

Mastercard launches ‘Dine. Delight. Depart for Thailand’ campaign

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mastercard, a global digital payment solutions provider, has recently launched a campaign, titled “Dine. Delight. Depart for Thailand 2025”, in collaboration with Chef’s Table, a prominent multi-cuisine dining destination and food court in Bangladesh.

Under this campaign, Mastercard cardholders have the chance to win exclusive rewards simply by using their Mastercard debit, credit or prepaid cards at any Chef’s Table outlet nationwide.

According to a press release, the campaign will run from July 15 to August 31, 2025.

Syed Mohammad Kamal, country manager for Bangladesh at Mastercard, inaugurated the campaign as the chief guest at the Chef’s Table outlet in the capital’s Gulshan-1.

The top 10 cardholders with the highest cumulative spending during the campaign period will receive exciting prizes, including a 3-day, 2-night couple’s trip to Thailand, inclusive of return airfare and hotel accommodation.

An additional nine winners will be awarded Unimart shopping vouchers worth up to Tk 20,000.

Winners will be determined based on their total qualifying expenditure throughout the campaign duration.

Jubaer Hossain, lead of merchant and commerce at Mastercard Bangladesh, attended the event alongside senior representatives from Chef’s Table, Mastercard, and its partner banks.



Syed Mohammad Kamal, country manager for Bangladesh at Mastercard, inaugurates the campaign, titled “Dine. Delight. Depart for Thailand 2025”, jointly organised by Mastercard and Chef’s Table, at the latter’s Table outlet in Gulshan-1, Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: MASTERCARD

Dollar maintains weekly gains

REUTERS, New York

The US dollar slipped against the euro on Friday but held on to weekly gains, as investors weighed expected Federal Reserve policy amid signs that tariffs may be starting to increase some inflation pressures and as US President Donald Trump continued to criticise Chair Jerome Powell.

Data on Tuesday showed that consumer prices rose in June, though the increase was seen as moderate. Wednesday’s producer price inflation report showed that prices were steady last month.

Powell has said he expects inflation to rise this summer as a result of Trump’s tariff policies. His comments have pushed out expectations of when the US central bank is likely to cut interest rates.

But the labor market is showing signs of weakness even as headline job gains and the unemployment rate remain relatively solid.

“We’re waiting on the tariffs to become real and not just a negotiating ploy and waiting on the labor market to reveal itself,” said Lou Brien, strategist at DRW Trading in Chicago.

“Layoffs are at a lower level than they were pre-pandemic, but the hiring is terrible. And if, all of a sudden, the layoffs come up, we’re going to get a significant increase in the unemployment rate very quickly,” Brien said.



Md Mohiuddin Khan, executive chairman of National Pension Authority, and Md Habibur Rahman, managing director and chief executive officer of Standard Bank PLC, shake hands and exchange signed documents of the MoU at the Bangladesh Secretariat in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: STANDARD BANK

Standard Bank signs MoU with National Pension Authority

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Standard Bank PLC has recently entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the National Pension Authority (NPA).

Md Habibur Rahman, managing director and chief executive officer of the bank, and Md Mohiuddin Khan, executive chairman of the NPA, signed the MoU at the conference room of the Finance Division at the Bangladesh Secretariat in Dhaka, according to a press release.

Md Khairuzzaman Mojumder, secretary of the Ministry of Finance, attended the signing ceremony as the chief guest. Senior officials from Standard Bank, the NPA, and the Ministry of Finance were also present.



Ali Reza Iftekhar, managing director of Eastern Bank PLC; Sabbir Ahmed, country manager for Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan at Visa, and M Jahangir Alam, chairman of The Yours Truly Limited, inaugurate the “SkyFlex Visa Prepaid Card”, jointly launched by the bank, Visa and The Yours Truly, at Le Méridien Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: EASTERN BANK

Mercantile Bank inks deal with National Pension Authority

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mercantile Bank PLC has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the National Pension Authority (NPA) to facilitate and accelerate the implementation of various schemes under the Universal Pension Scheme (UPS).

Matiul Hasan, managing director of the bank, and Md Mohiuddin Khan, executive chairman of the NPA, signed the MoU at the conference room of the finance division at the Bangladesh Secretariat in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

Under the terms of the agreement, Mercantile Bank will support the collection of pension instalments for the NPA’s UPS schemes through a wide range of digital and physical banking channels.

These include the bank’s online banking platform, mobile banking service MyCash, digital banking app MBL Rainbow, agent banking outlets, internet banking, and other authorised service channels.

The signing ceremony was attended by the managing directors of 17 banks, along with senior officials from participating banks and the Ministry of Finance.



Md Mohiuddin Khan, executive chairman of the National Pension Authority, and Matiul Hasan, managing director of Mercantile Bank PLC, shake hands and exchange signed documents of the memorandum of understanding at the Bangladesh Secretariat in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: MERCANTILE BANK

Eastern Bank brings social currency card for youth

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Eastern Bank PLC (EBL), in strategic collaboration with The Yours Truly Limited and global digital payment solutions provider Visa, has launched “SkyFlex Visa Prepaid Card”, a product tailored specifically for digitally savvy youth.

Linked to the Flex app, this prepaid card offers dual-currency functionality, contactless payment capability, e-commerce compatibility, and a distinctive rewards system named FlexScore, which enables cardholders to earn cashback at select merchants.

