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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**



## **Chief Advisor**

Dr. Md. Habibur Rahman  
Deputy Governor

## **Advisor**

Tarun Kanti Ghosh  
Executive Director (Statistics)

## **Chief Editor**

Md. Zahedul Islam  
Director (Statistics)

## **Editor**

Dr. Saiful Arefeen  
Additional Director (Statistics)

## **Members**

Hossain Md. Alhelal  
Joint Director

Md. Tamimul Islam  
Assistant Director

Sanchita Basak  
Assistant Director

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

Any suggestions/comments for improvement in the contents of this booklet would be highly appreciated. Users may kindly contact with the following mailing address for their suggestions/comments and queries (if any):

Md. Zahedul Islam, Director (Statistics) (zahedul.islam@bb.org.bd)

Dr. Saiful Arefeen, Additional Director (saiful.arefeen@bb.org.bd)

Hossain Md. Alhelal, Joint Director (hossain.alhelal@bb.org.bd)

Md. Tamimul Islam, Assistant Director (tamimul.islam@bb.org.bd)

Sanchita Basak, Assistant Director (sanchita.basak@bb.org.bd)

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## **Executive Summary**

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

The significant growth found both in issuance of debit, credit and prepaid cards (142%) and the total transaction volume through these three types of cards (166%) over the last five-year period.

Domestically, credit card usage peaked in March 2024 but experienced a steady decline until August 2024, followed by a recovery starting in September 2024.

Within the country spending patterns of credit cards across different sectors in January 2025, showing that nearly half (49%) 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 September 2024 before rebounding to normal levels by November 2024 and further it increased in December 2024 and January 2025.

Bangladeshi credit cardholders conducted approximately 1.76 times transactions abroad compared to foreign nationals using credit cards within Bangladesh in January 2024.

VISA cards emerged as the most popular choice for both domestic (72%) and international (64%) transactions.

Notably, Bangladeshi nationals primarily used (15%) their credit cards in the USA, while US cardholders accounted for the highest spending (27%) among foreign nationals within Bangladesh.

Overall, domestic, cross-border transactions and credit card usage by Bangladeshi nationals in abroad saw slight decrease in January 2025 compared to that of the previous month whereas card usage by foreign nationals in Bangladesh saw slide increase in January 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.

## Introduction

In 2012, 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. 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. 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 January 2020 stood at 1,86,11,681, 15,24,492 and 4,28,910 respectively. By December 2024, these numbers had increased to 3,95,74,049, 26,74,512 and 75,44,985 respectively, reflecting a total growth of 142% across all three card types. Additionally, the transaction volume through these cards rose from Tk 1,68,087 million in 2020 to Tk 4,46,913 million by the end of 2024, marking a 166% growth over five years. This surge highlights the significant demand for card-based transactions among both consumers and merchants.

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.

Consequently, BDADS Unit of Statistics Department is presently collecting extensive data on credit card transactions from 46 scheduled banks and 1 non-banking financial institution operating in Bangladesh. 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 January 2025 reveals a 2.80% decrease in domestic transactions within Bangladesh, decreasing to Taka 31,252 million from Taka 32,153 million in December 2024 (Table-2). Concurrently, international transactions conducted outside the country amounted to Taka 4,456 million in January 2025 (Table-4), reflecting a notable decrease of 9.34% compared to Taka 4,915 million in December 2024. Similarly, transactions involving credit cards issued by foreign entities but utilized within Bangladesh experienced a slide rise, increasing by 4.86% to Taka 2,526 million in January 2025 from Taka 2,409 million in December 2024 (Table-7).

## Issued Cards and Transaction Statistics

The following table depicts overall trend of number of issued cards and transaction amount during January, 2020 and December, 2024.

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
Jan, 2020	18611681	1524492	428910	20565083	152695	13571	1821	168087
Dec, 2024	39574049	2674512	7544985	49793546	407028	35321	4564	446913
Growth (%)	113	75	1659	142	167	160	151	166

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

## Domestic credit cards usage

In January 2025, credit card transactions at department stores decreased to Taka 15,202 million from Taka 15,686 million in December 2024. Similarly, transactions in Retail Outlet Services, Cash Withdrawal, Clothing Stores, Transportation, Fund Transfer, and Business Services also decreased compared to that of the previous month. In contrast, Paying Utility Bills, Drug and Pharmacies, Government Services, and Professional Services saw a slight increase in transactions during January 2025 compared to December 2024.

