FUTURE OF FESTIVE SPENDING

NCC BANK PLC

"Digital-first consumer behaviour will continue beyond Eid al-Adha. Growing trust in contactless payments, wider financial inclusion through MFS and agent banking, stronger bank-fintech integration, and more personalised digital services are set to reshape Bangladesh's future festive spending.

M. SHAMSUL AREFIN
Managing Director
NCC Bank PLC.

Digital payments are transforming Eid al-Adha spending in Bangladesh, offering speed and security where cash once ruled. M. Shamsul Arefin, Managing Director of NCC Bank PLC, highlights how enhanced digital infrastructure and shifting consumer habits are accelerating the country's journey toward a cashless future.

The Daily Star(TDS): What major trends are you seeing in Eid-related digital transactions, such as card payments, mobile financial services, and online transfers?
M. Shamsul Arefin (MSA): Digital transactions are driving a surge in Bangladesh's Eid-ul-Adha economy, with MFS, cards, and QR codes becoming mainstream for shopping and transfers. While cash still dominates rural livestock markets, the rise in app-based banking and e-commerce shows that digital payments have evolved from a supplement into a core festival behavior. The most visible trend is the growing use of digital platforms for everyday Eid payments, from family transfers and Qurbani payments, to peer-to-peer transfers.

TDS: How are banks preparing to support the seasonal rise in cash withdrawals, digital payments, and customer demand during Eid?
MSA: To handle the seasonal rush, banks are ramping up preparations: ensuring cash availability at ATMs and branches, extending hours at select locations, bolstering digital infrastructure and customer support, and stepping up cybersecurity monitoring to prevent fraud and unauthorized transactions during Eid.

TDS: How significant is Eid-related spending for the banking sector, especially in terms of deposits, transactions, remittances, and payment activity?
MSA: For banks, Eid al-Adha is one of the year's busiest periods. Transaction volumes surge across branches, ATMs, online banking, and mobile services. Remittance inflows from expatriates rise, along with temporary spikes in deposits and digital payments. This seasonal activity boosts operational throughput and fee-based income.

TDS: How are SMEs and informal businesses benefiting from Eid-driven demand, and what financing support can banks provide to them?
MSA: SMEs and informal businesses, such as clothing retailers, cattle traders, food vendors, transport operators, and online sellers, are major beneficiaries of Eid-driven demand. Banks support them with the required short-term working capital, fast loan disbursement, simplified paperwork, and digital payment tools like POS, QR codes, and MFS integration.

TDS: What trends are you observing in e-commerce and online buying during Eid, and how are banks enabling that ecosystem?
MSA: The e-commerce sector continues to grow rapidly during Eid, with rising online purchases of fashion, electronics, gifts, and household items. Social commerce platforms—especially those based online—are also drawing more consumers. Banks support this growth with payment gateways, cashback offers, card discounts, and secure online transaction services.

Bridging convenience and security this Eid

MUTUAL TRUST BANK PLC

"Digital payments are becoming a permanent behavioural norm, with habits formed during Eid such as app-based transfers and QR payments. Platforms like MTB Neo already show that festive spending is becoming more planned and digitally influenced. Combined with wider QR adoption, these trends are cementing a robust, digital-first economy in Bangladesh.

SYED MAHBUBUR RAHMAN
Managing Director & CEO
Mutual Trust Bank PLC

As Bangladesh prepares for Eid-ul-Adha, rising remittances and economic stability are driving a shift toward digital payments. Syed Mahbubur Rahman, MD & CEO of Mutual Trust Bank PLC, explores how the bank's targeted card promotions and digital tools are helping customers navigate high inflation while embracing a cashless festive economy.

TDS: What major trends are you seeing in Eid-related digital transactions, such as card payments, mobile financial services, and online transfers?
SMR: Eid digital transactions are surging, driven by a shift toward contactless cards, QR payments, and EMI options. Mutual Trust Bank (MTB) supports this momentum through its MTB Neo app and reward card propositions, including cashback and "Buy One Get One" deals. By expanding SoftPOS and Bangla QR, MTB is facilitating seamless 24/7 banking and leading Bangladesh's transition toward a digitally inclusive economy.

