograph after signing the agreement at the bank's corporate office in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: PRIME BANK

Anwarul made EC chairman of Mercantile Bank

STAR BUSINESS DESK



Md Anwarul Haque

Md Anwarul Haque has recently been elected as the chairman of the executive committee of Mercantile Bank PLC.

The election took place at the bank's 490th board meeting, according to a press release.

Anwarul is the immediate past chairman of the board of directors of Mercantile Bank PLC.

He has also chaired various committees of the bank, making significant contributions to its strategic direction and corporate governance.

He is the managing director of Living Plus Ltd.

In addition, Anwarul is actively involved in various financial institutions and business ventures. He is also closely associated with several socio-cultural organisations, including Gulshan Club Ltd, Dhanmondi Club Ltd and Uttara Model Club Ltd.

Southeast Bank unveils research publication 'Economic Outlook 2026'



Md Khalid Mahmood Khan, managing director and CEO of Southeast Bank PLC, poses for a photograph after launching the bank's research publication "Economic Outlook 2026 – Anchoring Insight" at its head office in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: SOUTHEAST BANK

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Southeast Bank PLC has launched its first research publication, titled "Economic Outlook 2026 – Anchoring Insight", to strengthen institutional knowledge and contribute to the sustainable development of Bangladesh's banking industry and economy.

Prepared by the bank's management information system, research and project management unit, the publication reflects Southeast Bank's commitment to strengthening research-based decision-making and strategic planning.

Md Khalid Mahmood Khan, managing director and CEO of the bank, inaugurated the publication at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

In his remarks, Khalid described "Economic Outlook 2026 – Anchoring Insight" as a milestone in Southeast Bank's knowledge-driven journey.

He congratulated the bank's management information system, research and project management unit and encouraged its members to continue producing impactful research for business growth and innovation.

The report provides a comprehensive assessment of the global and Bangladeshi economies, the banking and financial sectors, capital markets, foreign trade, remittances, key industries, sustainability, demographic trends, and the macroeconomic outlook.

Through data-driven analysis and practical insights, it supports informed decision-making across corporate banking, SME, retail banking, treasury, investment banking, and remittance, while offering valuable insights into the evolving economic landscape.

Abidur Rahman Chowdhury, additional managing director and chief operating officer of the bank; Md Mahbub Alam, additional managing director and chief risk officer; and Khairul Anam Mohiuddin, head of management information system, research and project management unit, along with the additional managing directors, deputy managing directors, senior executives, divisional heads, and branch managers from across the country, also attended the launching ceremony.

Oil prices rise

REUTERS

Oil prices rose on Thursday as investors remained cautious on the outcome of Iran-Oman talks and whether they will restore flows via the Strait of Hormuz, while reports of attacks on Saudi tankers in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden renewed supply tensions.

Brent crude futures gained 48 cents, or 0.60 percent, to $79.93 a barrel by 0755 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate futures added 29 cents, or 0.39 percent, to $75.51 a barrel.

"Traders still remember the short-lived Memorandum of Understanding signed in June, so there is understandable anxiety that any new deal could prove equally fragile," said Tim Waterer, chief market analyst at KCM Trade.

Iran and Oman have reached an understanding on the geographic coordinates for a shipping route through the Strait of Hormuz, and a joint announcement is being finalised, provided certain third parties did not interfere, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei said on Wednesday.

A proposed deal between Iran and Oman to help end the US-Iran conflict would give Tehran control over ships entering the Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz, a senior Iranian source and two regional officials told Reuters on Wednesday, one of the biggest concessions yet to Iran.

Before the conflict began in late February, the Strait of Hormuz handled about one-fifth of global daily oil and liquefied natural gas supplies.

Shahjalal Islami Bank employees to get discounts at Padma Diagnostic Centre

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Shahjalal Islami Bank PLC has signed an agreement with Padma Diagnostic Centre Limited to provide benefits to its employees.

AKM Hasan Rahim, head of the human resources division of the bank, and Mohammad Abdus Sayem, general manager of the diagnostic centre, signed the agreement at the bank's corporate head office in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

Under the agreement, Shahjalal Islami Bank's employees will be entitled to receive discounts of up to 25 percent on health services at Padma Diagnostic Centre Limited.

Md Jafar Sadeq, deputy managing director of the bank; Fajlul Karim Khan, vice-president of the human resources division; Md Riad Hossain, head of the card division; and Md Shafiul Islam, assistant vice-president of the card division, attended the event.

KM Harunur Rashid, in-charge of the public relations division and CEO of Shahjalal Islami Bank Foundation, and Md Habibul Islam Rubel, head of business development at the diagnostic centre, along with senior officials from both organisations, were also present at the signing ceremony.



