‘Bubble tea diplomacy’ can strengthen Bangladesh-Malaysia ties

Malaysian charge d’affaires says

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Bangladesh and Malaysia can deepen their longstanding bilateral ties through greater people-to-people exchanges, including food and beverage businesses, said Hazwan Hasnol, charge d’affaires of the Malaysian High Commission and head of chancery.

He made the remarks while inaugurating an outlet of Malaysian bubble tea brand Tealive Bangladesh in Banani, Dhaka yesterday.

“Malaysia and Bangladesh have long enjoyed close, friendly bilateral relations. Our cooperation continues to expand across various sectors, including trade, investment, education, tourism, healthcare and cultural exchanges,” Hazwan said.

He described the entry and expansion of Tealive in Bangladesh as a new dimension of bilateral relations, calling it “bubble tea diplomacy”.

“We often speak about diplomacy through official meetings, negotiations and agreements. But I believe that diplomacy can also happen in much simpler and more enjoyable ways -- over a cup of tea,” he said.

Hazwan Hasnol, charge d’affaires of the Malaysian High Commission, described the entry and expansion of Malaysian bubble tea brand Tealive in Bangladesh as a new dimension of bilateral relations.

He said the entry and expansion of Malaysian brands in Bangladesh could create opportunities for greater commercial engagement between businesses of the two countries, particularly in the food service and consumer sectors.

Tealive offers a range of beverages in Bangladesh, including milk tea, fruit tea and matcha, and is targeting younger consumers.

The Banani outlet is part of the brand’s expansion in Bangladesh, with the food and beverage sector attracting both local and international brands.

Ashmita Irad Ali, managing director of A&I Food and Beverage, said the company has opened two Tealive outlets in Dhaka, in Gulshan-2 and Banani.

She said the idea came from her family’s love for bubble tea.

“We used to have bubble tea almost every day, and my husband said, ‘If you love it so much, you should have your own brand.’ That’s the story behind Tealive’s opening,” she said.

Tealive is halal-certified and uses biodegradable cups, she said. The brand offers both hot and cold beverages and aims to cater to consumers across generations.

She said the company will open another outlet in Chattogram on October 15.

Mohammad Irad Ali, group managing director of A&I Group; Ammar Hashmi, chief operating officer of Tealive Bangladesh; Khairul Anuar Bin Baharuddin, international operation manager of Tealive in Malaysia; and Md Anwar Shahid, president of the Bangladesh-Malaysia Business Chamber of Commerce and Industry, along with guests from the high commissions of Singapore and Malaysia, also attended the event.

Mahbubor made chairman of SBAC Bank Investment

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mohammad Mahbubor Rahman has been elected chairman of SBAC Bank Investment Limited (SBIL), a DSE-registered brokerage and investment banking subsidiary of SBAC Bank PLC.

The election was held at the company’s 30th board meeting in Dhaka on Wednesday, according to a



press release. He currently serves as chief executive officer and director of Finance at Intec Solution.

Mahbubor is the representative director of SBAC Bank PLC, nominated by Intec Solution, and a distinguished professional accountant and corporate executive with more than 27 years of leadership experience across six countries – Bangladesh, Malaysia, Vietnam, South Korea, Thailand and Cambodia.

He has held senior positions at organisations including Starwood Hotels & Resorts and Marriott International.



Mahmudul Bari, group adviser of Sandhani Group, and Shaila Abedin, senior executive vice-president and head of liability and women banking at Prime Bank PLC, pose for a photograph after signing the memorandum of understanding at the bank’s head office in Dhaka yesterday. PHOTO: **PRIME BANK**

Prime Bank, Sandhani Group team up for financial, business services

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Prime Bank PLC has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Sandhani Group to build a strategic cross-industry partnership aimed at creating mutual business opportunities and offering better financial and corporate benefits to their stakeholders.

The partnership will draw on Prime Bank’s banking ecosystem and Sandhani Group’s presence across healthcare, investment, higher education services and various financial services, according to a press release.

Shaila Abedin, senior executive vice-president and head of liability and women banking at the bank, and Mahmudul Bari, group adviser of the group, signed the MoU at the bank’s head office in Dhaka yesterday, according to the press release.

Under the deal, Prime Bank will offer banking solutions to eligible Sandhani Group entities and their employees, clients and students. These include multi-channel fee collection, institutional internet banking through Prime Pay, payroll solutions, financing facilities, digital banking services, savings products, education-related financial services and overseas education support.

The bank will also explore financial literacy initiatives, skill development programmes, and campus ambassador and internship opportunities.

The two sides will further explore collaboration in bancassurance, insurance solutions, institutional investment, mutual fund distribution, wealth management, capital market investment and investment banking services.



