

## BB forms \$500m forex intervention fund

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and AHSAN HABIB

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) has formed a \$500 million fund to contain erratic movements in the foreign exchange market, as the country moves towards a more flexible exchange rate regime in line with International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditions.

The formation of the fund was disclosed in the Monetary Policy Review 2024-25, released yesterday.

During discussions over the fourth and fifth tranches of the IMF loan programme in April and May, BB assured the multilateral lender that it would form the fund as part of the conditions for transitioning to a flexible exchange rate regime.

Preferring anonymity, a central bank official said the fund will be used according to IMF guidelines.

"In buying dollars by the BB, this fund will have no relation," said the official. "But, in the case of selling dollars, there will be some specific conditions."

While the central bank faces no restriction in buying dollars from the market, sales will be capped at the size of the fund. The official added that the IMF has outlined specific criteria under which BB can sell dollars.

According to the policy review, Bangladesh is transitioning towards a flexible exchange rate system, where the market will play a greater role in determining the value of the taka.

### IPDC ডিপোজিট | ১৬৫১৯

The transition is expected to improve export competitiveness by aligning exchange rates with market realities, while also making the country more attractive to foreign investors and supporting broader industrial growth.

Referring to the stabilisation fund, BB says the success of this policy, however, will depend on effective communication, swift implementation, and regular monitoring of both domestic and international economic developments.

The review said that by promoting transparency and adopting a more market-driven approach, Bangladesh hopes to integrate more seamlessly with the global economy and support long-term growth.

To counter the recent appreciation of the local currency against the dollar, a trend that could dissuade remitters and exporters, the central bank has recently bought around \$484 million from banks.

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## Export data gap balloons to \$4b despite 2024 reset

### EXPORT DATA BY EPB AND BB (In million \$)

	FY23	FY24	FY25*
EPB	46,430	44,469	44,946
BB	43,364	40,807	40,868
Gap	3,067	3,663	4,078

\*FY25 data was up to May

### REASONS BEHIND DATA MISMATCH

- EPB counts shipments; BB uses realised proceeds
- Shipment-realisation time lag also causes mismatch
- BB does not count exports from EPZs to local market
- Lack of NBR code for samples overstates EPB data

### WHAT TO DO TO AVOID MISMATCH

Adjust for shipment-realisation time lag | Introduce customs code for samples | Improve coordination among EPB, BB, and NBR

SOHEL PARVEZ

The gap in export data maintained by the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) and the Bangladesh Bank (BB) has persisted even though both agencies teamed up last year and began reconciling merchandise shipment figures.

In the fiscal year (FY) 2023-24, the gap in export data between EPB and BB was \$3.66 billion. At the beginning of FY25, the central bank adjusted the calculation, while the export promotion agency briefly suspended its monthly data release.

Despite the reset, the discrepancy in export data rose to \$4 billion in the first eleven months of FY25, according to figures from BB and EPB.

The mismatch has prompted fresh calls among economists for investigations.

Amid criticism following the revelation of a large mismatch in export earnings data by BB and EPB in mid-2024, EPB suspended the release of export data for three months to identify the causes of the gap.

At that time, it emerged that the difference between export figures calculated by EPB and BB had persisted for at least 12 years, with the gap crossing \$12 billion in FY 2022-23.

The central bank corrected its figure in the Balance of Payments (BoP) in July last year,

taking economists and business leaders by surprise.

Later, BB identified multiple entries, equivalent to 20 percent of the total dataset. In previous months, the ratio of multiple entries to total exports was 14 percent.

EPB usually compiles export data based on numbers it receives from the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and the central bank.

While resuming export data releases in October 2024, the EPB mentioned the role of the revenue board in the data mismatch. It assured that there would be no data gap between the revenue board and EPB in future.

Prof Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow at local think tank Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said double-counting of export data could be stopped. But the main factor behind the mismatch is shipment value and proceeds realisation -- the process by which an exporter receives payment for goods or services that have been exported.

While the central bank uses actual proceeds, EPB counts exports based on shipment, Rahman added.

Sometimes exporters have to give discounts, and some orders get cancelled too, he said. "But the \$4 billion gap in export data is quite large. It should be examined."

Selim Raifhan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling

(Sanem), said a proper explanation regarding the gap should be given by the agencies to clear up ambiguity.

"Besides, steps should be taken so that the gap can be narrowed down as much as possible," he said.

#### POTENTIAL AREAS OF DISCREPANCY

Arief Hossain Khan, a spokesperson of BB, said EPB counts exports based on shipment, whereas they use export data based on realisation. This creates a discrepancy.

On the issue, Abu Mukhles Alamgir Hossain, director (Policy and Planning) current charge at EPB, said the export figure used by BB in the Balance of Payments (BoP) excludes exports from Export Processing Zones (EPZs) to Bangladesh and cutting, making, and trimming (CMT) charges.

CMT is a manufacturing process where a factory cuts fabric according to provided patterns by the buyer, sews the pieces together to create the garment, and then trims any excess threads to finish the product for shipping.

Hossain said the shipment value of goods used by the central bank in other places matches the EPB figures.

Apart from CMT and local sales by EPZs, he identified two more areas where the counting could mismatch.

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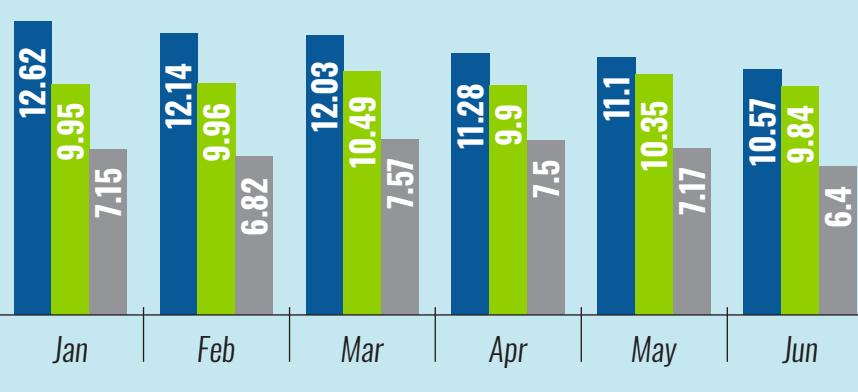


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### PRIVATE CREDIT GROWTH (IN %)

■ 2023 ■ 2024 ■ 2025



### Overregulation stifles growth of capital market

Amir Khasru says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Excessive regulatory control is negatively affecting the capital market, said BNP Standing Committee Member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday, calling for a more streamlined and investor-friendly approach to ensure stability and growth.

He made the remarks while addressing a workshop titled "Operational Framework of Commodity Derivatives Market and Its Business Prospect", organised by the Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE).

"The capital market cannot flourish under excessive regulatory pressure. Overregulation is deterring growth and confidence," he said, urging automation and transparency across all government procedures involving investment and trading.

Referring to future governance plans, the former commerce minister stressed the need to eliminate physical contact between citizens and government institutions in service delivery.

"As long as physical contact exists, corruption will persist. We envision a system where everything is accessible from home. Citizens will receive all services without needing to physically visit any office," he said.

Khasru further stated that the BNP, if in power, would fully digitalise the investment process, allowing investors to track their files in real time from anywhere in the world.

Citing examples, he said,

## Exporters to seek duty-free access for apparel made of US cotton



Local apparel exporters have long been urging the US government to allow duty-free access for Bangladeshi garments made from American cotton.

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Entrepreneurs in the Bangladesh delegation currently in Washington will once again push for duty-free access to the American market for garments made from US cotton during the final round of tariff negotiations with the Trump administration today.

However, if that does not work, the Bangladesh government would try to negotiate a lower tariff rate from the proposed 35 percent.

Local apparel exporters have for many years been demanding that the US government allow duty-free market access for Bangladeshi apparel made from imported American cotton.

If the US government does not agree to zero duty, then retention of the existing 15 percent duty on all types of garments will also be acceptable, said Showkat Aziz Russell, president of the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association.

The import of a high volume of cotton from the US can reduce the bilateral trade deficit immediately, he also said.

Even a few years ago, the US used

one of the Bangladesh delegation members now in Washington. He, however, will not directly take part in the negotiations, since those are meant to be undertaken by government officials.

The delegation also includes two other businesspeople, one a major soybean importer and the other a liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) trader.

Bangladesh annually imports \$4 billion worth of cotton, and only five percent comes from the US, said Russell.

Some \$2 billion worth of cotton can easily be imported from the US in a year, as the quality is also higher than that from other countries, he said.

"I hope Bangladesh can import a lot of LPG from the USA to reduce the trade gap between the two countries," the importer said, asking not to be named.

He said local LPG traders have already become engaged in negotiations with US exporters to find ways to import LPG.

But recently the US share decreased as local cotton importers, users, traders, and millers diversified their sourcing, especially from African countries, he added.

The price of US cotton is two to three cents higher than that of other countries because of its high quality, he said.

It takes more than 90 days to bring cotton from the US to Bangladesh, he said.

An LPG trader in Bangladesh, who is also on the way to Washington DC, said he would hold several meetings with American LPG exporters on the sidelines of the negotiations.

"I hope Bangladesh can import a lot of LPG from the USA to reduce the trade gap between the two countries," the importer said, asking not to be named.

He said local LPG traders have already become engaged in negotiations with US exporters to find ways to import LPG.

## Is there room to cut policy rate from 10%?

BB to unveil Jul-Dec monetary policy tomorrow

MD MEHEDI HASAN

The central bank is set to unveil its latest monetary policy for the first half of the fiscal year (FY) 2025-26 tomorrow, as inflation slows but private sector credit growth hovers at multi-year lows, underscoring the fragility of the country's economic recovery.

Inflation declined to 8.48 percent in June, down from 9.05 percent in May, marking the lowest level since February 2023. The drop follows more than two

years of aggressive monetary tightening, during which the central bank raised the policy rate, or repo rate, to 10 percent, its highest in a decade.

The foreign exchange market has also stabilised in recent months, supported by rising remittance inflows and a shift to a market-driven exchange rate. These improvements have prompted debate over whether there is now scope to ease the policy rate.

Governor Ahsan H Mansur, who will announce the new monetary policy at a press conference at the BB headquarters at 3pm on Thursday, has signalled

that the policy rate will likely remain unchanged.

"There is no reason to reduce the interest rate," Mansur said in a recent interview with The Daily Star.

Still, the central bank is under pressure from sections of the business community, who argue that high borrowing costs are stifling investment.

This will be the second monetary policy announced by Mansur since he became governor of the Bangladesh Bank following the political changeover on August 5 last year.

The Monetary Policy Statement (MPS) has been drafted following a meeting of the central bank's Monetary Policy Committee, which held consultations with both internal and external stakeholders over the past month, according to officials familiar with the matter.

The policy will be finalised after presentation at the central bank's board meeting today.

BUSINESSES WANT LOWER RATES, ECONOMIST SAYS NO

Despite the fall in inflation, private sector borrowing remains sluggish amid political uncertainty and the high borrowing rate.

Borrowing by the private sector dropped to 6.4 percent in June, according to the central bank, well below the target of 9.8 percent and the lowest recorded in recent years.

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## bKash offers discounts on healthcare services

### STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mobile financial service (MFS) provider bKash is offering discounts of up to Tk 400 on the purchase of medicines, medical tests, and health check-ups at select pharmacies, diagnostic centres, and hospitals.

According to a press release issued by bKash, the offers will remain valid until September 10, 2025.

For health check-ups at 127 hospitals across the country, customers can receive a Tk 100 discount when making a bKash payment of at least Tk 1,500. To avail of this offer, users must apply the code 'H3' before completing the payment.

For medical tests, customers will receive a Tk 100 discount by making a minimum bKash payment of Tk 1,000 using the code 'H2' at 483 diagnostic centres nationwide, including Popular Diagnostic, Medinova, BRAC Healthcare, and others. This discount can be used once per day and up to a maximum of two times during the campaign period.

To purchase medicines, customers can enjoy a 5 percent daily discount (up to Tk 25), redeemable up to four times throughout the campaign. The offer applies at nearly 4,500 pharmacies across the country, including Lazz Pharma, Tamanna Pharmacy, AKS Pharmacy, and others. To receive this discount, users must apply the code 'H1' before payment.

## PKSF to provide free skills training to 12,000 low-income youth



Md Khairuzzaman Mozumder, secretary to the Ministry of Finance and national programme director of the Skills for Industry Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (SICIP), poses for group photographs after inaugurating the PKSF's part of the SICIP project at the PKSF Bhaban in Agargaon, Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: PKSF

### STAR BUSINESS DESK

The Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) has launched its part of the Skills for Industry Competitiveness and Innovation Program (SICIP), aiming to transform underprivileged and marginalised communities into skilled manpower and ensure their sustainable employment through modern, industry-oriented technical training.

Md Khairuzzaman Mozumder, secretary of the Ministry of Finance and national programme director of SICIP, attended the project's launching ceremony as chief guest at the PKSF Bhaban in the capital's Agargaon, according to a press release.

He praised PKSF's contributions to skill development, stating, "Following the successful training of 12,000 youth under the PKSF-SICIP project, the government will extend further support to PKSF."

"There is a strong demand for skilled workers abroad. In this context, PKSF and

its partner organisations can make an effective contribution to the government's efforts to develop a skilled labour force," he added.

Under the regular training component of this three-year project, 12,000 young people across the country will receive training free of charge. Of them, 30 percent will be women. Priority will also be given to youth from low-income families and marginalised regions within the remaining 70 percent.

Participants will receive training in 12 different trades and business areas. The project will cover their accommodation and meal expenses. In addition, after successful completion of the training, necessary support will be provided for both self-employment and wage-based employment aligned with the skills acquired.

Commenting on the initiative, Zakir Ahmed Khan, chairman of PKSF, remarked that Bangladesh's current demographic advantage will not last

indefinitely. "To capitalise on this dividend, there is no alternative to developing a skilled workforce," he said.

"To that end, the SICIP-PKSF project will complement various government initiatives aimed at workforce development," he added.

The state-owned development organisation also signed agreements with partner training institutions under the project, which is supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Previously, PKSF successfully trained a total of 38,633 individuals under the SEIP project, the predecessor to the SICIP-PKSF initiative.

Among others, Mohammed Walid Hossain, additional secretary and executive programme director of SICIP; Md Fazlul Kader, managing director of PKSF; Mohammad Jashim Uddin, additional managing director; and Md Ziauddin Iqbal, senior general manager, were also present.

## Euro struggles to recoup losses

REUTERS, Singapore

The euro struggled to recoup its steep losses on Tuesday as investors sobered up to the fact that terms of the trade deal between the US and the European Union favoured the former and hardly lifted the economic outlook of the bloc.

France, on Monday, called the framework trade agreement a "dark day" for Europe, saying the bloc had caved in to US President Donald Trump with an unbalanced deal that slapped a headline 15 percent tariff on EU goods.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said his economy would suffer "significant" damage due to the agreed tariffs.

The euro slid 1.3 percent in the previous session, its sharpest one-day percentage fall in over two months, on worries about growth and as euro-area government bond yields fell.

The common currency failed to recoup its losses and last traded 0.02 percent lower at \$1.1584.



"It hasn't taken long for markets to conclude that this relatively good news is still in absolute terms, bad news as far as the near term implications for euro zone growth are concerned," said Ray Attrill, head of FX research at National Australia Bank.

"The deal has been roundly condemned by France while others including German Chancellor Merz are playing up the negative consequences for exporters, and with that, economic growth."

The slide in the euro in turn boosted the dollar, which jumped 1 percent against a basket of currencies overnight.

The dollar held on to gains on Tuesday and knocked sterling to a two-month low of \$1.3338. The yen edged 0.2 percent higher to 148.22 per dollar.

The dollar index steadied at 98.66.

## City Bank brings City Impex for seamless trade services

### STAR BUSINESS DESK

City Bank PLC has recently launched a new online platform, titled "City Impex", to provide seamless trade services.

Clients can carry out all types of trade transactions through City Impex from anywhere in the world and at any time, according to a press release issued by the bank.

Hossain Khaled, the new chairman of the bank, inaugurated the platform at the bank's head office in Dhaka.

Aziz Al Kaiser, the immediate past chairman of the bank, also attended the launching ceremony.

With this new platform, clients can access advanced features such as real-time trade transaction status, user-friendly transaction requests, report generation, transaction advices, SWIFT messages, SMS and email notifications, 24/7 online



Hossain Khaled, the new chairman of City Bank PLC, inaugurates the new online platform, titled "City Impex", at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently. Aziz Al Kaiser, the immediate past chairman of the bank, was present.

PHOTO: CITY BANK

services, and real-time statements secured by robust digital security measures.

Mashrur Arefin, managing director and chief executive officer of the bank; Faruk Ahmed, deputy

managing director and head of TSD; and Mesbaul Asif Siddiqui, deputy managing director and head of wholesale banking, along with other senior officials of the bank and clients, were also present at the event.

## UCB Investment, UCB Stock Brokerage get Euromoney awards

### STAR BUSINESS DESK

United Commercial Bank (UCB) PLC has celebrated a momentous achievement as its two leading subsidiaries -- UCB Investment Limited and UCB Stock Brokerage Limited -- have been recognised at the Euromoney Awards for Excellence 2025.

Sharif Zahir, chairman of UCB, inaugurated the celebration at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

UCB Investment Limited (UCBL) was named "Best Investment Bank in Bangladesh 2025", reinforcing its reputation as a trailblazer in the country's capital markets.

The award acknowledges UCBIL's steadfast commitment to strategic innovation, market leadership, and a client-centric approach. From



Sharif Zahir, chairman of United Commercial Bank, inaugurates a celebration at the bank's head office in Dhaka, recognising the achievements of UCB Investment and UCB Stock Brokerage at the Euromoney Awards for Excellence 2025.

PHOTO: UNITED COMMERCIAL BANK

advising on landmark transactions to promoting sustainable finance, UCBIL continues to play a transformative role in the financial sector.

Meanwhile, UCB Stock Brokerage Limited earned two accolades such as the "Best Securities House -

Bangladesh 2025" and the "Best Bank for Research - Bangladesh 2025".

These achievements further establish UCB Stock's leadership in both brokerage services and financial research, the press release noted.

## EU defends Trump trade deal

### FROM PAGE B4

Industry groups in both countries made plain their disappointment, with Germany's main auto sector body saying the 15 percent levy "burdens" carmakers while its VCI chemical trade association said the rates were "too high".

Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban attacked the deal in blunt terms, saying: "Trump ate Ursula von der Leyen for breakfast."

European stock markets dipped later on Monday, wiping out early gains and reflecting unease at terms viewed as lopsided.

"It looks a bit like a capitulation," said Alberto Rizzi of the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR).

"The EU accepted a fairly

unbalanced deal," he added, saying it delivered a "political victory for Trump".

Von der Leyen had faced intense pressure from EU states to strike a deal quickly with the bloc's biggest partner and protect a \$1.9-trillion trading relationship.

Defending Brussels' approach, Sefcovic warned that a no-deal scenario -- meaning a 30 percent tariff and the prospect of further escalation -- would have risked up to five million jobs in Europe.

Throughout the months-long talks, Brussels prioritised stability and maintaining good relations with Washington over escalation.

"But if you're trying to avoid worse national security outcomes, well then maybe the deal is not so bad," he said.

