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SHIFTING shelves



Building a career in modern retail

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For many young jobseekers, a supermarket cashier or sales assistant position offers a first step into employment. With experience, training and strong performance, it can also lead to supervisory, managerial or specialist roles.

Cashiers process payments and answer customer queries, while sales assistants replenish shelves, arrange displays and help shoppers. Entry requirements and pay vary by employer. A September advertisement for a point-of-sale executive at Bandhon Departmental Shop offered Tk 12,000–15,000 monthly, requiring HSC in commerce and at least one year's experience. Such figures illustrate individual vacancies, rather than an industry-wide pay scale.

Employees may progress to senior cashier, team leader or floor supervisor, coordinating staff, monitoring stock and resolving complaints. However, experience alone may not meet every employer's requirements. A September Meena Bazar advertisement offered Tk 20,000–30,000 for an officer/supervisor, seeking a bachelor's or master's degree and two to five years of relevant experience.

"Someone who starts as a cashier or sales assistant can develop the skills needed for supervisory roles. We look for people who understand customers, manage responsibilities efficiently and demonstrate leadership potential," said Shafik Alam, an area manager at a supermarket chain.

Further steps may include assistant outlet manager and outlet manager, responsible for staffing, sales, inventory and customer experience. Area or regional managers oversee several stores. Progression depends on vacancies, performance and company policy; it is not guaranteed by years of service.

Retail careers also extend into merchandising, procurement, supply chain management, e-commerce, marketing and human resources. Moving into these functions may require additional qualifications or specialist training.

For employees seeking advancement, useful skills include accurate cash handling, stock control, spreadsheet use and familiarity with point-of-sale systems. Handling complaints and coordinating colleagues also provide preparation for supervisory work.

Before accepting an offer, applicants should clarify shift lengths, weekly days off, overtime arrangements, benefits and training opportunities. Asking how promotions are assessed can help distinguish a clear career pathway from a general promise of growth.

SUPERSHOP CAREER PATHWAY

Higher-level role
Outlet Manager / In-Charge
Tk 22,000–50,000
Leads an outlet, staff, stock and sales

Possible mid-career route
Floor / Outlet Supervisor
Tk 18,000–30,000
Sales-floor operations and staff coordination

Possible mid-career route
Chief Cashier
Tk 16,000–22,000
Cash handling and cashier-team oversight

Entry role
Cashier / Salesman
Tk 8,000–14,000
Customer service, checkout and shelf support

Source: Meena Bazar, Universal Mart, Daily Shopping (PRAN Group) and Apon Family Mart, 2025–2026; Dohaj, Bdjobs and Meena Bazar HR LinkedIn posts (2025–2026).

Notes

- The ranges combine the lowest and highest advertised amounts across separate postings for each role. They are not averages, a standard salary scale or confirmed take-home pay.
- Chief Cashier and Floor / Outlet Supervisor are parallel routes, not compulsory successive promotions.
- Job titles and reporting lines vary by employer. Progression depends on vacancies, experience and company policy.
- The chart uses vacancies from 2025–2026, despite the broader 2020–2026 search window.
- Salary ranges reflect selected advertised vacancies, not industry averages.

Customer-first convenience at superstores

Just two decades ago, there was little noticeable difference between village traditional markets (hat-bazaars) and urban retail shops for household groceries. A culture of bargaining while sweltering in the heat or wading through mud and rainwater was deeply established. Against this backdrop, chain superstores have played a remarkably positive role in creating a comfortable, modern alternative for citizens.

The convenience of buying a variety of quality products under one roof, in a hygienic environment, with well-planned displays and fixed prices, has brought fantastic ease to city dwellers. Urban consumers are also happily embracing the added convenience of card payments. This transformation in shopping habits has added a brand-new dimension to urban culture.

Turning specifically to Shwapno, it holds a leading position within the country's superstore community. By practising globally recognised agricultural standards, committing to food safety, and upholding a zero-compromise policy on health protection and environmental standards, the organisation has earned widespread public trust in a short time. Furthermore, establishing 1,000 stores nationwide has given it a distinct status, making it the undisputed market leader in terms of individual achievement. Taking everything into account, it is clear that Shwapno is the largest superstore chain in the country.

