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An Overview of Credit Cards Usage Pattern Within and Outside Bangladesh



**Big Data Analytics and Data Science Unit
Statistics Department
Bangladesh Bank**

An Overview of Credit Cards Usage Pattern Within and Outside Bangladesh



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Table of contents

	Page no.
Executive summary.....	1
1. Introduction.....	2
2. Issued cards and transaction statistics.....	3
3. Domestic credit cards usage.....	4-5
4. Outward credit cards usage.....	5-6
5. Inward credit cards usage.....	7-8
6. Overall credit cards transaction trend.....	9
7. Implications	9
8. Conclusion.....	10

List of charts

Chart-1:	Credit cards spending pattern for different sectors (Domestic)	4
Chart-2:	Percentage of spending pattern for different sectors (Domestic)	4
Chart-3:	Percentage of transaction type	5
Chart-4:	Diversity of usage of credit cards in different sectors (Outside the country)	5
Chart-5:	Percentage of usage of credit cards in different sectors (Outside the country)	5
Chart-6:	Country-wise transaction (Outside the country)	6
Chart-7:	Percentage of country-wise transactions (Outside the country)	6
Chart-8:	Category-wise credit cards transactions (within the country by foreign nationals)	7
Chart-9:	Percentage of category-wise credit cards transactions (within the country by foreign nationals)	7
Chart-10:	Country-wise transaction (within the country by foreign nationals)	8
Chart-11:	Percentage of country-wise transaction (within the country by foreign nationals)	8
Chart-12:	Movements of credit cards transactions over time	9

Annexure (Tables)

List of tables

Table-1:	Issued cards and transaction statistics.....	3
Table-2:	Category-wise breakdowns of credit cards transactions (Domestic)	11
Table-3:	Card type breakdowns of credit cards transactions (Domestic)	11
Table-4:	Category-wise breakdowns of credit cards transactions (Outside the country)	11
Table-5:	Card type breakdowns of credit cards transactions (Outside the country)	12
Table-6:	Country-wise breakdowns of credit cards transactions (Outside the country)	12
Table-7:	Category-wise breakdowns of credit cards transactions (within the country by foreign nationals)	12
Table-8:	Card type breakdowns of credit cards transactions (within the country by foreign nationals)	13
Table-9:	Country-wise breakdown of credit cards transactions (within the country by foreign nationals)	13
Table-10:	Movements of credit cards transactions over time	13

An Overview of Credit Cards Usage Pattern within and Outside Bangladesh (March, 2025)

Big data Analytics and data Science Unit, Statistics Department

Executive Summary

The analysis of credit card usage patterns reveals distinct trends in both domestic and international transactions.

The significant growth (137%) found both in issuance of debit, credit and prepaid cards and the total transaction volume (170%) through these three types of cards over the last five-year period.

Domestically, credit card usage showed overall upward trend during March, 2024 to March, 2025 and showed a significant increase in March, 2025 compared to February, 2025.

Within the country spending patterns of credit cards across different sectors in March, 2025 showed that nearly half (44%) of domestic credit card transactions occurred at department stores.

Cross-border transactions showed minor fluctuations over time, while spending by foreign nationals within Bangladesh saw a sharp decline between June and October, 2024 before rebounding to normal levels by November, 2024 and further it increased steadily in December, 2024 to February, 2025 but it saw a slight decrease in March, 2025.

Bangladeshi credit cardholders conducted approximately 1.41 times transactions abroad compared to foreign nationals using credit cards within Bangladesh in March, 2025.

The VISA cards emerged as the most popular choice for domestic (72%), outward (76%), and inward (65%) transactions.

Notably, Bangladeshi nationals primarily used (16%) their credit cards in the USA, while USA cardholders accounted for the highest spending (39%) among foreign nationals within Bangladesh.

Overall, domestic credit card usage saw significant increase whereas credit card usage by Bangladeshi nationals in abroad and card usage by foreign nationals in Bangladesh saw slight decrease in March, 2025 compared to that of the previous month. This data highlights the evolving dynamics of credit card usage, reflecting both domestic economic trends and the influence of international spending patterns in Bangladesh.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, credit cards are one of the most popular means of transaction worldwide. Most countries use credit cards as plastic money. A considerable segment of Bangladesh's population enjoys the facilities and advantages offered by credit cards, though many people express reluctance to use the card despite having qualifications due to fear and lack of knowledge about it.

In this context, Bangladesh Bank launched an initiative to introduce plastic money (various types of cards) with the goal of establishing a cashless banking system powered by information technology on a global scale in 2012. Furthermore, to provide a legal foundation for the payment and settlement system and to protect the consumers' interest, the enactment of the payment and settlement system Act, 2024 has come into effect on 4 July, 2024. To support this effort, the Payment Systems Department has developed essential guidelines, including a legal framework. As a result, the number of card users, as well as the volume and variety of card-based transactions, has been steadily rising across the country.

This analytical review holds substantial value for key stakeholders of cards, including banks and non-banking financing companies (NBFCs), for the following strategic purposes:

- **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** By leveraging monthly insights into domestic and international card transaction volumes, financial institutions can formulate informed, evidence-based business strategies.
- **Market Trend Analysis:** The findings enable stakeholders to discern critical market trends and identify growth opportunities within Bangladesh's rapidly evolving card industry.
- **Competitive Benchmarking:** Institutions can evaluate competitive dynamics within the sector, allowing them to refine market positioning and operational strategies.
- **Marketing Strategy Evaluation:** The review provides insights into prevailing marketing tactics for different card categories, aiding stakeholders in optimizing promotional campaigns and customer engagement efforts.

Beyond financial institutions, the analysis serves as a vital resource for policymakers crafting regulatory frameworks, researchers investigating financial behavior patterns, and industry observers tracking economic shifts. By consolidating transactional and behavioral data, this review supports informed decision-making, fosters innovation in financial services, and contributes to the sustainable growth of Bangladesh's digital economy.