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD

Road Division, Gopalgonj

Phone: 02479961678

email: eegopal@rhd.gov.bd/rhdgopal@gmail.com

## Invitation for Tenders

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Road Transport and Bridge/ Road Transport and Highway Division
2	Agency	Roads and Highways Department
3	Procuring Entity Name	Md. Azharul Islam, Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Gopalgonj.
4	Procuring Entity Code	Not Applicable
5	Procuring Entity District	Gopalgonj.
6	Invitation for	Toll Collection Activity and Operation & Maintenance of Real-Time Web-Based Toll Collection System for Modhumoti Bridge (Kalna Bridge) at 4th km of Bhatiapara-Kalna-Lohagara-Narail-Jessore Road (N-806) for 3 (Three) years under Gopalgonj Road Division during the year 2025-2026.
7	Invitation Ref No	35.01.3500.428.07.002-25-1799
8	Date	29-07-2025
KEY INFORMATION		
9	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)
FUNDING INFORMATION		
10	Budget and Source of Funds	GOB
11	Development Partners (if applicable)	None
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
12	Project / Program Code (if applicable)	None
13	Project Name (if applicable)	None
14	Tender Package No.	01/Manual/PSN/GRD/2024-2025 (2nd Call)
15	Tender Package Name	Toll Collection Activity and Operation & Maintenance of Real-Time Web-Based Toll Collection System for Modhumoti Bridge (Kalna Bridge) at 4th km of Bhatiapara-Kalna-Lohagara-Narail-Jessore Road (N-806) for 3 (Three) years under Gopalgonj Road Division during the year 2025-2026.
16	Tender Publication Date	29-07-2025
17	Tender Last Selling Date	27-08-2025 and 04:00 pm
18	Tender Closing Date and Time	28-08-2025 and 12:00 pm
19	Tender Opening Date and Time	28-08-2025 and 03:00 pm
20	Name & Address of the office(s)	<p>- Selling Tender Document (Principal) Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Gopalgonj.</p> <p>(i) Office of the Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka Division, Segun Bagicha, Dhaka.</p> <p>(ii) Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Madaripur (iii) Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Shariatpur.</p>
NO CONDITIONS APPLY FOR SALE, PURCHASE OR DISTRIBUTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS		
21	Receiving Tender Document	<p>(i) Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Gopalgonj.</p> <p>(ii) Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Gopalgonj.</p>
- Opening Tender Document		
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER		
22	Eligibility of Tenderer	As Per TDS
23	Brief Description of Services	Toll Collection Activity and Operation & Maintenance of Real-Time Web-Based Toll Collection System for Modhumoti Bridge (Kalna Bridge) at 4th km of Bhatiapara-Kalna-Lohagara-Narail-Jessore Road (N-806) for 3 (Three) years under Gopalgonj Road Division during the year 2025-2026.
25	Price of Tender Document (Tk)	4000.00
	Package No	Identification of Package
	01/Manual/PSN/GRD/2024-2025 (2nd Call)	Location
		Tender Security Amount (Tk)
		20.00 (Twenty) Lakh
		Completion Time in Weeks / Months
		36 Months
PROCURING DETAILS		
30	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Md. Azharul Islam
31	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Executive Engineer, RHD
32	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Gopalgonj Road Division, Gopalgonj.
33	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Phone: 02479961678, E-mail : eegopal@rhd.gov.bd
34	The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all of the Tender at any time without assigning any reason whatsoever.	This notice will be available on RHD website: <a href="http://rhd.portal.gov.bd">rhd.portal.gov.bd</a> and on CPTU website: <a href="http://www.cptu.gov.bd">www.cptu.gov.bd</a> .

29.7.25  
(Md. Azharul Islam)  
ID - 602306  
Executive Engineer (C.C), RHD  
Road Division, Gopalgonj.

## ACI forms bioscience subsidiary

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Advanced Chemical Industries PLC (ACI) has approved the formation of a new subsidiary named "ACI Biosciences Limited" with an authorised capital of Tk 100 crore and a paid-up capital of Tk 25 crore.

ACI will hold a 90 percent stake in the newly proposed venture, which is subject to regulatory approval, the company said in a disclosure on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) website yesterday.

The decision was taken at the company's board meeting on July 28.

The move to expand into biosciences comes after ACI's losses in the third quarter of fiscal year 2024-25.

The company reported a consolidated loss of Tk 13.69 crore, compared to a profit of Tk 1.65 crore in the same period a year earlier.

As of June 30, 2025, sponsors and directors held 45.77 percent of ACI shares, while institutional investors owned 34.14 percent and the general public 20.09 percent, according to DSE data.

## Stocks extend losses

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Stock indices in Bangladesh continued their downward trend for a third straight trading session yesterday, with market turnover also edging lower.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), lost 33.59 points, or 0.63 percent, to settle at 5,298, according to the day's market update by BRAC EPL Stock Brokerage.

The Shariah-compliant index, DSES, declined 0.95 percent to 1,147.

The DS30, comprising the blue-chip shares, dropped 0.85 percent to close at 2,044.

Turnover, a key gauge of investor participation, amounted to Tk 717.32 crore, down from Tk 865.04 crore in the previous day's session.

Block trades contributed 3.6 percent of the overall market turnover.

City Bank Limited emerged as the most traded stock, with a turnover of Tk 55.9 crore.

A total of 188,215 trades were executed, while block transactions amounted to Tk 26 crore across 31 scrips. Market participation was negative, with 82 stocks advancing, 250 declining, and 64 remaining unchanged.

Among A-category scrips, 51 made gains, 139 suffered losses, and 27 remained unchanged.

**Turnover amounted to Tk 717.32 crore, down from Tk 865.04 crore in the previous day's session**

In the B-category, 17 stocks rose and 53 fell, while there was no activity in the N-category.

Segment-wise, mutual funds posted mixed performance, with two advancing and 19 declining. In the bond market, one corporate bond gained, while one government bond declined.

Among individual performers,

Karnaphuli Insurance Company Ltd topped the gainers' list with an 8 percent rise, while Bay Leasing & Investment Ltd was the worst performer, dropping 8 percent.

All the sectors that account for large amounts in market capitalisation, which refers to the total value of a company's outstanding shares of stock, posted negative performances.

The telecommunication sector experienced the highest loss of 1.49 percent, followed by the fuel & power sector (1.33 percent), the engineering sector (1.31 percent), non-banking financial institutions (1.07 percent), the food & allied sector (0.82 percent), the banking sector (0.30 percent), and the pharmaceuticals sector (0.23 percent).

At the Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE), the CSE All Share Price Index (CASPI) – the main index of the port city bourse – dropped by 65.47 points, or 0.44 percent, to close the day at 14,858.

## Gold regains some ground

REUTERS

Gold prices rose on Tuesday as initial euphoria over the US-EU trade truce ebbed, while investors looked forward to the upcoming Federal Reserve policy meeting for clarity on the US interest rate trajectory.

Spot gold was up 0.4 percent at \$3,327.30 per ounce, as of 0827 GMT. Bullion hit its lowest point since July 9 on Monday.

US gold futures gained 0.5 percent to \$3,325.40.

"We are seeing a reset of sentiments in the market after a couple of trade deals, but there are still some hurdles that must be overcome," said Ricardo Evangelista, senior analyst at brokerage firm ActivTrades.

If the US and China fail to ink an agreement and there is no extension of the deadline and then we could see a return of risk off and we could see the return of global economic uncertainty dominating the sentiment of investors."

The European Union and the United States announced a tariff deal on Sunday that will see most EU exports face a 15 percent tariff, nearly three months after Britain locked in a 10 percent baseline tariff rate.

## BB forms \$500m forex intervention fund

FROM PAGE B1

In contrast, BB frequently sold dollars during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic to stabilise the exchange rate.

Over FY22, FY23 and FY24, net foreign currency sales reached \$7.4 billion, \$13.4 billion and \$9.4 billion, respectively, reflecting increased intervention efforts to support the taka.

In three years, the total sales stood at \$30.2 billion. This approach, however, contributed to a decline in foreign exchange reserves, prompting the authorities to gradually allow the taka to depreciate.

In a further step towards exchange rate liberalisation, the central bank has repealed the

previous circular that imposed a Tk 1 spread limit.

This rule required authorised dealers (ADs) to maintain uniformity in their buy and sell rates across all transactions for a given business day.

Under the revised framework, ADs are now permitted to negotiate rates freely with both clients and other dealers.

The policy review recalls that Bangladesh maintained a fixed exchange rate from independence until May 30, 2003, with occasional adjustments to preserve export competitiveness.

A floating exchange rate was adopted on May 30, 2003, allowing market forces to determine the value of the taka.

To manage excessive volatility, BB has retained the option of intervening in the market by buying or selling dollars when deemed necessary.

Until April 2022, the exchange rate was largely stable at Tk 86.45 per US dollar, thanks to active intervention by the central bank.

But recognising that the overvalued taka was not sustainable, BB permitted gradual depreciation of 9.3 percent in FY22, 11.84 percent in FY23 and 10.14 percent in FY24.

To introduce greater flexibility, BB rolled out a crawling peg system on May 8 last year, pegged to a currency basket with a mid-rate aligned to the Real Effective Exchange

Rate (REER) index. The Crawling Peg Mid Rate (CPMR) was set at Tk 117 per dollar, with trading permitted around that benchmark.

Initially, on May 9 last year, BB allowed a trading band of Tk 1 above and below the CPMR.

This was widened to 2.5 percent on either side from August 19 last year to allow more efficient market functioning and ease the transition towards a market-led exchange rate.

On December 30 last year, the BB governor announced that the CPMR would be revised upwards to Tk 119 per dollar, effective from January 1 of this year. The 2.5 percent band remained unchanged.

The policy rate, or repo rate (repurchase rate), is the interest rate at which the central bank lends

FROM PAGE B1

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), which approved a \$4.7 billion loan package for Bangladesh, has recommended keeping the policy rate unchanged until at least mid-FY26 to prevent inflation from rebounding. It has also urged the central bank to move towards market-based monetary tools and interest rate flexibility.

However, some stakeholders, especially businesspeople, have criticised the central bank's tight monetary stance, arguing that the high interest rate is constraining investment.

On December 30 last year, the BB governor announced that the CPMR would be revised upwards to Tk 119 per dollar, effective from January 1 of this year. The 2.5 percent band remained unchanged.

The policy rate, or repo rate (repurchase rate), is the interest rate at which the central bank lends

money to commercial banks when there is a shortage of funds.

In simpler terms, it is the rate at which banks borrow money from the central bank for short-term needs, usually against government securities.

"The interest rate should be lowered, considering the current economic situation," said Anwarul Alam Chowdhury Parvez, president of the Bangladesh Chamber of Industries (BCI).

He cited concerns over the cost of borrowing, a deteriorating investment climate, and rising non-performing loans.

"Business people are now facing trouble because of high bad loans in the banking sector and

the overall investment environment," he pointed out.

These issues should be considered when formulating the monetary policy, he added.

However, Zahid Hussain, former lead economist of the World Bank Dhaka office, said there is currently no scope to increase the policy rate.

"The issue now is whether to cut it immediately or wait. If we consider cutting it now, we need to assess the potential benefits versus the risks," he stated. "On the other hand, lowering the policy rate would increase credit demand, which could, in turn, create fresh inflationary pressure in the market."

## Is there room to cut policy rate from 10%?

### Overregulation

FROM PAGE B1

"It should take no more than half an hour to exit an airport. If it still happens, someone must be held accountable."

Similarly, containers at the Chattogram port must be cleared with minimal turnaround time. These steps will build global confidence in Bangladesh's economy," he said.

The BNP leader also noted that investors abroad of Bangladeshi origin are showing strong interest in investing in their home country.

In a commodity derivatives market, participants can trade contracts based on the future prices of goods such as agricultural products, metals, and energy, said CSE

Chairman AKM Habibur Rahman.

Chairing the workshop, Rahman presented a framework outlining how such a market could function smoothly, ensuring transparency, risk management, and efficiency.

The launch of a commodity derivatives market would deepen the country's capital market by creating new investment avenues and attracting both local and foreign investors, he said.

CSE shareholder directors Akhtar Parvez and Major (retd) Emdad, CSE Managing Director M Shafir Rahman Mazumdar, and international commodity market expert Kathir Kamanathan Annamalai also spoke at the event.

### Exporters

FROM PAGE B1

Another local billionaire in the Bangladesh delegation who is involved in commodity trade will also look into ways more US soybean could be imported to help reduce the trade deficit with the US.

Officials from the United States Soybean Export Council (USSEC) will also hold meetings with the Bangladeshi delegation, which includes the business representatives.

Moreover, a group of private sector negotiation initiators, mainly garment exporters focused on the US, is staying in the US to effect from August 1 for the countries concerned.

encourage their buyers to persuade Trump to reduce the tariff rate.

The Bangladesh delegation left the country on Monday to join the third and final round of negotiations with the Trump administration in the hope of reaching consensus on a much lower tariff rate on exports to the American market.

The third round of negotiations is scheduled to begin on July 29 and continue up to July 31, as Trump's new reciprocal tariff rate will come into effect from August 1 for the countries concerned.

### Export data gap

FROM PAGE B1

Hossain said BB includes exports under merchandising, which means a trader purchasing goods from one country and selling them to a buyer in another country, and goods procured in ports by carriers, such as fuels and supplies, in the export calculation.

Besides, he said there is a time lag between shipment and actual export proceeds realisation.

Additionally, Hossain said in the absence of any code for samples sent by

exporters to buyers, the revenue board counts the value of those samples as exports. This problem will be over once the NBR creates a customs procedure code for samples.

"It will be operational soon," he said, adding that there would be no gap in export data once the Bangladesh Single Window, an electronic gateway enabling businesses to submit documents for imports and exports and clear goods more efficiently, becomes fully operational.

### CREDIT RATING REPORT

ONE Bank PLC

...We Make Things Happen

Corporate HQ

2/F HRC Bhaban, 46 Kawran Bazar C.A., Dhaka-1215

ONE Bank PLC has been rated by the Emerging Credit Rating Limited (ECRL) on the basis of Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024. The summary of the rating is presented below:

Valid From	Valid Till	Long Term Rating	Short Term Rating	Outlook
March 10, 2025	March 9, 2026	AA	ST-2	Developing
March 10, 2024	March 9, 2025	AA	ST-2	Stable
March 10, 2023	March 9, 2024	AA	ST-2	Stable

John Sarkar  
DMD & Company Secretary

### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD

Road Division, Dinajpur

Tel: 0531-65141, Fax: 0531-66359

Email: eedin@rhd.gov.bd

### e-Tender Notice

An e-Tender has been invited for the following work through e-GP Portal, which will be visible from Today. Registered person/organization on e-GP Portal can visit (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

Tender ID No.	Name of work	Last selling date & time	Closing date & time	Opening date & time
88/e-GP/OTM/RHD/E/DRD/2024-2025 (Re-Tender 02) Tender ID No. 1133370	Supplying of Spare Parts of Excavator & other heavy equipment under Road Division, Dinajpur during the year 2024-2025.	06/08/2025 17.00	07/08/2025 13.30	07/08/2025 025

Reference No. 35.01.2764.413.07.003.25-1689

Date: 28/05/2025

28/05/2025

Md. Sahanur Rashid  
Assistant Engineer (A.C), RHD  
Road Division, Dinajpur

GD

# Wage gap narrows as inflation eases: BB report

Real wage growth, however, remains negative, as per BBS

FEDA AL HOSSAIN

The gap between wages and inflation, which has been narrowing gradually since February 2025, shrank further in the fourth quarter of fiscal year (FY) 2024-25, offering a slight boost to household purchasing power, the central bank said in a report released this week.

In the April-June quarter of FY25, year-on-year headline consumer price index (CPI) inflation averaged 8.9 percent, down from double-digit levels earlier in the year, according to the Bangladesh Bank's "Inflation Dynamics in Bangladesh" report released this week.

During the same period, average wage growth stood at 8.2 percent, indicating a persistent but smaller gap between earnings and prices.

The development points to early signs of recovery in real incomes for millions of low-income consumers in the country, where food and energy costs have surged in recent years. However, according to the Wage Rate Index (WRI) of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), real wage growth remains negative.

Bangladesh's average wage growth remained negative for the 41st consecutive month in June, even as the inflation rate eased to its lowest level in nearly three years, according to the WRI released earlier this month.

It said year-on-year wage growth stood at 8.18 percent in June, 0.30 percentage points below the month's inflation rate of 8.48 percent.

A similar trend was observed in May, when wages across 63 occupations in the agriculture, industry, and services sectors grew by 8.21 percent, 0.84 percentage points below inflation at the time.

According to the latest BB report, food inflation, which remained in double digits during the first half of FY25, continued to decline in the fourth quarter, falling to 7.4 percent by the end of June.

Cereal products, including rice and wheat, remained the dominant driver of food inflation, contributing an average of 43.7 percent during Q4, the highest quarterly contribution observed in recent periods.

Non-food inflation, however, remained elevated, averaging 9.5 percent in the third and fourth quarters of the fiscal



Workers maneuver a heavily loaded hand-pulled cart through a street in Fakirpul, Dhaka. Bangladesh's average wage growth remained negative for the 41st consecutive month in June, even as the inflation rate eased to its lowest level in nearly three years.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

year. Clothing, footwear, and household energy items accounted for the largest share of non-food price increases.

The central bank noted that core inflation, which excludes food and energy, rose 2 percentage points to 4.97 percent of headline inflation in the quarter, suggesting underlying pressures remain strong despite the slowdown in food prices.

Meanwhile, food prices' average contribution to headline inflation declined to 41.3 percent in the fourth quarter from 45.3 percent in the previous quarter. The contribution of energy items, including solid fuels, held steady at around 9 percent in both quarters.

The contribution of perishable goods to overall inflation fell to 30.8 percent from 33.2 percent in the previous quarter,

as vegetable and fish prices eased. Non-perishable goods, however, made up a slightly larger share at 50.8 percent, up from 50.0 percent in Q3, the report states.

The services sector's contribution to inflation saw a marginal uptick, rising to 18.4 percent in Q4 from 16.8 percent in the previous quarter.

On a month-on-month basis, inflation rose 0.6 percent in June, reversing a 0.3 percent decline in May. Similarly, month-on-month food inflation increased by 1 percent in June from a 1 percent decline in May. Non-food inflation, however, remained positive at 0.3 percent in both May and June.

The central bank's report comes as multilateral lenders project slower disinflation ahead. The Asian Development Bank (ADB), in its "Asian

Development Outlook" published in April 2025, projected Bangladesh's inflation for FY25 at around 10 percent but anticipated a decline in FY26, assuming favourable weather conditions, easing international commodity prices, and stricter domestic policy measures.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its "World Economic Outlook" (WEO) released in April 2025, noted that global headline inflation was likely to decline more slowly than previously expected. However, for low-income and emerging market economies, inflation may fall slightly faster than earlier projections.

The IMF expects Bangladesh's headline inflation to average around 10 percent in 2025 before gradually easing to 5 percent in the following years.

## Sister concerns and the strain on our financial sector

MASUD KHAN

The financial sector in Bangladesh is facing mounting pressure due to the unchecked rise of "sister concerns" within large business groups. Unlike multinational corporations, which tend to stick to their core strengths, many Bangladeshi conglomerates have ventured into numerous unrelated sectors, often without proper financial analysis. The thinking seems to be: if one can turn a profit, so can I. This has led to business sprawl across 10 to 50 different industries. Most of these ventures lose money, with only a handful generating profit.

This unrestrained diversification has triggered systemic financial problems. Loss-making units are rarely shut down. Instead, they survive on funds funnelled from the group's successful arms. Profitable businesses take loans from banks, then redirect the funds through intercompany lending to support the failing concerns. This practice drains the healthier entities and spreads financial strain across the group. Financial reports are often distorted, with "window dressing" used to hide losses and create a false impression of profitability. This allows companies to keep borrowing from banks under false pretences.

Banks are heavily exposed to this cycle. Much of their lending goes to these sprawling corporate groups. The money meant for viable ventures frequently ends up in the coffers of failing sister concerns. As a result, non-performing loans (NPLs) have risen, piling debt on top of interest and threatening the sector's stability.

The roots of the problem lie in a mix of influence, optimism, and denial. Powerful business groups often escape scrutiny, with banks reluctant to enforce strict conditions. Many entrepreneurs refuse to accept failure, holding on to unviable

businesses out of pride or false hope. Banks, meanwhile, have often turned a blind eye to the misuse of loans and the manipulation of financial records.

This situation has created a dangerous buildup of risk. NPLs continue to grow, draining bank liquidity and weakening the overall financial system. As more businesses struggle to meet repayments, the pressure on both banks and borrowers intensifies.

Over the long term, this poses a serious threat to the economy. Instead of focusing on sustainable growth, many entrepreneurs are gambling on a rebound that may never come. Profitable businesses are being bled dry to keep loss-making ventures alive, while banks face escalating defaults.

Addressing this issue calls for a fundamental change in mindset and business behaviour. Entrepreneurs must embrace financial discipline and accept that not all ventures succeed. Failing concerns should be wound up, not propped up. Banks must play a stronger role in monitoring how loans are used and steer lending towards financially sound projects. Regulatory authorities should also enforce stricter oversight to stop the manipulation of accounts and ensure that lending decisions are based on genuine financial health.

