

HSBC introduces e-commerce facility on debit card



STAR BUSINESS DESK

HSBC in Bangladesh has launched ecommerce facility on HSBC Visa Debit Card for customers.

Along with enabling online transaction facility and mobile wallet top up for customers in local and global sites, the bank has also announced a 50-day reward campaign for its customers.

During the campaign, customers will get cashback on any purchases made using the card, smartwatch as a reward for top users and additional rewards and discounts from its launch partners.

"Digital Bangladesh started off with a set of promises and dreams for every individual in this country," said Zunaid Ahmed Palak, state minister ICT, at a webinar marking the launch.

"And with the launch of online transaction facility on HSBC Visa debit cards, I must say HSBC Bangladesh building on to the steps in realising yet another vision and fulfilling yet another promise made by the bank for its customers."

"With the significant increase of online spending and payment driven by the pandemic, we have stepped up our investment and focus on digital solutions," said Md Mahbub ur Rahman, CEO of HSBC Bangladesh.

"We are pleased to launch ecommerce facility on HSBC Visa Debit Card, enabling customers to manage their expense digitally both in domestic and international markets."

Dollar gains as stimulus nerves nudge investors to safety

REUTERS, Singapore

The US dollar rose on Tuesday as rising coronavirus cases and doubts over the speed and size of US stimulus tempered traders' upbeat mood, while investors were also cautious ahead of the Federal Reserve's policy review later in the week.

US Treasuries held onto gains, equity markets fell in Asia, and the cautious move into safer assets pushed the dollar index higher. The greenback rose 0.1 per cent to 90.462, close to a one-week high and near the middle of a range it has held for most of the month.

The euro, which fell on Monday as German business morale slumped, is also trading in a range between support around \$1.2050 and resistance at \$1.2215. It slipped 0.1 per cent to \$1.2128.

The yen was steady at 103.71 per dollar. The risk-sensitive Australian dollar hit a one-week low and the New Zealand dollar fell 0.4 per cent.

"Markets have come a long way on the hope that COVID goes away and governments spend a lot of money," said Westpac currency analyst Imre Speizer.

"Both of those have stalled at the moment, and so markets will stall as well," he said, adding that this had left the kiwi in a mode of "indecision" between \$0.7150 and \$0.7240.



A US dollar note, bottom, is pictured alongside an Australian 10 dollar, left, and 20 dollar bill in this picture illustration.

"One of those needs to break to give you direction for the next couple of weeks," Speizer said. The kiwi was last at \$0.7174 and the Australian dollar was down 0.4 per cent at \$0.7685. Sterling slipped 0.2 per cent to \$1.3645.

Tight liquidity supported the Chinese yuan. One-year onshore yuan forwards rose to their highest levels of 2021, while the onshore spot price edged up 0.1 per cent to 6.4733.

Investors last week added to bets that the dollar's months-long downtrend would extend, weighed by US budget and trade deficits. Short

dollar positions have hit their highest in almost ten years, according to data last week.

But currency markets have entered a holding pattern while waiting to see whether the Democrats' big virus relief package can clear Congress and whether COVID-19 vaccines actually start turning the tide on the pandemic.

US Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said Democrats may try and pass much of President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion spending package with a majority vote, but it is not clear if they have the numbers to override Republican objections.

IMF lifts global growth forecast for 2021, still sees 'exceptional uncertainty'

REUTERS, Washington

The International Monetary Fund on Tuesday raised its forecast for global economic growth in 2021 and said the coronavirus-triggered downturn in 2020 would be nearly a full percentage point less severe than expected.

It said multiple vaccine approvals and the launch of vaccinations in some countries in December had boosted hopes of an eventual end to the pandemic that has now infected nearly 100 million people and claimed the lives of over 2.1 million globally. But it warned that the world economy continued to face "exceptional uncertainty" and new waves of COVID-19 infections and variants posed risks, and global activity would remain well below pre-COVID projections made one year ago.

Close to 90 million people are likely to fall below the extreme poverty threshold during 2020-2021, with the pandemic wiping out progress made in reducing poverty over the past two decades.

E-payment of import taxes over Tk 2 lakh a must from July

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Munem said the NBR took several initiatives to ensure transparency and electronic payments are a part of that.

The revenue administration also took the initiative to buy 13 scanners to install at the ports to examine imported and exported consignments. "This will speed up deliveries," he added. At the event, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal directed the NBR

to quickly procure the scanners and install them at all ports.