This review encompasses several key areas: the growth in the number of issued cards and transaction volumes from 2020 to 2025; a detailed analysis of spending patterns, sector and country-wise usage of credit cards within Bangladesh in March 2025, covering domestic, outward, and inward transactions; and an overview of overall transaction trends in credit card usage over the past year. Additionally, the review discusses the broader implications of increased card usage on financial inclusion, digital economic development, transaction security, and consumer awareness. It concludes by summarizing the progress of Bangladesh's transition toward a cashless society and the positive prospects for sustained growth in card usage.

2. Issued cards and transaction statistics

According to a five-year statistical review conducted by the E-Banking and E-Commerce Statistics Unit of the Statistics Department, the number of debit, credit, and prepaid cards issued up to March, 2020 stood at 1,93,00,127, 15,66,074 and 4,95,791 respectively. By February, 2025, these numbers had increased to 4,03,46,611, 26,53,977 and 75,62,366 respectively, reflecting a total growth of 137% across all three card types. Additionally, the transaction volume through these cards rose from Tk 1,64,178 million in March, 2020 to Tk 4,43,721 million by February, 2025, marking a 170% growth over five years (Table-01). This surge highlights the significant demand for card-based transactions among both consumers and merchants.

Table-01 depicts the overall trend of number of issued cards and transaction amount during March, 2020 and February, 2025.

Table-1: Issued Cards and Transaction Statistics

Period	Number of Issued Cards (Net)				Card Transactions Amount (in million Taka)			
	Debit	Credit	Prepaid	Total	Debit	Credit	Prepaid	Total
	a	b	c	d = a+b+c	e	f	g	h = e+f+g
Mar, 2020	19300127	1566074	495791	21361992	151367	11350	1461	164178
Feb, 2025	40346611	2653977	7562366	50562954	408127	31171	4423	443721
Growth (%)	109	69	1425	137	170	175	203	170

Source: e-Banking and e-Commerce Statistics Unit, Statistics Department.

In response to this growing demand, it has been decided to collect, compile and analyze data related to various card transactions, including inward and outward transfers, withdrawals as well as other activities and present this information in comprehensive reports. In this context, the Big Data Analytics and Data Science (BDADS) Unit of this department has been regularly publishing reports on credit card usage patterns, both within and outside Bangladesh since 2023 which are available on the Bangladesh Bank website. These reports provide valuable insights into the evolving trends and behaviors associated with card usage. Among the 61 scheduled banks and 35 non-banking financial corporations (NBFCs) operating in Bangladesh, 46 scheduled banks and 01 (one) NBFC provide credit card services.

Consequently, BDADS Unit of Statistics Department is presently collecting extensive data on credit card transactions from 46 scheduled banks and 01 (one) NBFC. This initiative is aimed at establishing a comprehensive and robust database that captures the substantial volume of transactions, which are classified as Big Data due to their diverse nature, high velocity and variability.

Analysis of credit card transaction data for March, 2025 reveals a 26.53% increase in domestic transactions within Bangladesh, increasing to Taka 37,557 million from Taka 29,683 million in February, 2025 (Annex-table-02). This substantial increase in domestic credit card transactions occurred due to EID festival. On the other hand, international transactions conducted outside the country amounted to Taka 3,612 million in March, 2025 (Annex-table-04), reflecting a slight decrease of 5.89% compared to Taka 3,838 million in February, 2025. Similarly, transactions involving credit cards issued by foreign entities but utilized within Bangladesh experienced a slight decrease, decreasing by 4.40% to Taka 2,562 million in March, 2025 from Taka 2,680 million in February, 2025 (Annex-table-07).

3. Domestic credit cards usage

In March 2025, credit card transactions at department stores increased to Taka 16,562 million from Taka 14,354 million in February, 2025. Similarly, transactions in clothing stores, retail outlet services, paying utility bills, cash withdrawal, drug and pharmacies, government services, transportation, fund transfer, business services, and professional services also increased compared to that of the previous month (Chart-01). The analysis indicates an upward trend in consumer spending across various transaction categories from February, 2025 to March, 2025.

Chart-01 highlights the spending patterns across different sectors in March, 2025, showing that nearly half of domestic credit card transactions occurred at department stores (Chart-02). The reasons behind this may be inflation driving essential purchase, promotional bank offers, the convenience of department stores for daily needs and possibly better acceptance of cards in these establishments. Credit cards were also used in other sectors, including Clothing Stores, Retail Outlet Services, Paying Utility Bills, Cash Withdrawal, and Drug & Pharmacies during this period.

Chart-02 provides a comparative overview of proportional expenditures by sector based on total credit card transactions in March, 2025.

