

Mobile banking hits spotlight

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

With the mobile phone becoming effective in transferring money around the world, the stakeholders of the mobile banking eco-system need security and mutual trust to introduce the service in Bangladesh.

A recent study predicts the number of money transactions through the mobile banking (m-banking) system will increase to 37 billion by 2011 from only 2.7 billion in 2007.

In Bangladesh, Grameenphone customers (23.48 million) generate 5 million money transactions a day to load money on their cell accounts.

"So there is scope for m-banking in Bangladesh, which has 13 percent banking penetration," said Oddvar Hesjedal, chief executive officer of Grameenphone.

The rate of mobile penetration is 33 percent in Bangladesh. "If banks and telecom stakeholders work together, there is a potential of introducing mobile commerce or mobile banking in Bangladesh," said the Grameenphone CEO.

However, the security of money transactions and a lack of regulatory framework are still absent in Bangladesh, although the central bank permitted banks and some mobile

operators to go for mobile banking.

Both national and international m-banking experts expressed these views at the second international conference -- Bangladesh Banking 2010 -- at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka yesterday.

Total Communication, in association with Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services, organised the conference.

M-banking is rapidly growing in developing countries, said Sampath Paranavipane, general manager of hSenid Mobile, Sri Lanka. "To reach out to un-banked rural markets, m-banking could be a cost effective technology."

Quoting a study, he said the number of money transactions through m-banking is expected to rise to 37 billion by 2011, which indicates increased control of mobile customers over financial matters.

Indicating to the rapidly growing mobile market, he said there is a bank in every customer handset.

However, regarding security concerns, GSM (Global System of Mobile Communication) is a comparatively less reliable technology to handle m-banking, said an expert.

Among the six mobile operators in Bangladesh, five are GSM based.

"GSM is not strong enough for m-banking," said Amitpal Singh, ASEAN

identity management and security specialist of Oracle Corporation. However, in response to queries at the conference, he refused to say which will be the best technology to run m-banking.

The Grameenphone CEO stressed the need to form a regulatory body to settle disputes in money transactions through m-banking.

From the customer's perspective, he said: "Customer behaviour does not change overnight. We have to have patience." He said Bangladesh Bank should permit mobile linkages to bank accounts and cards.

Bangladesh's market of 160 million has become lucrative for the money transaction business with rapid growth of the mobile technology. As per a recent Bangladesh Bank directive, m-banking will be launched soon. However, all transactions will take place through banks channels.

Mobile operators will just provide SMS based transaction services and money delivery in some cases. Therefore, bankers are concerned whether mobile operators will go for complete banking services.

Tarique Afzal, head of consumer banking of Bank Alfalah Ltd, said: "A mobile outlet cannot be a bank outlet. It can be used as a money payment outlet to minimise customer hassles."



Officials of Intertek Bangladesh Limited and Mutual Trust Bank Limited sign a corporate deal in Dhaka yesterday. Intertek will provide inspection services to the bank's clients to confirm quality and quantity of their importing goods through Intertek's global network.

BB starts farm loan monitoring by mobile

Bss, Dhaka

Bangladesh Bank (BB) yesterday rolled out a farm loan monitoring system through mobile phones.

Governor Atiur Rahman made the first phone call to a farmer in a village to start the monitoring system based on convenient technology. The farmer was surprised by the phone call from the governor. Rahman made few more calls to other farmers in parts of the country.

The BB chief inquired about the problems that the farmers used to face in getting loans from banks.

Mahabub Ahmed, a farmer in Sunamganj, said he took Tk 36,000 in farm loan without any problem.

Similarly, Sunil Kumar Biswas in Rajbari said he did not find any irregularity in lending.

The governor asked farmers to report any irregularity directly to the monitoring cell of the central bank for remedy.

He also met a banker who was on a field visit to oversee the bank's lending activities. The banker said some farmers in his area were waiting for farm subsidy cards, which is a prerequisite to get agro credit.

The governor advised the banker to contact immediately with the related department for issuing cards to farmers.

The BB boss said the central bank was trying to establish an effective monitoring system at the grassroots, ensuring transparency in farm credit.

"But I believe there are still some problems the central bank will deal with."