He also suggested that the revenue collector form an estimate on the duties and taxes it exempts to reduce the cost of goods imported for implementation in the country's mega projects and various public agencies.

"It would give us an idea about the amount of duty we are waiving," Kamal said.

The duty that has been exempted

would have been added to the total revenue collected and Bangladesh's revenue-GDP ratio would have been higher in that case.

Bangladesh's tax-GDP ratio is less than 10 per cent.

Calculating the exempted amount will give an idea about the collection of revenue. The country's overall revenue-GDP ratio will be higher once the exempted tax is taken into consideration, he added.

Stocks fall, Beximco companies end rally amid profit taking

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Turnover, one of the important indicators of the market, fell 29 per cent to Tk 1,125 crore.

Beximco topped the turnover list, trading shares worth Tk 142 crore followed by Energypac Power Generation, Robi Axiata, LankaBangla Finance, and Beximco

Pharmaceuticals.

Jute Spinners topped the gainers' list, rising 7.53 per cent followed by Agrani Insurance, BATBC, Daffodil Computers, and Green Delta Mutual Fund.

Energypac Power Generation shed the most, falling 9.93 per cent followed by Shinepukur Ceramics,

Beximco, Robi Axiata and Midas Financing.

The port city bourse also dropped. The general index of the Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE), CASPI, fell 299 points, or 1.77 per cent to 16,578 yesterday. Among the 251 stocks that were traded at the CSE, 22 advanced, 179 fell and 50 remained unchanged.

Banks fail to pay import bills, tarnish country's image

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Confirmation is a definite and legal undertaking from the importer's bank to the exporter's bank.

The central bank recently verified the unsettled import bills of 29 banks, of which the performance of some lenders was not good at all, the report said.

As of September last year, the overdue of unsettled import bills stood at \$23.79 million.

Rahman said that banks should

settle the import bills on time in the interest of the country's image.

In some cases, there are some genuine reasons to not settle the foreign import bills but if there is no genuine cause, banks should not delay in making import payments.

"The sovereign rating of Pakistan is lower than Bangladesh but our confirmation charge is higher than theirs," Rahman said, adding that the charge would decrease if local banks settle the import bills on time.

Besides, the banks did not settle the local import bills amounting to \$31.22 million.

Local banks are engaging in disputes with each other to settle import bills. The number of allegations has also been rising to this end, according to the central bank report.

To address the issue, the central bank will give a strong message to local banks so that they settle both local and foreign import bills on time, an official of Bangladesh Bank said.

Bureaucratic tangles mar aviation prospects

FROM PAGE B4

"The industry is making a tremendous contribution to our economy. But every possible harness is tying up the helicopter horse."

Helicopters have the ability to operate from elevated helipads and rooftops and even land on hospital roofs with patients. All of these are allowed in every country of the world except for Bangladesh, he said.

"We need to correct our course of actions following examples of the surrounding countries." Senior officials of CAAB and AOAB were also present at the programme.

Commerce Bank, Janata run into a quagmire

FROM PAGE B1

The central bank has unearthed massive financial scams at a number of the NBFIs out of six. Some of them have failed to repay the deposits to common savers.

Janata Bank deposited Tk 110 crore with Premier Leasing, ILFS, and FAS finance. The NBFIs have not paid any interests for more than one year, said Md Abdus Salam Azad, managing director of the state-run lender.

The interest of the deposited fund stood at Tk 21 crore, he said.

The bank wrote to the central bank in March last year, seeking permission to sue the three NBFIs. But the BB has suggested not to file any case as it will send a bad signal to the depositors in the NBFIs sector, the BB paper said.

"We are in a difficult situation," Azad said.

Pritish Kumar Sarker, managing director of FAS Finance and

Investment, said that the NBFIs would repay the money in the quickest possible time.

"We are not getting deposits from the common savers at this moment. We have requested the banks to renew the term deposits," he said.

Abdul Hamid Mia, managing director of Premier Leasing & Finance, said his company was now paying the interests.

"We have already repaid Tk

100 crore to BCB. The rest will be returned soon."

Premier Leasing has requested Janata Bank to renew the term deposit, he said.

Prashanta Kumar Halder and his associates embezzled a large amount of money from four NBFIs, creating a haphazard situation in the financial sector, according to a central bank report.

Halder, a former managing director of NRB Global Bank,

misappropriated Tk 2,500 crore from ILFS, Tk 2,200 crore from FAS Finance, Tk 3,000 crore from Peoples Leasing, and Tk 2,500 crore from Reliance Finance between 2015 and 2019. He fled to Canada.