Md Mojibur Rahman Sheikh, executive director of Bangladesh Bank, poses for a group photograph with participants of the “Annual Risk Management Conference-2026” organised by NCC Bank PLC at the latter’s head office in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: **NCC BANK**

NCC Bank holds annual risk conference

STAR BUSINESS DESK

NCC Bank PLC recently held its “Annual Risk Management Conference-2026” at its head office in Dhaka to raise awareness of risks, strengthen its risk management system and ensure compliance with regulatory directives.

Md Mojibur Rahman Sheikh, executive director of Bangladesh Bank, inaugurated the conference as the chief guest, according to a press release.

In his speech, he said there is no alternative to effective risk management to ensure long-term, orderly and sustainable operations in all areas of banking.

He urged all concerned to ensure the bank’s stability by properly identifying, assessing and controlling various risks, including those arising from changing economic conditions, technological advancements, AI and cyber threats, credit, liquidity and operational risks.

NCC Bank has always conducted its operations in line with Bangladesh Bank’s directives and prevailing policies and has been working to ensure effective risk management, M Shamsul Arefin, managing director of NCC Bank PLC said while presiding over the conference.



Pubali Bank Managing Director Mohammad Ali hands over the keys of a bus donated by the bank to Comilla Victoria Government College Principal Professor Md Abul Basher Bhuiyan at a ceremony in Cumilla on Wednesday. PHOTO: **PUBALI BANK**

Pubali Bank donates bus to Comilla Victoria College

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Pubali Bank PLC has donated a bus to Comilla Victoria Government College to facilitate transportation for its students as part of the bank’s social responsibility initiatives.

Mohammad Ali, managing director of the bank, handed over the keys to Prof Md Abul Basher Bhuiyan, the college principal, at a ceremony held at the college’s Zia Auditorium, according to a press release issued yesterday.

Prof Md Abdul Majid, vice-principal of the college, and Md Mainul Islam, deputy general manager and head of the bank’s Comilla region, attended the event.

Mohammad Ali said ensuring safe and comfortable transportation for students was a shared responsibility. He said the bank would continue its social responsibility initiatives in education, health and public welfare.

Prof Md Abul Basher Bhuiyan thanked Pubali Bank for the initiative, saying the bus would help ensure safer and more comfortable travel for students.

The event also featured a tree-planting programme on the college campus and the inauguration of an electronic booth of Pubali Bank.

Gazi Muhammad Golam Sohrab Hasan, secretary of the Teachers’ Council; and Prof Abdul Kuddus; Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, assistant general manager of the bank; along with senior officials from both organisations, were also present.



Md Nurul Azim, managing director and CEO of Shimanto Bank PLC, and AKM Nurunnabi, director of the Sustainable Finance Department at Bangladesh Bank, pose for a photograph after signing the agreement at the central bank’s headquarters in Dhaka recently. PHOTO: **SHIMANTO BANK**

Shimanto Bank partners with BB to boost ICT financing

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Shimanto Bank PLC has recently signed a participatory agreement with Bangladesh Bank to facilitate financing at a concessional interest rate and on simplified terms for the development of the ICT sector.

AKM Nurunnabi, director of the Sustainable Finance Department at Bangladesh Bank, and Md Nurul Azim, managing director and CEO of Shimanto Bank PLC, signed the agreement at the central bank’s headquarters in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

To foster the development of the information technology (IT) sector, loans of up to Tk 50 crore will be provided at the customer level at an interest rate of 4 per cent per annum for a maximum term of 10 years under the scheme.



Md Khalid Mahmood Khan, managing director and CEO of Southeast Bank PLC, cuts the ribbon to inaugurate seven new “Shagotom” agent banking outlets alongside senior executives, bank officials and outlet proprietors recently. PHOTO: **SOUTHEAST BANK**

Southeast Bank launches seven agent banking outlets

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Southeast Bank PLC has launched seven agent banking outlets in Satkhira, Jashore, Faridpur, Manikganj, Brahmanbaria, Tangail and Bogura to provide banking services to unbanked people, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas.

Md Khalid Mahmood Khan, managing director and CEO of the bank, recently inaugurated the outlets, according to a press release.

Senior executives and officials from the bank’s head office and branches, along with the proprietors of the seven agent outlets, attended the launching ceremony.

Branded as “Shagotom”, the agent banking service offers conventional and ‘Tijarah’ Islamic banking services through technology-driven platforms.

Customers can open savings and current accounts, deposit and withdraw cash, transfer funds, use BEFTN and RTGS services, and receive foreign remittances.

The outlets also offer cheque book, debit card and credit card processing, BO account opening and share transaction services.

Customers can apply for micro, medium and agricultural loans with insurance benefits. They can also pay utility bills, repay loan instalments, receive government allowances, access regular customer loans and use internet banking services.

The bank said recycler ATMs at the outlets provide round-the-clock access to essential banking services.

The initiative aims to promote financial inclusion and expand banking services nationwide, it said.