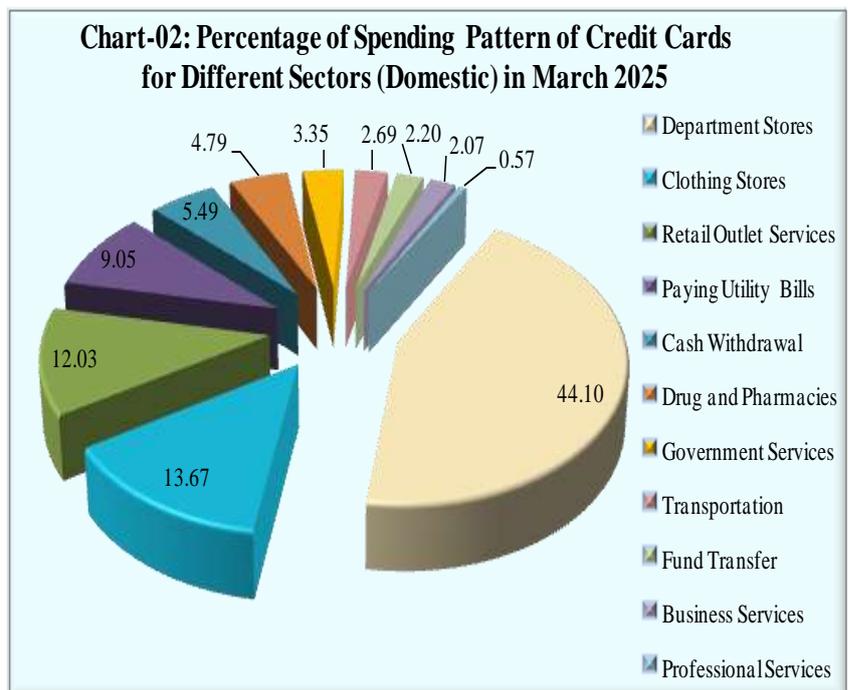
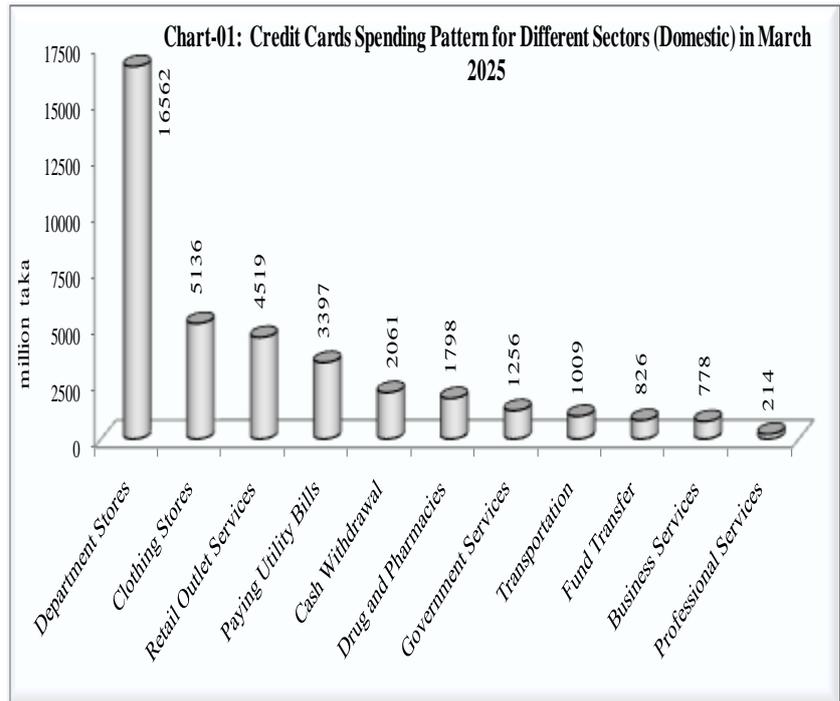
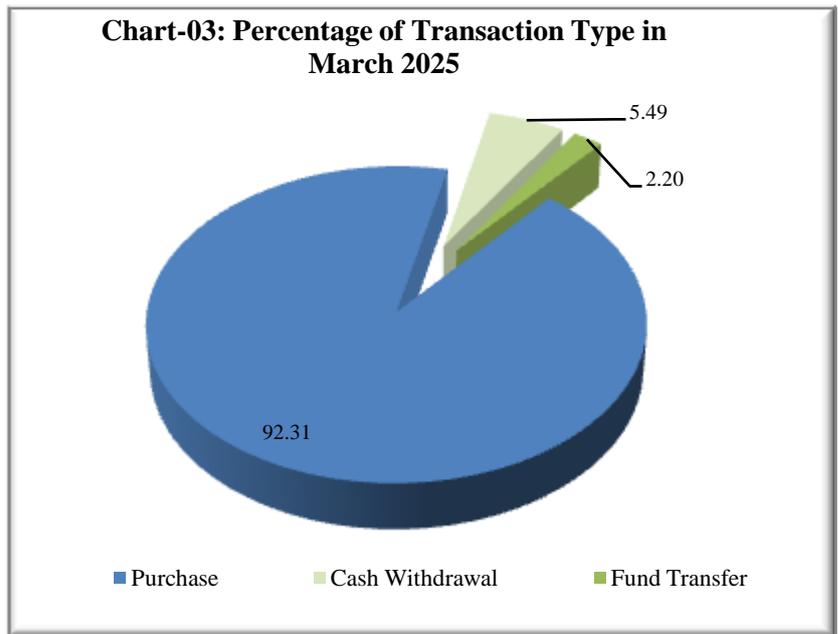


Chart-03 shows that, in domestic credit card usage, around 92% were used for purchase, 6% for Cash Withdrawal and 2% for Fund Transfer.



4. Outward credit cards usage

Credit cardholders involved in cross-border transactions primarily used their cards at department stores abroad, making up 27.25% of transactions. Other significant categories were retail outlet services (16.89%), transportation (10.92%), business services (10.39%), drug and pharmacies (10.07%), professional services (6.54%), and various other sectors (17.94%) (Annex-table-04).

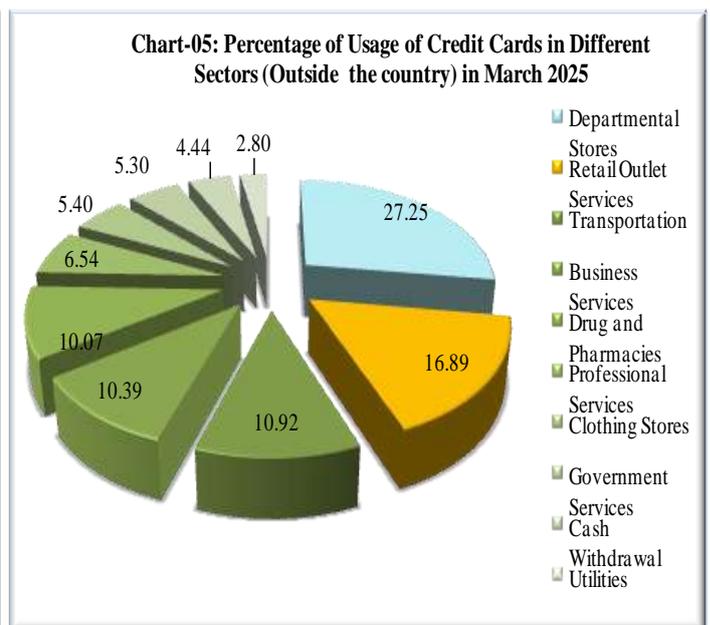
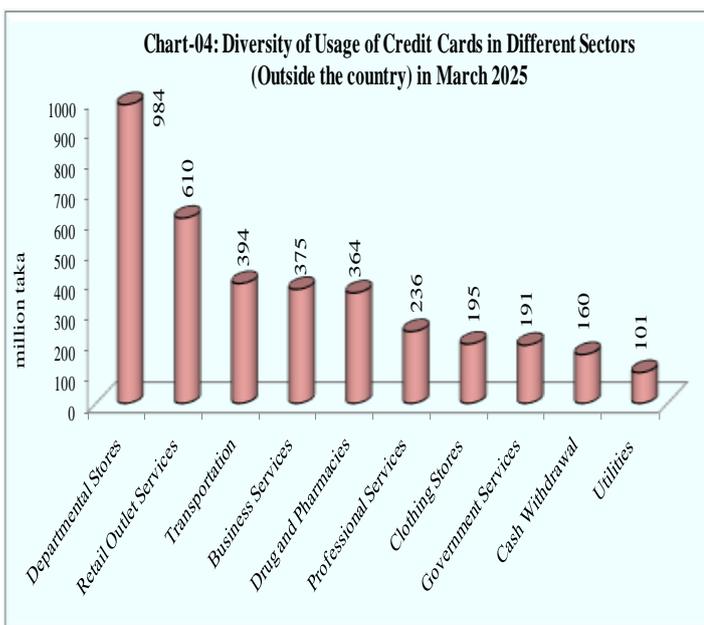


