

## Mobile wallet users suffer as BB lowers transaction limits

**MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM**  
On Friday morning, Mozammel Hossain, a contractor, came to a mobile financial service (MFS) agent at Tejturi Bazar to deposit Tk 47,000 into two accounts of his site managers, who would then use the sum to pay the labourers their daily wages. But, he was dealt a blow when the vendor informed him that he could deposit at most Tk 30,000 into the accounts; and not only that, his site managers would not be able to take out the entire sum that day. And it was Friday, a bank holiday, meaning Hossain had no other option but to resign to the new restric-

tions, which meant after a full day's hard work, his labourers went home with just a fraction of their pay. Like Hossain's labourers, the country's 1.58 crore active MFS users are left in serious inconvenience after the central bank lowered the ceilings for transactions from February 1. Previously, users could deposit Tk 25,000 into their mobile wallets each day and take out the same amount, but now they have to make do with Tk 15,000 for cash-in and Tk 10,000 for cash-out. It is the students, garment workers and small entrepreneurs that were most hit by the new Bangladesh Bank directive, which has already caused a

30-40 percent decline in transaction value, according to the MFS providers. Take, Shohag Sarkar, a student of Government Science College in the capital's Farmgate area, who relies on MFS to pay his tuition fees that his father sends from Sherpur. Like every month, he arrived at Dhaka Telecom, an MFS agent beside his college, last week to withdraw his tuition fees and found a long queue outside the store. He patiently waited in the queue for 30 minutes, only for the vendor to tell him, much to his irritation, that he would not be able to take out the cash without his national ID card.

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Attendants wait for visitors at a stall at the opening day of the 12th Dhaka International Plastic, Packaging and Printing Industrial Fair, at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka yesterday.

## Customs asks WB for details of 16 duty-free cars

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**  
The Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate yesterday sought information from the World Bank about 16 vehicles its officials brought in Bangladesh under a duty-free facility. The National Board of Revenue in 2003 framed a rule that allowed foreigners, who work at the local offices of international development agencies like the WB, the International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank, to import durables including vehicles at zero duty. The durables brought in under the facility must be listed on a passbook, and when the foreigners leave Bangladesh for good, they should return the passbooks to the NBR and dispose of the durables. The foreign nationals can choose to take back the durables with them or sell those to people with the same status as them, and the NBR must be informed about their choice of action. If the persons leave the country without

disposal, the head of the organisation concerned will be responsible for them, according to the rules. And under the facility, the 16 WB employees brought in vehicles that now remain unaccounted for, according to customs intelligence. The foreigners have left Bangladesh sometime back and some of the vehicles are plying the streets, said Moinul Khan, director general of CIID. "We believe that the officials have sold those cars to local people for personal gain." "Such an act of noncompliance is a punishable offence under customs law and money laundering prevention law," he said, adding that the vehicles can be seized by the government. Subsequently, the CIID has given the Dhaka office of the Washington-based multilateral lender seven days to provide detailed information on the vehicles, including their present ownership and registration status.

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## NBR to award more tax cards

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**  
The National Board of Revenue will honour more taxpayers with tax cards in the coming years in order to motivate an increased number of people to comply with rules properly, the NBR said in a press release yesterday. "The NBR has already increased the number of tax cards; diversity will be brought here in the coming years," said NBR Chairman Md Nojibur Rahman at a programme at his office. The event was organised to award tax cards to five personalities who were not recognised earlier.

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## Global yarn makers see Bangladesh as a potential market

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**  
Global textile and yarn makers see Bangladesh as a potential market despite the country's apparel export is facing challenges in some of its strong markets, including the United States and Europe. Though fabrics and yarn are being locally made, Bangladesh still needs to import a good quantity to meet the growing demand. In Bangladesh, local spinners meet over 90 percent demand for raw materials of the knitwear sector and over 40 percent demand of the woven sector. "Bangladesh is a good market for us as the demand for fabrics here is rising from the garment makers," said Lavender Zhang, manager of Jiangsu Wulong Knitting Co, a knit-

wear fabrics maker. Zhang spoke at the 11th Dhaka International Yarn & Fabric Show 2017—Winter Edition and Dhaka Int'l Denim Show 2017. Mirza Azam, state minister for textiles and jute, inaugurated the fair jointly organised by CEMS Global and CCPIT (CCPIT-TEX) at International Convention City Bashundhara in the capital. Around 180 companies from six countries are showcasing their products at the three-day event. Bangladesh's apparel exports to the US, its single largest destination, declined 1.96 percent year-on-year to \$5.49 billion in 2016, due to the volatile US economy and the recent presidential election.

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## Introduce 4G by this year: Joy

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**  
Prime Minister's ICT Affairs Adviser Sajeed Wazed Joy yesterday directed the telecom regulator to introduce fourth generation (4G) services in the country by this year. "The ICT adviser has directed us on making quick arrangements to launch 4G," said Tarana Halim, state minister of the telecom division. All the mobile operators are almost ready to offer 4G and customers will be able to enjoy the fastest data service within a short time, she said. Tarana Halim spoke to The Daily Star after a meeting with Joy at the division. She said Joy gave them direction on several issues before high officials of the government's telecom entities. Joy said people are being deprived of technological advancements for a delay in launching 4G in the country, said an official present at the meeting.

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### Brac to invest in Maya Apa app

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**  
Brac yesterday signed a deal to invest in a mobile application -- Maya Apa -- to ensure the delivery of quality information and counselling services to a greater number of people. At a ceremony at Hotel La Vinci in Dhaka, Muhammad Musa, executive director of Brac, signed the agreement with Ivy H Russell, founder of Maya Apa, to invest Tk 4 crore in the app in the next couple of years.

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