In sum, the unchecked growth of sister concerns has created a tangled mess of mismanagement that endangers both the corporate and banking sectors. The use of profitable companies to bankroll failing ones is unsustainable and inefficient. Unless business leaders and financial institutions rethink their approach, the strain on the system will only grow, placing individual firms and the wider economy at serious risk.

The writer is the chairman of Unilever Consumer Care Ltd

## BRAC Bank logs Tk 420cr profit in Q2

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

BRAC Bank PLC reported a profit of Tk 419.56 crore for the April-June quarter of 2025, saying it was driven by a rise in investment and interest income.

According to its financial statements, its consolidated earnings per share (EPS) stood at Tk 1.54 for the April-June quarter, up from Tk 1.25 in the same period of 2024.

The bank attributed the EPS increase to improvements in profitability in the first half of 2025, supported primarily by incremental investments and interest earnings.

For the January-June period, its consolidated net operating cash flows per share (NOCPS) rose to Tk 44.24, up from Tk 30.99 in the corresponding period of the previous year.

The private commercial lender said the NOCPS figure resulted from a rise in deposit mobilisation and bank borrowings, while loan portfolio growth slowed compared to the same period last year.

Net asset value per share also increased, supported by rising net profits and revaluation gains on government securities, BRAC Bank said.

## EBL's profit rises 11% in Apr-Jun quarter

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Eastern Bank PLC's (EBL) profit grew 11 percent year-on-year in the second quarter of 2025.

The private commercial lender posted a profit of Tk 196.28 crore for the quarter.

Its consolidated earnings per share stood at Tk 1.23 for the April-June period, according to a post on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) website yesterday.

It was Tk 1.11 in the same period last year.

EBL's consolidated net operating cash flow per share was Tk 13.49 in the first half of 2025, up from Tk 12.79 a year ago.

As of June 30, sponsor-directors held 31.44 percent of the bank's shares, while institutions owned 43.44 percent, according to DSE data.

AFP, Brussels

The European Union on Monday defended its trade deal with President Donald Trump, with EU capitals and businesses sharply divided on an outcome some branded a "capitulation".

"I'm 100 percent sure that this deal is better than a trade war with the United States," top EU trade negotiator Maros Sefcovic told journalists.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen clinched the framework accord with Trump on Sunday after dashing to Scotland as the August 1 deadline loomed for steep levies that threatened to cripple Europe's economy.

EU exports are now set to face across-the-board tariffs of 15 percent -- higher than customs duties before Trump returned to the White House, but much lower than his threatened 30 percent.

The 27 nation bloc also promised its companies would purchase energy worth \$750 billion from the United States and make \$600 billion in additional investments -- although it was not clear how binding those pledges would be.

**"I'm 100 percent sure that this deal is better than a trade war with the United States," top EU trade negotiator Maros Sefcovic said**

"This is clearly the best deal we could get under very difficult circumstances," Sefcovic said.

Full details of the agreement -- and crucially which sectors could escape the 15-percent levy -- will be known in the coming days, although the EU says it has avoided steeper tariffs on key exports

including cars and medicines.

The reaction from European capitals -- which gave von der Leyen the mandate to negotiate -- ranged from muted to outright hostile.

French Prime Minister Francois Bayrou said it was a "dark day" for Europe and that the accord was tantamount to "submission".

Speaking for Europe's biggest economy, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said his country would face "substantial damage" from the tariffs but that "we couldn't expect to achieve any more".

He argued that the deal's negative effects "will not only be limited to Germany and Europe, but we will see the effects of this trade policy in America as well". Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said he gave his support for the deal "without any enthusiasm".

READ MORE ON B2

## US policy incoherence sets a tariff trap



### ANALYSIS

REUTERS, Washington

In July, the White House set the pillars of its economic strategy: a 15 baseline tariff on key trading partners and gutting corporate and income taxes. Revenue from import duties has now reached a level unseen in decades, over \$100 billion so far in 2025. Problem is, the administration spent that money and much more on \$4 trillion of tax cuts, while other goals -- like onshoring production -- will whittle down collections. Given the size of the fiscal hole, the temptation will be to come back for more.

Customs duties in June hit \$27 billion, a month during which the average effective tariff rate was 15.6 percent, according to the Yale Budget Lab. Trade deals with Japan and the European Union announced in recent days include a baseline 15 percent levy, meaning that an even higher average rate looks plausible when factoring in more punitive levels on China and specific categories of goods.

If this level holds, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent's estimate that annual customs revenue could hit \$300 billion will end up being about right. President Donald Trump has gone further, though, claiming that tariffs

can replace the federal income tax. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick narrowed that to exempting those making \$150,000 or less. Right now, that's a big stretch. The federal income tax raised \$2.4 trillion in 2024, with around \$565 billion coming from the bottom 90 percent of earners, according to Treasury

Department data.

The gulf will only grow. Tariffs are effectively a tax on consuming imports. Many consumers and manufacturers will look to avoid it, either purchasing or producing US goods instead. Where substitution is impossible or costly, it may just dent demand,



Forklifts move shipping containers at a port in Miami, Florida. The US has collected more than \$100 billion in customs levies in 2025 as effective tariff rates have climbed far beyond their average in prior years of around 2 percent.

thereby reducing economic activity: budget scorekeepers tend to assume that \$1 of tariff revenue leads to a \$0.25 decline in income and payroll tax revenue.

Yet while incentivizing domestic production is ostensibly the overarching goal of the trade war, extra revenue is becoming all the more crucial. Trump's signature fiscal legislation, signed earlier this month, adds \$3 trillion in debt over the next decade, according to the Congressional Budget Office, primarily to codify individual and corporate tax cuts. Rolling back those reductions is a non-starter for Republicans, while even opposition Democrats have signed onto policies like exempting tipped income.

Even just collecting owed rates is getting harder. The Internal Revenue Service estimated that there was a \$600 billion "tax gap" in 2022 that could be closed with better enforcement. The administration has instead proposed a 50 percent cut to the budget for tax collectors. When fiscal reality sets in, there are few other places to turn than back to the tariff well.

The United States has collected more than \$100 billion in customs levies in 2025 as effective tariff rates have climbed far beyond their average in prior years of around 2 percent.

US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick has said that tariffs could ultimately replace income taxes for those making \$150,000 or less. The federal income tax raised \$2.4 trillion in 2024.

# SAVING FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

## Bangladesh's Evolving Deposit Landscape

PRIYAM PAUL

In a country where economic uncertainties often challenge long-term planning, deposits have quietly become one of the most powerful tools shaping both personal security and national financial stability. Far beyond being just idle savings, they are now central to how banks build resilience, how citizens navigate inflation, and how the financial sector fuels inclusive growth. From rural homemakers to digital freelancers, deposit schemes in Bangladesh are evolving fast—combining technology, trust, and tailored solutions to reach more people than ever before.

"Effectively managing uncertainties and emergencies demonstrates resilience against

financial shocks. Those who practise sound financial management are better prepared to meet future obligations and crises. Regular, planned deposits in banks contribute to greater stability and security," says Dr Muhammad Shahadat Hossain Siddiquee, Professor of Economics at the University of Dhaka.

According to data from Bangladesh Bank, deposits in the country's scheduled banks have continued to show a steady upward trend, reflecting sustained public trust in the banking sector despite ongoing economic headwinds. As of April 2025, total deposits stood at Tk. 18.20 trillion, marking an 8.21% year-on-year increase and a marginal monthly rise of 0.11%.

SEE PAGE J4



ILLUSTRATION: EFATH

 Prime Bank

## FIRST SAVINGS ACCOUNT

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## Trust, technology, and brand equity – THE THREE PILLARS OF OUR SUCCESS

MASHRUR AREFIN, Managing Director & CEO, City Bank

**The Daily Star (TDS):** What is the current state and trend of bank deposits in the country?  
**Mashrur Arefin (MA):** The deposit landscape in Bangladesh today is undergoing a profound transition. I would call it a quiet rebalancing of public sentiment.



As of March 2025, total deposits in the banking sector stood at approximately BDT 18 trillion, growing at around 9% year-on-year. This signals a subtle erosion in the real value of bank deposits. What we are witnessing is not a crisis of liquidity, but a crisis of confidence. Recent stresses in isolated parts of the sector have prompted many to differentiate banks not just by products, but by asset quality, discipline, disclosure standards, and commitment to digital resilience. As a result, depositors are moving towards banks that they perceive as stable, well-governed, and forward-looking.

This is where City Bank's strategy has found its resonance. In the first half of 2025, we registered BDT 8,000 crore growth in deposits—a remarkable acceleration compared to our BDT 3,000 crore growth in the same period of 2024. This momentum is not accidental. It is the result of three deliberate strategic pillars: trust, technology, and brand equity.

**TDS:** What major deposit schemes does your bank currently offer, particularly those tailored to specific customer segments?

**MA:** We have built a portfolio that is broad in scope, deep in relevance, and digitally accessible—meaning it caters to every meaningful segment of our society.

For youth and students, we offer the Student Savings Account, designed to instil early saving habits with digital access, zero fees, and guardian-linked security. For the freelancer community, we have introduced the Freelancer Savings Deposit, fully ERQ-enabled, integrated with foreign inward remittance solutions, and bundled with dollar-linked benefits and remittance certificates.

For women, our flagship City Alo proposition offers not only deposit accounts but also financial literacy, preferential rates, and access to entrepreneurial development tools.

The emerging middle class finds great value in our variety of savings accounts, which offer tiered interest rates, lifestyle-linked privileges, and waived transactional charges.

Recognising the growing need for faith-based finance, we also offer a full suite of Shariah compliant Islamic banking solutions through our City Islamic platform.

For the affluent segment, our Priority Banking platform delivers not only curated deposit schemes and wealth preservation tools but also a high-touch relationship model backed by financial planning.

**TDS:** What innovations has your bank introduced in terms of technology, payments, and security to benefit depositors?

**MA:** We have embraced innovation not as a performative gesture, but as an institutional obligation. We have moved decisively into the future of payments—integrating Google Pay, enabling Tap & Pay contactless experiences, and establishing ourselves as the largest POS acquirer in the country.

We are redesigning banking for our customers with the help of technology. These customers are the ones who live in motion, who bank at midnight, who expect precision and beauty in every interaction. And as we innovate, we remain steadfast in our commitment:

to earn trust through technology and loyalty through experience.

**TDS:** What are your bank's future plans for developing new deposit schemes and enhancing operational models for depositors?

**MA:** We are moving with deliberate intent toward becoming what we believe a bank should ultimately be—a household institution. Not just a bank for the wealthy or the urban, but a people's bank.

Our future product roadmap includes deposit schemes that will be designed around the real goals and constraints of individual segments, not generic products stretched to fit everyone.

For instance, a working mother in Narayanganj should have access to a flexible deposit scheme linked to her child's education. A schoolteacher in Barisal should be able to open an account within minutes, without stepping into a branch. A freelancer in Rajshahi should be able to receive dollars and convert to Taka with one swipe. And a retiree in Chattogram should find security, predictability, and human touch—digitally.

This is not just vision; it is already in motion.

Our ambition is that most Bangladeshis, regardless of geography or literacy, can engage with City Bank

through their mobile phone.

**TDS:** What role do you believe the Government should play in strengthening public trust and ensuring the safety of deposits in the banking sector?

**MA:** The role of the Government in today's financial system extends far beyond regulatory oversight. The central bank has demonstrated commendable agility. They have championed inclusion through agent banking, enabled growth in mobile financial services, and embraced innovation via e-KYC, digital payment networks, and alternative credit assessment frameworks.

Looking ahead, the Government can play an equally transformative role in providing policy support for frictionless digital onboarding and e-KYC adoption. Secure public data infrastructure and regulatory sandboxes can rapidly expand the reach of formal financial services. At the same time, permission for controlled experimentation with micro-savings models, goal-based deposits, and alternative scoring mechanisms can unlock access for millions still standing at the edge of the financial system.

## We are focused on INCLUSIVE INNOVATION

MOHD. RAFAT ULLAH KHAN,  
Managing Director (CC), Al-Arafah Islami Bank



**The Daily Star (TDS):** What is the current state and trend of bank deposits in the country?

**Mohd. Rafat Ullah Khan (MRUK):** Bangladesh's banking sector is witnessing a steady upward trend in deposit mobilisation. According to the latest publication by Bangladesh Bank, total bank deposits in the country's banking industry increased by 5.15% during the period July–May FY25, reaching BDT 18,325.72 billion at the end of May 2025. This marks a slowdown compared to a 6.64% increase during the same period in FY24. The growth in deposits was primarily driven by a rise in time deposits. Of the total deposits, Shariah-based banks accounted for BDT 4,430 billion. Among them, Al-Arafah Islami Bank held an 11.33% share of the total Shariah-compliant deposits, representing 2.74% of the entire banking sector's deposits.

While conventional banks have demonstrated relatively higher growth in some areas, Shariah-based banks like Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC continue to exhibit strong and stable performance. This resilience is driven by growing customer confidence in ethical banking practices and the increasing appeal of Shariah-compliant financial solutions.

**TDS:** What major deposit schemes does your bank currently offer, particularly those tailored to specific customer segments?

**MRUK:** Al-Arafah Islami Bank PLC offers a diverse range of Shariah-compliant deposit schemes designed to meet the needs of a wide spectrum of customers. Our deposit portfolio includes a number of specialised products tailored to specific purposes and segments. The Al-Arafah Monthly Hajj Deposit Scheme enables customers to prepare for Hajj through a structured, Shariah-compliant savings plan. The Mudaraba Profit-Based Term Deposit Scheme offers profit-sharing returns over a fixed term, while the Mudaraba Pension Deposit Scheme helps customers secure their financial future through monthly savings towards retirement.

We also provide the Cash Waqf Deposit Scheme, which facilitates charitable giving in a sustainable way, allowing depositors to endow funds for social welfare purposes. The Mudaraba Advantage Deposit Scheme is designed for clients seeking enhanced returns within Islamic banking principles. For customers with international needs, we offer both the Offshore/International Banking Account and the Resident Foreign Currency Deposit Scheme, enabling Shariah-compliant services across borders.

**TDS:** What innovations has your bank introduced in terms of technology,

payments, and security to benefit depositors?

**MRUK:** Innovation and technological advancement are central to Al-Arafah Islami Bank's approach to modern banking. We have streamlined the account opening process through digital onboarding using e-KYC, ensuring secure and hassle-free access to financial services. Our i-Banking and Mobile App platforms offer customers convenient, 24/7 banking at their fingertips.

Al-Arafah Islami Bank, one of the leading Shariah-based banks in the country, has launched three new deposit products as part of its ongoing efforts to expand the scope of modern banking services. The newly introduced products are:

**We also plan to introduce a range of Shariah-compliant digital financial products through partnerships with fintech companies and mobile financial service providers, enabling deposit services for micro-merchants and gig workers.**

- Al-Wadiah Current Plus Account,
- Mudaraba Savings Plus Deposit, and
- Mudaraba Youth Saver Account.

Al-Arafah Islami Bank is committed to meeting customer needs by combining modern technology with Islamic values. These three new deposit products will add a new dimension to the banking experience for retail, corporate, SME, and young customers across the country.

**TDS:** What are your bank's future plans for developing new deposit schemes and enhancing operational modes for depositors?

**MRUK:** Looking ahead, Al-Arafah Islami Bank is focused on inclusive innovation to reach untapped customer segments. One of our key initiatives is the introduction of Digital Islamic Micro-Savings solutions,

especially targeted at underserved and underprivileged communities, including women.

These solutions will be available via our mobile app and Islamic Wallet, making them easy to access and manage.

We also plan to introduce a range of Shariah-compliant digital financial products through partnerships with fintech companies and mobile financial service providers, enabling deposit services for micro-merchants and gig workers.

**TDS:** What role do you believe the government should play in strengthening public trust and ensuring the safety of deposits in the banking sector?

**MRUK:** The government holds a pivotal responsibility in enhancing public confidence and safeguarding deposits within Bangladesh's banking sector. Below is a detailed outline of the key roles it should undertake:

**Regulatory Oversight and Enforcement**  
- Empower Bangladesh Bank (BB): Ensure the central bank operates independently and efficiently in its role as the primary regulator of the banking sector.

**Enforce Robust Monitoring:** Mandate strict adherence to international banking standards, such as Basel III, to promote financial stability and risk management.

**Respond Swiftly to Irregularities:** Take prompt, transparent, and decisive action against banks engaged in fraud, mismanagement, or reckless financial practices.

**Deposit Insurance and Protection**  
- Expand Deposit Insurance Coverage: Raise the coverage limit of the Deposit Insurance Scheme to better protect small and medium depositors, as the current ceiling of BDT 100,000 is insufficient for many.

**Increase Public Awareness:** Launch targeted awareness campaigns to inform citizens about deposit insurance benefits, aiming to reduce panic and misinformation during periods of financial uncertainty.

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# Our deposit strategy is moving toward **GOAL-BASED SAVINGS**

**ALI REZA IFTEKHAR**, Managing Director, Eastern Bank

**The Daily Star (TDS):** What is the current state and trend of bank deposits in the country?

**Ali Reza Iftekhar (ARI):** The banking sector in Bangladesh is going through a complex transition. On the one hand, macroeconomic pressures—rising inflation, higher living costs, and shifting customer behavior—have made deposit growth more challenging.

On the other, growing concerns about governance and financial stability in some institutions have shaken public confidence.

The unfortunate reality is that, apart from a few trusted banks, many customers are increasingly worried about the safety of their money. This has made depositors more cautious, more discerning, and more value-conscious than ever before.

Customers today are not just comparing interest rates—they are evaluating the credibility, transparency, and track record of the banks they choose. While overall deposit growth may appear muted, banks with strong fundamentals, sound governance, and

clear digital strategies are continuing to attract and retain depositor trust.

**TDS:** What major deposit schemes does your bank currently offer, particularly those tailored to specific customer segments?

**ARI:** At Eastern Bank, we believe that deposit products should reflect the realities and aspirations of our customers. That's why we offer a broad range of deposit solutions tailored for different life stages, professions, and personal goals.

We've designed the EBL Freelancer Account to meet the needs of digital professionals and online earners, and the EBL Mariner Account for Bangladeshi marine professionals working abroad. For women, we offer the EBL Women Savings Account, along with specialized deposit schemes like Women Confidence and Women Millionaire, focused on long-term financial empowerment.

For young savers, our EBL Junior and EBL Campus Accounts instill good saving habits early. We also provide a full suite of Shariah-compliant deposit products through our Islamic Banking window, ensuring that customers with faith-based preferences are well served.

Beyond these, we segment customers into SuperSaver, Power Banking, and Priority Banking tiers, each offering customized privileges. The underlying goal is simple: make saving safe, rewarding, and personally relevant.

**TDS:** What innovations has your bank

**“For young savers, our EBL Junior and EBL Campus Accounts instill good saving habits early. We also provide a full suite of Shariah-compliant deposit products through our Islamic Banking window, ensuring that customers with faith-based preferences are well served.”**

introduced in terms of technology, payments, and security to benefit depositors?

**ARI:** Innovation at EBL is driven by one core principle—enhancing customer trust through convenience and security. Our EBL SkyBanking app is central to this strategy. It offers comprehensive features: from fund transfers and utility payments to credit card and DPS management—all from your smartphone.

We've also launched a fully digital Self-Service Platform, allowing customers to open accounts, FDs, or DPS from anywhere—without stepping

into a branch.

Security remains paramount. We introduced Bangladesh's first biometric metal card, combining a premium aesthetic with fingerprint authentication for enhanced safety.

On the corporate side, EBL connect delivers robust online cash management—handling payroll, bulk transfers, and real-time transactions seamlessly.

All these innovations reflect our ongoing commitment to build a safe, smart, and future-ready banking environment for depositors.

**TDS:** What are your bank's future plans for developing new deposit schemes and enhancing operational modes for depositors?

**ARI:** Looking ahead, our deposit strategy is moving toward goal-based savings—allowing customers to define and track specific financial targets, whether it's education, travel, or homeownership, directly through our app.

We are also exploring market-linked and loyalty-based savings products, where benefits improve with tenure or usage. Another area of focus is extending deposit services to low-income and underserved segments, helping bring more people into the formal banking fold.

Operationally, we are investing heavily in automation and process optimisation. We want opening an account or updating information to be

as effortless as ordering food online—fast, secure, and paperless.

**TDS:** What role do you believe the government should play in strengthening public trust and ensuring the safety of deposits in the banking sector?