Chart-04 and Chart-05 demonstrate the varied use of credit cards across different sectors outside the country in March, 2025.

A country-wise breakdown of cross-border transactions reveals that the majority of credit card transactions took place in the USA, accounting for 15.89%. The remaining transactions were spread across other countries: UK (9.98%), Saudi Arabia (9.75%), Singapore (8.61%), India (7.63%), Thailand (6.14%), Malaysia (5.47%), Netherlands (5.26%), Canada (4.52%), Ireland (4.17%), UAE (3.66%), Australia (3.61%), and other countries (15.31%) (Chart-07).

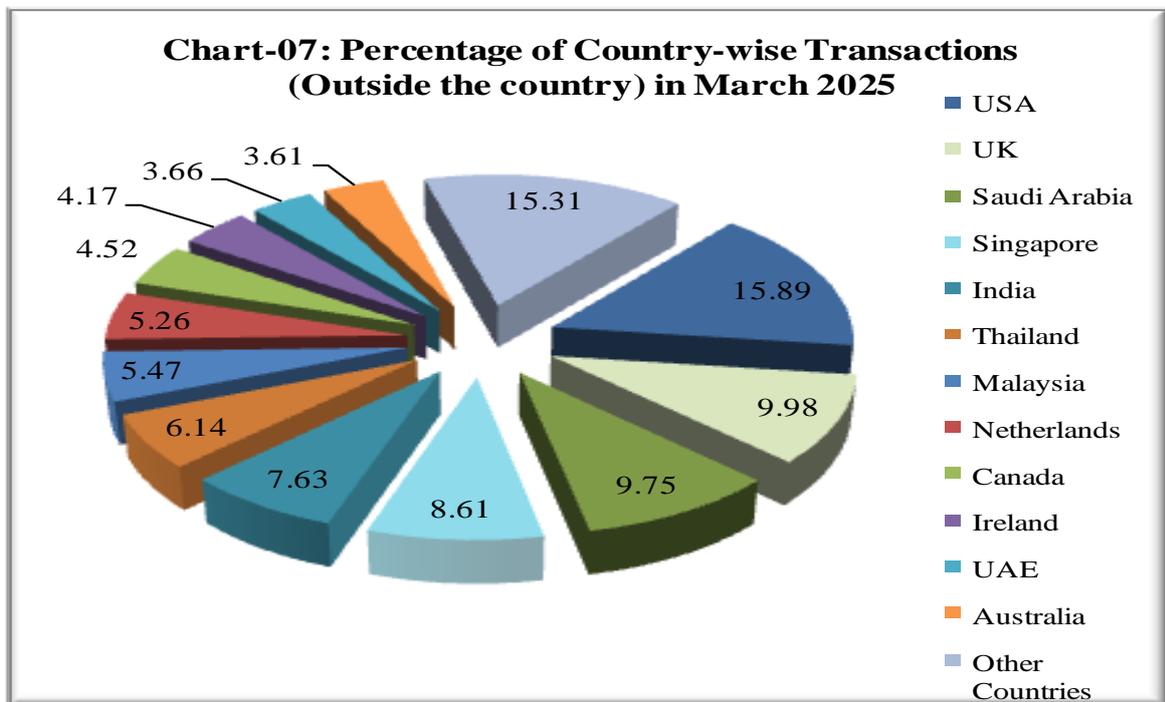
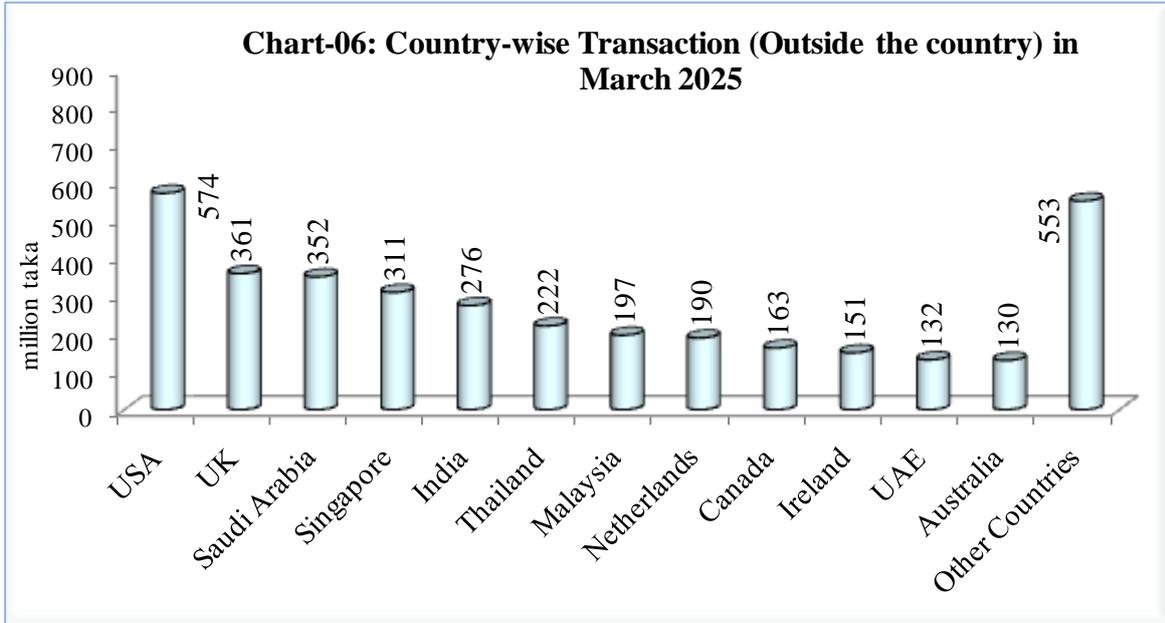


Chart-06 illustrates the diversity of credit card usage across different countries in March, 2025, while Chart-07 displays the percentage distribution of country-wise cross-border transactions for the same period.

