Financial connectivity key to Bangladesh-China ties

Says Ashik Chowdhury, chairman of Invest Bangladesh

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A stronger presence of Chinese financial institutions in Bangladesh could benefit both countries and help turn investment decisions into action, said Ashik Chowdhury, chairman of Invest Bangladesh.

"Financial connectivity is the next frontier of Bangladesh-China cooperation," he said, adding that Chinese investors need easier access to trade finance, equipment loans, working capital and long-term investment support.

"Our bilateral trade volume also points to this need. Bangladeshi businesses need access to technology and productive partnerships," he said at the Bangladesh Day event yesterday, according to a press release.

The Export-Import Bank of China, in partnership with Invest Bangladesh, organised the event at the bank's headquarters in Beijing to encourage Chinese banks to establish operations in Bangladesh.

The event brought together 11 Chinese financial institutions, including the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, Agricultural Bank of China and Bank of China, three of the world's four largest banks by assets.

It also featured 26 Chinese companies from sectors such as infrastructure and engineering, power and renewable energy, information and communication technology, electronics, industrial technology, environmental solutions and agricultural technology.

Eleven Chinese financial institutions and 26 companies joined a Beijing event to explore investment opportunities in Bangladesh and discuss how stronger banking ties could support bilateral economic cooperation

Bangladesh Bank and Invest Bangladesh jointly delivered the keynote presentation, titled "The Next Frontier -- Bangladesh-China Financial Connectivity".

The presentation said Bangladesh's trade with China reached $19 billion in FY2025, but no Chinese bank operates in the country. It also cited Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Myanmar as examples of markets with similar trade volumes with China.

The event highlighted investment opportunities in Bangladesh's priority sectors, the Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone and the Mongla Economic Zone for Chinese businesses and their financial partners.

Wang Kang, vice president of China Exim Bank, said the bank continued to use its strengths as a policy bank to support China's foreign trade, investment and international cooperation.

"We currently have nearly 40 projects in Bangladesh, spanning infrastructure, energy, agriculture, processing and manufacturing," he said.

The bank would also encourage more leading Chinese companies to invest directly in priority sectors such as textiles and healthcare, ensuring that financing supports Bangladesh's real economy, he added.

BRAC Bank launches digital trade solutions on CORPNET

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BRAC Bank has introduced digital trade solutions on CORPNET, its digital platform for wholesale banking clients, bringing key trade services into a single digital channel where corporate clients can initiate requests, submit instructions, and monitor progress.

Tareq Refat Ullah Khan, managing director and CEO of BRAC Bank, formally launched the solution at a ceremony at Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel in Dhaka on October 18, 2026, in the presence of wholesale banking clients, according to a press release.

Md Shaheen Iqbal, additional managing director and head of wholesale banking, and other senior officials were also present.

Describing itself as the fastest-growing trade bank in the industry, BRAC Bank is modernising its trade operations to meet rising customer expectations. The platform reduces paperwork and bank counter visits, tracks transactions in real time, and supports cash flow planning, working capital management, and better decision-making through customised management information system (MIS) reports and AI-enabled processing.



PHOTO: BRAC BANK

Tareq Refat Ullah Khan, managing director and CEO of BRAC Bank, poses for photographs in the presence of officials of the bank at a ceremony at Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel in Dhaka on October 18.

"We have adopted the world's best-in-class digital trade solutions. This is an important milestone in our trade finance transformation. By digitising and streamlining trade operations, we are enhancing transparency, control, and efficiency while enabling us to serve corporate clients faster and more reliably. This advancement brings us closer to our ambition of becoming Bangladesh's most preferred trade bank by consistently delivering superior value to our customers," said Tareq Refat Ullah Khan, managing director and CEO of BRAC Bank.

The platform covers import and export transactions from end to end, including letters of credit, shipping guarantees, import payments, export documents, pre- and post-shipment financing, and bank guarantees. Clients can also access customised reports, an interactive dashboard, SWIFT copies, real-time balances and credit limits, and secure correspondence with the bank.

Pubali Bank holds quarterly ADC, card business review meeting

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Pubali Bank PLC recently held its third-quarter ADC (alternative delivery channel) and card business review meeting for 2026 at the bank's head office auditorium.

Mohammad Ali, managing director of Pubali Bank PLC, attended the meeting as the chief guest, while Md. Shahnewaz Khan, deputy managing director, was present as the special guest. NM Firoz Kamal, DGM and head of the Card Business Division, also attended the meeting, according to a press release.

Md Rabiul Alam, DGM and division head of the ADC Division, presided over the meeting.

Regional managers from the Gazipur and Narayanganj zones participated in the session, along with all branch managers, ADC officials, card business officials, and BSA/CSA from the respective zones.

The session featured in-depth discussions on business growth strategies, an analysis of third-quarter performance, and future action plans to enhance ADC and card business.



PHOTO: PUBALI BANK

Mohammad Ali, managing director of Pubali Bank, is seen alongside other officials of the bank at its third-quarter ADC and card business review meeting for 2026 at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently.



Sheikh Rakibul Karim, chief executive officer of Guardian Life Insurance Limited, and Shahriar Kamal, managing director of Concord Group of Companies, pose with the signed documents at Concord Group's head office in Dhaka on October 19.

PHOTO: GUARDIAN LIFE INSURANCE

Guardian to insure Concord Group employees, dependants

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Guardian Life Insurance Limited will provide life insurance coverage and medical benefits to employees of Concord Group of Companies and their family members under a group insurance agreement.

The agreement was signed at Concord Group's head office in Dhaka on October 19, 2026. Sheikh Rakibul Karim, chief executive officer of Guardian Life Insurance Limited, and Shahriar Kamal, managing director of Concord Group of Companies, signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organisations, according to a press release.