Ali Reza Iftekhar, managing director of the bank; Sabbir Ahmed, country manager for Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan at Visa; and M Jahangir Alam, chairman of The Yours Truly Limited, jointly unveiled the card at a ceremony held at Le Méridien Dhaka yesterday, according to a press release.

Commenting on the launch, Iftekhar

stated, “This innovation reflects EBL’s commitment to developing secure, digital-first financial solutions that foster inclusion and empower the next generation.”

Ahmed added, “This launch underscores Visa’s continued dedication to equipping young people with secure, flexible, and technologically advanced payment tools.”

“We believe SkyFlex will not only promote financial inclusion but also transform the way young Bangladeshis engage with digital financial services, making daily transactions more seamless and rewarding,” he continued.

Alam commented, “With the launch of this social currency-based card, in partnership with EBL and Visa, we aim to strengthen the creator economy by equipping aspiring and established creators with the financial tools necessary to grow and monetise their talents effectively.”

Drug-making

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“There was a time when medical representatives gave doctors a pen or a leaflet. Over time, gifts have increased. Some are so expensive that they make me furious. These gifts account for about 3 percent of sales,” he said.

“Financially, it may not make a major impact, but it is a bad practice and should be addressed,” he admitted.

One proposed solution has been to make doctors write prescriptions using only generic names, rather than specific brands. But

Kabir said Bangladesh is not yet ready for that step.

“In developed countries, doctors write generics as there are chemists in their pharmacies. But in middle-income countries like ours, we do not have skilled pharmacists, let alone chemists at drug stores. Besides, our regulatory oversight is also weak.”

He said that if generic-only prescriptions are enforced without the required infrastructure, patients may end up with poor-quality medicines despite paying higher prices.

IMF warns

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Gopinath said capital uncertainty remains high,” she said, in a text of her remarks.

She urged countries to resolve trade tensions and implement policy changes to address underlying domestic imbalances, including scaling back fiscal outlays and putting debt on a sustainable path.

Gopinath also underscored the need for monetary policy officials to carefully calibrate their decisions to specific circumstances in their countries, and stressed the need to protect central bank independence. This was a key theme in the G20 communiqué released by finance officials.

flows to emerging markets and developing economies remained sluggish, but resilient, in the face of increased policy uncertainty and market volatility. For many borrowers, financing conditions remained tight.

For countries with unsustainable debt, proactive moves were essential, Gopinath said, repeating the IMF’s call for timely and efficient debt restructuring mechanisms.

More work was needed on that issue, including allowing middle-income countries to access the G20’s Common Framework for Debt Restructuring, she said.

BRAC Bank opens ‘Digital First’ branch in Gulshan

STAR BUSINESS DESK

BRAC Bank PLC yesterday launched a new “Digital First” branch on North Gulshan Avenue in the capital’s Gulshan area.

Designed to provide unparalleled convenience and cutting-edge services, the branch redefines a customer-centric approach by combining personalised service with modern technology.

Meheriar M Hasan, chairperson of the bank, inaugurated the branch as the chief guest, according to a press release issued by the bank.

Commenting on the launch, Hasan said, “We are expanding our branch network across the country as part of our strategic initiative to offer customers more convenient banking solutions.”

“With an extensive physical branch presence alongside robust digital

banking capabilities, we aim to deliver superior services to our valued clients,” he added.

The branch is equipped with advanced digital solutions to enhance efficiency and speed in banking services.

Key features include the “DIGI Box” — a 24/7 digital delivery system for the secure collection of cheques and cards — as well as a digital file-sharing service to facilitate seamless document transfers.

To further elevate the customer experience, the branch employs a matrix of QR codes, enabling users to lodge complaints and provide feedback effortlessly.

A Queue Management System has been implemented to minimise waiting times, while a dedicated Digital Corner — supported by a digital ambassador — assists customers in navigating and utilising the bank’s digital platforms.



Meheriar M Hasan, chairperson of BRAC Bank PLC, inaugurates the new “Digital First” branch on North Gulshan Avenue in Gulshan, Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: BRAC BANK



Tarek Reaz Khan, managing director and CEO of NRB Bank PLC, and Md Mohiuddin Khan, executive chairman of the National Pension Authority, shake hands and exchange signed documents of the memorandum of understanding at the Bangladesh Secretariat in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: NRB BANK

NRB Bank signs MoU with National Pension Authority

STAR BUSINESS DESK

NRB Bank PLC has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the National Pension Authority (NPA) to facilitate and accelerate the implementation of various schemes under the Universal Pension Scheme (UPS).

Md Mohiuddin Khan, executive chairman of the NPA, and Tarek Reaz Khan, managing director and CEO of the bank, signed the MoU at the conference room of the finance division at the Bangladesh Secretariat in the capital recently, according to a press release.

Md Khairuzzaman Mojumder, secretary of the finance division at the

Ministry of Finance, attended the signing ceremony as the chief guest.

The Universal Pension Scheme, administered by the National Pension Authority, comprises four distinct programmes: Probas, Pragati, Suraksha and Samata. Each enrollee is issued a unique pension ID, allowing them to monitor their contributions and accrued returns in real time through an online platform.

Beyond ensuring financial security post-retirement, the scheme offers a range of additional benefits, including income tax concessions, access to loans, and government co-partnership for economically disadvantaged groups.