**ARI:** In today's context, restoring public trust in the banking system is more urgent than ever. While banks must uphold sound governance and transparency, the government and regulators play a critical role in ensuring systemic stability.

Timely regulatory interventions in troubled institutions, stronger enforcement of prudential standards, and greater transparency in financial reporting can go a long way in rebuilding confidence.

An enhanced Deposit Insurance Scheme—with broader coverage and greater public awareness—would be especially reassuring to small and risk-averse savers.

Additionally, the government can lead nationwide financial literacy programs, empowering people to make informed choices. Investing in digital infrastructure and cybersecurity will also help protect depositors as banking moves further online.

Trust cannot be demanded—it must be earned. A collaborative approach between public institutions and responsible banks is essential to protect depositors and preserve long-term stability in our financial system.

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# A RESILIENT AND INCLUSIVE

## banking sector relies heavily on public trust

**M. NAZEM A. CHOUDHURY**, Deputy Managing Director, Prime Bank

**The Daily Star (TDS):** What is the current state and trend of bank deposits in the country?

**M. Nazem A. Choudhury (MNAC):** The deposit landscape in Bangladesh is evolving amidst global uncertainties, domestic inflation and changing customer expectations. Despite these challenges, the banking sector remains resilient, with Prime Bank playing a key role in driving deposit growth through innovation and targeted solutions. Customers today demand more than traditional banking—they seek value, ethics and convenience. In response, Prime Bank has enhanced its focus across Corporate, Institutional, Commercial and SME Banking by offering tailored deposit products aligned with business needs and regulatory frameworks. Our academic initiative, PrimeAcademia, is reshaping financial inclusion for the education sector by offering specialised deposit solutions such as digital tuition fee collections, teacher centric savings and youth accounts promoting financial literacy. Additionally, our Hasanah Islami Banking has gained strong traction by promoting Shariah-

compliant deposit options like Halal Savings, ensuring financial services that align with faith-based values while promoting transparency and social welfare.

**TDS:** What major deposit schemes does your bank currently offer, particularly those tailored to specific customer segments?

**MNAC:** Prime Bank offers a wide range of tailored deposit schemes to meet the diverse needs of individuals and institutions. For corporates and institutions, we provide advanced cash management solutions through PrimePay for efficient, secure transactions. SMEs benefit from flexible deposit options linked with credit facilities and preferential rates. Priority Banking serves high-net-worth individuals with exclusive services, while salaried professionals enjoy high-return Payroll Savings Schemes. Senior citizens are supported through the Prime 50 & Plus Savings Scheme, offering higher returns and healthcare benefits. Our women-centric platform 'Neera' includes exclusive deposit schemes and insurance coverage to promote financial inclusion. Under Hasanah Islami Banking, we offer Shariah-compliant savings, Mudarabah term deposits and profit-sharing accounts. Students and youth are engaged through PrimeAcademia's zero-fee Youth Accounts, while teachers enjoy preferential interest rates, insurance, and loan facilities. Educational institutions benefit from dedicated accounts for managing payroll and tuition collections. Non-

**Our women-focused platform Neera will expand to include maternity-linked savings schemes and financial training for rural women entrepreneurs.**

Resident Bangladeshis are served through the NFCD, NRBPL, Home Loan and Prime Porijon Accounts, offering income schemes and remittance-linked savings.

**TDS:** What innovations has your bank introduced in terms of technology, payments, and security to benefit depositors?

**MNAC:** Innovation lies at the heart of Prime Bank's strategy to enhance customer experience, expand access and ensure secure banking. Our omnichannel platform, MyPrime, enables 24/7 deposit access, fund transfers, utility payments. We've introduced end-to-end digital account opening through e-KYC, empowering underserved segments—especially students and rural women—to join the formal financial system with ease. Through PrimeAcademia, we offer digital tuition fee collection for schools, while our women-focused platform

Neera combines financial education with autonomous savings solutions. We've also enabled QR payments, mobile wallet integration and interoperability with RTGS and BEFTN for seamless, real-time transactions.

In partnership with TallyKhata, we are pioneering micro deposit collection for informal workers, helping nano entrepreneurs transition into formal banking. Security remains a top priority—our systems are equipped with AI-based fraud detection, two-factor authentication and real-time risk scoring to protect depositors.

**TDS:** What are your bank's future plans for developing new deposit schemes and enhancing operational modes for depositors?

**MNAC:** Prime Bank's future deposit strategy centers on inclusion, personalisation and digital innovation to meet the evolving needs of customers. We are set to introduce savings planners, offering personalised insights based on customers' income, goals and behavior. PrimeAcademia will be enhanced with flexible instalments, digitised student loans and pension-linked deposit options for educators. Our women-focused platform Neera will expand to include maternity-linked savings schemes and financial training for rural women entrepreneurs, promoting empowerment and resilience. For sustainability-conscious savers, we plan to launch Green Deposit Products, while Hasanah Islami Banking will grow to feature youth-oriented halal savings and zakat-linked community deposits.

To improve accessibility, we're rolling out voice-assisted banking and biometric authentication, particularly benefiting elderly and visually impaired customers. We aim to deepen our SME deposit ecosystem by integrating accounting tools, invoicing and digital payment solutions. Through Agent Banking, we'll further penetrate underserved regions, connecting unbanked communities to formal financial services.

**TDS:** What role do you believe the government should play in strengthening public trust and ensuring the safety of deposits in the banking sector?

**MNAC:** A resilient and inclusive banking sector relies heavily on public trust and the government plays a vital role in reinforcing that trust. Strengthening the Deposit Insurance Scheme, particularly to protect small savers, is key to ensuring deposit safety and financial stability. Transparent disclosures of bank performance and governance should be mandated, enabling customers to make informed banking decisions with confidence. The government can further promote financial literacy across schools, rural communities and women-focused groups. Initiatives that align well with platforms like PrimeAcademia and Neera, which already champion financial education and empowerment. Encouraging strong compliance frameworks, ethical governance and Shariah-compliant banking practices will foster a more competitive and values-driven industry.



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## Bangladesh's Evolving Deposit Landscape



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

### FROM PAGE J1

Notably, interest rates on deposits have risen compared to recent years. However, challenges such as persistent inflation and reduced public confidence continue to weigh on the broader financial system. Many households, facing growing living costs, have been forced to draw down savings rather than deposit new funds.

"Despite attractive deposit rates between 9% to 13%, high inflation and a lack of public confidence have limited stronger growth in some banks," explains Ahsan Zaman Chowdhury, Managing Director & CEO of Trust Bank.

In the wake of recent instability within parts of the banking sector, there has been a visible shift in depositor behaviour. Customers have increasingly transferred funds away from banks perceived as risky to institutions with stronger governance and financial health. For instance, in 2024, eleven banks reportedly lost a combined Tk. 23,700 crore in deposits, which were redirected to other more trusted banks.

"In the first half of 2025, we registered BDT 8,000 crore in deposit growth—a remarkable acceleration compared to BDT 3,000 crore during the same period in 2024. This momentum is not accidental; it results from three deliberate strategic pillars: trust, technology and brand equity," shares Mashrur Arefin, Managing Director & CEO of City Bank.

"While the industry recorded a 7.44% deposit growth in 2024, BRAC Bank achieved an impressive 34% increase—setting a significant benchmark," notes Tareq Refat Ullah Khan, Managing Director & CEO (Current Charge), BRAC Bank.

Banking insiders believe the sector is stabilising. Recent guidance from the central bank on improving governance and preventing financial misconduct has played a key role in rebuilding confidence.

"Inflation has remained elevated at around 9%, reducing people's capacity to save, and confidence has been undermined by past irregularities. However, central bank interventions have helped stabilise the situation. While growth remains below the 10-11% levels of late 2023, the trend is upward, indicating gradual recovery," says Sheikh Mohammad Maroof, Managing Director & CEO, Dhaka Bank.

Currently, most commercial banks—both local and foreign—offer a variety of deposit products. These include Fixed Deposits (FDs), Monthly Savings Schemes (MSS), Double/Triple Benefit Deposits, Pension and Retirement Schemes, Women's Savings Accounts, Islamic savings instruments, and Student Savings Accounts.

"UCB offers a wide range of deposit schemes tailored to meet the diverse needs of our customer base—from individuals to SMEs, corporates, and NRBS. Our offerings are designed with flexibility, inclusiveness, and transparency in mind," says Mohammad Mamdudur

Rashid, Managing Director & CEO of United Commercial Bank.

"Among our standout innovations is the e-FD, a fully digital Fixed Deposit Receipt available through our CBC Digital platform. This allows customers to open fixed deposits in minutes, with preferential interest rates and a seamless, paperless experience," adds Najith Meewanage, CEO of Commercial Bank of Ceylon, Bangladesh Operations.

Senior citizens, a particularly vulnerable demographic due to the limited scope of national safety net programmes, are being targeted through specialised deposit schemes under various DPS plans.

"Senior citizens aged 60 and above benefit from our Trust Seniors Account, Trust Seniors FDR, and Trust Seniors ECHO. In addition, we offer adult customers regular monthly deposit plans such as the Trust Smart Savers Scheme, Lakshmi Scheme, Trust Millionaire Scheme and Trust Kotipati Scheme," says Ahsan Zaman Chowdhury of Trust Bank.

Technological innovation remains a priority across the sector, as banks seek to enhance both convenience and security for depositors.

"We are investing heavily in automation and process optimisation. We want opening an account or updating information to be as effortless as ordering food online—fast, secure, and paperless," says Ali Reza Iftekhar, Managing Director of Eastern Bank.

SEE PAGE J6

# TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

## is integral to our mission

**NAJITH MEEWANAGE**, Chief Executive Officer, Commercial Bank of Ceylon, Bangladesh Operations

**The Daily Star (TDS):** What is the current state and trend of bank deposits in the country?

**Najith Meewanage (NM):** Bangladesh's banking sector is witnessing a cautious yet encouraging recovery in deposit growth, amid shifting market dynamics and depositor sentiment. After a slower pace in late 2024, with growth stabilizing around 7.5%, momentum picked up in early 2025—surpassing 8.25% in January and remaining above 8.5% through March.

However, this trend moderated slightly in May, settling at 7.73%.

This rebound reflects improved depositor confidence despite lingering inflationary pressures and macroeconomic uncertainty. A major catalyst has been the Bangladesh Bank's forensic audits into financially distressed institutions particularly those who have suffered by weak capital structures and elevated non-performing assets. Public disclosures of governance lapses and control failures in these banks have prompted a notable shift in deposits toward more stable, well-governed institutions.

As a result, stronger banks have

seen significant inflows, while weaker entities face stagnation further intensifying market concentration. This development highlights the urgent need for regulatory reforms focused on governance, transparency, and risk-based supervision. Sustaining depositor trust and ensuring a balanced liquidity environment will be crucial to preserving financial sector resilience.

**TDS:** What major deposit schemes does your bank currently offer, particularly those tailored to specific customer segments?

**NM:** Commercial Bank of Ceylon (CBC) offers a dynamic range of deposit products designed to meet the evolving needs of various customer segments. Among our standout innovations is the e-FD, a fully digital Fixed Deposit Receipt available via our CBC Digital platform. This pioneering service allows customers to open fixed deposits in minutes, offering preferential interest rates and a seamless, paperless experience.

A key strength of CBC is our well-diversified balance sheet, with 30% of total deposits in foreign currency a testament to depositor confidence and our cross-border capabilities. To serve this segment, we've introduced Dollar-Smart, a foreign currency term deposit tailored for FCY account holders. It offers competitive returns, flexibility, and security aligned with global standards.

These offerings reflect our strategic focus on sustainability, digital transformation, and segment-specific solutions positioning CBC as a trusted, future-ready financial partner.

Our AAA credit rating sustained for 15 consecutive years, one of the lowest NPL ratios in the sector at 0.60%, and one of the highest capital adequacy ratio of 51.57% in any local or global context far exceeding the regulatory minimum ratio of 12.50% demonstrates our prudence and financial strength.

**TDS:** What innovations have your bank introduced in terms of technology, payments, and security to benefit depositors?

**NM:** At CBC, technological innovation is integral to our mission of delivering secure, efficient, and customer-centric banking. Since achieving PCI-DSS certification in 2019, we have maintained compliance with the latest version (v4.0), underscoring our strong data protection credentials.

Our flagship CBC Digital platform offers a secure, paperless banking experience through advanced encryption, two-factor authentication,

and real-time alerts. Additionally, our e-passbook app provides customers with instant access to account activity, reinforcing both convenience and transparency.

Security remains paramount. From real-time SMS/email notifications to robust fraud prevention protocols, we are committed to safeguarding customer assets at every touch point. These efforts are complemented by our hallmark of personalized service ensuring each depositor experiences both technological convenience and human-centered support.

**TDS:** What are your bank's future plans for developing new deposit schemes and enhancing operational models for depositors?

**NM:** CBC is committed to continuous innovation in deposit solutions. Our latest launch, the Flexi-FD, is a market-first floating rate deposit product with tenures of 2, 3, or 4 years. By linking returns to the 91-day Treasury bill rate, Flexi-FD empowers customers to benefit from rising interest rate trends. With the option to receive interest quarterly or at maturity, this product offers both yield flexibility and transparency.

Looking ahead, our dedicated R&D team is developing a robust pipeline of deposit products, informed by customer insights and market research. These initiatives aim to broaden customer choice while reinforcing our leadership in deposit mobilization through innovation and operational excellence.

**TDS:** What role do you believe the Government should play in

strengthening public trust and ensuring the safety of deposits in the banking sector?

**NM:** The government plays a pivotal role in strengthening public trust and ensuring deposit safety through transparent, reform-driven oversight. Recent proposals encouraging the Merger or acquisition of weaker institutions are a welcome step toward a more resilient banking system. Additionally, the government's restructuring of dues related to fuel and fertilizer imports has improved overall liquidity in the financial system.

These reforms signal a positive shift toward sustainable, rule-based market practices. At CBC, we strongly support such initiatives, which enhance market integrity and empower well-managed institutions to operate with greater confidence and long-term focus.

Trust is the foundation of our identity. Our AAA credit rating sustained for 15 consecutive years, one of the lowest NPL ratios in the sector at 0.60%, and one of the highest capital adequacy ratio of 51.57% in any local or global context far exceeding the regulatory minimum ratio of 12.50% demonstrates our prudence and financial strength. During recent foreign exchange constraints, CBC stood by its clients facilitating trade, opening LCs, and ensuring timely settlements reinforcing both customer loyalty and the nation's international credibility.

We believe that effective governance and strong oversight will continue to foster depositor trust, financial inclusion, and sector-wide stability.

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# PIONEERING THE FOURTH-GENERATION BANKS

## with Record Deposit Achievements

**DR MD TOUHIDUL ALAM KHAN**, Managing Director & CEO, NRBC Bank

**The Daily Star (TDS):** What is the current state and trend of bank deposits in the country?

**Dr Md Touhidul Alam Khan (DMTAK):** Currently, Bangladesh is home to 62 commercial banks. Despite global economic uncertainties, the banking sector in Bangladesh has experienced a consistent increase in deposit collection. According to the latest report from Bangladesh Bank, the total deposits in the banking sector reached BDT 18.2 trillion as of 30 April 2025, reflecting a 4.5% growth compared to the same period last year. Nonetheless, global instability stemming from the Russia-Ukraine conflict, ongoing tensions in the Middle East, and the United States' tariff policies have exerted some influence on Bangladesh's financial landscape. If both domestic and international conditions improve, it is anticipated that deposit flows will further accelerate.

**TDS:** What major deposit schemes

does your bank currently offer, particularly those tailored to specific customer segments?

**DMTAK:** As previously highlighted, the banking landscape has undergone substantial transformation. Nevertheless, people in Bangladesh are increasingly gravitating toward formal banking channels. Customers are looking to safeguard their hard-earned money, while banks are expanding their reach through an extensive network of branches, sub-branches, digital platforms, mobile banking, and agent banking.

NRBC Bank continues to demonstrate steady deposit growth. As of the end of June, our total deposits amounted to BDT 20,200 crore. This growth is primarily driven by customer-centric services, innovative deposit schemes, and the trust we have built. Currently, we serve our customers through 109 branches and 415 sub-branches across the country. To cater to diverse customer needs, we have introduced a variety of deposit schemes, including General Savings Accounts, Fixed Deposits (FDR), Monthly Savings Schemes (DPS), Double/Triple Benefit Schemes, Millionaire Schemes, and Pensioner Schemes. We also offer specialised deposit schemes tailored for professionals and working individuals. For instance, the Shikkhaguru scheme is designed to honour educators, while targeted savings schemes are available

**NRBC Bank continues to demonstrate steady deposit growth. As of the end of June, our total deposits amounted to BDT 20,200 crore. This growth is primarily driven by customer-centric services, innovative deposit schemes, and the trust we have built. Currently, we serve our customers through 109 branches and 415 sub-branches across the country.**

for garment workers and other labour professionals.

**TDS:** What innovations has your bank introduced in terms of technology, payments, and security to benefit depositors?

**DMTAK:** There is significant potential to expand mobile deposit services among the unbanked population in

Bangladesh. According to the Global Finex 2025 report by the World Bank, over 50% of unbanked adults globally—more than 650 million people—live in Bangladesh, which has a low financial inclusion rate of around 50%. Despite some progress, a large segment of the population remains without access to formal financial services. The widespread use of mobile technology presents a huge opportunity to bridge this gap, enabling more people, especially those with low incomes, to access banking through mobile deposits and financial technology solutions. This can significantly enhance financial inclusion and economic participation on a daily or weekly basis.

This innovative approach will

eliminate the need for customers to visit the bank physically, even for cash deposits or withdrawals after maturity. The entire process will be automated, with funds directly deposited into customers' accounts.

**TDS:** What role do you believe the government should play in strengthening public trust and ensuring the safety of deposits in the banking sector?

**DMTAK:** While commercial banks operate as business entities, they are also regarded as public institutions and are regulated directly by the government. Bangladesh Bank, on behalf of the government, issues licences, supervises operations, and ensures adherence to regulations. As a result, Bangladesh Bank and the government play a vital role in fostering public trust in the banking sector. Rigorous supervision and regularly updated policies are essential to maintaining sector stability.

## Bangladesh's Evolving Deposit Landscape

FROM PAGE J4

EBL has also launched the EBL Freelancer Account, tailored for digital professionals, to capture a growing segment of tech-savvy depositors.

Islamic banks and Shariah-compliant divisions of conventional banks are likewise expanding their deposit portfolios. These include women-focused products and rural outreach schemes, essential components of the national financial inclusion strategy.

"Our recent offerings include the Al-Wadiyah Current Plus Account, Mudaraba Savings Plus Deposit, and Mudaraba Youth Saver Account. These are designed for individuals, SMEs, and the youth—ensuring ease

outside the formal workforce," says Tareq Refat Ullah Khan.

"Prime Bank's Neera platform includes exclusive deposit schemes and insurance options to enhance financial inclusion. Under Hasanah Islami Banking, we offer Shariah-compliant savings, Mudaraba term deposits, and profit-sharing accounts," notes M. Nazeem A. Choudhury, Deputy Managing Director, Prime Bank PLC.

"Through targeted products and outreach via branches, sub-branches, and digital platforms, we aim to empower rural communities, freelancers, low-income groups, and remittance recipients," states M. Shamsul Arefin, Managing Director of NCC Bank.

university years. At the same time, banks are tapping into the expatriate market by offering attractive savings schemes for NRBS.

Youth engagement is promoted through PrimeAcademia's zero-fee Youth Accounts, while teachers enjoy preferential interest rates, insurance, and loan facilities. For educational institutions, we offer dedicated accounts for payroll and tuition collection. NRBS benefit from the NFCD, NRBL, Home Loan and Prime Porijon Accounts—featuring income plans and remittance-linked savings," explains M. Nazeem A. Choudhury of Prime Bank.

Ultimately, the long-term health of the deposit ecosystem relies on sustained depositor confidence,



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of access and encouraging disciplined saving," states Mohd. Rafat Ullah Khan, Managing Director (Current Charge), Al-Arafah Islami Bank.

"We provide Islamic Banking Deposits—Mudaraba savings and term deposits, fully compliant with Shariah principles—as well as products aimed at empowering women, such as Achol and the Senior Citizen Deposit Schemes," adds ANM Mahfuz, Managing Director (CC) of Bank Asia PLC.

