

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT BY

The Daily Star

DHAKA THURSDAY MAY 30, 2024 JAISHTHA 16, 1431 BS

APP SAVVY BANGLADESH

As Bangladeshi people become increasingly app-savvy, their everyday lives are enriched by a diverse array of mobile apps. In this supplement, we delve into some of the most beloved and widely-used mobile apps in Bangladesh. From innovative solutions for daily tasks to platforms connecting communities, these apps have become integral parts of modern Bangladeshi life, reflecting the country's growing embrace of technology and digital innovation.



MILLIONS OF SHOPKEEPERS Using TallyKhata App for Records and Payments

TallyKhata is not just an app for managing business accounts and payments; it enables communication with 1 million shopkeepers nationwide. It is especially popular among rural and marginal shopkeepers, enhancing their digital capabilities and facilitating information exchange.

ZUBIAN KARIM THAKUR

Buying daily essentials from Rahim Store is a routine for many, with products conveniently delivered via WhatsApp or phone call. Two years ago, I received an SMS from the TallyKhata app detailing my purchase. Curious, I asked Rahim about it, and he explained how TallyKhata simplified his business operations by replacing lengthy account books. This introduction to TallyKhata led me to discover its popularity among Bangladeshi shopkeepers.

To learn more, I spoke with Dr. Shahadat Khan, TallyKhata's CEO, who highlighted the app's focus on filling the digitalization gap for micro and small businesses in Bangladesh. Launched in 2020 amid the Covid-19 pandemic, TallyKhata quickly gained over a million monthly active users, becoming a staple among shops and small businesses nationwide.

Simplified Business Accounting
TallyKhata is a simple app in the Bangla language. Through this app, a small business owner can easily manage necessary accounts. They can add their customers and suppliers one by one. The app offers two options for recording



Key highlights of the TallyKhata platform

- 📌 #1 app for shops and small businesses
- 📌 1 million monthly active users
- 📌 45,000 active Bangla QR merchants and growing
- 📌 Well-distributed in metros as well as rural areas
- 📌 Payment service provider (PSP)
- 📌 license from Bangladesh Bank
- 📌 Winner of Visa accelerator 2022 cohort
- 📌 PCI-DSS certificate for enhanced security



transactions: Pelam ("received") and Dilam ("given"). To ensure ease of use for all types of users, accounting terms like debit or credit are not used. A transaction can be entered within three to ten seconds.

A small business owner can easily get an overall view of their business through the TallyKhata dashboard. The total receivables, payables, and income and expense statements are all visible at a glance.

Accepting Digital Payments from Customers
In addition to managing business accounts, TallyKhata provides digital wallets and QR codes for shop owners, allowing customers to make payments from any bank or mobile banking app in Bangladesh. Operating under the Bangladesh Bank's Payment Service Provider license, TallyKhata introduced Bangla

QR, enabling payments via a single QR code. Shopkeepers can apply for a digital wallet and QR code through the TallyKhata app, using an electronic Know Your Customer (eKYC) process.

Comprehensive Banking and Financial Services Opportunities

TallyKhata is the largest digital platform for micro and small businesses in Bangladesh. Business owners regularly record transactions and accept digital payments here. Millions of business owners have completed electronic KYC on this platform. It is the largest active database of Bangladeshi shopkeepers and micro-businesses.

A significant portion of micro-businesses lack banking facilities due to high customer acquisition costs, product distribution challenges, and lack of client data. TallyKhata aims to help banks address these issues using

modern eKYC, big data, and credit scoring technologies. It collaborates with various banks and financial institutions in Bangladesh to deliver comprehensive banking services to shopkeepers and small business owners.

Digitizing the Informal Sector for a Cashless and Smart Bangladesh

TallyKhata is not just an app for managing business accounts and payments; it enables communication with 1 million shopkeepers nationwide. It is especially popular among rural and marginal shopkeepers, enhancing their digital capabilities and facilitating information exchange.

With over ten million micro and small businesses, the informal sector contributes 28% to Bangladesh's GDP and 80% of employment outside agriculture. To achieve a Smart Bangladesh by 2041, integrating these businesses into digital services is crucial, and platforms like TallyKhata are key to this effort.

About the Company Behind TallyKhata
TallyKhata and TallyPay are developed by Progoti Systems Limited (PSL), a FinTech company in Bangladesh focusing on digital financial services and the digitalization of the informal sector. PSL previously implemented the largest digital payment disbursement project in the country via SureCash, benefiting 10 million families.