The governor was unhappy with the poor

performance of the respective banks in collecting mobile phone numbers of the farmers who took loans from them.

In September last year, the central bank directed respective banks to collect mobile phone numbers of the farmers who received loans. Five state-owned banks -- Sonali, Agrani, Janata, Bangladesh Krishi Unnayan Bank and Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan Bank -- collected 150,241 phone numbers, which is only 35 percent of the 427,819 clients.

Rahman directed the banks to get the job done soon so that they can contact their clients directly. He said the central bank would also continue making such phone calls to farmers regularly.

"I shall try to do this once a week if possible."

Intertek signs deal with Mutual Trust Bank

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Intertek, a global provider of quality and safety solutions to industries, has signed a commercial inspections deal with Mutual Trust Bank in Dhaka, Intertek said in a statement yesterday.

Under the agreement, Intertek will provide inspection services to the bank's clients to confirm quality and quantity of the imported goods through Intertek's global network.

This will enable Bangladeshi importers to confirm the quality of products from the exporting country.

Intertek has a network of more than 1,000 laboratories and offices and over 24,000 people covering more than 100 countries around the world.

It has issued more than 1.5 million certificates and test reports to companies wishing to export their products.



Annisul Huq, president of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, presents a crest to George Hara, leader of a Japanese delegation, at a meeting in Dhaka yesterday.

Demand for cancelling ship-breaking order

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Ship breakers and MS (mild steel) rod producers yesterday demanded that the government cancel the order that restricts entry of any breakable ship into Bangladesh without a pre-cleaning certificate.

They said no countries in the world require such a prerequisite for ship breaking.

At a press conference in Dhaka yesterday, they also termed the statutory regulatory order (SRO) issued by the government in January as "unrealistic", adding that it would ruin the ship breaking and re-rolling mill industries of the country.

The government issued the SRO, restricting entry of any ship into the country's maritime territory without having pre-cleaning certificate.

"Our competitors such as China, India and Turkey don't want such certificates for breakable vessel import. And so, we will lose competitiveness in the global market if the government doesn't cancel the SRO," M Anam Chowdhury, a consultant of Bangladesh Ship Breakers' Association (BSBA), told the press briefing.

BSBA, Bangladesh Re-rolling Mills Association and Bangladesh Steel Mills Owners' Association jointly organised the press conference in response to issuing the SRO that has prompted the ship breakers to call a strike from February 21.

After the order was issued, Chittagong Customs barred at least 10 ships from entering the country's maritime territory, as those did not have pre-cleaning certificates.

The ship breakers also pointed to a controversial global treaty formulated in 2009 by the International Maritime Organisation that allows ship owners to export ships with hazardous materials.

The BSBA consultant said more than 150 countries including Bangladesh signed the first ever agreement on ship-breaking.

Talking about the Basel Convention, which was designed to reduce trans-boundary movement of hazardous wastes and became effective in 1992, M Anam Chowdhury said the treaty does not deal with

breakable ships. Bangladesh is one of the signatories of the Basel Convention.

Bangladesh Re-rolling Mills Association President M Ali Hossain said the government should relax the environmental rules, primarily, to help develop the industries of the country.

"If the deadline in the ship-breaking industry continues, around 400 steel and re-rolling mills in the country that pay over Tk 1,000 crore to the government as duties will face destruction," said Hossain.

The total investment in the re-rolling mill industry is over Tk 5,000 crore, he added.

BSBA Vice President Mohammad Mohsin said they are working to reduce casualties in the ship-breaking sector and have adopted many safety measures to avert accidents.

About the high rate of casualty in the sector, he said it was "propaganda" by some nongovernmental organisations.

Shaikh Fazlur Rahman Bakul, chairman of Bangladesh Steel Mills Owners' Association, was also present.

Japanese investors keen on joint venture

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Japanese investors are keen to invest in Bangladesh, especially in the pharmaceuticals, construction and reconditioned car assembling, said George Hara, leader of a 10-member Japanese business delegation, yesterday.

Hara stressed the need for continuing the interaction between the business communities of the two friendly countries.

He was speaking at a meeting of his team with the leaders of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI).

Annisul Huq, president of FBCCI, presided over the meeting that was attended by Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury, former caretaker government adviser, and Abul Kashem Ahmed, first vice president of FBCCI.