**Table-2: Category-wise Breakdowns of Credit Cards Transactions (Domestic) in December 2024 and January 2025**

(Amount in million taka)

Merchant Categories	Dec-24			Jan-25		
	No. of Transactions	Amount	Percentage	No. of Transactions	Amount	Percentage
Department Stores	2021663	15686	48.79	1954460	15202	48.64
Retail Outlet Services	1037453	4192	13.04	1006284	4087	13.08
Paying Utility Bills	257294	2660	8.27	254079	2669	8.54
Cash Withdrawal	238634	2205	6.86	220324	2040	6.53
Clothing Stores	430622	2037	6.33	372511	1804	5.77
Drug and Pharmacies	355500	1738	5.40	343908	1740	5.57
Government Services	28971	888	2.76	36293	1032	3.30
Transportation	95921	1076	3.35	84079	983	3.14
Fund Transfer	31398	847	2.63	30790	826	2.64
Business Services	108408	629	1.96	106640	610	1.95
Professional Services	19483	195	0.61	23186	260	0.83
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4625347</b>	<b>32153</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>4432554</b>	<b>31252</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The analysis indicates a downward trend in consumer spending across various transaction categories from December 2024 to January 2025. Chart-1 highlights the spending patterns across different sectors in January 2025, showing that nearly half of domestic credit card transactions occurred at department stores. Credit cards were also used in other sectors, including Retail Outlet Services, Paying Utility Bills, Cash Withdrawal, Clothing Stores, and Drug & Pharmacies during this period.

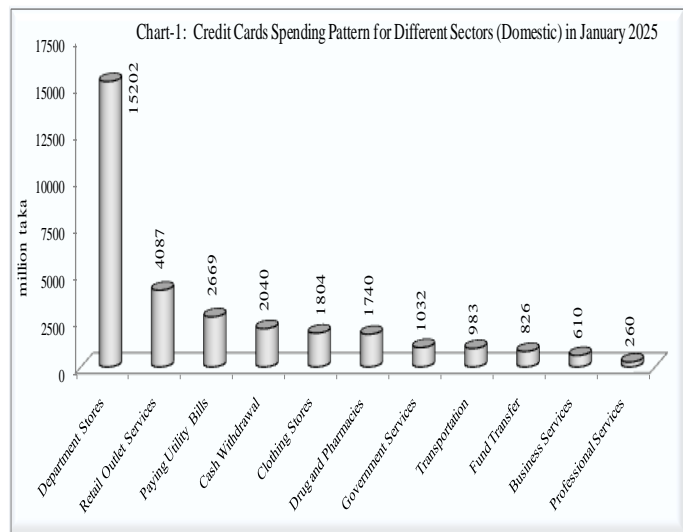
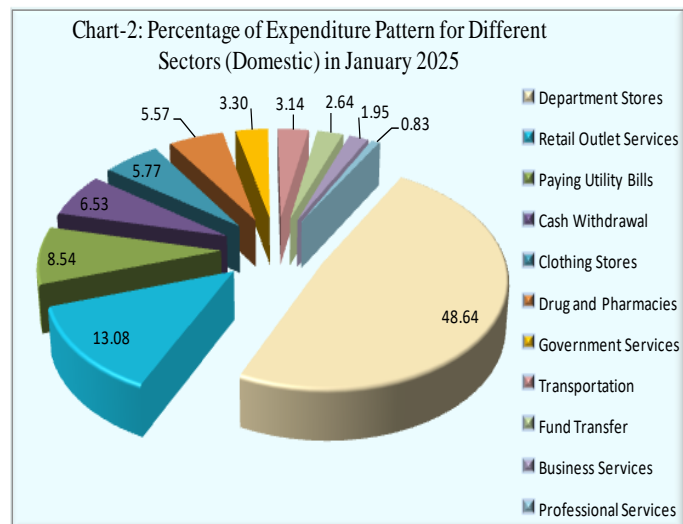


Chart-2 provides a comparative overview of proportional expenditures by sector based on total credit card transactions in January 2025.