5. Inward credit cards usage

In March, 2025, inward credit card usage saw a slight decrease compared to that of the previous month. Credit cards issued by foreign countries but used within Bangladesh were primarily utilized at department stores, accounting for 43.09% of all transactions during this period. Cash withdrawals made up 27.33%, while transportation-related transactions constituted 12.52%. The remaining sectors collectively contributed 17.05% to the total transaction volume (Chart-09).

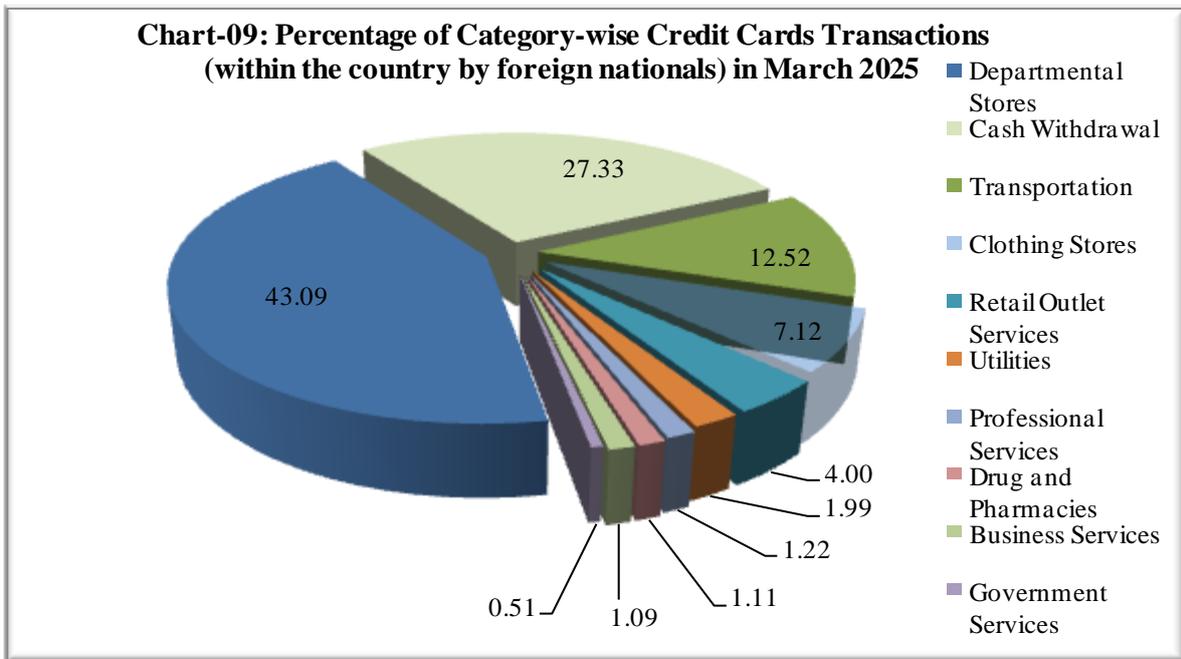
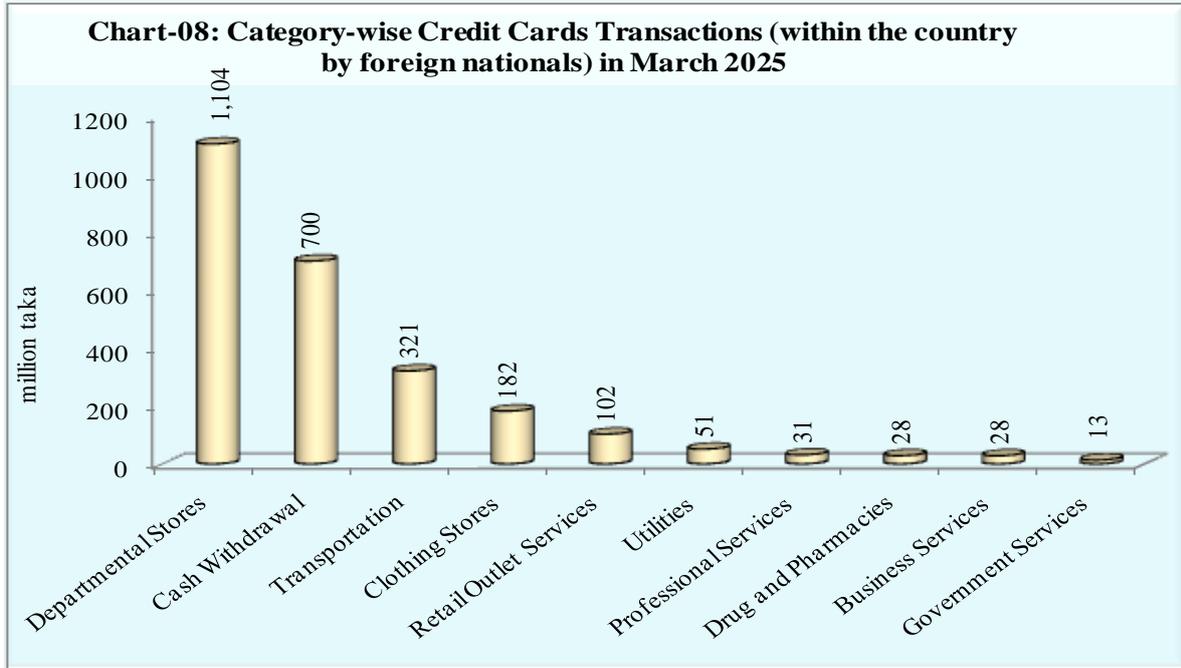


Chart-08 and Chart-09 showcase the diverse usage of credit cards (within Bangladesh by foreign nationals) across various sectors in March, 2025.