In 2012, Shwapno began developing its proprietary direct sourcing model. Through this initiative, the company sought to work closer to farmers, including smallholder and marginal farmers, reducing unnecessary intermediaries between producers and consumers. The goal was never merely to purchase products at lower prices, but rather to create a value chain where farmers gain better market access and consumers receive fresher produce at competitive prices.



It goes without saying that superstores have brought citizen convenience to urban culture.

Internationally recognised Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) were integrated into Shwapno's sourcing ecosystem. Shwapno takes pride in standing out from other superstore chains, as more than 1,500 farmers have been trained under GLOBALG.A.P. protocols. Among them, 100 farmers across 15 crops have achieved GLOBALG.A.P. certification. The organisation's emphasis on safe sourcing extends to commodities like poultry and beef, where food safety is of paramount importance.

Given factors like novelty, modernity, and urban culture, establishing superstores in the country was initially a significant challenge. Shwapno was a key pioneer in accepting this challenge, gradually evolving into the nation's largest chain store. Looking ahead, it remains part of Shwapno's strategic vision to demonstrate how much further it can expand its professionalism, reach, and scope of customer service as a market leader.

Furthermore, amid inflation and the sudden disappearance of essential food items (such as oil and sugar) from open markets, Shwapno, guided by its social responsibility, takes immediate proactive steps to protect consumer interests. In this regard, Shwapno stands distinct and unique.

It goes without saying that superstores have brought citizen convenience to urban culture. Earning customer trust and satisfaction is crucial for any business venture. Just how far Shwapno succeeds on this journey will become even clearer in the days to come.

Opening a supershop through a franchise



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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Opening a supershop does not always mean building a retail brand from scratch. In Bangladesh, entrepreneurs can partner with established chains through franchise arrangements, investing in an outlet while drawing on the company's brand, supply network and operating experience. However, who runs the shop, pays its bills and bears its risks depends on the agreement.

Shwapno introduced its expansion-focused franchise model in 2017–2018. Meena Bazar announced franchising in April 2022, signing its first partner for an outlet in Shanir Akhra. Agora followed with its first franchise outlet in Tangail in August 2024. These arrangements have opened a route for investors to participate in organised grocery retail.

WHO RUNS THE SHOP?

A franchise partner does not necessarily manage the checkout counter, recruit employees or purchase stock. Some arrangements divide responsibilities between the investor and the retail chain.

Shwapno Managing Director Sabbir Hasan Nasir explained that franchise partners financed lease advances, civil works, interiors and equipment. Shwapno controlled operations and inventory, bearing staffing and supply-chain costs. Partners covered rent, utilities and maintenance.

The model described divided gross profit between Shwapno and the investor in a 60:40 ratio. That distinction matters: receiving 40 percent of gross profit does not mean keeping 40 percent of sales. The partner still has expenses to meet from that allocation. These published terms describe Shwapno's arrangement at the time; applicants should obtain its current offer in writing.

WHAT SHOULD AN INVESTOR CALCULATE?

The first question is the total investment required. A useful proposal should separately identify any franchise fee or deposit, advance rent, renovation, shelving, refrigeration, equipment and working capital. It should also explain who finances stock and pays for damaged, expired or missing goods.

Location deserves equally close attention. Nearby households, pedestrian traffic, competing stores, delivery access and rent all need consideration. A busy address can still be difficult to sustain if occupancy costs absorb too much of the outlet's earnings.

Ask the chain for a financial projection showing expected sales, gross margin, monthly expenses and the point at which the outlet covers its costs. Test what happens if sales fall below expectations. Any estimated return should be assessed alongside the assumptions behind it.

READ THE AGREEMENT CAREFULLY

Before committing money, clarify the contract period, renewal conditions, responsibility for losses and the process for leaving the partnership. Establish who owns the equipment and what happens to deposits and unsold stock when an outlet closes.

An established name can provide a starting point. Whether the outlet becomes a viable business will depend on its location, costs, sales and the responsibilities each partner agrees to carry.