**Table-3: Card Type Breakdowns of Credit Cards Transactions (Domestic)  
in December 2024 and January 2025**

(Amount in million taka)

Card Type	Dec-24			Jan-25		
	No. of Transactions	Amount	Percentage	No. of Transactions	Amount	Percentage
VISA	3285616	23100	71.85	3144840	22535	72.11
Mastercard	871877	5801	18.04	844930	5651	18.08
AMEX	449047	3191	9.93	420041	2991	9.57
Diners	14452	27	0.08	17940	34	0.11
QcashProprietar	3337	23	0.07	3602	29	0.09
JCB	340	7	0.02	275	8	0.02
Unionpay	678	3	0.01	926	4	0.01
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4625347</b>	<b>32153</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>4432554</b>	<b>31252</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Analysis of credit card usage patterns reveals that the majority of transactions (72.11%) were made using VISA cards, while Mastercard accounted for 18.08% and AMEX cards for 9.57%. The remaining transactions were conducted using other types of cards in January 2025.

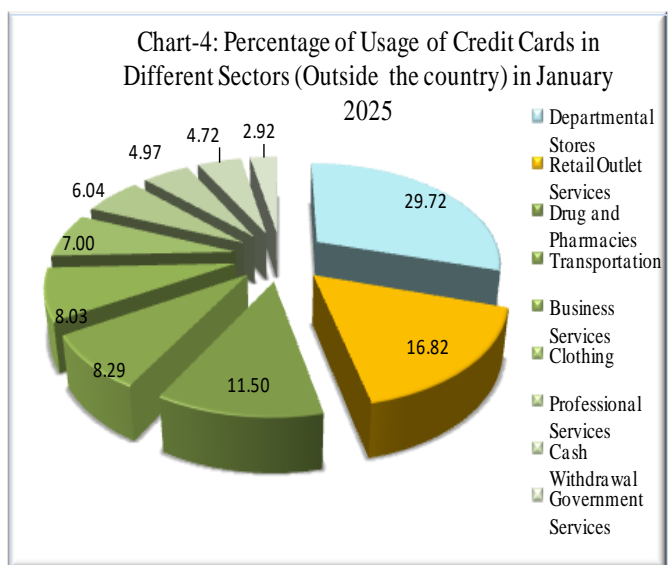
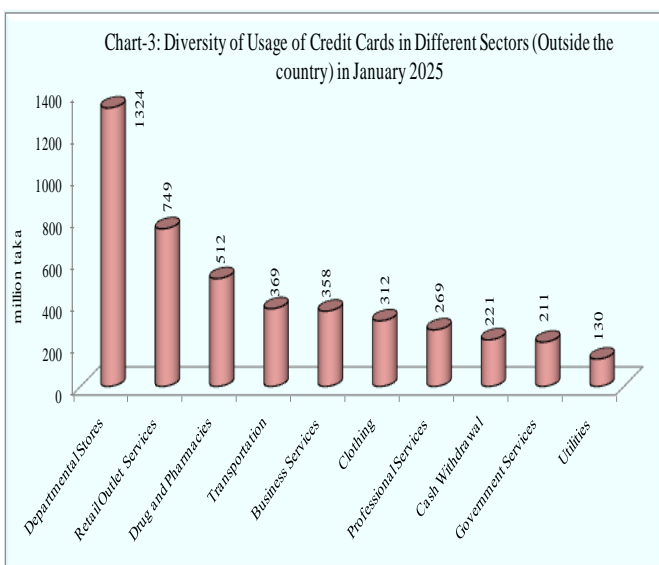
### Outward credit cards usage

**Table-4: Category-wise Breakdowns of Credit Cards Transactions (Outside the country)  
in December 2024 and January 2025**

(Amount in million taka)

Merchant Categories	Dec-24			Jan-25		
	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage
Departmental Stores	239580	1531	31.14	213902	1324	29.72
Retail Outlet Services	144517	820	16.69	130019	749	16.82
Drug and Pharmacies	28095	481	9.78	26238	512	11.50
Transportation	56375	456	9.28	49812	369	8.29
Business Services	87569	374	7.62	78053	358	8.03
Clothing Stores	36196	382	7.77	28301	312	7.00
Professional Services	22349	263	5.34	22615	269	6.04
Cash Withdrawal	10364	235	4.78	9128	221	4.97
Government Services	42574	227	4.63	49027	211	4.72
Utilities	44316	146	2.97	40206	130	2.92
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>711935</b>	<b>4915</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>647301</b>	<b>4456</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Credit cardholders involved in cross-border transactions primarily used their cards at department stores abroad, making up 29.72% of transactions. Other significant categories were Retail Outlet Services (16.82%), Drug and Pharmacies (11.50%), Transportation (8.29%), Business Services (8.03%), Clothing Stores (7.00%), and various other sectors (18.65%).