During March, 2025, the majority of transactions by foreign nationals were carried out by individuals holding credit cards issued by the USA, representing 39.18% of the total. Other significant contributions came from UK (8.59%), Mozambique (6.26%), India (5.86%), Canada (2.92%), Australia (2.80%), Singapore (2.48%), UAE (2.47%), Japan (2.15%), China (2.14%), Saudi Arabia (1.96%), Italy (1.94%), Korea (1.80%), and various other countries (19.44%) (Chart-11).

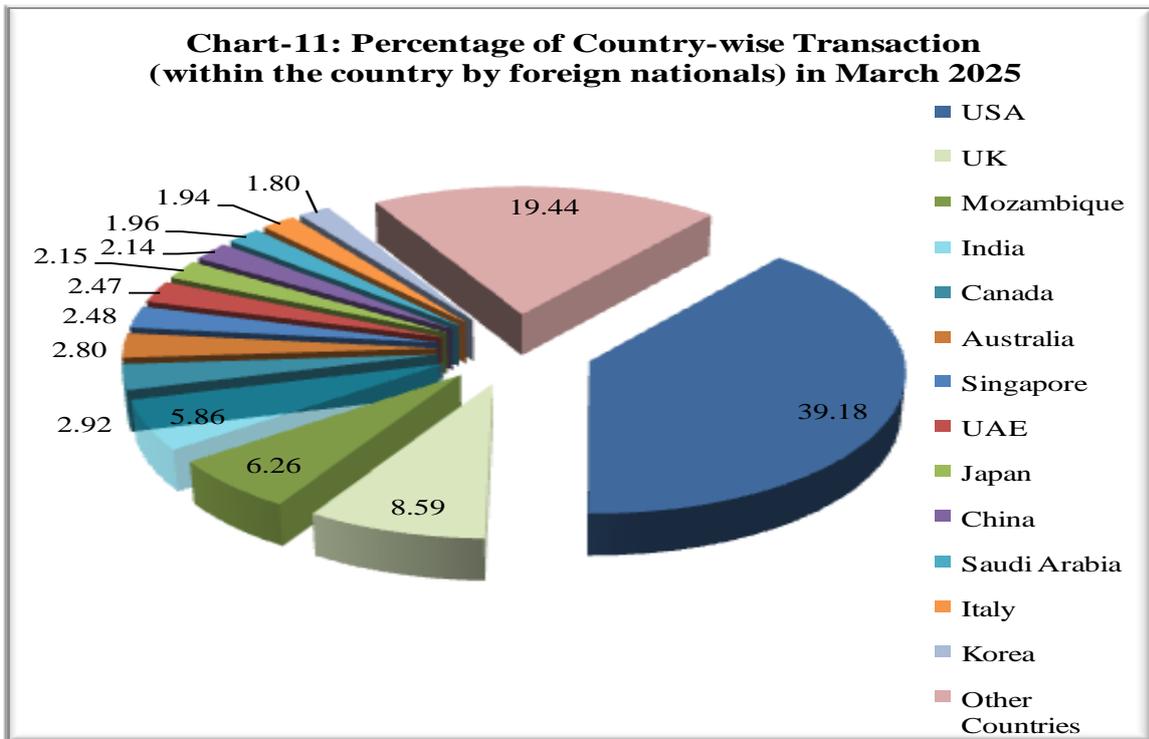
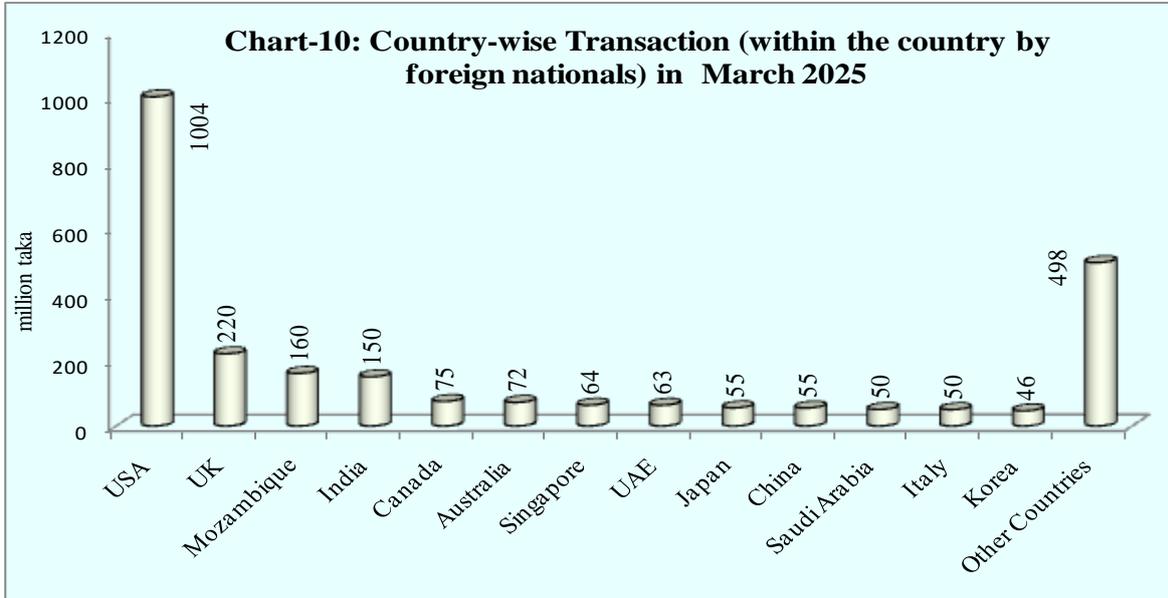
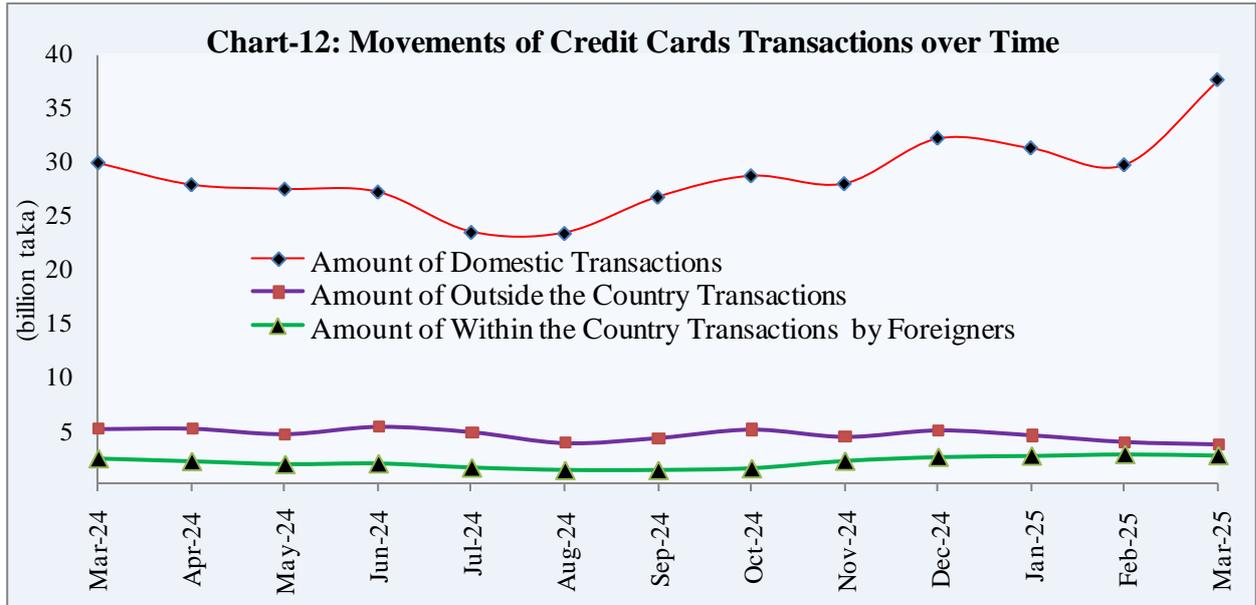