"At BRAC Bank, our flagship Women Banking proposition, TARA, empowers and connects women across Bangladesh. TARA includes tailored financial and lifestyle products, including the TARA Homemaker Savings Account—specifically created for women

Digital banking platforms are playing an increasingly central role. Apps that offer user-friendly interfaces, biometric authentication, and a full range of services are reshaping how customers engage with deposits.

"One cornerstone of our digital strategy is the IFIC Aamar App. It enables customers to access over 20 services from a single platform, secured through biometric authentication. The app reflects our commitment to accessibility, convenience, and innovation," says Md. Mehmoond Husain, Chairman of IFIC Bank.

Student deposit schemes are also on the rise, especially for those aspiring to study abroad or seeking financial independence during

underpinned by strong governance and sound regulatory oversight.

"Public trust is the foundation of a strong and resilient banking sector, and the government plays a central role in upholding that trust. There must be a robust regulatory framework with updated rules on liquidity, capital adequacy, and risk governance," asserts Md. Ahsan-uz Zaman, Managing Director & CEO of Midland Bank.

"Rigorous supervision and regularly updated policies are essential for maintaining sector stability. Moreover, expanding deposit insurance coverage would significantly bolster depositor confidence," concludes Dr Md Touhidul Alam Khan, Managing Director & CEO of NRBC Bank.

# We have embraced technology-driven INNOVATIONS

**M. SHAMSUL AREFIN**, Managing Director, NCC Bank

**The Daily Star (TDS):** What is the current state and trend of bank deposits in the country?

**M. Shamsul Arefin (MSA):** Bangladesh's financial sector is undergoing a significant transformation, driven by regulatory reforms, digital innovations, and evolving customer expectations. Today's banking is not only about financial intermediation; it's about being a trusted partner in people's lives and helping them achieve their aspirations.

The banking sector has shown notable resilience in recent times.

Total deposits in Bangladesh rose by 2.11% in Q1 2025, reaching Tk 19.24 trillion, marking a 9.51% year-on-year increase. This upward trend reflects a gradual recovery in consumer confidence towards banks, aided by easing inflationary pressures and a robust inflow of remittances. However, it remains crucial for the industry to stay vigilant to ensure this positive momentum is sustained in the coming months.

**TDS:** What major deposit schemes does your bank currently offer, particularly

those tailored to specific customer segments?

**MSA:** NCC, as a pioneer bank in the country, is no exception to this growth trend. Our deposit mobilisation efforts have gained significant traction, surpassing last year's achievements. In particular, our retail customers' deposit growth in 2024 has been three times higher compared to 2023—a testament to our customers' growing trust and confidence in us.

We are focusing on strengthening our fundamentals through quality asset growth, optimising operational efficiency through technology, and embracing sustainable banking practices. Our profitability remains stable, and we are witnessing encouraging traction in the retail, SME, and corporate banking segments.

To cater to our diverse customers' needs and promote a savings culture, NCC Bank offers a wide range of attractive deposit schemes, including the Deposit Plus Scheme, Special Savings Scheme, NCC Freelancer, Double Benefit Scheme, Kotipoti Scheme, Millionaire Scheme, Parama Super Saver, Parama Uddokta, and Parama Monthly Savings Scheme. These products have been carefully designed to serve various customer segments—professionals, freelancers, aspiring entrepreneurs, and long-term savers nationwide, including women.

**TDS:** What innovations has your bank introduced in terms of technology, payments, and security to benefit



**To cater to our diverse customers' needs and promote a savings culture, NCC Bank offers a wide range of attractive deposit schemes, including the Deposit Plus Scheme, Special Savings Scheme, NCC Freelancer, Double Benefit Scheme, Kotipoti Scheme, Millionaire Scheme, Parama Super Saver, Parama Uddokta, and Parama Monthly Savings Scheme. These products have been carefully designed to serve various customer segments—professionals, freelancers, aspiring entrepreneurs, and long-term savers nationwide, including women.**

depositors?

**MSA:** Digital transformation is no longer optional—it's imperative. We are upgrading our systems, launching new digital products, and reshaping customer journeys through AI-driven data analytics and automation.

We have embraced technology-driven innovations to enhance customer experience, security, and accessibility. Our "NCC Always" internet banking platform ensures 24/7 access to essential services such as fund transfers, bill payments, and mobile top-ups through web and app channels, with state-of-the-art security features.

Additionally, our NFC-enabled, chip-based, multi-currency debit card offers seamless and secure tap and pay transactions, both domestically and internationally. Complemented by our widespread ATM network, we provide customers with easy access to cash withdrawals, balance enquiries, and other self-service banking facilities.

These innovations reaffirm our commitment to delivering modern, secure, and user-friendly banking solutions to our customers across the country.

In addition, we are preparing to introduce new deposit schemes—specifically for senior citizens, university students, and lower-income groups. These products support financial inclusion by bringing more segments of society into the formal banking system.

Furthermore, as part of our broader

vision, we plan to launch "Banking to Community" services through financial kiosks, enabling customers to open accounts, perform transactions, and access a range of services closer to their locality.

**TDS:** What are your bank's future plans for developing new deposit schemes and enhancing operational modes for depositors?

**MSA:** Through targeted products and outreach via branches, sub-branches, and digital channels, we aim to empower rural communities, women entrepreneurs, freelancers, low-income groups, and remittance beneficiaries. Financial inclusion is one of our core business philosophies.

We believe in proactive risk management, governance excellence, and maintaining transparency at all levels. We have a clear roadmap focused on sustainable growth, enhancing customer experience, and contributing to the broader economic development of Bangladesh.

Our vision is to evolve into a future-ready bank with strong digital capabilities, a robust compliance culture, and innovative solutions tailored for the next generation.

Despite global uncertainties and local challenges, Bangladesh's banking sector holds immense potential. With adaptability, innovation, and dedication, we are confident in our ability to help shape a brighter financial future for both our customers and the nation.

## CUSTOMISED care for her needs

SAUDIA AFRIN

For millions of Bangladeshi women, having a bank account was once a distant dream. Today, dedicated deposit schemes are not just empowering their financial choices, but also transforming entire communities. While saving is essential for everyone regardless of gender, women-focused banking products now offer tailored propositions to address specific financial needs around saving and money management.

Key features of women-friendly deposit accounts in Bangladesh include lower initial deposit requirements, higher interest rates, no or low maintenance fees, access to loan facilities, insurance or pension plans, and even dedicated counters at select

branches. These thoughtful inclusions aim to reduce entry barriers for women and build long-term banking relationships.

Typically, these accounts require only a small opening balance often between BDT 100 and 500. Some banks go further by offering slightly higher interest rates than standard savings accounts. Other common incentives include access to

and helping them meet their aspirations," said M. Shamsul Arefin, Managing Director of NCC Bank.

In that spirit, NCC Bank has launched products like Parama Super Saver, Parama Uddokta, and Parama Monthly Savings Scheme, each designed to serve different customer segments including aspiring women entrepreneurs and long-term savers.

**It's not just urban women who are benefiting. Banks are increasingly extending these services to semi-urban and rural women, many of whom face social and physical barriers to accessing traditional banking. By doing so, banks are promoting more inclusive financial participation across the country, addressing financial stability of women.**

collateral-free loans under SME or microfinance schemes, or lower interest on personal and business loans. These benefits help encourage women to channel their savings through formal financial systems.

This shift reflects a broader vision among banks to move beyond traditional intermediation and toward financial empowerment.

"Today's banking is not only about

Other banks are also innovating to personalise financial solutions. Mashrur Arefin, Managing Director & CEO of City Bank, said, "Instead of trying to fit everyone into generic products, we plan to design deposit schemes that address the real goals and constraints of specific segments."

City Bank's City Alo is a strong example of this approach. It not only provides women-focused deposit accounts, but also financial literacy, preferential interest rates, and access to entrepreneurial development resources.

Echoing similar ideas, Ali Reza Iftekhar, Managing Director of EBL, shared that the bank is now shifting its deposit strategy toward goal-based savings.

"This approach will allow customers to define and track specific financial targets—be it education, travel, or homeownership."

SEE PAGE J8



financial intermediation; it's about being a trusted partner in people's lives

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# UNWAVERING RELIABILITY

## Not a Single Cheque Bounced

MOHAMMAD MAMDUDUR RASHID, Managing Director & CEO, United Commercial Bank (UCB)

**The Daily Star (TDS):** What is the current state and trend of bank deposits in the country?

**Mohammad MAMDUDUR RASHID (MMR):** The banking sector in Bangladesh is currently operating in a dynamic and increasingly competitive environment, shaped by evolving customer expectations and a rising demand for personalised financial solutions. While the industry overall is witnessing steady, albeit cautious, deposit growth, this has been largely

driven by competitive interest rates, product innovation, and the growing adoption of digital banking platforms.

At United Commercial Bank (UCB), we are proud to share that we have once again scripted an extraordinary success story. In just the first six months of this year, we opened over 300,000 new accounts, and our net deposits grew by more than BDT 7.82 billion. Against an initial target of BDT 60 billion, we surpassed expectations, crossing BDT 75 billion—a clear testament to the trust our customers place in us.

A breakdown of this growth shows that 56% came from retail clients, 32% from corporate customers, and 12% from SMEs—all during a period of notable macroeconomic and sectoral challenges. While the banking industry has averaged a deposit growth rate of around 8%, UCB achieved a remarkable 15%, demonstrating the strength of our strategic focus and customer-centric approach.

What truly sets UCB apart is our unwavering commitment to reliability. Whether it is a deposit of BDT 10,000 or BDT 100 million, not a single cheque has bounced—a record that speaks louder than any advertisement. This consistency is our strongest endorsement, echoed by our satisfied customers.

**TDS:** What major deposit schemes does your bank currently offer, particularly those tailored to specific customer segments?

**MMR:** UCB offers a wide range of deposit schemes tailored to meet the diverse needs of its customer base—from individuals to SMEs, corporates, and Non-Resident Bangladeshis (NRBs). Our offerings are designed with flexibility, inclusiveness, and transparency in mind.

**Key deposit products include:**

- UCB Super Flex DPS: A flexible monthly deposit plan with tenures ranging from 1 to 10 years, ideal for general retail customers starting with as little as BDT 1,000 per month.
- NRB DPS Plus: Specially designed for NRB customers, offering attractive interest rates and tenures of 5, 7, or 10 years.
- UCB AYMA DPS Plus: A women-centric savings product that offers

competitive rates and flexible terms of 5, 7, or 10 years.

We continuously evolve our offerings based on lifestyle changes, feedback, and market trends—because we believe that meaningful banking starts with truly understanding those we serve.

**TDS:** What innovations has your bank introduced in terms of technology, payments, and security to benefit depositors?

**MMR:** UCB has been at the forefront of digital transformation in the banking sector. We have made strategic investments to enhance customer experience, drive convenience, and

ensure depositor protection.

**Key innovations include:**

- Digital Account Opening via the UCB Digital App, enabling instant customer onboarding—also available through biometric authentication at agent outlets.

From an operational perspective, we will further strengthen our digital banking platforms, leveraging AI driven personalisation to offer the right product at the right time to the right customer. Our agent banking network will be a key driver in reaching underserved regions and enhancing service accessibility.

**TDS:** What role do you believe the government should play in strengthening public trust and ensuring the safety of deposits in the banking sector?

**MMR:** The government has a vital role in creating and maintaining an environment of trust in the banking sector. To that end, a few focus areas stand out:

- Enforcing strong prudent regulations, transparent disclosure norms, and effective supervision to ensure depositor safety.
- Promoting public awareness on deposit insurance schemes, banking stability, and fraud protection—this helps reduce misinformation and builds confidence.

Together, these steps can go a long way in reinforcing public faith and ensuring that depositors feel secure across all tiers of the financial system.

## Customised care for her needs



### FROM PAGE J7

To support long-term financial empowerment, EBL offers various savings schemes under its women's banking portfolio, such as EBL Women Savings Account, Women Confidence, and Women Millionaire schemes.

Trust Bank has followed suit with its Trust Sristi Account, tailored to meet women's needs while offering attractive interest rates and exclusive features.

But it's not just urban women who are benefiting. Banks are increasingly extending these services to semi-urban and rural women, many of whom face social and physical barriers to accessing traditional banking. By doing so, banks are promoting more inclusive financial participation across the country, addressing financial stability of women.

Midland Bank's MDB RMG Star Savings is a standout example of this rural focus. Aimed at unbanked and underserved communities, the scheme helps integrate them into the formal financial system.

"We support rural financial inclusion through the MDB RMG Star Savings, focused on the garment sector workers," said Ahsan-uz Zaman, Managing Director & CEO of Midland Bank.

The Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector in Bangladesh is

predominantly female. The garment sector, dominated by women, is central to this financial inclusion push.

According to Mapped in Bangladesh (MiB), women made up 58% of the RMG workforce in 2020 and 53.65% in 2021, based on a joint study by ETI, GIZ, and BRAC University.

Recognising this, banks have also expanded their rural presence, establishing branches and sub-branches to reach underprivileged women.

"NRBC Bank has earned customers' trust by providing essential banking services," said Dr. Md. Touhidul Alam Khan, Managing Director & CEO of NRBC Bank. "We've also introduced savings schemes dedicated to garment workers and other labor professionals."

Agent banking has also played a key role in reaching women. According to Bangladesh Bank, the number of women depositors using agent banking grew by 16.58% in the past year. Currently, 31 banks—including two state-owned, 21 private commercial, and eight Islamic banks offer these services across the country.

Digital integration has further eased access. Features like Mobile Financial Services (MFS) integration now enable women to save regularly without visiting branches, an important development for those

facing mobility or social restrictions.

However, the overall deposit landscape is facing challenges. Rising inflation and living costs have reduced people's ability to save, despite nominal GDP growth.

"This signals a subtle erosion in the real value of bank deposits. What we're witnessing is not a crisis of liquidity but a crisis of confidence," observed Mashrur Arefin, CEO of City Bank.

As banks prioritise asset quality, governance, disclosure standards, and digital resilience, depositors are increasingly choosing stable, transparent, and forward-looking banks for their financial planning.

The need for deposit protection is also being highlighted.

Ahsan Zaman Chowdhury, Managing Director & CEO of Trust Bank, urged, "The government must expand and publicise the Deposit Insurance Scheme to boost depositor confidence, especially among small savers. Periodic reviews and adjustments of the existing coverage limit are necessary to reflect inflation and the evolving financial landscape."

Despite the hurdles, the rise of women-focused deposit schemes signals a promising shift. As banks continue refining their offerings to meet the needs of female savers, financial inclusion in Bangladesh stands to gain not just in numbers, but in impact.



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# Transforming Depositor Experience THROUGH INNOVATION

**TAREK REAZ KHAN**, Managing Director & CEO, NRB Bank

**The Daily Star (TDS):** What is the current state and trend of bank deposits in the country?

**Tarek Reaz Khan (TRK):** Bangladesh's banking sector has seen a steady increase in total deposits over the past year, surpassing Tk 18.3 trillion by the end of May 2025. However, recent figures indicate a noticeable slowdown in deposit growth, raising concerns about liquidity and investor confidence in the sector.

According to the latest data from the Bangladesh Bank, total deposits in the banking system stood at:

- Tk 17.43 trillion on 30 June 2024
- Tk 17.77 trillion on 30 December 2024
- Tk 18.32 trillion as of 31 May 2025 (June data pending; expected to be similar)

This marks a year-on-year deposit growth of 7.73%, down from over 9.25% recorded in March 2024. Experts attribute the deceleration to a combination of persistent inflation, the attractiveness of high-yield government securities, and growing public scepticism toward weaker banks.

**TDS:** What major deposit schemes does your bank currently offer, particularly

those tailored to specific customer segments?

**TRK:** Here are the major deposit (savings & term) schemes currently offered by NRB Bank PLC, especially those tailored to specific customer segments like NRBs, SMEs, students, pensioners, women, etc.:

#### Non-Resident Bangladeshi (NRB) Focused Products

Tailored for expatriate Bangladeshis:

- NRB Horizon – Monthly instalment savings scheme for NRBs
- NRB My Deposit – Daily interest-bearing Taka savings account paying profit semi-annually; designed for NRBs to deposit foreign earnings and enjoy easy remittance credit
- Non-Resident Investor Taka Account (NITA) – For NRBs investing in Bangladesh via foreign currency remittance or portfolio investment.

#### Islamic / Shari'ah-Compliant Savings Products

Based on the Mudaraba (profit-sharing) model:

- Mudaraba Term Deposit Account – Standard Islamic term deposits with tenors from 1 month to 5 years
- Mudaraba Hajj Savings Scheme – Automatic monthly instalment deposit scheme for Hajj planning
- Mudaraba Deposit Pension Scheme – Pension-focused monthly instalment savings
- Mudaraba Monthly Income Scheme – Designed for regular monthly returns
- Perpetual Cash Waqf Account – Charitable endowment account; one-time deposit (min. BDT 10,000); no principal withdrawal; profit used perpetually for charity

• Al-Wadieeh Current & Mudaraba Savings – Islamic versions of current and savings accounts

#### Retail & Specialised Term Deposit Plans

Designed for salaried individuals, businesses, and high-value savers:

- Standard Term Deposit (FDR) – Offered to retail customers in taka;

technology to improve depositor convenience, payment flexibility, and security. Its flagship mobile app, NRB Click, enables real-time fund transfers, bill payments, and Bangla QR-based merchant transactions—offering a seamless digital experience. Over 23% of customers actively use this service, reflecting growing digital engagement.

depositor services with a strategic focus on retail and SME growth. It achieved over 14% deposit growth in 2024 and continues to prioritise small-ticket deposit mobilisation through diversified offerings. The bank plans to introduce new goal-oriented deposit schemes, such as education savings, women-centric accounts, and Hajj savings, catering to underserved segments.

A key area of innovation is digital transformation, including remote account opening and neo-banking partnerships with fintechs and telecom providers. These digital initiatives aim to provide easy, tech-enabled access to deposit services. The bank is also broadening its physical presence, with approval for over 100 branches and a major expansion of agent banking outlets to reach rural and remote customers.

Additionally, a dedicated NRB Division targets expatriate Bangladeshis with customised deposit products.

**TDS:** What role do you believe the government should play in strengthening public trust and ensuring the safety of deposits in the banking sector?

**TRK:** A well-structured deposit insurance scheme should protect small depositors, while prudent and timely crisis management and transparent public communication help prevent panic. Additionally, the government should promote financial literacy and implement consumer protection mechanisms to empower depositors.

**NRB Bank is actively expanding its deposit schemes and improving depositor services with a strategic focus on retail and SME growth. It achieved over 14% deposit growth in 2024 and continues to prioritise small-ticket deposit mobilisation through diversified offerings.**

tenors: 1, 3, 6, 12, 24, 36 months

• Monthly Benefit Scheme – Term deposit scheme offering monthly return on deposit

• SME Equity Planner – Monthly instalment savings plan designed for SMEs

In addition, there are DPS and term deposit products that come with insurance coverage, providing financial protection to the nominee of the account holder in case of death/accidental death—safeguarding the future of family members.

**TDS:** What innovations has your bank introduced in terms of technology, payments, and security to benefit depositors?

**TRK:** NRB Bank has embraced

To strengthen card services, the bank launched an in-house processing centre powered by TranzWare, replacing third-party systems. This has allowed NRB Bank to issue EMV-compliant debit and credit cards, while implementing 3D Secure protocols for safer online transactions.

Looking ahead, NRB Bank is preparing to launch neo-banking—a mobile-first banking platform for NRBs, SMEs, and youth—partnering with telecom and fintech providers.

**TDS:** What are your bank's future plans for developing new deposit schemes and enhancing operational modes for depositors?

**TRK:** NRB Bank is actively expanding its deposit schemes and improving

## FROM CAMPUS TO CASH

### The rise of youth-focused deposit accounts

AYMAN ANIKA

In today's Bangladesh, banking is no longer just for salaried professionals and business owners. A shift is underway: slow but steady. From university students freelancing online to teenagers earning allowances, young Bangladeshis are entering the financial mainstream earlier than ever before. Recognising this shift, banks are introducing deposit schemes tailored specifically for students and youth, hoping to not only tap into a growing demographic but also foster a generation that sees money not as stress, but as a strategy.