Commenting on the partnership, Sheikh Rakibul Karim said, "We believe that employee well-being is fundamental to sustainable business success. Through this partnership, we aim to provide Concord employees and their families with financial protection and healthcare support, helping them face unexpected challenges with greater confidence."

Shahriar Kamal said, "A company's responsibility to its people goes beyond providing a workplace. It also means helping them navigate life's uncertainties without having to face every challenge alone. We see this partnership as a way to extend that responsibility to our employees and their families."

Saniyat Rahman, assistant managing director and chief enterprise business officer of Guardian; Mohammad Soieb, senior assistant vice-president and group business lead; and Arannya Akter Bithi, key account manager, attended the signing ceremony.

Representing Concord Group, Shakil Abir, senior general manager and group head of HR; Anup Kumar Sarker, chief marketing officer; Md Abdul Karim, chief financial officer; Faroque Ahmed, deputy general manager for strategic operations; Md Reajul Hasan Shohag, deputy legal adviser; Md Mofizul Islam, executive director for audit; and Major Md Sakib Rayhan (Retd), executive director for administration, were present.

Guardian currently serves more than 500 corporate clients across Bangladesh, providing insurance protection to over 1.4 crore lives nationwide. Its network of more than 500 partner hospitals enables customers to access healthcare services, including cashless treatment through the Guardian app and its 24-hour helpline at 16622.

Anti-money laundering compliance officers elect new leaders



Members of the newly elected 15-member executive committee of the Association of Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Officers of Banks in Bangladesh pose for a photo after their unanimous election for the 2026-27 term at the association's annual general meeting in Gulshan, Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: AACOBB

STAR BUSINESS DESK

The Association of Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Officers of Banks in Bangladesh (AACOBB) has recently elected a 15-member executive committee for the 2026-27 term.

The committee was elected unanimously at the association's annual general meeting in Gulshan, Dhaka, according to a press release.

Mahia Juned, additional managing director and chief anti-money laundering compliance officer (CAMLCO) of City Bank PLC, has been elected chairperson, while Faruk Ahammad, deputy managing director and CAMLCO of United Commercial Bank PLC, will serve as general secretary.

Rais Uddin Ahmad, deputy managing director and CAMLCO of Mutual Trust Bank PLC, has been named treasurer. Chowdhury Moinul Islam, deputy managing director and CAMLCO of BRAC Bank PLC, and Suprova Saeed, general manager and CAMLCO of Agrani Bank PLC, have been elected first and second vice-chairpersons, respectively.

Mahmoodun Nabi Chowdhury, deputy managing director and CAMLCO of Eastern Bank PLC, and Md Saiful Hasan, CAMLCO of Citibank NA, will serve as first and second joint secretaries, respectively.

The other eight members represent Bank Asia PLC, Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC, Dutch-Bangla Bank PLC, HSBC, Pubali Bank PLC, Prime Bank PLC, Habib Bank Ltd and Community Bank Bangladesh PLC.



Modhumoti Bank's Managing Director Md Shafiul Azam and other senior officials attend a discussion session marking National Cybersecurity Awareness Month 2026 at the bank's head office recently.

PHOTO: MODHUMOTI BANK

Uttara Bank holds annual risk management conference

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Uttara Bank PLC recently held its annual risk management conference for 2026 at Sea Pearl Beach Resort & Spa in Cox's Bazar.

Md Abul Hashem, managing director of Uttara Bank PLC, attended the conference as the chief guest. Md Rafiul Islam, deputy managing director and chief risk officer of the bank, presided over the conference, according to a press release.

Maksudul Hasan, additional managing director; Md Rezaul Karim and Khandaker Ali Samnoon, deputy managing directors; along with other executives, all zonal heads, and all branch and sub-branch incumbents, also attended the conference.



Md Abul Hashem, managing director of Uttara Bank, is seen alongside other officials of the bank at its annual risk management conference for 2026 at Sea Pearl Beach Resort & Spa in Cox's Bazar recently.

PHOTO: UTTARA BANK

Modhumoti Bank kicks off cybersecurity awareness month

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Modhumoti Bank PLC has held a launching event for the National Cybersecurity Awareness Month 2026 at its head office to promote secure digital banking and strengthen cybersecurity awareness among employees.

The inauguration programme was attended by the bank's Managing Director Md Shafiul Azam, Additional Managing Director Shahnawaj Chowdhury, Deputy Managing Director and Chief Business Officer Arab Fazlur Rahman, and Deputy Managing Director and Chief Risk Officer Arif Hasan Khan, among other senior officials.

A discussion session highlighted the growing importance of cybersecurity in banking, emphasising the need to strengthen cyber resilience, raise employee awareness, protect customer information and ensure the confidentiality, integrity and availability of digital banking services, according to a press release.

The participants also stressed collective responsibility, proactive security measures and continuous vigilance in addressing emerging cyber threats.

Other senior officials attending the programme included Fahmida Saeed Saki, senior executive vice-president and head of the International Division; R M Sariful Islam, executive vice-president and head of the Credit Risk Management Division; Shaikh Mohammed Shoieb, executive vice-president and head of the Operations Division; and Mohammad Nazmus Sakeb, vice-president and chief information and communication technology officer.

Md Mashiur Alam Mollah, vice-president and chief financial officer; Md Rezaul Karim, vice-president and company secretary; S M Arifur Rahman, assistant vice-president and head of Brand Communication and Public Relations; and Md Ismail Chowdhory, first assistant vice-president and head of IT Security, also attended the event.