Chart-10 and Chart-11 provide a visual representation of credit card usage by foreign nationals within Bangladesh in March, 2025, categorized by their respective countries of origin.

6. Overall credit cards transaction trend

Chart-12 illustrates that domestic credit card transaction showed overall upward trend during March, 2024 to March, 2025 and peaked in March, 2025. Cross-border transactions experienced overall downward trend during this period. Meanwhile, credit card spending by foreign nationals within Bangladesh saw a sharp decline between June 2024 and October 2024, but it rebounded to normal levels by November 2024 and further it is steadily increasing till February 2025 but it saw a slight decrease in March, 2025.



7. Implications

- **Increased Financial Inclusion:** The growth in card usage in Bangladesh suggests that more people are gaining access to formal financial services, which is a positive step towards financial inclusion.
- **Digital Economic Growth:** The rise in cashless transactions supports the growth of a digital economy, reducing reliance on physical cash and enhancing the efficiency of financial transactions.
- **Security and Fraud Prevention:** As the volume of card transactions is increasing day by day in Bangladesh, it will be crucial to continue enhancing security measures to prevent fraud and ensure the safety of digital transactions to protect the customers.
- **Consumer Education and Training:** With the increasing adoption of plastic money, there is a need for ongoing consumer education and training to ensure that users are aware of the benefits and risks associated with card usage.

8. Conclusion

Cash transactions have been dominating Bangladesh's consumer payment ecosystem for many years but its prevalence has shown a consistent decline in recent years. To accelerate the adoption of electronic payment methods, the government and Bangladesh Bank have implemented a series of targeted policy measures and regulatory reforms. This strategic focus on digitization has yielded significant results, with card-based transactions experiencing exponential growth as businesses and consumers increasingly shift toward digital financial instruments.

Based on the March, 2025 data, it is evident that Bangladeshi credit cardholders conducted approximately 1.41 times transactions outside the country compared to foreign nationals using credit cards within Bangladesh in this month. VISA credit cards were the most popular choice for both domestic and international transactions. Notably, Bangladeshi nationals predominantly used their credit cards in the USA, while among foreign nationals; USA cardholders spent the most within Bangladesh. The issuance of debit, credit and prepaid cards grew by 137% and the total transaction volume through these three types of cards increased by 170% over the last five-year period. Overall, the initiative by Bangladesh Bank has been successful in promoting a cashless banking system, and the continued growth in card usage indicates a positive trend towards a more digitally inclusive financial ecosystem in Bangladesh. Nonetheless, it is expected that the credit cards usage will experience sustained growth further day by day if the development of Bangladesh continues coupled with rising living standard of the people and an increase in international transactions.

Annexure (Tables)

**Table-02: Category-wise Breakdowns of Credit Cards Transactions (Domestic)
in February 2025 and March 2025**

(Amount in million taka)

Merchant Categories	Feb-25			Mar-25		
	No. of Transactions	Amount	Percentage	No. of Transactions	Amount	Percentage
Department Stores	1817148	14354	48.36	1883111	16562	44.10
Clothing Stores	358550	1887	6.36	1034486	5136	13.67
Retail Outlet Services	929543	3720	12.53	1119778	4519	12.03
Paying Utility Bills	235912	2488	8.38	254697	3397	9.05
Cash Withdrawal	214116	1990	6.71	193648	2061	5.49
Drug and Pharmacies	329420	1663	5.60	327034	1798	4.79
Government Services	32666	1015	3.42	34815	1256	3.35
Transportation	79014	907	3.06	82312	1009	2.69
Fund Transfer	29217	815	2.75	28596	826	2.20
Business Services	96968	664	2.24	90889	778	2.07
Professional Services	17651	179	0.60	22721	214	0.57
Grand Total	4140205	29683	100.00	5072087	37557	100.00