Dr. Shahadat Khan, the founder and CEO, was a BUET faculty member and completed his PhD in Canada. The company, backed by foreign investment from venture capital firms in Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Canada, including SBI Group and Standard Chartered Bank Ventures, aims to advance Bangladesh's digitalization.



Stream Anytime, Anywhere with Toffee

1 BILLION+ PAID CRICKET MINUTES WATCHED

Digital entertainment is booming, and Banglalink's homegrown and locally developed OTT platform, Toffee, is leading the charge. Launched in 2019, Toffee offers a wide range of content, from Live Sports, Video on Demand, Dubbed foreign series, and original movies to audiobooks. This variety has made it a hit, with 70% of its 12.1 million monthly active users coming from non-Banglalink networks. It's now the top digital entertainment platform in the country.

Toffee has changed how people consume entertainment, allowing them to watch their favorite content on the go or at home. It's especially popular with sports fans, providing live streams of major events like the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ and Cricket World Cup 2023. Over 1 billion views have tuned in to Toffee for these events.

Looking ahead, Toffee will exclusively stream major cricket events in 2024 and 2025, including the ICC Men's and Women's T20 World Cups and the ICC Men's Champions Trophy. Fans can look forward to 71 men's and 95 women's matches from 20 nations.

Toffee also features a collection of

BANGLADESH'S MOST VISITED DIGITAL ENTERTAINMENT PLATFORM WITH

12.1 MILLION

MONTHLY ACTIVE USER

A POPULATION MORE THAN 47 UN APPROVED NATION

Bangla-dubbed Turkish dramas and a rich library of Bangla movies, series, and dramas. Recent hits include Rayhan Rafi's war film "Damal," the cybercrime thriller "Antarjal," and the

50 M+ REGISTERED USERS



A NUMBER LARGER THAN ARGENTINIAN POPULATION.

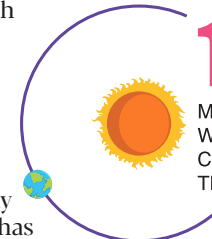


independence war-based "Ora 7 Jon," which have set streaming records. The platform is also branching into new genres like infotainment and podcasts.

Toffee's popularity has made it a prime spot for advertisers, creating new opportunities to reach a wider audience. This shift allows advertisers to focus more on local platforms rather than relying on Meta and YouTube, helping to keep ad revenues within the nation. Competing successfully with international platforms, it has

attracted over 50 brands. During the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™, Toffee generated 2.5 billion ad impressions.

In just a few years, Toffee has become a staple in Bangladesh's digital entertainment landscape. Its continued evolution promises to keep meeting the entertainment needs of its users. As Toffee grows, its impact on Bangladesh's entertainment scene is undeniable.



1 BILLION+

MINUTES CONSUMED PER MONTH; WITHIN THIS TIME, THE EARTH COULD ROUND THE SUN TWO THOUSAND TIMES

টি২০ বিশ্বকাপ ডিসকাউন্ট প্যাক

১৬৮ প্যাক

৯৯ প্যাক

পুরো বিশ্বকাপ

ডিসকাউন্ট ৩১ মে পর্যন্ত

অ্যাপ ডাউনলোড করতে

ডাউনলোড করুন

দেখুন যেকোনো ডিভাইসে

*শর্ত প্রযোজ্য

THE UNSTOPPABLE rise of Bangladesh's mobile app Market

In recent years, Bangladesh has witnessed an extraordinary boom in its mobile app market, transforming from a nascent industry into a vibrant ecosystem teeming with innovation and growth. This rapid evolution is underpinned by a young, tech-savvy population, burgeoning internet penetration, and a supportive government keen on propelling the nation towards a digital future.

ZARIF FAIAZ, ZAHIDUR RABBI

As the app development sector flourishes, Bangladeshi apps are increasingly competing with global giants like Uber and Foodpanda in the country's market, offering localised solutions that resonate deeply with the local populace.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF GROWTH

Bangladesh's app development industry has its roots in a robust educational framework, with around 42 public and private institutions offering degree programs in IT and computer science. Each year, approximately 3,000 students graduate from these programs, bolstering the ranks of a burgeoning tech workforce. Complementing this, numerous IT training centres, both domestic and international, enrol about 12,000 students annually, ensuring a steady pipeline of skilled developers ready to contribute to the sector's growth.