#### Why student deposit schemes matter

The value of youth and student-oriented banking goes beyond interest rates or transaction caps. These accounts create a first financial identity. They offer students a way to receive payments for

mobile banking for transactions is no longer a luxury. It's a necessity in a digitally evolving society.

**A look at what banks are offering** Several banks are taking steps to bring these accounts to market with more clarity and intention.

City Bank's Student Savings Account is one such example. According to Mashrur Arefin, Managing Director and CEO of City Bank, "Our goal is to instil early saving habits securely and smartly. We offer digital access, zero fees, and a card-linked safety so that

students can learn banking without fear."

Similarly, NCC Bank is expanding its portfolio with deposit schemes that speak directly to underbanked segments. "We're introducing new deposit schemes specifically for senior citizens, university students, and lower-income groups," says M. Shamsul Arefin, Managing Director of NCC Bank. "Our goal is to bring more segments of society into formal banking channels."

The focus is not just on urban students in Dhaka or Chattogram, but on building trust and reach across smaller towns and semi-urban centres – places where banking is still seen as complex or intimidating.

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J10



**The focus is not just on urban students in Dhaka or Chattogram, but on building trust and reach across smaller towns and semi-urban centres – places where banking is still seen as complex or intimidating.**

tuition, stipends, or freelance work. They also act as a gateway to formal banking tools—online portals, mobile apps, and ATM access, which many first-time users in Bangladesh still lack exposure to.

These deposit schemes are designed with a vision: to help students start saving small and thinking big. The ability to deposit BDT 500 a month, track expenses through SMS alerts, and access



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# Customer-Centric Banking, Powered by Specialised **DEPOSIT BUNDLES**

**MD. MEHMOOD HUSAIN**, Chairman, IFIC Bank

**The Daily Star (TDS):** What is the current state and trend of bank deposits in the country?

**MD. Mehmoor Husain (MMH):** The current trend of bank deposits in Bangladesh signals a steady but meaningful recovery. While growth may appear modest, it is significant in the context of ongoing inflationary pressures, liquidity constraints, and the lack of faith that emerged after

August 2024. That period of instability—marked

by public concern and institutional disruption—had a direct impact on depositor confidence across the banking sector.

Despite these challenges, deposits have rebounded, reflecting a gradual restoration of public trust. Within our

institution, the turnaround has been both strategic and deliberate. At the height of the crisis, we faced heightened withdrawal pressure. However, through targeted reforms, transparent communication, and proactive client engagement, we stabilised the situation. By April 2025, we reinstated BDT 6,000 crore in deposits—achieved solely through

internal operational strength. It is important to highlight that IFIC Bank has maintained a strong and self-sustained liquidity position throughout its operations. The bank has never availed any form of liquidity support from the Central Bank—neither in the past nor during the challenging economic period of financial stress. This milestone also marked our re-entry into the BDT 50,000 crore deposit club, and currently our deposit stands at more than BDT 51,500 crore.

**TDS:** What major deposit schemes does your bank currently offer, particularly those tailored to specific customer segments?

**MMH:** IFIC Bank continues to prioritise its key customer segments—Retail, SME, and Corporate—by offering a diverse range of innovative savings products that promote disciplined financial habits across all income levels and backgrounds.

The bank's popular offerings include Fixed Deposits (FD), Monthly Savings Schemes (MSS), Pension Savings Schemes (PSS), and Islamic Savings Schemes. Notably, IFIC Aamar Account, IFIC Aamar Bhabishawt, Shohoj Account, Monthly Income Scheme (MIS), and Pension Savings Scheme (PSS) have gained widespread acceptance among customers of various age groups and income brackets, thanks to their flexibility and attractive returns.

IFIC Bank currently offers interest rates of up to 12% on its specialised

**The bank has never availed any form of liquidity support from the Central Bank—neither in the past nor during the challenging economic period of financial stress. This milestone also marked our re-entry into the BDT 50,000 crore deposit club.**

a seamless, tech-driven experience within a secure and integrated environment nationwide.

A cornerstone of this digital journey is the IFIC Aamar App, which empowers customers to access a wide range of banking services anytime, anywhere. Offering more than 20 services through a single platform secured by biometric authentication, the app reflects the bank's commitment to convenience, accessibility, and innovation.

However, this technological evolution did not happen overnight. IFIC Bank's digital transformation is rooted in a carefully structured, phase-wise journey—designed with a strong focus on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles to support long-term sustainability.

**TDS:** What are your bank's future plans regarding the development of new deposit schemes and the enhancement of operational modes for depositors?

**MMH:** IFIC Bank PLC is advancing its commitment to customer-centric banking through specialised deposit bundles, Shariah-compliant products, and digital innovations. The bank is introducing focused solutions like the School Banking Bundle, which promotes financial literacy among youth; the Women Banking Bundle, empowering female clients with customised accounts and financing options; and the SME Banking Bundle, offering integrated deposit and credit support for small businesses under CMSME, Agri, and Sustainable Finance

programmes.

New offerings also include credit cards for diverse customer groups and the Agent's Retention Quota (ARQ) Account, enabling foreign exchange agents to retain 10% of remittances in foreign currency. IFIC Bank is expanding its Shariah-based portfolio with Hajj & Umrah DPS, Mohrana DPS, payroll accounts, and auto finance solutions.

**TDS:** What role do you believe the government should play in strengthening public trust and ensuring the safety of deposits in the banking sector?

**MMH:** Trust is the cornerstone of any banking system. In times of uncertainty, particularly as we experienced during and after August 2024, the role of the government becomes not just supportive, but foundational. During that critical period, public trust was shaken—not only in individual banks but in the financial system as a whole. What changed the narrative was decisive government action.

Bangladesh Bank's restructuring of our board on 4 September 2024 was a turning point—not only for our institution but for the entire sector. The government made it unequivocally clear that stability and depositor protection were national priorities. That signal was crucial. When customers understood that their bank was now under direct regulatory and governmental oversight, it calmed nerves and halted panic.



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এনআরবিসি  
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**NRBC BANK**

## The rise of youth-focused deposit accounts

FROM PAGE J9

### Barriers that still make banking feel distant

Despite the product launches, there remain practical challenges that prevent widespread adoption. One of the biggest issues is the lack of awareness.

Many students, especially outside major cities, are unaware that such accounts even exist. Banks occasionally organise promotional booths at university campuses, but these are often one-off efforts rather than part of a sustained engagement strategy.

Another challenge is the friction during onboarding. Students are often asked to produce utility bills, tax documentation, or multiple forms of identification—requirements that feel contradictory for "student accounts." This mismatch discourages students from going through the process, even if they are interested.

Mashrur Arefin of City Bank explains that simplifying this step is a key priority. "We want a schoolteacher in Barisal to open an account in minutes, without stepping into a branch. That's not just vision—it's already in motion."

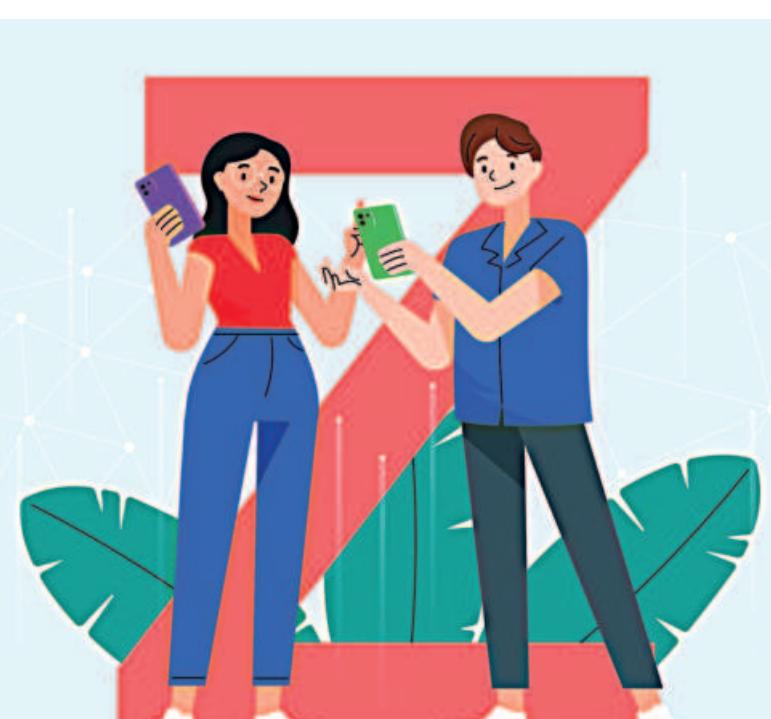
There is also the issue of integration. Even students with active bank accounts often find they can't use them for tuition payments, campus fines, or library charges, because the institutions aren't digitally synced with the banks. This makes the account feel redundant, even when it works.

### The role of technology

Digital banking platforms have made student accounts more accessible than ever. Online forms, e-KYC, and mobile apps have eliminated much of the paperwork, and banks are using digital channels to not only onboard but also educate.

NCC Bank's digital platform "NCC Always" is one such example, offering 24/7 services that allow students to manage money on the go. From fund transfers to mobile top-ups, this system caters to young people who are already accustomed to mobile-first interactions in other aspects of their lives.

But digital adoption must come with reliability. Students need assurance that the app will work



**Many students, especially outside major cities, are unaware that such accounts even exist. Banks occasionally organise promotional booths at university campuses, but these are often one-off efforts rather than part of a sustained engagement strategy.**

when they need it. Inconsistent mobile banking experiences or system downtime can breed mistrust faster than any interest rate can offset.

### Trust is the real currency

At the core of any student or youth deposit scheme is the question of trust. Do young people believe their money is safe? Will their accounts remain fee-free? Will the app remember their password? These are not small questions—they're deal-breakers.

City Bank's Mashrur Arefin puts it plainly: "We are witnessing a flight to quality. Depositors are moving toward banks they perceive as stable, well-governed, and forward-looking. The race is no longer about the highest rate—it's about the highest trust premium."

This is especially important for

youth, who are often sceptical of institutions. For many, their first banking experience will shape their lifelong relationship with money. If it's clunky, unhelpful, or dismissive—they won't come back.

**A small account with big impact**

A student deposit account may not seem like much—a card, an app, and a passbook. But it is a doorway. It's a tool that says: you belong in this system, your money matters, and you have control. That confidence, for a young person, can be transformative.

For banks, this is not just about customer acquisition. It's about building future savers, future investors, and future leaders. And for students and youth across Bangladesh, it is perhaps the most practical step they can take toward financial independence—one small deposit at a time.

# Serving a Diverse Customer Base with TAILORED SOLUTIONS

AHSAN ZAMAN CHOWDHURY, Managing Director & CEO, Trust Bank

**The Daily Star (TDS):** What is the current state and trend of bank deposits in the country?

**Ahsan Zaman Chowdhury (AZC):** As of April 2025, statistics from Bangladesh Bank show that bank deposits in Bangladesh reached BDT 18.20 lakh crore, reflecting 8.21% year-on-year growth, driven mainly by time deposits. Despite attractive deposit rates between 9% to 13%, high inflation and a lack of public confidence have limited stronger growth in some banks.

In recent times, people in our country have become more conscious about the safety and security of their deposits. Many customers now prioritise trusted banks with strong governance and stability over high interest rates. As a result, we have observed that some banks experienced a decline in total deposits, while well-governed and trusted banks have seen growth. At Trust Bank, this positive trend is reflected in ours.

**TDS:** What major deposit schemes does your bank currently offer, particularly those tailored to specific customer segments?

**AZC:** Trust Bank offers a variety of deposit schemes tailored to meet the needs of different customer segments. Students can begin their savings journey with the Trust Student Account and Trust Student DPS account, while senior citizens aged 60 and above can benefit from the Trust Seniors Account, Trust Seniors FDR, and monthly benefit scheme Trust Seniors ECHO. Women can enjoy exclusive features and attractive rates through the Trust Sristi Account, designed specifically for their financial needs. Adult customers have access to regular monthly deposit plans such as the Trust Smart Savers Scheme, Lakshpati Scheme, Trust Millionaire Scheme, and Trust Kotipati Scheme.

Customers at Trust Bank have the flexibility to choose between Conventional and Islamic modes of deposit, ensuring their financial preferences and beliefs are fully respected. Whether opting for traditional interest-based products or Shariah-compliant profit-sharing schemes, all deposit options offer attractive returns. This dual approach allows Trust Bank to serve a diverse customer base with tailored solutions that align with individual values and financial goals.

**TDS:** What innovations has your bank introduced in terms of technology, payments, and security to benefit depositors?

**AZC:** Our bank has adopted cutting-edge technologies to ensure a seamless and secure banking experience for our customers. We've launched

instant app-based services, including contactless payments, virtual cards, and real-time transactions. Notably, we've successfully implemented innovative digital onboarding solutions, such as the frictionless issuance of Sena Credit Cards, instant debit cards, and auto-generated virtual cards. Looking ahead, we are working on HCE-based payment solutions integrated into a single app. These advancements are

providers in Bangladesh. We are also in the process of offering Bancassurance products as a corporate agent to sell insurance products through our distribution channels. Recently, we signed an agreement with the National Pension Authority (NPA) to assist individuals in enrolling in various Universal Pension Schemes and facilitate the collection of monthly subscription instalments through

ongoing challenges. At the heart of this responsibility lies the need for robust regulatory oversight. It is essential that Bangladesh Bank, being the highest regulator, operates independently and efficiently, enforcing prudent regulations relating to capital adequacy, asset quality, and liquidity. Timely and transparent disclosure of banks' financial performance and risk profiles further supports accountability within the sector.

Another crucial area is the protection of depositors' interests. The government must expand and publicise the Deposit Insurance Scheme to boost depositor confidence, particularly among small savers. Periodic reviews and adjustments of the existing coverage limit are needed to reflect inflation and the evolving financial landscape. At the same time, governance and accountability across all banks should be improved through merit-based appointments of board members and executives, stricter enforcement against wilful defaulters and fraud, and greater transparency in bank ownership and related-party lending.

Tackling the high volume of non-performing loans (NPLs) is another priority. The establishment of fast-track courts for loan recovery can help reduce risk. Moreover, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) can play both timely and significant roles in addressing NPLs.

**Whether opting for traditional interest-based products or Shariah-compliant profit-sharing schemes, all deposit options offer attractive returns. This dual approach allows Trust Bank to serve a diverse customer base with tailored solutions.**

backed by a state-of-the-art switching system, with security embedded at every layer to deliver a smooth and safe banking experience.

**TDS:** What are your bank's future plans for developing new deposit schemes and enhancing operational modes for depositors?

**AZC:** Trust Bank is committed to understanding the evolving needs of our customers by actively seeking feedback from both our valued clients and branch officials.

As part of our commitment to innovation and customer-centric service, we are developing a Micro Savings Scheme in partnership with top Mobile Financial Service (MFS)

our nationwide banking network. In parallel, we are working on launching a Premium Banking service tailored for high-net-worth individuals, offering personalised financial solutions and exclusive privileges.

**TDS:** What role do you believe the government should play in strengthening public trust and ensuring the safety of deposits in the banking sector?

**AZC:** The government plays a critical role in strengthening public trust and ensuring the safety of deposits in the banking sector—particularly in a developing country like Bangladesh, where financial literacy remains limited and institutional transparency faces



## The digital era of deposits

SARAH BINTAY SHAKHAWAT

Long gone are the days when making a deposit meant queuing up at a branch, filling forms, and waiting for manual verification. Today, deposits have moved to the digital realm accessible with a few taps on mobile apps, available 24/7, and tailored to customer needs. Bangladesh's banking sector is undergoing a silent revolution where deposit innovations are redefining how people save, invest, and grow their money.

In Q1 2025, total deposits in Bangladesh stood at BDT 19.24 trillion, reflecting a 9.51% year-on-year growth. This growth is not just a result of economic resilience but also of the digital innovations in deposit products that are attracting more customers with ease of access, personalised schemes, and improved security.

### Digital Deposit Schemes

NCC Bank is among the banks leading this change. Along with traditional deposit plans like Deposit Plus, Kotipoti, and Parama Super Saver, it is investing heavily in digital delivery. "Digital

transformation is no longer optional; it's imperative," said M. Shamsul Arefin, Managing Director of NCC Bank. "We are reshaping

2023, a reflection of our customers' trust in convenient and transparent digital solutions," Mr. Arefin added.

### Digital-Only Deposits

Midland Bank PLC is taking deposit innovation a step further with fully online products. Through its 'midland online' platform, customers can open Digital FDRs or Family Support Schemes and receive an additional 0.25% profit for using online channels.

"Innovation is central to how we build trust and empower customers," said Md. Ahsan-uz-Zaman, Managing Director & CEO of Midland Bank. "From card-less cash withdrawals to automated tax certificate submissions, our depositors enjoy features that make banking seamless. We're also incentivising digital deposits with cashback and rewards."

The bank's virtual cash management platform also simplifies corporate deposit flows, reducing the need for cheques or physical branch visits.

**Micro-Savings and Nano Banking**  
A large portion of Bangladesh's population remains unbanked, and

**From digital FDRs and AI-driven savings plans to micro-deposit apps and fingerprint authentication, banks in Bangladesh are rewriting the rules of deposit banking.**

customer journeys through AI-driven data analytics, automation, and platforms like our 'NCC Always' internet banking, which provides 24/7 access to savings accounts, deposits, and fund transfers."

The bank is also introducing digital schemes for senior citizens, students, and low-income groups, ensuring greater financial inclusion. "Our deposit growth in 2024 was three times higher than

SEE PAGE J12

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# Powering Depositor Growth Through Broad, INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

**SHEIKH MOHAMMAD MAROOF**, Managing Director & CEO, Dhaka Bank

**The Daily Star (TDS):** What is the current state and trend of bank deposits in the country?

**Sheikh Mohammad Maroof (SMM):** As of May 2025, total bank deposits in Bangladesh stood at approximately Tk 18.32 trillion, marking a 7.73% year-on-year increase from Tk 17.01 trillion in May 2024. Growth has slowed from earlier highs—8.51% in March, 8.21% in April, and 8.28% in January. While inflation has remained elevated at around 9%, eroding people's capacity to save, and confidence has been shaken by past banking irregularities, recent central bank interventions have helped stabilise the situation. Although growth remains below the 10-11% levels seen in late 2023, the steady upward trend reflects gradually recovering depositor confidence. The slowdown in demand deposits, offset by modest gains in time deposits, indicates a shift towards longer-term savings instruments.

**TDS:** What major deposit schemes does your bank currently offer, particularly those tailored to specific customer segments?

**SMM:** Dhaka Bank offers a broad portfolio of deposit products customised for various groups:

- General Savings Accounts, Student Accounts, and Women's Savings Accounts (the latter with lower minimum balances and specific benefits)
- Fixed Deposit Receipts (FDRs), Monthly Benefit Plans, and Double/Triple Benefit Schemes, including Structured Deposit Schemes (SDS) offering enhanced monthly returns
- Recurring Deposit Plans such as DPS, child education and marriage schemes, and pension-style savings
- Senior Citizen Savings Plans that offer higher interest rates, often bundled with insurance coverage
- Shariah-Compliant Deposit Options under Islamic banking, including Mudaraba savings and term deposits
- NRB-Targeted Products geared toward remittance-linked savings
- Digital-First Solutions for tech-savvy customers, including mobile-based deposit accounts and app-driven savings planners

**Two illustrative schemes:**

- EduSavings Plan bundles savings with basic insurance: in case of a parent's accidental death or disability, the full maturity value is guaranteed; normal death also triggers a payout.
- Students' Ledger (for school and university levels) aims to cultivate financial literacy from an early age by promoting saving habits and financial awareness

**TDS:** What innovations has your bank introduced in terms of technology, payments, and security to benefit depositors?

**SMM:** Dhaka Bank leads with a suite of innovations:

- Digital Platforms: Go Plus, EzyBank, and the Self Banking Portal allow secure remote account opening, DPS/FDR setup, fund transfers, bill payments, mobile top-ups, and balance checks—all protected by password and OTP authentication
- Robotic Process Automation (RPA): Streamlined digital onboarding and incentive payouts without branch visits
- Payment Integrations: Bangla QR code support, NFC enabled contactless cards, and e-commerce partnerships enabling seamless online payments
- Security & Compliance: Certified under PCI DSS, ISO 27001, and TIA 942-B:2017; data centre resilience with intrusion prevention and automated failover
- Lounge Access Innovation: Dhaka Bank introduced the LoungeKey facility for the first time in the Bangladesh market in 2019, enabling our cardholders to access over 1,500 airport lounges abroad without carrying a separate Priority Pass
- Digital Lending via eRin App: Bangladesh's first fully digital, end-to-end lending platform approved by Bangladesh Bank. Users can access unsecured loans up to BDT 50,000 without any hardcopy documentation, with instant

approval—particularly valuable for underbanked segments. Dhaka Bank integrates AI/ML for inclusive credit access

**TDS:** What are your bank's future plans for developing new depository schemes and enhancing operational modes for depositors?