TDS: How are banks preparing to support the seasonal rise in cash withdrawals, digital payments, and customer demand during Eid?
SMR: To handle the Eid surge, banks are ensuring 24/7 service availability as per Bangladesh Bank directives. Mutual Trust Bank (MTB) is prioritising ATM and CRM uptime while incentivising cashless transactions through the MTB Neo app. By maintaining operational QR payments and real-time transfers, MTB provides customers with a secure, seamless alternative to physical cash throughout the holiday.

TDS: What role can banks play in making Eid travel, shopping, and Qurbani-related payments safer and more convenient for customers?
SMR: MTB and other banks are securing the festive economy by integrating digital infrastructure with lifestyle benefits. By deploying Bangla QR, contactless payments, and ATMs, MTB reduces cash risks at Qurbani Haats while providing value through EMI programs, cashback, and reward points. As e-commerce for cattle and travel grows, banks ensure a seamless, 24/7 digital experience, fostering consumer confidence and financial efficiency during high-volume periods.

TDS: What trends are you observing in e-commerce and online buying during Eid, and how are banks enabling that ecosystem?
SMR: E-commerce in Bangladesh is seeing rapid growth, with Eid driving peak demand for lifestyle goods, electronics, and travel. Online cattle marketplaces have also become a mainstay for Eid al-Adha. MTB facilitates this ecosystem by providing secure payment infrastructure and partnering with leading merchants and digital cattle farms to offer exclusive cashback, EMI facilities, and premium services. These initiatives are accelerating digital adoption while making festive shopping more secure and accessible.

Festive economy transforming from cash to QR

BANK ASIA PLC

"The future banking landscape will likely become more customer-centric, real-time and digitally interconnected. Eid-related spending patterns are increasingly becoming part of a broader digital economy transformation in Bangladesh, where convenience, security, and accessibility are driving customer behaviour.

ANM MAHFUZ
AMD & CBO
Bank Asia PLC.

As digital adoption grows, Bank Asia is revolutionising Eid spending through innovative Digital Booths at cattle haats and secure payment infrastructure. ANM Mahfuz, AMD & CBO of Bank Asia PLC, shares how the bank is enhancing security and convenience while driving Bangladesh's digital-first transformation.

The Daily Star (TDS): How do you expect overall consumer spending in Bangladesh to behave during this Eid-ul-Adha season compared with last year?
ANM Mahfuz (ANMM): Consumer spending during this Eid-ul-Adha is expected to remain strong and increasingly digital compared with last year. Despite inflationary pressure, Eid remains one of the largest consumption periods in Bangladesh, particularly for cattle trading, travel, fashion, groceries and remittance-supported family spending.

We are observing increased transaction activity through cards, mobile banking, internet banking, Bangla QR and account-to-account transfers. Customers are increasingly preferring secure and convenient digital channels for both small and large-value transactions.

TDS: What major trends are you seeing in Eid-related digital transactions, such as card payments, mobile financial services, and online transfers?
ANMM: Several important trends are becoming increasingly visible during Eid periods. These include significant growth in QR-based payments, especially Bangla QR transactions in retail outlets and cattle markets. One important development is the growing acceptance of digital payments in cattle markets. For the last five years, we have been operating Digital Booths in cattle haats where 24/7 banking support is provided through cash counters, ATM services, POS machines and Purchase QR (Bangla QR).

TDS: What role can banks play in making Eid travel, shopping and Qurbani-related payments safer and more convenient for customers?
ANMM: Banks can drive digital adoption by expanding QR and POS infrastructure, improving ATM and agent banking coverage, and offering secure payment gateways for e-commerce. Enhancing cybersecurity and transaction monitoring, alongside customer awareness campaigns, ensures a safer and more convenient festive experience.

For Qurbani-related activities, digital payment solutions can significantly reduce the security risks associated with carrying large amounts of cash in cattle markets. Our Digital Booth initiative in cattle haats is one practical example of how banks can support safer and more convenient Eid transactions for buyers, sellers and farmers.

TDS: What trends are you observing in e-commerce and online buying during Eid, and how are banks enabling that ecosystem?
ANMM: E-commerce activity continues to grow rapidly during Eid seasons. Customers are increasingly purchasing fashion items, groceries, electronics, gifts, travel tickets and even Qurbani-related services online.
Key trends include increased mobile-based shopping, higher demand for instant digital payment options, growth in social commerce, SME-led online businesses and increased card and account-based online transactions.