

Exploring cashless lifestyle with bKash payment this Ramadan



TAGABUN TAHARIM TITUN

Mariam, a private jobholder, stood at the heart of a bustling shopping mall in Dhaka, while her arms were laden with vibrant Eid gifts for her friends and family. Not long ago, a day like this would have meant constant anxiety, and worrying about carrying bundles of cash or hunting an ATM amid the festive crowds. However, now-a-days she moves with ease because a quick QR code scan or NFC tap

with her smartphone is all it takes to complete each purchase. This effortless experience is made practical by bKash, a platform that has transformed the way Bangladeshis shop and celebrate during the festive season with seamless and secure cashless transactions.

Besides, consumers also eagerly wait to grab latest offers as a growing behavioral shift toward cashless shopping becomes more visible across the country. With bKash, the entire shopping experience feels more

exciting and smoother, from scanning a QR code to NFC tap with phone for instant payments. Over the years, the platform has set a cashless shopping trend, encouraging customers to explore deals and track ongoing offers so they can shop smarter and go fully cashless during the festive season.

AFFORDABLE SHOPPING DURING RAMADAN

As the moon heralds the arrival of Ramadan, bKash brings a wide range of discounts and cashback offers,

covering almost every segment of Ramadan and Eid shopping. The MFS provider has unveiled a bunch of payment campaigns throughout Ramadan, where customers can enjoy up to Tk 10,000 discount and cashback on their purchases with bKash payment. The discounts and cashbacks are available at supermarkets, branded shops, online marketplaces, restaurants, fashion houses, footwear outlets, electronics retailers, ticketing platforms, and more.

From daily groceries to elegant lifestyle brands and travel tickets, the platform becomes the primary payment choice for millions. These curated deals allow shoppers like Mariam to buy presents for loved ones while staying within a strict budget. This surge in digital spending is establishing a new social norm where cashless convenience meets financial prudence. By monitoring the bKash app for the latest offers, users are shifting toward a more digital and rewarding lifestyle during this festive period.

SEAMLESS ACCESS NATIONWIDE DAILY

The strength of bKash lies in its robust infrastructure, featuring a vast network of 350,000 agents and nearly one million merchants nationwide. Whether shopping at a high-end boutique or a local neighborhood store, the platform's 82 million customers enjoy the freedom to pay via QR code, NFC tap, payment gateway or simply dialing USSD code *247#. To ensure a seamless experience, the platform allows users to add money from 49 commercial banks and Visa, Amex, MasterCard issued in Bangladesh. Furthermore, the direct payment feature from linked Visa cards ensures that transactions never fail even if the account balance is low. This facility makes digital payments more universal and secure for everyone.

STRESS-FREE SHOPPING WITH PAY LATER

To address emergency needs during peak shopping seasons, bKash and City Bank introduced the revolutionary "Pay

Later" service for selected customers. This loan without collateral allows customers to purchase desired products immediately and pay later. With limits ranging from 500 to 50,000 taka, this facility offers unprecedented financial flexibility. Additionally, the app's statement feature helps users track their expenses meticulously. By viewing exactly where and how much they have spent, customers can maintain better control over their personal finances while enjoying the festivities. Knowing one's spending habits is the foundation of smart financial management.

SUPPORTING BUSINESS GROWTH

Digital payments do not just benefit consumers; they also streamline operations for merchants. During the Eid rush, bKash reduces long queues at billing counters by eliminating the need for manual cash counting or searching for small changes. It removes risks associated with counterfeit notes and ensures money is transferred directly to bank accounts. Small businesses, particularly those on social media platforms, can now reach wider customer base by accepting digital payments. Furthermore, a transparent digital sales record enables these entrepreneurs to demonstrate creditworthiness, paving the way for easier access to formal business loans. This ecosystem fosters a secure environment for growth and prosperity. Digital transformation remains the key to building a modern and efficient Bangladesh for all citizens.

bKash has significantly enhanced the Ramadan and Eid shopping experience by delivering secure, seamless, and widely accessible digital payment solutions. Through comprehensive offers, nationwide acceptance, and financial empowerment tools, the platform supports both customers and businesses in adopting modern transaction practices. As Bangladesh advances toward a more digitally integrated economy, bKash remains a key driver of this transformation, strengthening the foundation for a sustainable and cashless future.

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NAJITH MEEWANAGE

Chief Executive Officer
Commercial Bank of Ceylon PLC Bangladesh Operations

With digital transactions growing at double-digit rates annually, fraud monitoring systems powered by AI-driven anomaly detection and behavioral analytics have become critical components of our risk management framework.

Banking Through the Ramadan Economy

Commercial Bank of Ceylon PLC

Ramadan increasingly shapes Bangladesh's annual economic rhythm. Financial institutions are adapting to shifting consumer behaviour, rising digital adoption, and growing expectations around convenience and security. Najith Meewanage, Chief Executive Officer of Commercial Bank of Ceylon PLC Bangladesh Operations, speaks with The Daily Star about how festive spending patterns are evolving and how banks are responding with smarter financial solutions.

The Daily Star (TDS): With Ramadan approaching, how has consumer spending behaviour evolved in recent years?

Najith Meewanage (NM): Ramadan has become a structurally significant economic cycle in Bangladesh. Spending now accelerates several weeks before Eid as households plan budgets more carefully. We also see strong growth in instalment-based consumption for electronics and lifestyle products. For banks, this period brings higher transaction volumes, increased remittance inflows, stronger card usage and rapid digital adoption across customer segments.

TDS: What trends are emerging in the shift from cash to digital payments during Ramadan and Eid?

NM: The transition towards digital payments is now clearly structural. Everyday Iftar and Sehri purchases are increasingly completed through cards, mobile wallets, and QR payments. On the other hand, Eid shopping is moving rapidly to POS terminals and e-commerce platforms. Customers prefer digital channels because they are faster and traceable, also because of cashback and instalment offers.

TDS: How is the bank ensuring smooth transactions during peak Eid demand?

NM: Instant transfers between bank accounts and mobile

financial service wallets ensure seamless fund flows during high-traffic periods. Our systems are built for operational resilience, while integrated core banking allows instant processing for Zakat payments and Eid transfers.

TDS: How are merchants and remittance recipients benefiting from digital solutions?

NM: We are strengthening POS acceptance and evaluating Bangla QR solutions to help small merchants receive payments directly into bank accounts with faster settlement and reduced cash dependency. At the same time, digital remittance integration enables quick crediting of funds nationwide, which is particularly important during Ramadan.

TDS: What safeguards are in place as transaction volumes rise?

NM: As a PCI DSS-compliant bank, we deploy advanced encryption, multi-layer authentication, real-time monitoring and strengthened API security frameworks. Customers also receive instant alerts via SMS, email, and app notifications. With digital transactions growing at double-digit rates annually, fraud monitoring systems powered by AI-driven anomaly detection and behavioral analytics have become critical components of our risk management framework. Transactions are monitored 24/7 with dedicated support by Call Centre to ensure prompt anomaly response.

TDS: How do you see festive spending evolving in the future?

NM: Internet banking transactions grew 47.5% year-on-year in August 2025, rising from BDT 759.39 billion in August 2024 to BDT 1.12 trillion, while card transactions surged 228% over the past five years, according to Bangladesh Bank. Festive spending will become increasingly digital now.