The country's low labour costs, high

programmer productivity, and broad English literacy have further cemented its position as a key player in the global outsourcing market. According to the Oxford Internet Institute, Bangladesh is now the second largest supplier of online outsourcing labour, surpassing even the United States, with around 500,000 active freelancers earning a combined total of \$100 million per year.

LOCAL CHAMPIONS: COMPETING WITH GLOBAL GIANTS

Bangladeshi apps are not merely playing catch-up with their international counterparts; they are actively redefining the market with innovative and localised offerings. Take OBHAI, for instance. Launched in 2017, Obhai started with a third-party developer but soon transitioned to an in-house development team. Initially plagued by performance issues, the app underwent significant improvements and post-Covid-19 transitioned to a cashless payment system, a move that initially caused a dip in user numbers but eventually led to a resurgence as drivers appreciated the instant payment feature.

"Currently, we

have a customer base of 4.5 million and 40,000 drivers combining CNG and car services," says Fazla Elahi, head of business at OBHAI. This impressive growth highlights how localised features can create a competitive edge, allowing Obhai to stand toe-to-toe with global players like Uber.

A THRIVING ENTERTAINMENT ECOSYSTEM

The entertainment sector in Bangladesh's app market is particularly vibrant, with platforms like Chorki, Hoichoi, and Bongo leading the charge. Chorki, for example, has quickly become a household name, offering a rich catalogue of local TV series and movies. Similarly, Bongo provides an extensive library of Bangladeshi content, enhancing the digital entertainment landscape.

However, it is Rabbithole BD that stands out for its focus on sports content. Launched in 2016, Rabbithole BD initially offered its services for free but switched to a subscription model during the 2019 Cricket World Cup. "We have over 10 million paid subscribers, with 500,000 being recurrent subscribers," says A.S.M Rafiq Ullah, CEO of Content Matters, the company behind Rabbithole BD. "Our app has been downloaded over 6 million times, and sports remain our primary focus. We are the legal distributor of international sports content in Bangladesh."

THE E-COMMERCE REVOLUTION

In the e-commerce sector, apps like Pickaboo, Rokomari, and Chaldal are making significant strides. Pickaboo specialises in electronics and gadgets, offering reliable delivery and exceptional customer service. "Currently, we have around 1.1 million active users. 55% of our total orders come from the app," shared Morin Talukder, CEO and Co-founder of Pickaboo.

Rokomari, a popular online bookstore, also deals in a variety of other products, including electronics and stationery, while Chaldal has revolutionised grocery shopping by providing a seamless online grocery delivery service.

Moreover, Sheba.xyz has emerged as a key player in the service sector, offering a wide range of services from home cleaning to car repairs. This diversity in offerings illustrates the broadening scope of the Bangladeshi app market, catering to an array of consumer needs and preferences.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Despite its impressive growth, the Bangladeshi app market faces several challenges. Technical limitations such as outdated devices and

inconsistent internet access in rural areas continue to pose significant obstacles. Security concerns also remain a pressing issue, particularly for financial and personal safety apps.

To address these challenges, developers are focusing on creating lightweight apps that function well on older devices and improving offline capabilities. Enhanced security protocols and user education on digital literacy are also being prioritised to build trust and ensure a safer user experience.

GLOBAL TRENDS AND BANGLADESH'S POSITION

The global mobile app market was valued at \$228.98 billion in 2023 and is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 14.3% from 2024 to 2030. Consumer spending on apps reached \$171 billion in 2023, with mobile ad spend hitting \$362 billion. The Asia Pacific region, driven by increasing smartphone penetration and internet access, leads in app revenue share, followed by North America and Europe.

Within this global context, Bangladesh's app market is poised for continued growth. The country's strategic focus on digital transformation, coupled with a supportive government and an entrepreneurial spirit among its youth, positions it well to capitalise on the burgeoning app economy. As more local developers enter the fray, bringing with them innovative solutions tailored to the needs of Bangladeshi consumers, the market is set to expand even further.

HOW THE INDUSTRY CAN IMPROVE

Infrastructure development is critical. Investing in better internet infrastructure to ensure consistent connectivity across the country is crucial for expanding access to mobile apps in rural areas and supporting the overall digital economy. Encouraging

collaboration between app developers, government bodies, and private sector companies can also foster innovation and resource sharing. Collaborative efforts can drive growth, streamline regulatory processes, and enhance the overall quality of mobile apps.

