Ctg port plans to go fully digital by December

BSS, *Chattogram*

The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) is planning to launch massive digital transformation aimed at turning the entire operational activities of Chattogram port, the country's main gateway of seaborne foreign trade, into a fully paperless 'smart port' by next December.

The initiative is to modernise operations, cut transportation costs, ensure transparency and ease chronic traffic congestion around port entrances and exit points.

The drive follows a recent progress review meeting led by CPA Chairman Rear Admiral SM Moniruzzaman.

The meeting focused on expanding existing digital services, integrating inter-departmental platforms and eliminating remaining manual workflows.

Record shows Chattogram port handled a record 3.4 million TEUs (Twenty-foot Equivalent Units) of containers, 138 million tonnes of general cargo and 4,273 vessels in 2025, accounting for roughly 92 percent of Bangladesh's seaborne general cargo and 98 percent of containerised trade.

"Keeping in account the complex and multi-disciplinary chain work of importers, exporters, shipping lines, C&F agents, freight operators, customs and banks, CPA assessed that true efficiency requires unified digital integration rather than piecemeal online solutions," CPA Secretary Syed Refayet Hamim told BSS.

He said the new measures will expand digital automation across every operational layer while 100 percent of shipping billing is already being processed online.

Port sources said through a newly established One-Stop Service Center featuring API integration with Sonali Bank PLC, container and consignee's billing has been transitioning and linking fully to the Terminal Operating System (TOS).

The meeting focused on expanding existing digital services, integrating inter-departmental platforms and eliminating remaining manual workflows.

Importers and their nominated internal service providing agents can make payments in round the clock, including during weekends and holidays. Additionally, an auto-pull payment system will launch in order to settle port charges unpaid after 72 hours through set digital platform, the sources added.

Building on last July's milestone, which synchronised the TOS with the National Board of Revenue's (NBR) ASYCUDA World system to digitise import container delivery orders, importers can now track documents online without physical paperwork, the port sources said.

Refayet said the CPA is implementing 'Time Slot Management', online cart tickets and e-gates passes to eliminate vehicle existing tailbacks at entry and exit points.

Equipment Interchange Receipts (EIR) are being synchronised with e-gate passes, allowing truck entry, cargo loading, and exit schedules to operate within a pre-planned digital framework.

Customs auction deliveries, special delivery assignments and Inland Container Depot (ICD) workflows are being integrated via NBR and Customs APIs, enabling real-time data sharing across all logistics partners, he added.

The port secretary said digital systems will expand up to bulk cargo handling, while plans are underway for the upcoming Bay Terminal feature a slot-by-slot digital parking ticket system to control vehicle flow.

Refayet highlighted that the foundations for this shift are already proven. The port's 'Port Single Window - CPA Sky' platform, launched earlier this year, offers single-login access to port services alongside digital radar and real-time vessel tracking.

Besides, the TOS dashboard currently handles 60,000 to 65,000 gate entries monthly, hitting a single-day record of 7,080 gate passes.



Syed Maruf Ali, head of cards business of ONE Bank PLC, and Azad Shamsi, managing director and chief executive officer of SAMAN International Limited, pose for a photograph after signing the agreement at a ceremony held in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: **ONE BANK**

ONE Bank partners with SAMAN International to offer card benefits

STAR BUSINESS DESK

ONE Bank PLC has signed a partnership agreement with SAMAN International Limited, an authorised partner for corporate and industrial channel of Rock Energy Limited that primarily deals in in Bangladesh that primarily deals in automotive, marine, and industrial lubricants, to offer benefits and special discounts to the bank's cardholders.

Azad Shamsi, managing director and chief executive officer of SAMAN International Limited, and Syed Maruf Ali, head of cards business of ONE Bank PLC, signed the agreement at a ceremony held in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

Under the agreement, ONE Bank credit and debit cardholders will get flat 15 percent discount on Hyundai XTeer, Apollo, and Veedol lubricants. ONE Bank credit cardholders will also be eligible for equated monthly installment (EMI) facilities for 3 to 6 months on selected products, subject to applicable terms and conditions.

The partnership is expected to strengthen business collaboration between the two organisations while providing ONE Bank cardholders with benefits.

The initiative is also part of ONE Bank's ongoing efforts to expand its partnership network and privileges for its cardholders.

Among others, Azam Khan, Deputy managing director, chief operating officer and chief finance officer of SAMAN International Limited; Masud Parvez, director and chief business officer; Iftekhar Ahmed Zafar, deputy managing director and head of transaction and investment banking of ONE Bank PLC; and Md Mahinur Rahaman, head of business excellence, were also present at the signing ceremony.

Shahjalal Islami Bank promotes Bangla QR in Barishal

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Shahjalal Islami Bank PLC on Sunday conducted a "Bangla QR" distribution and cashless campaign in Barishal to make digital transactions easier, more secure and convenient.

The initiative was carried out at various business outlets in Barishal city under the theme "One Country, One QR; transactions via Bangla QR".

Md Jafar Sadeq, deputy managing director of the bank, attended the event as the chief guest and distributed Bangla QR codes to merchants from various sectors, according to a press release.

Jafar said the initiative was undertaken to further expand modern and digital transaction systems in Barishal. By scanning a single Bangla QR code, customers can easily pay for products using various banks and mobile financial services.

He added that the use of Bangla QR would make transactions faster and more convenient for both merchants and customers, while reducing the risks associated with carrying cash and enhancing transparency and security in financial transactions.

