



PRESS RELEASE

IFSCA hosts Payments Forum 2026 to strengthen global payments ecosystem at GIFT-IFSC

The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) today hosted the **Payments Forum 2026**, bringing together representatives from banking, capital markets, insurance, fund management entities, Payment Service Providers (PSPs), fin-techs and academia to deliberate on strengthening the payments and settlement ecosystem at GIFT-IFSC.

The Forum focused on apprising regulated entities across sectors about the evolving payment infrastructure in the IFSC and highlighting recent regulatory and market developments aimed at enhancing efficiency in cross-border transactions.

Shri. K Rajaraman, Chairperson-IFSCA, highlighted that IFSCA's approach to building a robust payments ecosystem rests on two key pillars. First, the IFSCA (Payment Services) Regulations, 2024, which enable authorised PSPs to offer payment services and related infrastructure to diverse users. Second, the Foreign Currency Settlement System (FCSS), an RTGS-style inter-bank settlement mechanism within IFSC that currently enables settlement of USD obligations among IFSC Banking Units (IBUs) within approximately 5–6 seconds.

Chairperson also briefed the participants, that IFSCA has consistently emphasised that resilient and efficient payment infrastructure forms the backbone of any international financial centre. Progressive regulatory reforms across verticals have resulted in registrations crossing 1,100 entities, including IBUs, fund management entities, finance companies and PSPs, reflecting growing global participation in the IFSC ecosystem.

Chairperson emphasised that Ease of Doing business, catalysing innovation and expanding the retail products offerings, for serving the bottom of pyramid financial users, shall remain the focus of IFSCA. In this regard, the Authority has published a consultation paper on Tokenisation. He also urged fin-techs and innovators to utilise the GIFT International Fintech Institute (GIFT IFI) and GIFT International Fintech Innovation Hub (GIFT IFIH) platform.

The Authority has also noted the increasing interest from global PSPs in offering payment account issuance and e-money services to exporters and NRI/OCI investors. These services are facilitating seamless cross-border flows and enabling access to capital market and insurance products available at GIFT-IFSC. Over USD 19 billion in External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) flows have been routed through IFSC channels in 2024-25, and domestic SMEs and micro enterprises are gaining improved access to trade finance through ITFS platforms, factoring and credit insurance.

Discussions at the Forum also covered innovations and payments offerings by authorised PSPs, who can undertake – (a) account issuance service; (b) e-money issuance service; (c) escrow service; (d) cross border money transfer service; (e) merchant acquisition service, which are the 5 currently permitted payment services as per the IFSCA (Payment Services) Regulations, 2024. The PSPs highlighted their product offerings such as providing multi-currency accounts, global collection and payout rails, partnerships with fund management entities and banks to facilitate NRI investments, and solutions supporting Indian exporters in foreign currency management and compliant cross-border payments.

Launched in October 2025, the FCSS has emerged as a significant milestone in enhancing settlement efficiency by reducing dependence on traditional correspondent banking arrangements that typically take 24–36 hours. The system has stabilised and is functioning smoothly. Regulated entities yet to onboard have been encouraged to participate to fully leverage its benefits. Discussions on expanding the scope of FCSS to include indirect participation, onboarding of banks from onshore India and other jurisdictions, and inclusion of additional permitted foreign currencies is under consideration. The Authority's earlier press release on FCSS may be seen at <https://www.ccilindia.com/documents/43866/0/IFSCA+Press+Release.pdf/c70f2043-e8c7-bf30-7a7d-240059ee23e1?t=1759841894726>

IFSCA further highlighted key initiatives to strengthen digital onboarding, including Video-based Customer Identification Process (VCIP), integration with e-KYC Setu, DigiLocker (passport access), CKYCR 2.0 and PAN verification through the Protean portal. Extension of VCIP to foreign nationals is under active exploration.

The Payments Forum 2026 served as a platform for dialogue, collaboration and innovation, reaffirming IFSCA's commitment to building a world-class, technology-driven payment and settlement ecosystem at GIFT-IFSC.

GIFT City, Gandhinagar
February 13, 2026