User education is another important area. Educating users on digital literacy helps them make the most of available apps. This includes initiatives to improve understanding of app functionalities, security practices, and digital transactions.

At the same time, more relevant to users, developers can build connection a stronger with local the audience and cater to their specific needs and preferences.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Looking ahead, the Bangladeshi app market holds immense potential. With ongoing improvements in

infrastructure and a relentless drive towards digitalisation, the country is on track to become a significant player in the global app economy. By continuing to leverage its unique strengths—such as a young, educated workforce and a growing middle class—Bangladesh can further cement its position as a hub of innovation and growth in the mobile app sector.

The rise of Bangladesh's mobile app market is a testament to the country's adaptability and resilience. As local developers continue to innovate and compete with global giants, the future looks bright for this dynamic and rapidly evolving industry. With continued investment and support, Bangladesh's app market is set to achieve even greater heights, contributing significantly to the country's economic growth and digital transformation.



Realme's feature-packed smartphones now favourite to YOUNG CONSUMERS

In the sub-BDT 20,000 price band, the consumer survey reveals realme is the No. 1 brand for product quality in the 16-20 age group.

Ever since its emergence, the brand has been continuously introducing robust performing devices targeting the youth. In a very short time, the story of realme has become promising in the market.

The youth immediately embraced the brand for its focus on meeting their needs, not just in Bangladesh but across the globe, following its global launch in mid-2018.

Most of the brand's smartphones are packed with powerful batteries, gaming processors, crystal-clear cameras, large displays, and state-of-the-art hardware-software optimization to ensure an unmatched experience.

As a result of the amazing performance and user experience, realme has initiated sales on popular e-commerce platforms and sold all allotted phones in just a few minutes in multiple instances over the past years.

During its journey in Bangladesh, realme launched numerous phones of its C series, number series and several Pro phones. Recently, it has also launched the Note series. These phones were sold out like hotcakes.

The smartphones disrupted the market to such an extent that they were highly appreciated not only by users but also by tech reviewers in Bangladesh.

According to Counterpoint Research's quarterly smartphone shipment tracker for Q1 2024, 80% of Bangladesh's smartphone market belongs to the sub-BDT 20,000 price band and has an average selling price (ASP) of BDT 20,700. In the sub-BDT 20,000 price band, the consumer survey reveals realme is the No. 1 brand for product quality in the 16-20 age group.

Further, realme tops the overall market in terms of build quality, a sub-parameter of product quality, with 54% of the survey respondents preferring the brand. When asked which brand they would recommend to others for product quality, 83% of the respondents expressed a strong inclination for realme.

Commenting on realme's positioning in Bangladesh's smartphone market, Counterpoint's Senior Analyst Arushi Chawla said, "As smartphones have become an integral part of daily life, their quality is increasingly gaining importance. Besides, product quality is also important for securing a favorable resale value. Factors like camera quality, battery life, processor, build quality and display are key considerations for smartphone buyers in Bangladesh when evaluating the product's quality. Among various brands in Bangladesh, realme is particularly popular among young users in the affordable price range. This is because realme offers a well-designed and tailor-made portfolio specifically for the Bangladeshi market.

In addition, its innovative software and trusted build quality make it a top choice for smartphone buyers."

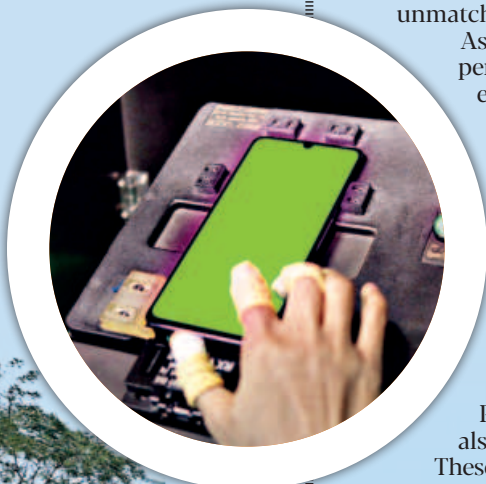
Beyond smartphones, realme also entertains users with youth-centric and creative digital content. These high-value contents are delivered by influencers in unique ways.

