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# Star BUSINESS

DHAKA SATURDAY NOVEMBER 6, 2004 E-mail: dsbusin@gononet.com

Concrete Waterproofing by Crystallization

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Al-Haj Group of Industries

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## Nat'l committee on exports sits idle

No meet in 18 months, although quota-free era begins next year

MONJUR MAHMUD

The national committee on exports is sitting idle as it has failed to hold any meeting in the last one and a half years, although Bangladesh is to face stiff competition in the global market with the phasing out of quota from next year.

The last meeting of the committee was held in April 2003. The 11th meeting was scheduled to be held on 11 April this year and was rescheduled to April 22. But finally it was postponed.

The 36-member national committee with prime minister as the chairperson takes important deci-

sions on exports. Other committee members include representatives from the associations, which have substantial contribution to the national export earnings.

"Inefficiency in ports and lead-time problem, the two crucial issues for the readymade garment industry in the quota-free era, are supposed to feature in the next meeting. But we don't know when the meeting will be held," said an aggrieved business leader, who is also on the committee.

Establishing a cluster village for the development of light engineering sector, allowing foreign direct investment in the readymade gar-

ment sector outside export processing zones and forming a high-powered committee to facilitate frozen food sector to earn Tk 10,000 crore a year by 2008 were on the agenda of the April meeting.

Giving cash incentive to backward linkage industries for readymade garments for another five years and supplying electricity, gas at subsidised rates to make export-oriented industries more competitive were also on the agenda.

The national committee on export was formed in 1993 and held ten meetings until now.

## Craft fair begins at Dhanmondi

A fair of home-made products such as apparels and leather goods, organised by Bangladesh Homeworkers Women Association (BHWA), began in Dhaka on Thursday.

The three-day craft fair at the Dhanmondi Mohila Kriya Complex, participated by home-based women workers throughout the country, will continue from 9am to 9pm until today, says a press release.

BHWA has arranged the craft fair especially to rehabilitate the women garment workers in the wake of phasing out of quota-free era.

## Seven new commissioners in Income Tax

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Promotions of seven commissioners (current charge) in Income Tax Department were approved on Thursday.

The promoted commissioners include Kalipada Halder, Lokman Chowdhury, Mahbubur Rahman, Fakir Feroz Ahmed, Chowdhury Amir Hossain, Arshad Hossain and Parvez Iqbal.

The new commissioners will assume offices this week.



Desperate visitors take to floor in the cellphone fair venue at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in Dhaka yesterday to fill in subscription forms to get SIM (subscriber identity module) cards. Lured by connection at the lowest-ever price, thousands of people flocked to the show that has been extended by one more day.

## Aktel eyes three million subscribers by 2005

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Telecom Malaysia International (Bangladesh) Ltd (TMIB), the service provider of Aktel mobile phone, yesterday announced an ambitious target of reaching three million subscribers by 2005.

The second-largest cellular operator, now with over nine lakh (0.9 million) users, is set to hit the figure of one million users' mark by this year-end, a high company official hoped yesterday in Dhaka.

The Malaysia-Bangladesh joint venture company plans to invest \$160 million in 2005 to achieve its ambition.

"We have invested \$140 million this year. At the end of last year we had 4.5 lakh subscribers and now it

is very close to one million. Given the growth trend, we are sure to rope in two million more subscribers in 2005," Jose Ravee, general manager (Marketing) of TMIB, said at an iftar party arranged by the company.

"We now cover 275 upazila in 61 districts and once the new investment is complete by 2005, all the upazila of Bangladesh will come under our network," he said.

Aktel is going to launch international roaming services soon in cooperation with 370 operators in 170 countries. "The testing for the launch is going on. Subscribers of those foreign countries will also get Aktel services when in Bangladesh, creating scope for revenue generation here, the GM said.

"The next will be a year of competition in mobile phone sector in Bangladesh. So, we are making more investment and planning to introduce many innovative products to become the market leader," he said.

