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# Digital channels shape Eid spending

## Pubali Bank PLC

As Ramadan continues to reshape consumer spending and financial activity across Bangladesh, banks are witnessing a steady transformation in how customers transact, save, and manage money during the festive season. Increasing card adoption, growing reliance on digital transfers, and expanding merchant digitisation are redefining traditional banking patterns. Mohammad Ali, Managing Director and CEO of Pubali Bank PLC, speaks with The Daily Star about evolving consumer behaviour, digital payment trends, and how the bank is preparing for a more connected financial future.

**The Daily Star (TDS):** With Ramadan approaching, how has consumer spending behaviour evolved in recent years?
**Mohammad Ali (MA):** Over the past few years, we have observed a significant shift in consumer spending patterns during Ramadan. Card usage has grown consistently year on year by nearly 40 per cent, and during festive periods, the growth reaches around 60 per cent. Ramadan has become an important economic cycle affecting people across income groups, as households plan expenditures more carefully ahead of Eid. Alongside essential spending, instalment-based purchases have increased notably, allowing customers to manage larger expenses in a structured way. This reflects a broader trend where consumers are becoming more financially organised and increasingly comfortable using formal banking channels for everyday transactions.

**TDS:** What trends are emerging in the shift from cash to digital payments during Ramadan and Eid?
**MA:** The transition towards digital payments is clearly accelerating. Customers are now widely using services such as NPSB transfers, BEFTN, RTGS, QR code payments and mobile financial service integrations with bank accounts. These channels allow faster and convenient fund transfers, particularly during peak shopping periods. Digital payments are no longer limited to large purchases; they are increasingly used for daily expenses, online shopping, and person-to-person transfers during Ramadan and Eid preparations.

**TDS:** How do your card campaigns encourage smarter spending?
**MA:** Our card campaigns are designed to promote responsible and value-oriented spending. We provide seasonal discounts, cashback offers, and instalment payment facilities that allow customers to spread costs without financial strain. Rather than encouraging impulsive purchases, these initiatives help customers plan their expenditures while benefiting from rewards and savings. The growing acceptance of cards across retail outlets and online platforms also ensures greater transparency and convenience in managing finances.

**TDS:** How is the bank ensuring smooth transactions during peak Eid demand?
**MA:** Ensuring uninterrupted service during high transaction volumes is a key priority. We continuously strengthen our payment infrastructure and monitoring systems to handle increased activity during Ramadan and Eid. Enhanced network capacity, improved processing efficiency, and close coordination with national payment systems enable faster transaction settlement. Our focus is to ensure customers experience reliable, seamless banking even during the busiest periods of the year.

**TDS:** How are merchants and remittance recipients benefiting from digital solutions?
**MA:** Digital solutions are creating meaningful advantages for both merchants and customers. QR-based payments and electronic fund transfers allow merchants to receive payments instantly into their bank accounts, improving liquidity and reducing reliance on cash handling. At the same time, remittance recipients benefit from faster fund transfers through integrated banking and payment networks, ensuring families across urban and rural areas receive financial support quickly, particularly ahead of Eid.

**TDS:** What safeguards are in place as transaction volumes rise?
**MA:** As digital adoption grows, security remains central to our operations. We have implemented multi-layer authentication, secure payment gateways and continuous transaction monitoring to detect unusual activity. Customers also receive real-time notifications, enabling them to track transactions instantly. Regular awareness initiatives help educate users about fraud prevention, ensuring that convenience does not come at the expense of safety.

**TDS:** How do you see festive spending evolving in the future?
**MA:** Festive spending will increasingly move towards digital and integrated financial ecosystems. QR payments, mobile banking platforms and interoperable payment systems will make transactions faster and more accessible across the country. As financial literacy improves and digital infrastructure expands, we expect customers to rely less on cash and more on structured banking solutions. The future of festive commerce in Bangladesh will be defined by inclusivity, enabling broader participation in the formal financial system.