With a growing number of users and fans, the brand has also been expanding its aftersales services countrywide. With over 350 brand shops across Bangladesh, realme is reaching more customers every day.

realme believes that the young generation will lead their countries in near future and they need to follow their dreams to do so. To assist the youth in their journey, realme also took multiple initiatives. The brand also arranges exciting online competitions almost regularly.

realme has become a favourite among the youth, drawing them in with its energetic vibe. With realme, young people feel empowered to live boldly and fearlessly. The brand offers many initiatives to support and uplift young people. Its motto, "Making it real", captures its commitment to innovation.

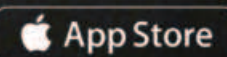
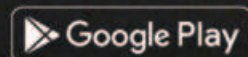
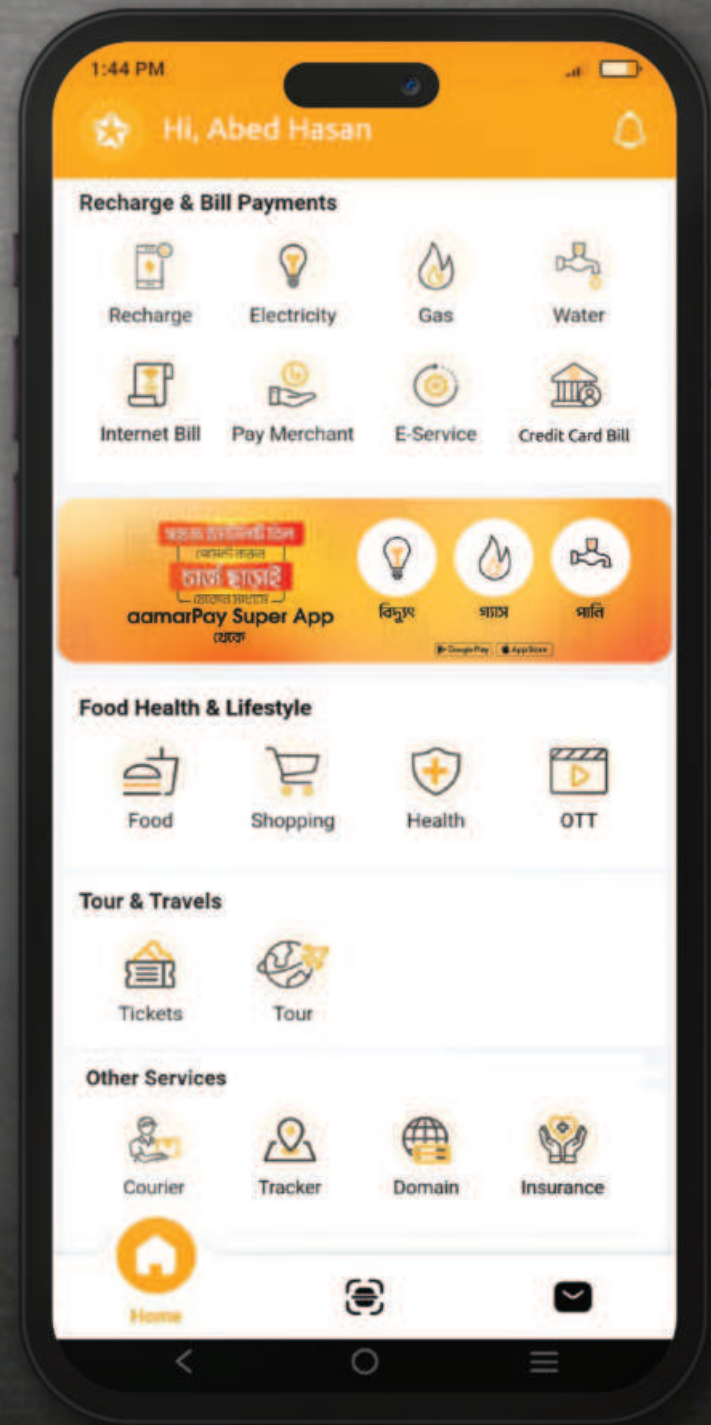
In Bangladesh, realme has now become the go-to choice for its top-quality smartphones.



*Counterpoint Research Bangladesh survey for 16-20 age group (sub-Tk 20k band), 2024

aamarPay Super App

*Your one-stop solution for
effortless payments*



QUICK CASH

Taptap Send speeds up global remittances

Launched in 2018, Taptap Send has quickly gained popularity, serving thousands of users worldwide. Founded by two Harvard alumni, the company has its head offices in London and New York City. Taptap Send is also known for its community projects across various regions, often catering specifically to Bangladeshis living in the US, UK, UAE, Europe and Canada.