Charts 3 and 4 demonstrate the varied use of credit cards across different sectors outside the country in January 2025.

**Table-5: Card Type Breakdowns of Credit Cards Transactions (Outside the country) in December 2024 and January 2025**

(Amount in million taka)

Card Type	Nov-24			Dec-24		
	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage
VISA	539688	3699	75.26	491676	3358	75.36
Mastercard	107693	742	15.10	95009	650	14.60
AMEX	64336	472	9.61	60527	447	10.04
Unionpay	174	1.57	0.03	71	.43	0.01
Diners	44	0.14	0.00	18	0.06	0.00
JCB						
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>711935</b>	<b>4915</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>647301</b>	<b>4456</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table-5 highlights that VISA and Mastercard were the top choices for cross-border transactions during this period.

**Table-6: Country-wise Breakdowns of Credit Cards Transactions (Outside the country) in December 2024 and January 2025**

(Amount in million taka)

Countries	Dec-24			Jan-25		
	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage
USA	149580	743	15.12	137595	688	15.44
Thailand	56605	648	13.18	54105	641	14.38
Singapore	55693	412	8.39	49335	382	8.58
Malaysia	61622	348	7.07	57835	351	7.87
UK	42951	368	7.49	40368	332	7.45
India	44205	400	8.13	33490	326	7.31
Saudi Arabia	50391	340	6.91	53678	304	6.82
Netherlands	29114	200	4.07	27236	174	3.90
Canada	34759	203	4.13	31650	171	3.84
UAE	14472	213	4.33	12777	168	3.78
Australia	20291	150	3.05	19178	141	3.16
Ireland	33172	131	2.67	28732	119	2.68
Other Countries	119080	760	15.47	101322	659	14.79
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>711935</b>	<b>4915</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>647301</b>	<b>4456</b>	<b>100.00</b>

A country-wise breakdown of cross-border transactions reveals that the majority of credit card transactions took place in the USA, accounting for 15.44%. The remaining transactions were spread across other countries: Thailand (14.38%), Singapore (8.58%), Malaysia (7.87%), UK (7.45%), India (7.31%), Saudi Arabia (6.812), Netherlands (3.90%), Canada (3.84%), UAE (3.78%), Australia (3.16%), Ireland (2.68%), and other countries (14.79%).

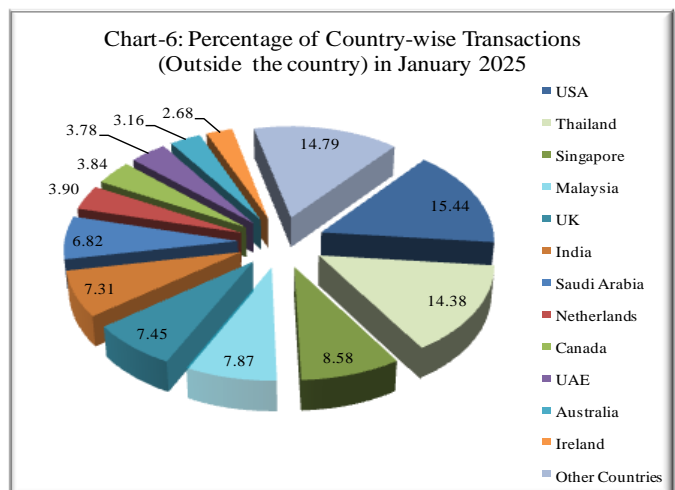
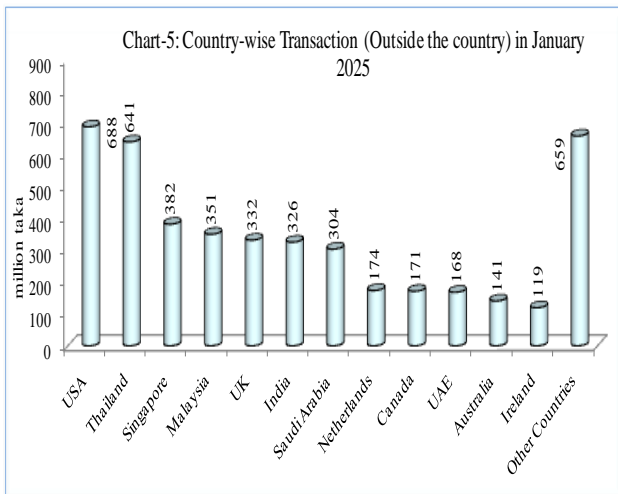


