
SME Foundation and Visa join forces to support 7.8 million CMSME entrepreneurs in Bangladesh

Dhaka, – December 11, 2024: SME Foundation and Visa signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support cottage, micro- and small and medium-sized entrepreneurs (CMSMEs) in Bangladesh. This three-year partnership was announced on December 10, 2024, at the SME Foundation's head office.

With this partnership, Visa and SME Foundation aim to provide support to small and medium-sized businesses for capabilities development, using Visa's expert content on financial and business skills. This includes Regional entrepreneurship development training, Exchanging global best practices and tools to enhance their skillsets, Capabilities for e-commerce and wider markets, Secure online payments systems and Facilitating access to finance by introducing Visa commercial/SME products and solutions.

Additionally, SME Foundation and Visa will collaborate to design and implement pilot programs for government incentives disbursements, enhancing resource personnel capacity, and strengthening coordination efforts. Visa will also provide payments intelligence for policymaking through tools like the Visa Government Insights Hub, utilizing SME profile data to support and offer various SME-related services.

The ceremony was attended by Mr. Anwar Hossain Chowdhury, Managing Director of SME Foundation, and Sabbir Ahmed, Country Manager, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, Visa along with Shruti Gupta, Head – Commercial & Money Movement Solutions, India and South Asia, Visa. Also present were the Asst. General Manager Md. Mostafizur Rahman, General Manager Farzana Khan and other officials from SME Foundation and Visa.

On the occasion, the Managing Director of SME Foundation, Mr. Anwar Hossain Chowdhury, says, “Our collaboration with Visa marks a significant milestone in SME Foundation's commitment to accelerating the digital transformation of SMEs in Bangladesh. By integrating advanced digital payment systems, we aim to enhance financial inclusion, reduce operational costs, and drive revenue growth for SMEs. Beyond payments, our focus extends to equipping SMEs with cutting-edge technologies such as Business Intelligence, Artificial Intelligence, and robust cybersecurity measures, ensuring they remain competitive and resilient in the digital age. Together with Visa's expertise and our dedication to SME development, we envision creating a smarter, more secure, and sustainable business ecosystem that empowers SMEs to thrive in an ever-evolving global market.’

Sabbir Ahmed, Country Manager, Bangladesh, Nepal & Bhutan, Visa commented, “We are delighted to support the entrepreneurs of our country through our partnership with SME Foundation. Visa has demonstrated the power of digital transformation over decades and

we are happy to bring our global expertise to the vibrant SME community. Our financial and digital skills programs can enable entrepreneurs to integrate technology faster, gain global market access and revolutionise their businesses.”

It is noteworthy that the SME sector currently contributes 32% to Bangladesh's economy. According to the latest economic survey by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, there are more than 7.8 million cottage, micro, small, and medium enterprises (CMSMEs) in the country, accounting for over 99% of total industrial enterprises. About 85% of industrial sector employment is in the SME sector, directly and indirectly employing over 20 million people.

The SME sector plays a crucial role in the socio-economic development of Bangladesh and in creating employment opportunities in a country with a large population and limited resources. The MSME sector is labor-intensive and low-capital, significantly contributing to national income and employment due to its short production period. Like other developing countries, the CMSME sector in Bangladesh has immense potential for development and progress.

Since its establishment in 2007, approximately two million small and medium entrepreneurs have benefited from various programs of the SME Foundation, an organization under the Ministry of Industries.



Photo Caption: (L-R) Representatives of SME Foundation – Md. Mostafizur Rahman, Asst. General Manager, Farzana Khan, General Manager and Anwar Hossain Chowdhury, Managing Director, SME Foundation, with representatives of Visa - Sabbir Ahmed, Country Manager, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, Shruti Gupta, Head – Commercial & Money Movement Solutions, INSA and Md. Nasimul Islam, Director of Government Engagement, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan.

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About Visa

Visa (NYSE: V) is a world leader in digital payments, facilitating transactions between consumers, merchants, financial institutions, and government entities across more than 200 countries and territories. Our mission is to connect the world through the most innovative, convenient, reliable and secure payments network, enabling individuals, businesses and economies to thrive. We believe that economies that include everyone everywhere, uplift everyone everywhere and see access as foundational to the future of money movement. Learn more at [Visa.com](https://www.visa.com).

About SME Foundation

The Small and Medium Enterprise Foundation, commonly known as SME Foundation (www.smef.gov.bd), is a not-for-profit organization established under the Companies Act of 1994 and licensed by the Ministry of Commerce. Founded by the Government of Bangladesh through the Ministry of Industries, SMEF serves as the apex institution for SME development nationwide. Its key activities include implementing government-adopted SME policy strategies, advocating for SME growth, facilitating financial support, offering skill development and capacity-building training, promoting technology adoption and ICT access, and providing various business support services.

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