**Table-03: Card Type Breakdowns of Credit Cards Transactions (Domestic)
in February 2025 and March 2025**

(Amount in million taka)

Card Type	Feb-25			Mar-25		
	No. of Transactions	Amount	Percentage	No. of Transactions	Amount	Percentage
VISA	2956329	21533	72.54	3553706	26980	71.84
Mastercard	772882	5267	17.74	966806	6574	17.50
AMEX	390362	2807	9.46	528146	3906	10.40
Diners	16259	36	0.12	18783	46	0.12
Unionpay	783	4	0.01	3533	36	0.10
JCB	289	8	0.03	314	9	0.02
QcashProprietar	3301	29	0.10	799	5	0.01
Grand Total	4140205	29683	100.00	5072087	37557	100.00

**Table-04: Category-wise Breakdowns of Credit Cards Transactions (Outside the country)
in February 2025 and March 2025**

(Amount in million taka)

Merchant Categories	Feb-25			Mar-25		
	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage
Departmental Stores	187196	1113	29.00	185636	984	27.25
Retail Outlet Services	116417	664	17.31	115684	610	16.89
Transportation	47302	361	9.40	47660	394	10.92
Business Services	72096	313	8.15	87038	375	10.39
Drug and Pharmacies	23624	473	12.32	20624	364	10.07
Professional Services	15034	201	5.25	19172	236	6.54
Clothing	22199	269	7.02	17898	195	5.40
Government Services	39774	160	4.17	39538	191	5.30
Cash Withdrawal	7131	168	4.39	6808	160	4.44
Utilities	38773	115	3.00	42282	101	2.80
Grand Total	569546	3838	100.00	582340	3612	100.00

**Table-05: Card Type Breakdowns of Credit Cards Transactions (Outside the country)
in February 2025 and March 2025**

(Amount in million taka)

Card Type	Feb-25			Mar-25		
	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage
VISA	431564	2905	75.70	437694	2732	75.65
Mastercard	85134	576	15.00	85966	527	14.59
AMEX	52770	356	9.29	58564	352	9.75
Unionpay	56	.49	0.01	69	.57	0.02
Diners	22	0.14	0.00	47	0.16	0.00
JCB	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grand Total	569546	3838	100.00	582340	3612	100.00

**Table-06: Country-wise Breakdowns of Credit Cards Transactions (Outside the country)
in February 2025 and March 2025**

(Amount in million taka)

Countries	Feb-25			Mar-25		
	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage
USA	120667	523	13.62	138824	574	15.89
UK	38660	300	7.81	45584	361	9.98
Saudi Arabia	39925	241	6.27	44982	352	9.75
Singapore	47766	395	10.30	48726	311	8.61
India	26904	294	7.65	27855	276	7.63
Thailand	37881	468	12.19	17342	222	6.14
Malaysia	52962	304	7.92	38388	197	5.47
Netherlands	25924	156	4.06	30914	190	5.26
Canada	27636	146	3.79	31045	163	4.52
Ireland	29386	128	3.33	36843	151	4.17
UAE	13179	200	5.21	10837	132	3.66
Australia	19493	125	3.27	23040	130	3.61
Other Countries	89163	560	14.58	87960	553	15.31
Grand Total	569546	3838	100.00	582340	3612	100.00

**Table-07: Category-wise Breakdowns of Credit Cards Transactions (within the country by
foreign nationals) in February 2025 and March 2025**

(Amount in million taka)

Merchant Categories	Feb-25			Mar-25		
	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage
Departmental Stores	116354	1108	41.35	99388	1104	43.09
Cash Withdrawal	38881	659	24.58	40868	700	27.33
Transportation	14433	433	16.16	11618	321	12.52
Clothing	23398	202	7.54	20957	182	7.12
Retail Outlet Services	31478	107	3.98	26087	102	4.00
Utilities	30239	43	1.61	30314	51	1.99
Professional Services	1958	18	0.68	4109	31	1.22
Drug and Pharmacies	6460	47	1.76	4082	28	1.11
Business Services	4447	49	1.84	2847	28	1.09
Government Services	1933	13	0.50	1744	13	0.51
Grand Total	269581	2680	100.00	242014	2562	100.00

Table-08: Card Type Breakdowns of Credit Cards Transactions (within the country by foreign nationals) in February 2025 and March 2025

(Amount in million taka)

Card Type	Feb-25			Mar-25		
	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage
VISA	178530	1663	62.03	161700	1653	64.52
Mastercard	89759	1000	37.30	78950	890	34.73
Unionpay	636	7	0.26	704	8	0.32
AMEX	381	7	0.25	321	7	0.27
Diners	240	4	0.14	284	3	0.12
JCB	35	1	0.03	55	1	0.03
Grand Total	269581	2680	100.00	242014	2562	100.00

Table-09: Country-wise Breakdown of Credit Cards Transactions (within the country by foreign nationals) in March 2025

(Amount in million taka)

Countries	No of Transaction	Transaction Amount	Percentage
USA	70948	1004	39.18
UK	19111	220	8.59
Mozambique	6493	160	6.26
India	22640	150	5.86
Canada	9729	75	2.92
Australia	9777	72	2.80
Singapore	4629	64	2.48
UAE	7740	63	2.47
Japan	5019	55	2.15
China	4741	55	2.14
Saudi Arabia	14914	50	1.96
Italy	4128	50	1.94
Korea	2710	46	1.80
Other Countries	59435	498	19.44
Grand Total	242014	2562	100.00

Table-10: Movements of Credit Cards Transactions over Time (March, 2024 to March, 2025)

(Amount in million taka)

Month	Amount of Domestic Transactions	Amount of Outside the Country Transactions	Amount of Within the Country Transactions by
Mar-24	29875	5035	2266
Apr-24	27835	5069	1990
May-24	27425	4565	1698
Jun-24	27159	5246	1768
Jul-24	23427	4750	1361
Aug-24	23322	3728	1115
Sep-24	26685	4208	1114
Oct-24	28663	4989	1291
Nov-24	27933	4312	2026
Dec-24	32153	4915	2409
Jan-25	31252	4456	2526
Feb-25	29683	3838	2680
Mar-25	37557	3612	2562