New DMD for UCB

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United Commercial Bank Ltd promoted Mirza Mahmud Rafiqur Rahman to deputy managing director, the bank said in a statement yesterday.

Rahman, a postgraduate in English from Dhaka University, held various key positions in corporate affairs, business development and human resources in 23 years of his banking career.



Md Ali Hossain, chairman of Bangladesh Re-rolling Mills Association, speaks at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday, demanding the cancellation of a new policy on scrap vessel imports.



ফাস্ট সিকিউরিটি ইসলামী ব্যাংক লিঃ

فارست سيكيوري تي اسلامي بنك ليميتد

FIRST SECURITY ISLAMI BANK LTD.

Human Resources Division
Head Office: 23, Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000 www.fsibld.com

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

FIRST SECURITY ISLAMI BANK LIMITED, a third generation Shariah based Islami commercial bank is looking for smart, energetic, self-confident & experienced professionals (preference will be given to the candidates having Islamic Banking experience) for immediate employment in the following positions:

SME Officer (Female) (PO to SEO):
[A] Qualification: Masters in any discipline preferably in Business Administration.
[B] Experience & other competencies: At least 6-10 years commercial banking experience with particular focus in dealing with SME Investment. Should have ability to multi task and manage multiple priorities. Should be responsible to transform the business model from product to customer centric one and to manage the portfolio in most profitable manner with focus on segmentation, cross sell and risk management
[C] Age: Not over 42 years.

Diploma Mechanical Engineer (For Investment) & Diploma Civil Engineer (For GSD):
[A] Qualification: Diploma in Mechanical Engineering with 1st class.
Diploma in Civil Engineering with 1st class.
[B] Experience & other competencies: In case of Mechanical Engineer: At least 5-7 years working experience in relevant field with proven track record. Should have extensive experience on operating mechanism of machineries & faults-detection thereof, site supervision & solving site level problems, proper monitoring of on-going mechanical works.
He/She should have experience to give technical report (including Quality of the Machine, Productivity of the Machine, Life of the Machine, Production Cost) of a Project Investment.
In case of Civil Engineer: At least 5-7 years working experience in relevant field with proven track record. Should have extensive experience on operating mechanism of machineries & faults-detection thereof, site supervision & solving site level problems, proper monitoring of on-going civil works.
He/She should have ability to read construction documents including Blueprints, Design, Specification, Sketches and Architectural drawing etc.
[C] Age: Not over 42 years.

The criteria may be relaxed for exceptionally deserving candidates.
Interested candidates having requisite qualifications and experience should apply with their Curriculum Vitae and 02 recent passport size photographs to the Head of Human Resources Division, First Security Islami Bank Limited, Head Office, 23 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000 by 18th March, 2010.
Only short listed candidates will be contacted. Envelope should be marked in bold letters mentioning position.

Branch Managers (FVP/VP):
[A] Qualification: Masters in any discipline from a reputed University.
[B] Experience & other competencies: At least 14 years banking experience with exposure in Branch Banking. At least 3 years experience as Branch Manager or 4-5 years as 2nd Officer of a Branch. Should have extensive exposure in General Banking, Trade Finance, Investment Management and Investment Administration.
[C] Age: Not over 50 years.

Manager Operations/2nd Man (FAVP/AVP):
[A] Qualification: Masters in any discipline from a reputed University.
[B] Experience & other competencies: At least 12 years banking experience with exposure in Branch Banking. At least 2 years experience as 2nd Officer of a Branch. Should have extensive exposure in Branch Management, Banking Operations and Core Risk Management.
[C] Age: Not over 45 years.

Trade Finance Officers (Officer to SEO):
[A] Qualification: Masters in any discipline preferably in Business Administration.
[B] Experience & other competencies: At least 4-10 years commercial banking experience with 3 years experience dealing with Foreign Exchange Business.
[C] Age: Not over 42 years.

Investment Officers (Officer to SEO):
[A] Qualification: Masters in any discipline preferably in Business Administration.
[B] Experience & other competencies: At least 4-10 years commercial banking experience with 3 years experience dealing with investment related activities and thorough knowledge on modern Investment Risk Management in Branch/Head Office level.
[C] Age: Not over 42 years.