**SMM:** Dhaka Bank is developing several customer-centric initiatives:

- Goal-Based Digital Savings Planner: Allows users to set targets, receive reminders, and track progress in-app to encourage disciplined saving
- Green Savings Account: Allocates a share of profits to environmental causes, with annual impact reports for depositors
- Enhanced NRB Savings Schemes: Designed to integrate remittance inflows with tailored savings structures
- Biometric Agent Banking Expansion: Fingerprint-based banking kiosk authentication in rural areas to facilitate financial inclusion
- Bundled Savings with Insurance: New savings accounts combining insurance coverage, especially for low-income and women depositors
- Instant Virtual Cards: Issued via the app for secure contactless and online transactions

These efforts reflect Dhaka Bank's dedication to digital innovation, inclusivity, and customer-focused design, ensuring convenient and secure access for a diverse customer base.

**TDS:** What role do you believe

the government should play in strengthening public trust and ensuring the safety of deposits in the banking sector?

**SMM:** The government can enhance depositor confidence and banking integrity by:

- Enforcing Robust Regulatory Oversight: Ensuring transparency and accountability through central bank supervision, anti-fraud mechanisms, and strict enforcement
- Supporting Credible Deposit Insurance: Ensuring the deposit insurance scheme is well-funded and communicated effectively to assure customers
- Mandating Transparency: Requiring regular disclosures and audits by all banks, with prompt action against irregularities
- Reforming Legal & Enforcement Frameworks: Strengthening anti-corruption and financial crime legislation and ensuring independent supervision
- Promoting Financial Literacy: Investing in nationwide programmes to educate the public on banking risks, products, and safety measures
- Ensuring the Right Governance Framework in the banking industry through proper reform of the Banking Companies Act and regulatory structure

Public confidence improves when financial institutions are transparent and stable—and when the government clearly demonstrates its role as a reliable custodian of the financial system.

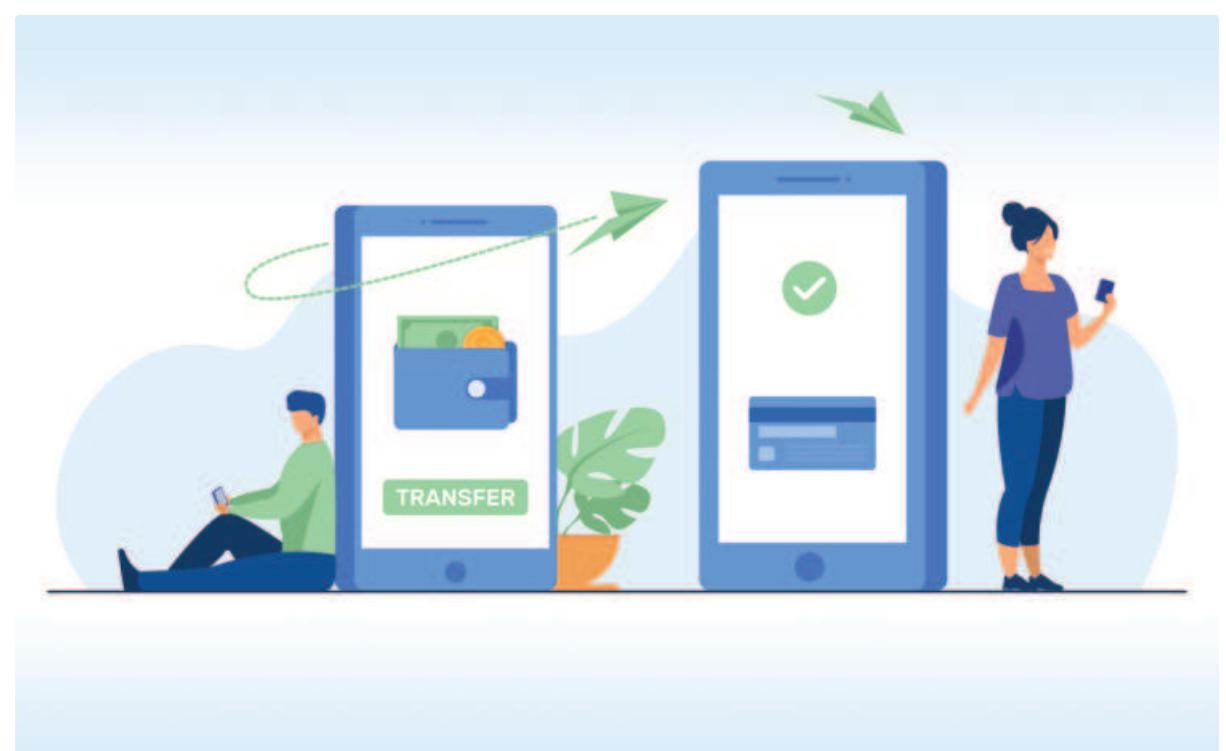


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মছন অনুযায়ী সঞ্চয় করুন।

১৬৫৯৬ [www.midlandbankbd.net](http://www.midlandbankbd.net)



## The digital era of deposits

FROM PAGE J11

NRBC Bank is aiming to change that through nano banking services and micro deposit schemes. "We plan to introduce digital deposit packages where even daily or weekly savings can be made through mobile apps," said Dr. Md. Touhidul Alam Khan, Managing Director & CEO of NRBC Bank.

The bank is also finalising its e-KYC platform, which allows customers to open savings accounts entirely online. "Expatriates, freelancers, and rural communities will benefit the most, as deposits can be made without visiting a branch," Dr. Khan added.

**Frictionless, Self-Service Deposits**

Eastern Bank Limited (EBL) is making deposits effortless with its digital self-service platform, allowing customers to open accounts, FDs, or DPS from anywhere. "We are focused on making deposit processes as simple as ordering food online; fast, secure, and paperless," said Ali Reza Iftekhar, Managing Director of EBL.

EBL's biometric metal card adds an additional layer of trust by combining aesthetics with fingerprint-based security, ensuring deposit accounts are safer

than ever.

**Redefining the Deposit Experience**

City Bank's Citytouch platform exemplifies how deposits have evolved into real-time, interactive

Zaman Chowdhury, CEO of Trust Bank.

From digital FDRs and AI-driven savings plans to micro-deposit apps and fingerprint authentication, banks in Bangladesh are rewriting

**The future belongs to banks that combine trust with technology helping customers save not just money but time, effort, and worry. With e-KYC, mobile-first onboarding, and AI-powered deposit management on the horizon, digital innovations will continue to shape a future where saving becomes as simple as a swipe or tap.**

experiences. "Citytouch is not just an internet banking app; it's a complete digital ecosystem for fund transfers, deposits, and utility transactions," said Mashrur Arefin, Managing Director & CEO of City Bank.

Similarly, Trust Bank PLC has streamlined deposit access with instant debit and virtual card issuance. "Our focus is on ensuring deposits are accessible and secure, backed by multi-layered digital security systems," said Ahsan Iftekhar, Managing Director of Trust Bank.

the rules of deposit banking. As Mr. Arefin of NCC Bank put it, "The future belongs to banks that combine trust with technology helping customers save not just money but time, effort, and worry."

The journey is far from over. With e-KYC, mobile-first onboarding, and AI-powered deposit management on the horizon, digital innovations will continue to shape a future where saving becomes as simple as a swipe or tap.

## Bringing Banking to CUSTOMERS' FINGERTIPS

**TAREQ REFAT ULLAH KHAN**, Managing Director & CEO (Current Charge), BRAC Bank

**The Daily Star (TDS):** What is the present state and trend of bank deposits in Bangladesh? What is the situation in BRAC Bank?

**Tareq Refat Ullah Khan (TRUK):** While the industry witnessed a deposit growth of 7.44% in the year 2024, BRAC Bank recorded an impressive 34% growth, setting a remarkable benchmark in the banking sector. Despite the challenging

environment faced by the banking

sector last year, BRAC Bank successfully maintained consistent growth in customer deposits—an achievement that reflects the trust and confidence of our customers.

Our market leadership is further reinforced by the highest market capitalisation, a consistently rising share price, and the best credit ratings from leading international and local rating agencies. Additionally, BRAC Bank has been recognised as one of the top sustainable banks for five consecutive years in the Sustainability Rating of Bangladesh Bank. BRAC Bank has also been featured in the Bloomberg Sustainability List, showing international recognition of its sustainable work.

**TDS:** What major deposit schemes does BRAC Bank currently offer, particularly those tailored to specific customer segments?

**TRUK:** Our products are tailored to accompany customers throughout their financial life cycle—from Future Star accounts for children, to Agami for students, and Golden Benefit for senior citizens. We also cater to specific professional groups, including government employees, mariners, freelancers, and high-net-worth individuals. For remittance earners, our Probashi segment enables customers to open accounts digitally from abroad.

For the tech-savvy generation, we offer Virtual Accounts with Virtual Debit Cards. Our insurance-backed savings products are specifically designed for women, children, and senior citizens, providing added security and peace of mind.

Under our flagship Women Banking proposition, TARA, we empower, inspire, and connect women across Bangladesh. Recently, we introduced the TARA Homemaker Savings Account, a pioneering product dedicated to women outside the formal workforce.

In our commitment to diversity and financial inclusion, we continue to expand our reach through 1,121 fully digital Agent Banking outlets across the country. We have also partnered with bKash, one of the largest MFS providers, to enable customers to open DPS accounts digitally, targeting underserved micro segments.

In Term Deposits, we offer flexible options, including Interest First, Monthly and Quarterly Interest Credit facilities, and Recurring Deposit Schemes, starting from as low as BDT 500, making them accessible to all.

For Corporate & Institutional Banking clients, we offer transactional

accounts with a number of facilities for business entities. For them, we also have the Special Notice Deposit (SND) account, which offers interest on deposited funds—making them attractive to companies looking for a safe place to save while earning a return, and enjoying flexibility in accessing their funds with short

**BRAC Bank has been recognised as one of the top sustainable banks for five consecutive years in the Sustainability Rating of Bangladesh Bank. BRAC Bank has also been featured in the Bloomberg Sustainability List, showing international recognition of its sustainable work. Looking ahead, we are set to launch the country's most advanced Trade Solution platform within the next year—an innovation we believe will positively transform Bangladesh's trade and commerce landscape.**

advance notification.

In addition to interest-bearing and low-fee current accounts for SMEs, BRAC Bank offers tailor-made collection solutions for corporates, enabling faster receivables, ERP integration, and improved supply chain transparency through virtual accounts and nationwide collection support.

**TDS:** What innovations has BRAC Bank introduced in terms of technology, payments, and security to benefit depositors?

**TRUK:** In this era of technological advancement and a fast-paced world, continuous innovation has been a key factor in the success that BRAC Bank has achieved so far. Our eKYC platform has enabled customers to easily open an account on their own. Customers can then register in our app, Astha, which has become a well-accepted lifestyle and financial assistance system for our customers. We have revolutionised the banking sector by being the only bank in the country that has enabled customers to take app-based (Shubidha) instant personal loans.

Our Corporate and Institutional Banking team is empowered by the CORPNet platform—a comprehensive, one-stop solution designed to meet the diverse needs of our corporate clients. With its user-friendly interface and robust security features, CORPNet stands among the pioneering digital platforms in the country.

Looking ahead, we are set to launch the country's most advanced Trade Solution platform within the next year—an innovation we believe will positively transform Bangladesh's trade and commerce landscape.

**TDS:** What are your bank's future plans for developing new deposit schemes and enhancing operational modes for depositors?

**TRUK:** The future of banking lies in providing customer convenience and offering tailored solutions according to individual needs and preferences. It directly contributes to changing the concept of traditional retail banking. Customers should be able to open accounts and take loans digitally 24/7—anytime, anywhere—regardless of the brick-and-mortar banking model. We believe in bringing banking to the fingertips of the customers—bank with us from anywhere.

**TDS:** What role do you believe the government should play in strengthening public trust and ensuring the safety of deposits in the banking sector?

**TRUK:** The government has played a pivotal role in ensuring macroeconomic stability and maintaining strong regulatory oversight. We have recently observed the lowest inflation rate in 27 months, primarily driven by a tightening of monetary policy. Public confidence in the banking sector is gradually being restored—thanks to initiatives such as the Deposit Insurance Scheme, continued efforts to ensure transparency, the enforcement of good governance practices, and the promotion of digital and financial literacy.

This positive momentum must be sustained. Going forward, the government should consider incentivising banks to adopt global risk management standards and encourage innovation in compliance frameworks.



## Banking on Big Dreams A look at lucrative deposit plans



MIFTAHUL JANNAT

Amid persistent inflation and tightening liquidity, long-term, high-yield deposit schemes are emerging as a win-win solution, offering financial security for savers and stability for banks. From fixed deposits to goal-based products like Millionaire Schemes, Kotipoti Plans, and Double/Triple Benefit Schemes, banks are rolling out tailored options that promise life-changing returns for disciplined savers.

As competition intensifies, banks are offering interest rates of up to 13% and launching innovative savings products for every demographic, from homemakers and garment workers to corporate clients and high-net-worth individuals. And customers are responding.

"The slowdown in demand deposits, offset by modest gains in time deposits, indicates a shift toward longer-term savings instruments," said Sheikh Mohammad Maroof, Managing Director and CEO of Dhaka Bank. Yet, depositors are more discerning than ever.

"Customers today are not just comparing interest rates," noted Ali Reza Iftekhar, Managing Director at Eastern Bank (EBL). "They are evaluating the credibility, transparency, and track record of the banks they choose."

**Millionaire schemes & beyond**  
Millionaire or Kotipoti deposit plans have become a staple offering

across many banks today. These are typically long-term, fixed-period deposit schemes requiring a consistent monthly or one-time investment that matures into a substantial lump sum, up to BDT 1 million or 1 crore.

Midland Bank's MDB Kotipoti and Millionaire Savings Scheme are examples of such high-aspiration products, offering competitive returns over terms ranging from 3 to 20 years. "We aim to make savings personal, inclusive, and convenient," said Md. Ahsan uz Zaman, Managing Director & CEO of Midland Bank. "Whether it's our MDB Double Benefit, Kotipoti, or Millionaire scheme, the objective is to help customers achieve long-term financial goals with security and discipline."

In a similar spirit, the EBL Millionaire Scheme allows customers to start saving with a monthly installment as low as BDT 1,500. The EBL Millionaire Women DPS offers even more flexibility, with an initial installment of either zero or BDT 1,00,000.

The Millionaire Scheme is currently our second most popular deposit product. One of its key advantages is the long tenure of up to 15 years, which significantly reduces the required monthly deposit," said an EBL official. Additionally, the EBL Kotipoti Scheme can be opened with an initial monthly installment starting from BDT

13,100, offering customers a choice of seven different tenures ranging from 5 to 20 years.

Bank Asia also offers a Kotipoti scheme with minimal installment from BDT 2,550. "Our Shonchoy E Kotipoti scheme offers a long-term structured path to accumulate wealth, designed for savers with aspirations to become millionaires over a 5 to 15-year horizon," said ANM Mahfuz, Managing Director (CC), Bank Asia. Moreover, their Double Benefit Plus scheme offers principal with interest doubling in 7 years.

Similar Millionaire, Lakhopoti, Kotipoti and Double/Triple Benefit schemes are also offered by other banks including Prime, Dhaka, NCC, NRBC and Trust Bank. "We offer a variety of deposit schemes tailored to meet the needs of different customer segments," mentioned Ahsan Zaman Chowdhury, Managing Director & CEO of Trust Bank. "Our adult customers have access to regular monthly deposit plans such as the Trust Smart Savers Scheme, Lakhopoti Scheme, Trust Millionaire Scheme and Trust Kotipoti Scheme."

Although terms and conditions might slightly vary depending on the financial institution, all these schemes offer compounded benefits—attractive interest rates, financial discipline, and the psychological reassurance of a long-term plan.

SEE PAGE J15

**Celebrating 30 Years of Stability and Growth**

# আতল হবে দ্বিতীয়

## সাউথ ইস্ট ব্যাংক ডাবল বেনিফিট স্কিম

যুক্তিমূল ও লাভজনক এই স্কিমে  
বিনিয়োগের মাধ্যমে নিশ্চিত করুন  
আপনার ভবিষ্যৎ

৬.৫ বছরে  
আমানত দ্বিতীয়

১০,০০০ বা এর প্রতিক যোগান  
পরিমাণ টাকা জমা করা যাবে

আমানতের বিপরীত  
খাদের সুবিধা পাওয়া যাবে

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# BANGLADESH'S DEPOSIT PULSE

Total Deposits Across All Banks (May 2025)  
BDT 18,320.652 billion



## DEPOSITS INCREASE (in billion BDT) from FY23 to FY24

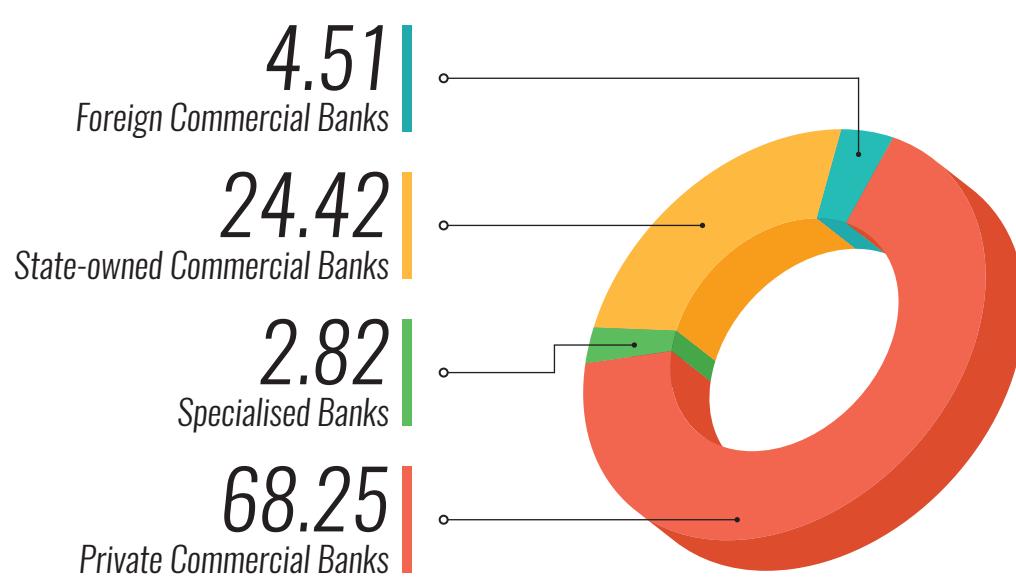
Total Deposits: 1644.37 (by 9.68 %)

Demand Deposits: 106.13 (by 5.33 %)

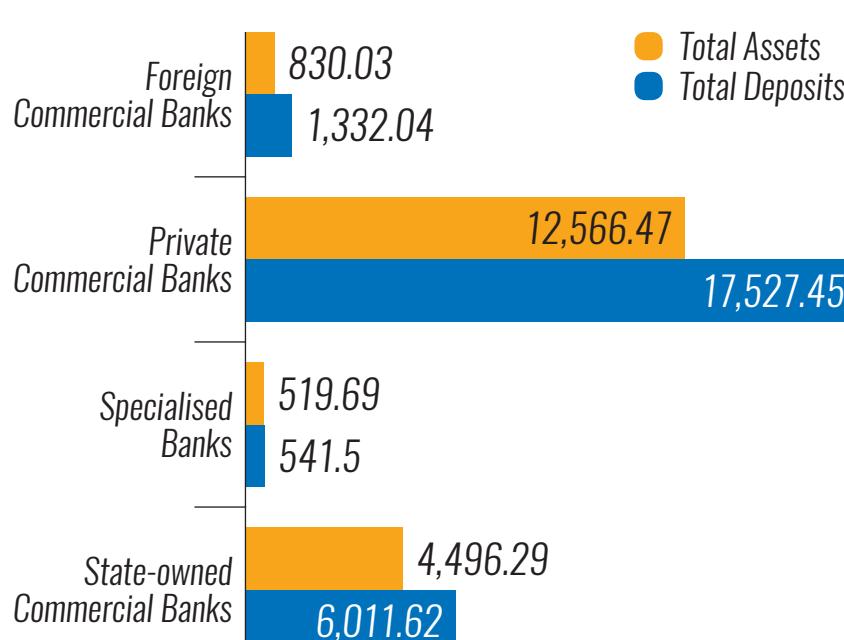
Time Deposits: 1370.27 (by 9.82 %)