The central bank applied to the High Court in 2019 to liquidate Peoples Leasing due to the deterioration of its financial health. The court accepted the plea and appointed a liquidator.

Economy will return to high growth path next fiscal year: UN

FROM PAGE B1

The report urged the policymakers in South Asia to strengthen their efforts to formalise labour markets and strengthen their social protection systems to dampen the impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable and improve macroeconomic resilience.

Informal workers account for more than 80 per cent of workers in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan and they have been far more exposed to the loss of employment than formal workers during the crisis.

South Asia's widespread informality has almost certainly magnified the impact of the pandemic.

The Covid-19 fiscal response in South Asia has consisted of a vast ad hoc expansion of social assistance and direct cash transfers for the neediest, but this kind of special support is neither sufficient nor sustainable.

Policymakers in South Asia, taking stock of recent lessons, will, therefore, have to design

their social protection systems with a view to rendering them more inclusive, especially for those in the informal sector, and more flexible and resilient, the UN Desa said.

However, they will need significantly more fiscal space to achieve all of these goals.

While increased domestic revenue mobilisation can make up for some of the shortfalls, both bilateral and multilateral creditors will still need to adopt a concessionary stance to avert protracted debt crises in an already deeply wounded region.

Several South Asian countries ran fiscal deficits of about 10 per cent of GDP in 2020, and government debt is forecast to grow significantly for most countries.

"Yet, fiscal austerity is not desirable until South Asian countries are back at or close to their economic growth potential, which might still take several years," the report said.

Economic growth in South Asia

in 2021 will be insufficient, at 6.9 per cent, to make up for the losses of 2020, as pandemic hotspots re-emerge and, increasingly, the ability of governments to deal with the multitude of challenges becomes exhausted, the UN report said.

While trade, remittances and investment are expected to pick up in 2021, as much of the global economy moves towards recovery from the widespread lockdown, investment and domestic consumption in many South Asian countries will nevertheless remain subdued owing to the continuing threat of the pandemic and the scarring effects of the crisis.

South Asian countries that are relatively more exposed to global economic conditions, such as Bangladesh and the Maldives with their high share of foreign trade and Nepal with its dependence on tourism and remittances, will enjoy a stronger rebound.

The recovery is subject, however, to significant risks. The forecasts assume effective containment of

the virus in South Asia and the rest of the world, including no further lockdowns in 2021, the resurgence of global trade, and the effective continuation of fiscal stimulus and containment efforts in South Asia and other regions.

"Failure of any or all of these base-line assumptions to materialise could plunge the region deeper into crisis. Opportunities exist as well, but they are less likely and would be less impactful than the downside risks."

The agency said the development of new growth sectors, aided by targeted fiscal stimulus and the disruptive effects of the crisis, could propel South Asia's development trajectory and allow the region to make up lost ground much more quickly.

"A forceful global commitment to counter the negative consequences of the pandemic, particularly in developing countries, could also allow the region to build back better and stronger and regain its position as the global development

champion."

But to grow back stronger, South Asian countries will need first to redouble their efforts to diversify their economies, while at the same time taking stock of global trends initiated by the crisis, such as reshoring of global value chains (GVCs) and a decreased appetite for contact-intensive services.

The report said economic diversification is low or minimal in many South Asian economies, with the near single-trade economies of Bangladesh (garments), Iran (oil) and the Maldives (tourism) especially exposed to external demand shocks.

Garment shipment accounts for more than 80 per cent of annual exports of Bangladesh.

"South Asian governments should promote, in particular, the development of more complex, high-skills and high value-added sectors that could reach a broader base of trade partners within and outside of South Asia or even the domestic market," the UN agency said.