Such initiatives will continue in the future to expand the scope of cashless transactions at Shahjalal Islami Bank and further integrate the general public and businesspeople into the digital payment system, the release added.

Md Mazharul Haque, executive vice-president of the bank's corporate head office; Md Mominul Islam, senior assistant vice-president; and Abul Kalam Azad, manager of the bank's Barishal branch, were also present.



PHOTO: **SHAHJALAL ISLAMI BANK**

Md Jafar Sadeq, deputy managing director of Shahjalal Islami Bank PLC, distributes a Bangla QR code to a merchant in Barishal on Sunday as part of the bank's nationwide "Bangla QR" distribution and cashless campaign.

NRBC Bank holds agent banking business review

STAR BUSINESS DESK

NRBC Bank PLC organised its "Agent Banking Business Review Meeting 2026" in Dhaka on Monday.

Md Shaheen Howlader, managing director and chief executive officer (current charge) of the bank, inaugurated the meeting as the chief guest, according to a press release.

Speaking at the meeting, Shaheen said agent banking has become an important channel for extending banking services to people who have limited access to traditional branches.

"We are committed to strengthening our agent banking network and ensuring accessible and quality banking services for small entrepreneurs, farmers, students and people in underserved areas," he said.

He also stressed the importance of improving customer service, ensuring compliance and maintaining customers' confidence in agent banking services.

Serajul Amin Ahmad, head of agent banking and business unit, chaired the event.



Md Shaheen Howlader, managing director and chief executive officer (current charge) of NRBC Bank PLC, attends the bank's "Agent Banking Business Review Meeting 2026" in Dhaka on Monday. PHOTO: **NRBC BANK**

The meeting was informed that NRBC Bank commenced its agent banking operations in 2014.

Currently, the bank operates approximately 623 agent banking outlets across the country.

Through its agent banking network, NRBC Bank provides banking services to beneficiaries under various government social safety net programmes, as well as to other customers.

As of August 31, the total number of accounts maintained under agent banking stood at 275,425, with total deposits amounting to Tk 68 crore.

The meeting discussed the performance of agent banking booths, business expansion, customer service and financial inclusion. It also focused on expanding banking services among small entrepreneurs, farmers and students through school banking, the release added.



Imtiaz U Ahmed, managing director of Midland Bank PLC, inaugurates the bank's Banani Islami banking branch at Nilufar Heights on Kamal Ataturk Avenue in Dhaka's Banani on Monday. PHOTO: **MIDLAND BANK**

Midland Bank launches Islami banking branch in Banani

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Midland Bank PLC (MDB) has transformed its Banani branch into a full-fledged Islami banking branch, aiming to broaden access to shariah-compliant banking services.

Imtiaz U Ahmed, managing director of the bank, inaugurated the branch at Nilufar Heights on Kamal Ataturk Avenue in Dhaka's Banani on Monday, according to a press release.

The branch will provide a comprehensive range of shariah-compliant deposit, investment and other modern banking services to individual and corporate clients.

Midland Bank's Islami banking operations adhere strictly to shariah principles, guided by its Shariah Supervisory Committee and in compliance with relevant Bangladesh Bank guidelines.

The conversion underscores Midland Bank's commitment to expanding its Islami banking presence and offering customers accessible, modern and shariah-compliant financial solutions.

With the launch of the full-fledged Banani Islami banking branch, Midland Bank aims to meet the growing demand for shariah-based financial services among customers and businesses in Banani and neighbouring areas.

Mufti Muhammad Abu Sayeed Khan, chairman of the bank's Shariah Supervisory Committee, and committee members Abu Yousuf Md Nesar Uddin and Muhammad Shahjahan Madani attended the programme.

Md Zahid Hossain, deputy managing director and chief risk officer of the bank, and Md Nazmul Huda Sarkar, deputy managing director and chief technology officer, along with customers and other senior officials of the bank, were also present.



PHOTO: **UCB ASSET MANAGEMENT**

Sharif Zahir, chairman of United Commercial Bank PLC, inaugurates a celebration programme at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently to mark UCB Income Plus Fund's achievement of the Tk 500 crore milestone.

UCB Income Plus Fund hits Tk 500cr milestone

STAR BUSINESS DESK

UCB Income Plus Fund, a fixed-income open-end mutual fund managed by UCB Asset Management, a wholly owned subsidiary of United Commercial Bank PLC, has crossed Tk 500 crore in size, growing tenfold from its initial Tk 50 crore since its launch in July 2023.

This is a rare feat, as such scalability has not been achieved in the past 15 years, according to a press release.

The bank and the asset management company jointly organised a celebration programme at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently to mark the achievement.

Sharif Zahir, chairman of the bank, inaugurated the celebration as the chief guest.

The fund's growth from Tk 50 crore to more than Tk 500 crore in just three years and three months reflects growing investor confidence in open-end mutual funds managed by credible asset managers.

Established in 2020, UCB Asset Management has become the fastest-growing asset management company in Bangladesh, while UCB Income Plus Fund has become the largest mutual fund managed by a private asset management company.

Only two open-end funds managed by ICB currently have higher assets under management.

The achievement reflects the collective contribution of UCB Asset Management's investors, team, regulators and fellow asset managers. Managing a mark-to-market fixed-income fund through a volatile interest-rate cycle presented significant challenges, while continued investor confidence played a key role in sustaining the fund's performance and supporting its growth.