Md Jafar Sadeq, deputy managing director of Shahjalal Islami Bank PLC, and Md Kaium Khan, director of Padma Diagnostic Centre Limited, exchange signed documents of the agreement at the bank's corporate head office in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: SHAHJALAL ISLAMI BANK



PHOTO: DHAKA BANK

HM Mostafizur Rahaman, senior executive vice-president and head of the retail business division at Dhaka Bank PLC, receives the award from Ziad Shatara, managing director and chief executive officer of Robi Axiata PLC, at the Robi Elite Partners Excellence Award 2026 held at the latter's corporate office in Dhaka recently.

Dhaka Bank receives Robi's Best Banking Partner award

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Dhaka Bank PLC has won the "Best Banking Partner" award at the Robi Elite Partners Excellence Award 2026 by Robi Axiata PLC in recognition of its outstanding contribution to enhancing customer engagement, delivering premium value, and strengthening the Robi Elite ecosystem during the first half of 2026.

Ziad Shatara, managing director and chief executive officer of Robi Axiata PLC, handed over the award to HM Mostafizur Rahaman, senior executive vice-president and head of the retail business division at the bank, at an award ceremony held at the former's corporate office in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

The event featured a partner recognition ceremony, leadership addresses, and networking sessions, providing a platform for Robi and its partners to strengthen collaboration, share future growth plans, and explore new opportunities to enhance customer value.

It brought together senior officials from Robi Axiata PLC and representatives from leading partner organisations to celebrate excellence in customer experience and strategic partnerships.

During the event, Robi and Dhaka Bank also celebrated the launch of the Dhaka Bank-Robi Co-Branded Visa Credit Card, designed to offer lifestyle and travel benefits to customers.

Through this recognition and continued partnership, Dhaka Bank PLC and Robi Axiata PLC reaffirmed their shared commitment to delivering innovative financial solutions, lifestyle benefits, and exceptional experiences for Robi Elite customers across Bangladesh.

Manik Lal Das, director of customer value solutions at the mobile operator, and Md Ariful Hoque, vice-president and head of transformation, along with other relevant team members, were also present at the programme.

Draft cyber security strategy

FROM PAGE B1

120 million internet users and 190 million mobile subscribers now generating millions of mobile financial transactions every day.

It says this rapid growth has significantly widened the country's exposure to cyber attacks.

Citing the Bangladesh Cyber Threat Landscape 2024 report, the draft says government platforms recorded the highest number of reported cyber incidents last year, with 63 cases.

The financial and education sectors followed with 34 incidents each.

Data breaches and leaks were the most common type of attack, accounting for 59 reported incidents, followed by website defacement and compromised user credentials.

The draft also points to a growing volume of Bangladeshi data being traded on dark web marketplaces. Email addresses made up the largest share of leaked information at 20 percent, followed by full names at 18 percent and phone numbers at 15 percent. Government-issued identity documents, including national identity cards and passports, accounted for another 10 percent.

It also highlights the country's standing on global cyber security benchmarks. As of January 2025, the draft says the country ranked 64th in the National Cyber Security Index (NCSI) with a score of 66.67.

It was also placed in the "role-modelling" tier of the International Telecommunication Union's Global Cyber Security Index 2024, although it scored comparatively lower on legal measures.

SIX PILLARS

The strategy is built around six pillars. Those are protecting critical infrastructure, creating a resilient cyber ecosystem, developing the cyber security workforce and industry, strengthening citizen protection and digital trust, securing emerging technologies, and expanding international cooperation and cyber diplomacy.

Under the first pillar, the draft calls for a comprehensive review of the country's list of critical information infrastructure and the adoption of international cyber security standards, with particular attention to small and medium-sized enterprises.

To strengthen national cyber defences, it proposes making key institutions fully operational, including the National Cyber Security Agency, a National Security Operations Centre, a National Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) and a Cyber Crisis Management Centre.

It also sets a target of securing at least $10 million in annual funding for the national agency.

The strategy aims to develop 20,000 cybersecurity professionals by 2030 and increase women's participation in the sector to at least 30 percent.

To improve public protection, it proposes a 24-hour national cybercrime helpline and a citizen-facing National Cyber Security Center.

The draft also identifies several setbacks that could slow implementation. These include a shortage of specialised cyber security professionals, weak collaboration between industry, academia and government on research commercialisation, poor cyber security practices among small and medium-sized businesses that could serve as entry points into larger networks, and continued reliance on outdated protocols such as SMB and Telnet in some systems.

The final pillar focuses on strengthening international cooperation through bilateral and multilateral cyber security agreements, joint exercises and cross-border cooperation to combat cyber crime.

TARGETS FOR 2030

The draft sets several national targets for 2030. These include placing the country among the world's top 20 in both the National Cyber Security Index and the Global Cyber Security Index, completing risk assessments for all critical information infrastructure entities and reaching 50 million people through cyber security awareness programmes.

According to the draft, the National Cyber Security Agency will establish baseline values for all performance indicators within a year of the strategy being approved. It will also publish annual progress reports, while a mid-term review is scheduled for 2028.