Aktel puts emphasis on quality of call and aggressive marketing with new products and services, Ravee said.

Asked about any plan on call tariff cut, he said the company does not have plan to cut tariff drastically now. But it depends on situation because market is competitive.

TMIB is a joint venture between Telekom Malaysia Berhad and AK Khan & Company Ltd of Bangladesh. Incorporated in 1996, it launched its services in 1997 under Aktel brand.

## India's inflation resumes upward march

AFP, New Delhi

India's inflation jumped by more than a quarter of a percentage point after falling over the past month from a three-and-a-half year peak, government figures showed Friday.

The rise came as analysts predicted a further increase in inflation in coming weeks following the Congress-led coalition government's decision late Thursday to hike oil and cooking gas prices.

Inflation for the week ended October 23 jumped to 7.38 percent from the previous week's level of 7.10 percent, largely driven by higher food and manufactured goods prices.

"Given the trend in oil prices it's only natural there will be upward pressure (on inflation)," said T.K. Bhaumick, senior economist at the Confederation of Indian Industry.

The hike in oil and cooking gas prices, which went into effect Thursday at midnight, will have a cascading effect on the cost of all goods, pushing up overall inflation, analysts said.

Bhaumick said inflation for the fiscal year ending March 2005 is likely to average around 8.0 percent. Inflation reached a three-and-one half year peak of 8.32 percent in August.

The price of a cooking gas cylinder went up immediately by 7.0 percent to 281 rupees (six dollars) and another five rupees will be added each month until the gap with the international price is erased.

Petrol prices were hiked 5.0 percent to bring them into line with the imported price, while diesel was increased 7.0 percent.

The government had delayed raising fuel prices for fear of aggravating inflation and denting economic growth in farm-dependent India, where agricultural output has been hit by patchy monsoon rains.

However, it finally raised fuel costs to bring them more into line with world prices and stem falling revenues at state-run refiners which racked up revenue losses of 100 billion rupees (2.2 billion dollars) in the first half of the financial year.

## MOBILE MELA

### People busy buying SIM cards

Fair extended by one day

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Thousands of people were buying GrameenPhone (GP) connections at the lowest-ever price at the mobile phone fair in Dhaka yesterday as the leading cellphone operator's price war gathers momentum.

The huge turnout of visitors forced the event management people to stop selling entry tickets at one stage. The visitors, mostly young people, were seen scrambling for subscription forms to get a SIM (subscriber identity module) card at Tk 650 including a free Tk 300 prepaid phone card.

The rush of the visitors prompted the fair organiser, GP, to extend the show by one more day. The second version of the fair that began on Wednesday will now continue until Sunday.

"I have come here at 9:30 in the morning to avoid crowd, but in vain. I am waiting in the queue for two

hours but could not manage a SIM card," said Ashraf Haque, a college student who came all the way from Tongi.

The pressure of the queuing crowd was so intense that structures of some stalls collapsed. "What can we do? We are delivering SIM at the quickest possible time but it seems that there is no ending to customers. We have not enough manpower and space to handle the crowd," salesman of a stall said.

To avoid the crowd rush, GP announced at the fair that customers will get SIM card at the fair-rate from any authorised dealer and outlet anywhere in Bangladesh. The GP also announced that it has enough connections to meet demand and SIM will also be available at the fair-rate even after Eid.

But people seem to be obsessed to get it now. Swarming visitors were crowding and crowding. "I think it's the best chance to buy a SIM at this

price. I'll buy one for my younger brother as Eid gift," said Parvez Alam, a banker and a resident of Lalmaia.

"We are amazed by onrush of people at the fair. Offer of a SIM without handset at the lowest-ever price may be the factor," said Mushfiq Salehin, an officer at GP's Customer Relation Centre at the fair.

GP offers a package of connection and handset at lowest Tk 4,145. But people seem to be less interested in the package.