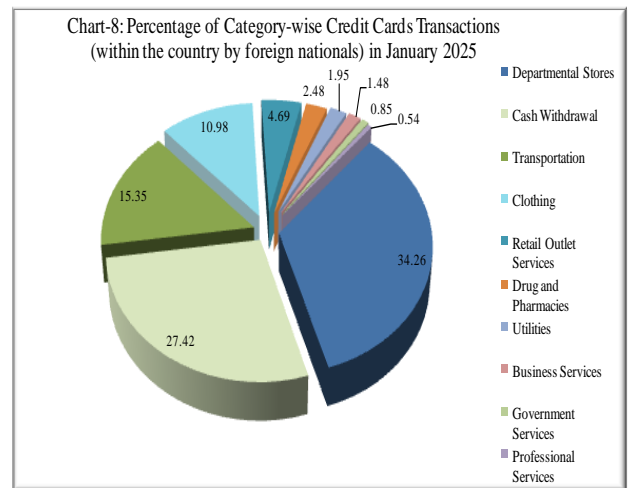
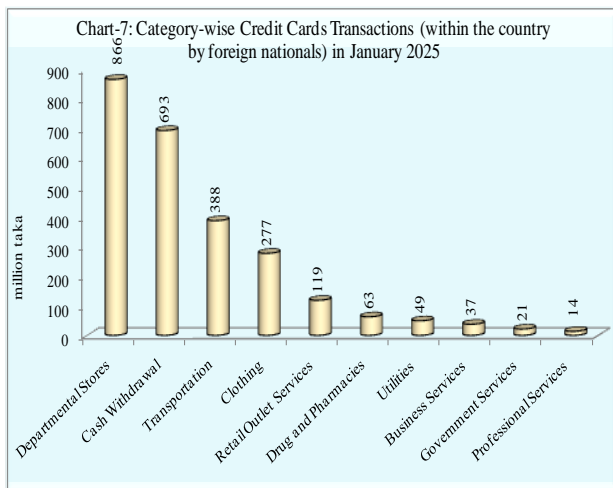
Chart-5 illustrates the diversity of credit card usage across different countries in January 2025, while Chart-6 displays the percentage distribution of country-wise cross-border transactions for the same period.

## Inward credit cards usage

In January 2025, inward credit card usage saw a slide rise 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 34.26% of all transactions during this period. Cash withdrawals made up 27.42%, while transportation-related transactions constituted 15.35%. The remaining sectors collectively contributed 22.97% to the total transaction volume.

**Table-7: Category-wise Breakdowns of Credit Cards Transactions (within the country by foreign nationals) in December 2024 and January 2025**

Merchant Categories	Dec-24			Jan-25		
	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage
Departmental Stores	136980	930	38.62	118027	866	34.26
Cash Withdrawal	37548	616	25.59	40880	693	27.42
Transportation	13995	359	14.90	14944	388	15.35
Clothing	28314	246	10.21	31040	277	10.98
Retail Outlet Services	39460	105	4.36	36497	119	4.69
Drug and Pharmacies	41953	43	1.77	33976	63	2.48
Utilities	6783	43	1.78	7428	49	1.95
Business Services	4711	35	1.44	4949	37	1.48
Government Services	2208	15	0.62	2458	21	0.85
Professional Services	2226	17	0.72	2047	14	0.54
Grand Total	314178	2409	100.00	292246	2526	100.00



Charts 7 and 8 showcase the diverse usage of credit cards (within Bangladesh by foreign nationals) across various sectors in January 2025.