Government Deposits: 167.97 (by 16.25 %)

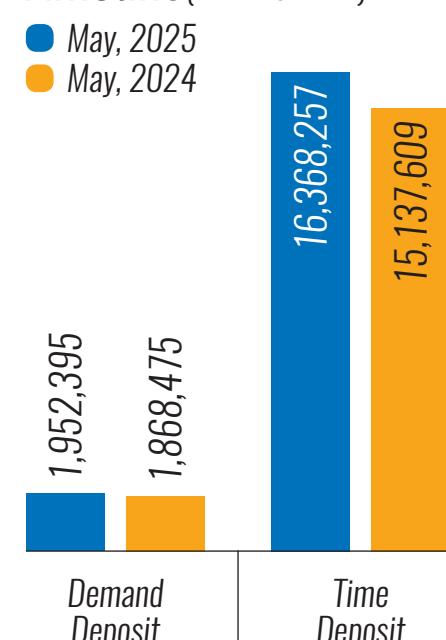
### Share in Industry Deposits of Different Banks (in %)



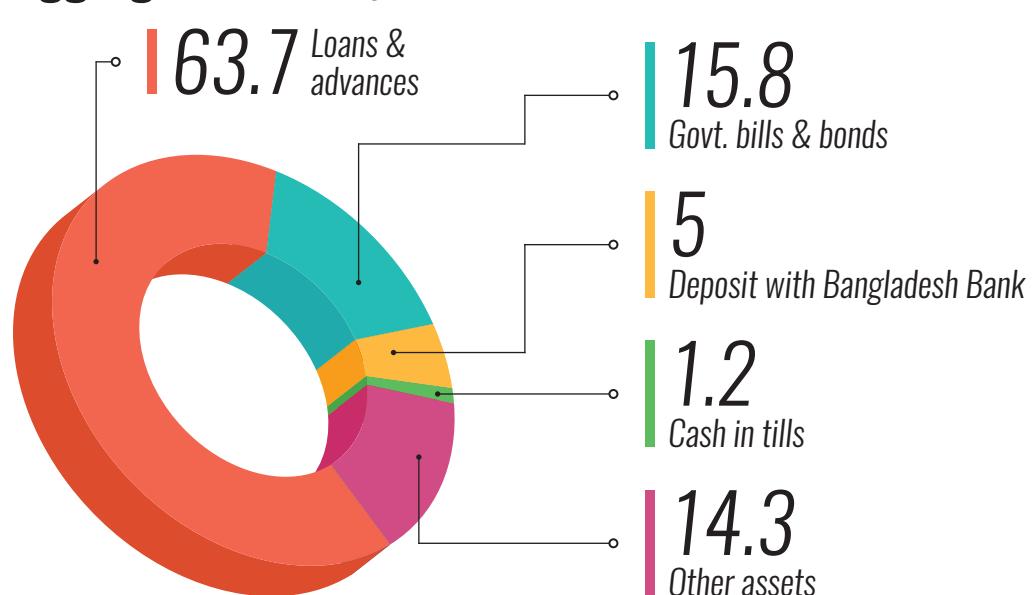
### Assets and Deposits Share by Bank Types (in billion BDT) as of June 2024



### Growth of Deposit Amount (in million BDT)

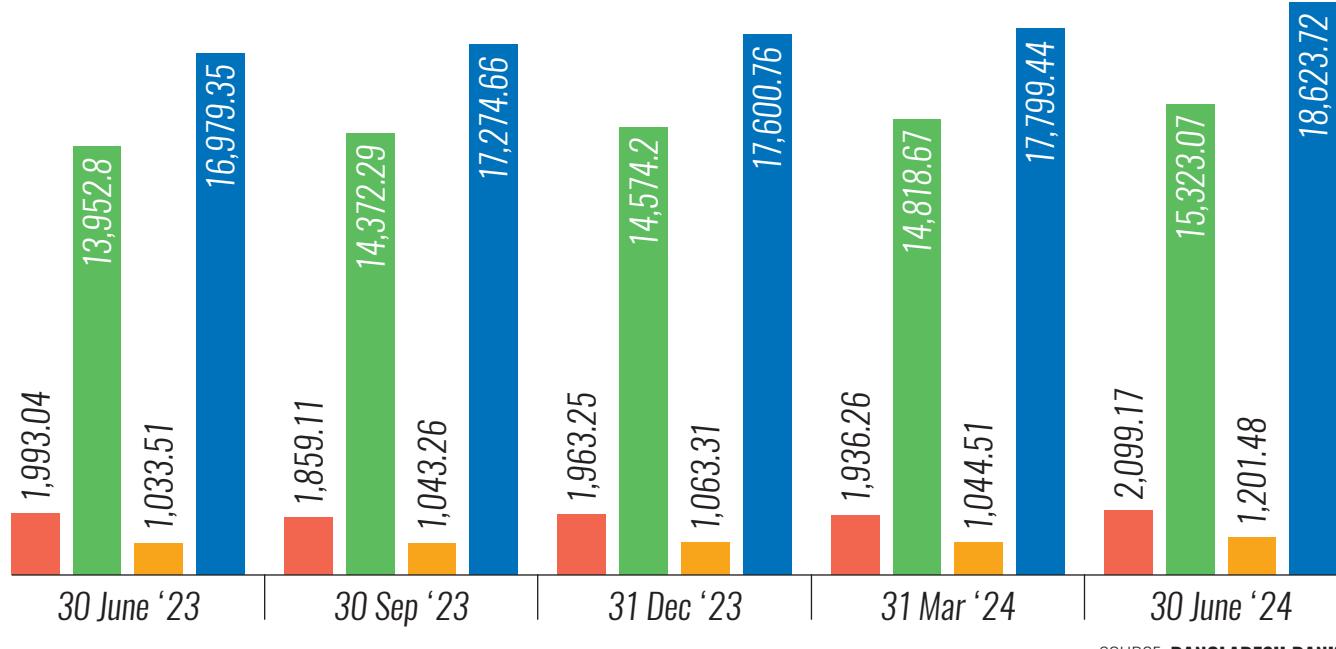


### Aggregate Industry Liabilities in % (June, 2024)



### Quarterly Positions of Bank Deposits

● Demand Deposits ● Time Deposits ● Govt. Deposits ● Total Deposits



SOURCE: BANGLADESH BANK

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Prosperity Through Shariah-BASED Transactions

Key Benefits:

- ❖ Hassle-free and convenient transactions
- ❖ Zero account maintenance fee
- ❖ Free pay orders, cheque book, SMS alert service & online fund transfers
- ❖ Free dual-currency debit card with exciting discounts on card payments
- ❖ Access to branches, sub-branches, ATMs and agent outlets nationwide



#### Mudaraba Savings Plus Deposit

Maximum Monthly Profit with Exciting Benefits

Key Benefits:

- ❖ Attractive profit on a monthly basis
- ❖ Free cheque book, SMS alert service and online fund transfers
- ❖ 25% discount on locker charges
- ❖ Free dual-currency debit card with exciting card payment discounts
- ❖ No transaction requirement to earn profit
- ❖ Access to branches, sub-branches, ATMs and agent outlets nationwide



#### Mudaraba YouthSaver Account

Save for a Prosperous Future

Key Benefits:

- ❖ Specialized savings account with attractive Shariah-based profit
- ❖ 20% discount on student file charges
- ❖ Free cheque book, zero account maintenance fee and online fund transfer
- ❖ Free dual-currency debit card with exciting card payment discounts

\* For citizens aged 18 to 25

\*Conditions apply

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## Strengthening Trust and INNOVATION IN BANKING

**ANM MAHFUZ**, Managing Director (CC), Bank Asia

**The Daily Star (TDS):** What is the current state and trend of bank deposits in the country?

**ANM Mahfuz (ANMM):** As of latest published data May 2025, Bangladesh's banking industry is experiencing moderate deposit growth, with total deposits reaching approximately BDT 18.32 trillion, reflecting a year-on-year increase of 7.73%. This growth has slowed down compared to earlier months and remains below the ideal 10-12% level, largely due to persistent high inflation (9-11%), reduced public confidence, and a weaker private sector credit demand. Time deposits dominate the deposit structure, comprising nearly 89% of the total, while demand deposits account for around 11%.

The depositors have become more perceptive—prioritizing security, transparency, and competitive returns. Despite banks offering 9-11% (or up to 13%) interest to attract deposits, deposit growth remains subdued, particularly as investors shift to government securities yielding ~12.5-13%. However, the good banks are still registering steady deposit growth. At Bank Asia, we have observed consistent growth in both local and foreign currency deposits, reflecting strong customer confidence and a robust governance framework.

**TDS:** What major deposit schemes does

your bank currently offer, particularly those tailored to specific customer segments?

**ANMM:** Bank Asia offers a comprehensive suite of deposit products tailored to diverse customer segments:

- Corporate Liability Solutions: Our latest offerings—Corporate Signature Transactional Account and Corporate Platinum Plus Account—provide interest-bearing current accounts for large corporate, government bodies, and NGOs with high transaction volumes.
- Retail & SME Deposits: Fixed deposits, savings accounts, and monthly benefit schemes designed for salaried individuals, homemakers, and small businesses.
- Islamic Banking Deposits: Mudarabah savings and term deposits, fully compliant with Shariah principles.
- Student & Youth Products: Accounts that foster savings habits among students under our School Banking initiative.
- Women, senior citizen focused Accounts: Specialized products promoting financial inclusion and empowerment for women, such as Achol and Senior Citizen Deposit Schemes.
- Scheme based & Targeted Savings: Deposit Pension Scheme (DPS): Tenures 3-12 years, designed for retirement savings; Shonchoy E Koti Poti: Long term scheme (5-15 yrs) encouraging million-making savings; Double Benefit Plus: Principal + interest doubling in 7 years, starting at Tk 50,000.

**TDS:** What innovations has your bank introduced in terms of technology, payments, and security to benefit depositors?

**ANMM:** Bank Asia leads with a digital-first approach, continuously innovating to enhance customer experience and security:

- PayEZ—Corporate Internet Banking: A secure, feature-rich platform for corporate clients offering real-time balance views, bulk transactions, and ERP integration.
- Agent Banking Network: One of the largest in the country, enabling

banking in remote areas. With competitive rates and inclusive products for minors, students, women, and senior citizens, the bank aims to boost disciplined saving habits across diverse and underserved communities.

**TDS:** What are your bank's future plans for developing new deposit schemes and enhancing operational modes for depositors?

**ANMM:** Our future strategy focuses

powered 24/7 customer support.

**TDS:** What role do you believe the government should play in strengthening public trust and ensuring the safety of deposits in the banking sector?

**ANMM:** Building public trust in banking requires consistent policies, regulatory oversight, and collaborative innovation. We believe the government can further strengthen depositor confidence by:

- Enforcing stringent risk management and corporate governance practices
- Ensure transparency and disclosure: Publish regular bank performance reports, including health indicators like capital adequacy, NPL ratios, and stress test results.
- Promote technology-driven oversight, including real-time monitoring of liquidity and solvency risks.
- Enhanced regulatory supervision would discourage irregular practices and play a vital role in building trust.
- Increase the coverage limit and awareness of the Deposit Insurance Scheme to protect small depositors. Consider a proportional premium system for deposit insurance i.e. riskier banks pay higher insurance premiums, discouraging reckless behavior.
- Promoting financial literacy to empower informed banking decisions.
- Investing in digital infrastructure to reduce cost and operational risks.

Bank Asia is committed to working closely with regulators and policymakers to build a secured, inclusive, and resilient financial ecosystem for all.

**Bank Asia has introduced financial literacy programs, partnered with NGOs, and expanded agent banking in remote areas. With competitive rates and inclusive products for minors, students, women, and senior citizens, the bank aims to boost disciplined saving habits across diverse and underserved communities.**

access to financial services in remote and underserved communities.

- Internet/Mobile Banking & QR Payments: Through the Bank Asia SMART App, clients can transfer funds, pay bills, and manage accounts with ease.
- Cybersecurity Enhancements: Deployment of multi-factor authentication, AI-driven fraud detection, and real-time risk monitoring systems.
- E-KYC & Digital Onboarding: A fully digital account opening process that ensures ease of access while maintaining strict regulatory compliance.

To promote a sustainable savings culture, Bank Asia has introduced financial literacy programs, partnered with NGOs, and expanded agent

on personalization, financial inclusion, and sustainability:

- Further segmentation: Expand youth, women, senior citizen, and Islamic portfolios, building on their success in attracting deposits.
- Digital feature enhancements: Integrate AI-enabled advisory, enhanced mobile banking User Experience, digital KYC, and real-time analytics within the Smart App.
- Agent channel expansion: Grow depositor base via more rural/urban agents.
- Foreign Currency Savings Plans: Designed for NRBs and export-oriented businesses.

Operationally, we aim to expand branchless banking, enhance digital service delivery, and introduce AI-

### A look at lucrative deposit plans



#### FROM PAGE J13

**Millionaire or Kotipoti deposit plans have become a staple offering across many banks today. These are typically long-term, fixed-period deposit schemes requiring a consistent monthly or one-time investment that matures into a substantial lump sum, up to BDT 1 million or 1 crore.**

#### Fixed Deposits make a comeback

Even as the market diversifies, the old faithful fixed deposits (FDRs) remain a stronghold, offering security, flexibility, and attractive returns. Many banks are offering interest rates of 9%-11% on traditional FDRs, with certain schemes pushing yields even higher.

According to IFIC Bank Chairman Mehmood Husain, "IFIC currently offers interest rates of up to 12% on its specialised deposit products," with Fixed Deposits (FDs) among the most sought-after. At NRBC Bank, FDRs are part of a diversified portfolio that includes pensioner and millionaire schemes. Dhaka Bank extends the appeal with Fixed Deposit Receipts (FDRs), including structured deposit schemes offering enhanced monthly returns.

Commercial Bank of Ceylon (CBC) introduced Dollar-Smart, a foreign currency term deposit offering

competitive returns, flexibility, and security aligned with global standards. The bank's CEO, Najith Meewanage also added, "Among our standout innovations is the e-FD, a fully digital Fixed Deposit Receipt available via our CBC Digital platform. This pioneering service allows customers to open fixed deposits in minutes, offering preferential interest rates and a seamless, paperless experience."

Many banks including City, EBL, Midland and Trust now offer both conventional and Islamic FDR options for those looking for Shariah-based solutions. Bank Asia also promotes FDRs for salaried individuals and homemakers. These offerings underscore how fixed deposits continue to anchor financial planning for individuals across diverse backgrounds and beliefs.

As banks continue to diversify their deposit offerings, introducing foreign currency schemes, bancassurance-linked deposits, and AI-driven financial advisory tools, the competition for deposits is likely to intensify. However, the real differentiators will lie not just in the rate of return, but in how effectively these products align with customers' evolving needs and how strongly banks demonstrate their stability, trustworthiness, and long-term performance.

**Eastern Bank PLC.**



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# Leading with Innovation, GROUNDED IN TRUST AND VALUE

**MD. AHSAN-UZ ZAMAN**, Managing Director & CEO, Midland Bank

**The Daily Star (TDS):** What is the current state and trend of bank deposits in the country?

**Md. Ahsan-uz Zaman (MAZ):** Bank deposits in Bangladesh have maintained a steady upward trend, signifying growing public confidence in the banking sector despite economic headwinds. As of April 2025, total deposits in scheduled banks reached BDT 18.20 trillion, reflecting an 8.21% increase year-on-year and a slight monthly rise of 0.11%, according to data from Bangladesh Bank.

For students, we have MDB School Saver and MDB College Saver to build savings habits early. Our MDB Probashi Savings is designed for expatriates, while MDB Sathi caters exclusively to women. We also support rural financial inclusion through MDB RMG Star Savings, focused on garments sector workers.

Demand deposits also grew by nearly 2%, suggesting a gradual shift of idle funds into formal banking channels.

However, with the bank deposits-to-GDP ratio at around 41%, there is still ample room for expansion, especially when compared to global benchmarks.

Digital transformation, customer-centric deposit schemes, and enhanced service delivery have contributed to this positive trend. We believe that trust, transparency, and technology

will continue to shape the deposit landscape.

**TDS:** What major deposit schemes does your bank currently offer, particularly those tailored to specific customer segments?

**MAZ:** We offer a wide range of both conventional and Shariah-compliant deposit products, each developed to serve different life stages, financial goals, and values.

For students, we have MDB School Saver and MDB College Saver to build savings habits early. Our MDB Probashi Savings is designed for expatriates, while MDB Sathi caters exclusively to women. We also support rural financial inclusion through MDB RMG Star Savings, focused on garments sector workers.

To help customers plan long-term, we offer attractive schemes such as MDB Double Benefit, MDB Kotipoti, Millionaire Savings Scheme, and the flexible MDB DPS, allowing monthly savings from BDT 250 up to BDT 5 lakh over a term of 3 months to 20 years. Institutions and NGOs can benefit from MDB Sthae, a reliable savings product tailored for them.

On the digital front, customers can open and manage accounts like MDB Digital Savings, Digital FDR, MDB Digital DPS, and Shariah-based options such as the Saalam Digital Hajj Savings Scheme—all from the comfort of their home via midland online. Through such segmentation, we aim to make savings personal, inclusive, and convenient.

**TDS:** What innovations has your bank

**We offer attractive schemes such as MDB**

**Double Benefit, MDB Kotipoti, Millionaire Savings Scheme, and the flexible MDB DPS, allowing monthly savings from BDT 250 up to BDT 5 lakh over a term of 3 months to 20 years. Institutions and NGOs can benefit from MDB Sthae, a reliable savings product tailored for them.**

Schemes online. They can also enjoy QR code-based merchant payments, cardless cash withdrawals, and automated tax certificate submissions.

To serve corporate clients, we've launched Midland Cash Management (MCM), a virtual banking solution offering real-time interbank transfers (BEFTN, RTGS), transaction approval workflows, and detailed account insights. This eliminates the need for cheques and physical visits, streamlining operations for businesses.

**TDS:** What are your bank's future plans for developing new deposit schemes and enhancing operational modes for depositors?

**MAZ:** Our focus at Midland Bank is to continuously evolve with customer expectations. We are actively working to introduce new deposit schemes and enhance operational efficiency to better serve our valued customers. Our future plans include developing purpose-driven savings products tailored to specific life goals.

We are also set to introduce the MDB Smart University Saver Account for university students, featuring tools for budgeting, goal-based savings, and reward-linked transactions to encourage financial discipline from a young age. As part of our Bancassurance strategy, we're developing deposit products bundled with insurance coverage, offering added financial protection for our customers.

To promote broader access, we will continue enhancing midland online, making it even more user-friendly and service-rich. Through

this platform, customers will have 24/7 access to account management, deposit encashment, digital loans, fund transfers, and payment services.

We aim to bring more unbanked and underserved communities into the fold through digital accounts, assisted onboarding, and community training programmes.

**TDS:** What role do you believe the government should play in strengthening public trust and ensuring the safety of deposits in the banking sector?

**MAZ:** Public trust is the foundation of a strong and resilient banking sector, and the government plays a central role in upholding that trust. First, there must be a strong regulatory framework ensuring sound banking practices, including updated rules on liquidity, capital adequacy, and risk governance. Regulatory bodies like Bangladesh Bank must maintain independent and proactive supervision, empowered to take swift corrective actions where needed.

Equally important is the Deposit Insurance Scheme, which should be expanded and strengthened to protect small depositors and reduce the fear of loss. Transparent reporting and disclosures by banks should be mandated to help the public assess the financial health of institutions confidently.

To support the Cashless Bangladesh vision, the government must invest in digital infrastructure, especially in rural areas, and lead nationwide financial literacy campaigns.

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