AYMAN ANIKA

Picture a Bangladeshi expatriate living in New York City, diligently saving a portion of his income every month to provide for his family back in Dhaka. However, in the face of global inflation and unpredictable exchange rates, the process of sending money abroad can become expensive and burdensome for individuals. In this situation, Taptap Send stands out as a convenient solution, making international money transfers simple and secure with ease and efficiency.

Introducing Taptap Send

Taptap Send, a cross-border remittance platform, has been crafted for diasporic communities, facilitating money transfers from countries like the US, UK, UAE, EU nations,

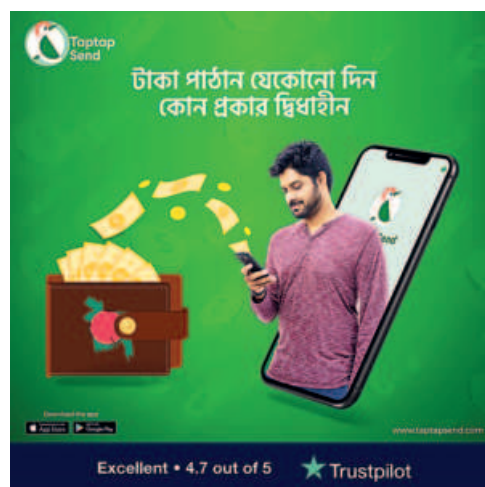
rates that are hard to beat. Additionally, it offers the convenience of instant bank transfers and mobile wallet options.

Seamless and cost-free transactions

According to Sudarshan Suvashish Das, Growth Manager for Bangladesh at Taptap Send, the platform's primary allure is its fee-free structure. "Taptap Send does not charge any fee. There are absolutely zero fees when you send money to Bangladesh, regardless of the pay-out method – banks, mobile wallets, or cash pick-ups – giving our customers the best value for their money when sending remittances," he explains. This approach ensures that the full amount reaches the intended recipient without deductions.

Unmatched exchange rates

"We ensure great exchange rates. Our platform ensures that money transfers are fast and



catering to all user demographics. "The app has a user-friendly interface that allows customers to navigate and complete transactions seamlessly," Das adds. Moreover, the company is committed to continual improvement, regularly updating its technological features to enhance user experience.

What lies ahead: Growth and improvement

Moving forward, Taptap Send is not complacent. "We are always striving to incorporate the latest technological advancements to provide our users with an exceptional experience," Das affirms. The company is looking to expand into new markets, improve its current services, and establish strong partnerships with important financial stakeholders in order to enhance its global presence and provide better service.

A reliable and affordable remittance solution

Launched in 2018, Taptap Send has quickly gained popularity, serving thousands of users worldwide. Founded by two Harvard alumni, the company has its head offices in London and New York City. Taptap Send is also known for its community projects across various regions, often catering specifically to Bangladeshis living in the US, UK, UAE, Europe and Canada. Since its inception, Taptap Send has been dedicated to providing reliable, affordable, and convenient remittance services.

With an ethos of customer-centricity, Taptap Send is poised to remain a preferred choice for Bangladeshi expatriates and other global users needing to send money home efficiently and without undue expense.

So, for Bangladeshis abroad and many others, Taptap Send can not only become a service – but a lifeline, connecting them with their loved ones through remittance.

and Canada to destinations across Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. Taptap Send ensures great exchange rates leveraging its partnerships with banks and financial institutions and streamlining the process.

A key benefit of the app is its remarkable convenience for Bangladeshis residing abroad who wish to send money to their family members in their home country. This app stands out from the rest by providing no-fee transfers at

efficient, allowing recipients to receive funds in a matter of minutes," Das informs, highlighting how Taptap Send consistently offers more favourable rates compared to other platforms. This rapid service is crucial for those who rely on timely financial support from abroad. Not only are the transfers quick and easy, but with each and every transfer, the recipients also receive a 2.5% government incentive.

Fast and efficient money transfers

Taptap Send stands out for its speed and efficiency. The app boasts an extensive network of partners and pay-out locations, enhancing its accessibility and convenience for users globally. The platform also features a secure transaction system with built-in fraud protection and a robust transfer mechanism.

User-friendly experience

The intuitive design of the Taptap Send app allows for easy navigation and quick transactions,