**Table-8: Card Type Breakdowns of Credit Cards Transactions (within the country by foreign nationals) in December 2024 and January 2025**

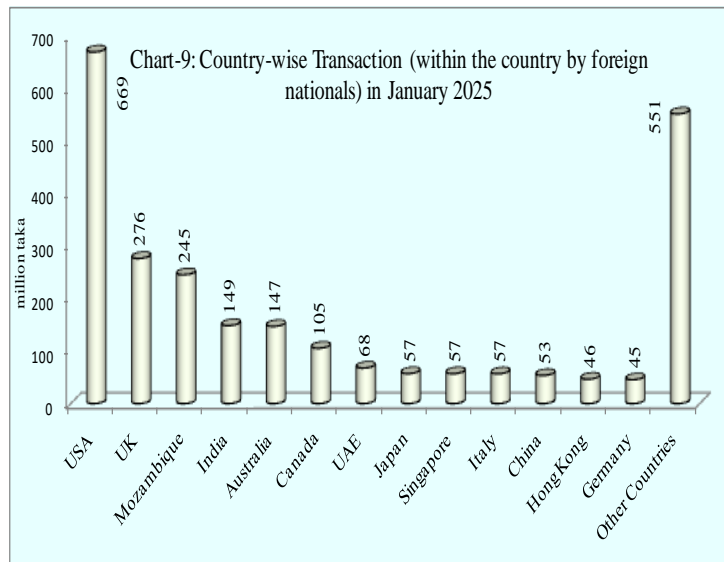
Table-8 reveals that 64.10% of transactions were conducted using VISA cards, while 35.06% were executed using Mastercard issued by foreign entities.

Card Type	Dec-24			Jan-25		
	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage	No of Transaction	Amount	Percentage
VISA	202793	1445	59.99	191406	1619	64.10
Mastercard	110146	944	39.18	99460	886	35.06
AMEX	419	8	0.31	512	11	0.45
Diners	375	4	0.16	428	5	0.18
Unionpay	414	7	0.31	389	5	0.18
JCB	31	1	0.05	51	1	0.03
Grand Total	314178	2409	100.00	292246	2526	100.00

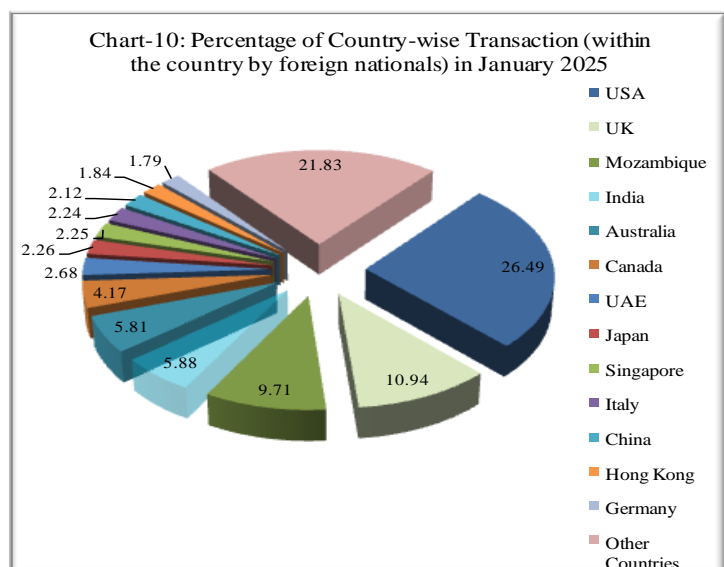
During January 2025, the majority of transactions by foreign nationals were carried out by individuals holding credit cards issued by the USA, representing 26.49% of the total. Other significant contributions came from UK (10.94%), Mozambique (9.71%), India (5.88%), Australia (5.81%), Canada (4.17%), UAE (2.68%), Japan (2.26%), Singapore (2.25%), Italy (2.24%), China (2.12%), Hong Kong (1.84%), Germany (1.79%), and various other countries (21.83%).