Bangladesh Lamps Limited				
Head office : House-22, Road-4, Block-F, Banani, Dhaka-1213				
2nd Quarterly Financial Statements (October-December 2020)				
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION (UN - AUDITED)				
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020				
	As at 31 December 2020	As at 30 June 2020		
	Taka	Taka		
ASSETS				
Non-current assets				
Property, plant and equipment	59,034,359	78,410,238		
Investments:				
At cost	88,527,133	88,527,133		
Fair value adjustment	570,722,598	338,678,180		
	659,249,731	427,205,313		
Loans and deposits	4,975,848	4,715,197		
Total non-current assets	723,259,938	510,330,748		
Current assets				
Inventories	453,715,384	403,980,033		
Trade and other receivables	84,468,640	130,606,869		
Advance, deposit and prepayments	32,646,116	23,070,316		
Advance income tax	370,313,708	346,703,583		
Cash and cash equivalent	59,270,507	48,175,927		
Total current assets	1,000,414,355	952,536,728		
TOTAL ASSETS	1,723,674,293	1,462,867,476		
EQUITY & LIABILITIES				
Capital and reserves				
Share capital	93,706,080	93,706,080		
Reserves and surplus	688,508,368	468,367,682		
Shareholders' equity	782,214,448	562,073,762		
Non-current liabilities				
Deferred liability - gratuity payable	54,960,018	54,734,999		
Deferred tax liability	43,558,696	23,982,297		
Total non-current liabilities	98,518,714	78,717,296		
Current liabilities				
Short term finance	384,140,425	427,847,816		
Trade and other payables	169,628,173	98,774,239		
Other liabilities	74,379,837	89,854,070		
Unclaimed dividend account	14,804,133	14,863,486		
Provision for tax	199,988,563	190,736,807		
Total current liabilities	842,941,131	822,076,418		
TOTAL EQUITY & LIABILITIES	1,723,674,293	1,462,867,476		
STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME (UN - AUDITED) FOR THE HALF YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020				
	1 July to 31 December 2020	1 July to 31 December 2019	1 October to 31 December 2020	1 October to 31 December 2019
	Taka	Taka	Taka	Taka
Revenue	669,978,690	554,023,453	352,090,380	274,710,614
Cost of sales	(503,332,530)	(420,270,541)	(264,963,880)	(211,375,089)
Gross profit	166,646,160	133,752,912	87,126,500	63,335,525
Other income/(loss)	12,115,925	5,147,835	(4,004)	3,371,169
Operating expenses	(140,578,644)	(152,283,413)	(71,983,321)	(77,743,235)
Profit/(loss) before net finance cost	38,183,441	(13,382,666)	15,139,175	(11,036,541)
Finance cost	(12,262,449)	(29,306,828)	(4,294,654)	(16,215,601)
Finance income	1,688,792	4,430,532	865,460	2,234,162
Net finance cost	(10,573,657)	(24,876,296)	(3,429,194)	(13,981,439)
Profit/(loss) before contribution to WPPF	27,609,784	(38,258,962)	11,709,981	(8,804,970)
Contribution to WPPF	(1,314,752)	-	(557,619)	-
Profit/(loss) before income tax	26,295,032	(38,258,962)	11,152,362	(25,017,980)
Income tax :				
Current tax	(9,251,757)	(3,632,782)	(4,202,948)	(1,956,905)
Deferred tax	3,628,043	2,222,576	2,675,141	1,190,816
Net profit/(loss) for the period	20,671,318	(39,669,168)	9,524,555	(25,784,069)
Other comprehensive income :				
Changes in fair value of financial assets	232,044,418	(140,239,854)	65,746,956	(75,307,211)
Deferred tax income/(expenses)	(23,204,442)	14,023,985	(6,574,696)	7,530,721
Other comprehensive income/(loss)	208,839,976	(126,215,869)	59,172,260	(67,776,490)
Total comprehensive income/(loss)	229,511,294	(165,885,037)	68,796,815	(93,560,559)
Earnings per share (par value Tk. 10 each)	2.21	(4.23)	1.03	(2.75)
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS (UN-AUDITED) FOR THE HALF YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020				
	1 July to 31 December 2020	1 July to 31 December 2019		
	Taka	Taka		
A. Cash flows from operating activities				
Collection from customers	809,346,710	767,936,228		
Payment to suppliers	(428,900,720)	(475,055,408)		
Payment to employees	(102,139,435)	(96,897,487)		
Payment for services received	(97,007,900)	(139,323,909)		
Cash payment of VAT	(126,402,540)	(86,100,285)		
Contribution to provident fund	(3,484,895)	(4,669,285)		
	51,411,210	(34,110,146)		
Cost recovery	8,800,923	4,590,520		
Collection from sale of scrap and others	-	166,550		
Interest paid	(10,081,352)	(26,993,024)		
Income tax paid	(23,610,125)	(19,323,315)		
	26,520,656	(75,669,415)		
B. Cash flows from investing activities				
Dividend received	28,619,775	-		
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment	2,971,546	-		
Payment for acquisition of property, plant and equipment	(1,574,938)			