



**MD. MAHIUL ISLAM**  
Deputy Managing Director &  
Head of Retail Banking  
BRAC Bank PLC

Through our bank's deep API-based integrations with bKash and other major MFS providers, customers can transfer money instantly between bank accounts and wallets - 24/7 and top-up their wallet directly from their bank account, and vice versa.

## EMPOWERING CUSTOMERS through Digital Innovation

### BRAC Bank PLC

BRAC Bank PLC highlights how its digital solutions and the Astha app are transforming Ramadan retail. In this interview, Md. Mahiul Islam, Deputy Managing Director & Head of Retail Banking, details the bank's efforts to foster value-driven "smart spending" through strategic merchant partnerships, secure remittances, and a robust digital ecosystem that aligns with the nation's shift toward a cashless society.

**The Daily Star (TDS):** With Ramadan approaching, how has your bank observed a shift in consumer spending behavior in recent years?

**Md. Mahiul Islam (MMI):** Ramadan has evolved into a significant shopping season, shifting toward digital-first spending. Customers plan ahead, comparing offers and maximising cashback. We see a transformation toward an empowered ecosystem where customers leverage installments and integrated platforms to manage liquidity during the festive season.

**TDS:** What trends define the transition from cash to digital channels for Iftar shopping?

**MMI:** Customers increasingly rely on cards, apps, and QR for dining and groceries. This evolution is notable as customers move toward structured spending. Tracking expenses via digital tools enables transparent financial decisions, aligning with our smarter banking strategy.

**TDS:** What specific campaigns or offers has your bank structured this season? How do these promote "smart spending"?

**MMI:** We partnered with 1,400 outlets, offering 50% discounts on dining and lifestyle. Deals include BIG4 buffets at Six Seasons and BIG1-2-3 deals at premium hotels. We are also offering 0% interest instalments for up to 24 months on electronics & furniture at 35 outlets including Singer Bangladesh, Rangs eMart, Gadget & Gear etc.

**TDS:** How are you ensuring seamless



ILLUSTRATION: E. RAZA RONNY

fund flows during the high-traffic Eid rush?

**MMI:** We strengthened API integrations with MFS providers creating a seamless ecosystem. This "digital highway" ensures instant 24/7 transfers. During peak season, selected cardholders enjoy a 50% waiver on bKash wallet fees, ensuring zero disruption and maximum convenience for users.

**TDS:** Are there features facilitating Zakat payments and Eidi transfers?

**MMI:** Yes. Through Astha and MFS connectivity, customers fulfill Zakat and transfer Eidi instantly. Movement between accounts and wallets is quick, ensuring charitable and personal

transfers remain uninterrupted during the highest traffic periods across our digital network.

**TDS:** How are you supporting small merchants during the Eid rush?

**MMI:** Our Bangla QR and Merchant Gateway empower small businesses to accept payments without hardware. Real-time settlements help merchants manage working capital. With extensive Agent Banking and SME offices, we support micro-entrepreneurs in urban and rural markets.

**TDS:** Ramadan is peak remittance season. How are you facilitating real-time distribution?

**MMI:** Remittance is a lifeline.

Through 80 exchange houses and API technology, funds credit within seconds. Beneficiaries access money instantly via branches or wallets. eKYC onboarding allows expatriates to send funds securely, ensuring their families receive financial support immediately.

**TDS:** How do your savings products help customers prepare financially for Ramadan and Eid?

**MMI:** Our DPS and FDR products — Flexi Deposit Premium, TARA Flexi DPS, Deposit Premium, Abiram and Freedom Fixed Deposits and many others, plus Astha App's digital openings, encourage disciplined saving for Ramzan and Eid, reducing short-term borrowing and boosting resilience.

**TDS:** With fraud risks rising, what safeguards are in place?

**MMI:** We deploy real-time fraud monitoring via behavioral analytics. Through Astha, customers utilise features like instant card blocking and limit customisation. Awareness initiatives regarding phishing ensure a secure environment as transaction volumes spike significantly.

**TDS:** How do you envision the future of festive spending?

**MMI:** Spending will become increasingly digital and experience-driven. The future lies in ecosystem banking, where financial services are embedded within lifestyle. BRAC Bank is committed to leading this, making every transaction smarter.

## This Ramadan Get Exclusive Offers With UCB Credit Cards

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