**Table-9: Country-wise Breakdown of Credit Cards Transactions (within the country by foreign nationals) in January 2025**  
(Amount in million taka)

Countries	No of Transaction	Transaction Amount	Percentage
USA	66004	669	26.49
UK	28731	276	10.94
Mozambique	6863	245	9.71
India	24360	149	5.88
Australia	19445	147	5.81
Canada	14091	105	4.17
UAE	8253	68	2.68
Japan	5913	57	2.26
Singapore	5290	57	2.25
Italy	5063	57	2.24
China	3986	53	2.12
Hong Kong	24636	46	1.84
Germany	5086	45	1.79
Other Countries	74525	551	21.83
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>292246</b>	<b>2526</b>	<b>100.00</b>



Charts 9 and 10 provide a visual representation of credit card usage by foreign nationals within Bangladesh in January 2025, categorized by their respective countries of origin.



## Overall credit cards transaction trend

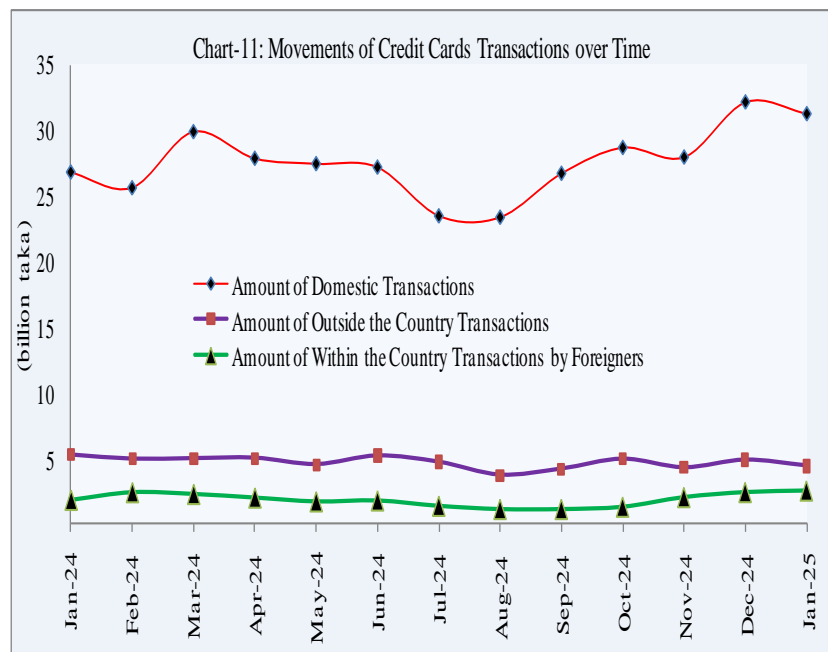
**Table-10: Movements of Credit Cards Transactions over Time**

(million taka)

Table-10 presents credit card transactions over the last 13 months, from January 2024 to January 2025, both within and outside the country.

Month	Amount of Domestic Transactions	Amount of Outside the Country Transactions	Amount of Within the Country Transactions by Foreigners
Jan-24	26784	5321	1816
Feb-24	25581	4991	2400
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

Chart-11 illustrates that domestic credit card transactions peaked in March 2024, followed by a steady decline until August 2024. However, they began to recover from September 2024 onward. Cross-border transactions experienced minor fluctuations during this period. Meanwhile, credit card spending by foreign nationals within Bangladesh saw a sharp decline between June 2024 and September 2024, but it rebounded to normal levels by November 2024 and further it increased in December 2024 and in January 2025.



## Implications and Future Directions

- **Increased Financial Inclusion:** The growth in card usage 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.
- **Data-Driven Policy Making:** The regular publication of reports on card usage patterns allows for data-driven decision-making, helping policymakers and financial institutions to better understand and cater to the needs of consumers and merchants.
- **Security and Fraud Prevention:** As the volume of card transactions grows, it will be crucial to continue enhancing security measures to prevent fraud and ensure the safety of digital transactions.
- **Consumer Education:** With the increasing adoption of plastic money, there is a need for ongoing consumer education to ensure that users are aware of the benefits and risks associated with card usage.

## Conclusion

Based on the data, it is evident that Bangladeshi credit cardholders conducted approximately 1.76 times transactions outside the country compared to foreign nationals using credit cards within Bangladesh in January 2025. 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; US cardholders spent the most within Bangladesh. The issuance of cards (debit, credit and prepaid) grew by 142% and the total transaction volume through cards increased by 166% 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.