Sale of handsets at the fair, styled Mobile Mela, was overshadowed by the low-priced connection offer.

Participating handset vendors Siemens, Flora Telecom (Sagem), Motorola, Unitel (Nokia), Grameen Telecom (Nokia), Discovery Communications (Panasonic), TCL Mobile, Hayes & Haier, Brothers (Maxon), Electra Telecom (Samsung) were witnessing sales below expectation.

**Directorate General of Defence Purchase**  
Ministry of Defence  
New Airport Road, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215

**Tender Notice**

Sealed tenders in foreign/local currency are invited from bonafide traders/manufacturers/stockists (firms enlisted with this Directorate General) for purchase of the undermentioned items for Bangladesh Air Force.

Sr No	Description of items and quantity	Date of selling		Date of opening	Currency	Tender No.	Selling price of tender
		From	To				
A)	Spare parts of Digitizing Oscilloscope and Communication Service Monitor-Quantity:03 LI	30/10/2004	07/12/2004	09/12/2004	Foreign	9139/AP-4	Tk 50/- only
B)	Spare parts of Battery Analyzer-Quantity:08 LI	30/10/2004	07/12/2004	09/12/2004	Foreign	9140/AP-4	Tk 50/- only
C)	Spare parts of Computer Network System (LAN/WAN)-Quantity:20 LI	30/10/2004	07/12/2004	09/12/2004	Foreign	9141/AP-4	Tk 200/- only
D)	Mail Scanner-Quantity:01 No	30/10/2004	07/12/2004	09/12/2004	Foreign	9132/AP-3	Tk 150/- only
E)	Computer Table (Stand) with Chair-Quantity:50 sets	30/10/2004	23/11/2004	25/11/2004	Local	9137/AP-4	Tk 50/- only
F)	Personal Computer, Quantity:100 Nos, Scanner, Quantity:02 Nos and UPS, Quantity:100 Nos.	30/10/2004	23/11/2004	25/11/2004	Local	9138/AP-4	Tk 500/- only

Tender with necessary terms and conditions can be collected at specified price (non-refundable) from this Directorate General on any day from 8.00 hours to 13.00 hours during office hours. Tender will be opened on the said date of opening tender at 10.00 hours in presence of tenderers.

ISPR/Misc/04/943  
DFP-25445-2/1/10  
G-1048

**Squadron Leader**  
For Director General

**Directorate General Defence Purchase**  
Ministry of Defence  
New Airport Road, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215

**Re-Tender/Tender Notice**

1. Sealed tenders in local currency are invited from bonafide manufacturers/dealers/suppliers/indentors (enlisted firms) for supply of the following items for Bangladesh Navy:

Sl No	Name of items	Date of selling		Date of opening	Currency	Tender No
		From	To			
1.	Starter for Tube Light (Qty: 2500 No)	18-12-2004	01-01-2005	02-01-2005	Local	8002
2.	Cap Peaked Plastic (Sailors) (Qty: 14,600 No)	18-12-2004	15-01-2005	16-01-2005	Local	8114
3.	Badges Cap Golden (For Po's) (Qty: 3,000 No)	--	--	--	Local	8115
4.	Knife Clasp (Seaman) (Qty: 10,000 No)	--	--	--	Local	8117
5.	Soap Soft (Qty: 20,000 kg)	--	--	--	Local	8118
6.	Copper Ingot 100% Purity (Qty: 13,000 kg)	--	--	--	Local	8119

2. Tender schedule with detail specifications/conditions will be available on payment (non-refundable) during office hours between 0800 hours to 1300 hours. The tender may be dropped latest by 1000 hours and will be opened at 1005 hours on the specified date of opening in presence of the tenderers (if any).

ISPR/Misc/04/960  
DFP-25880-28/10/04  
G-1042

**Lt Commander BN**  
For Director General

**Chittagong Port Authority**  
Office of the Chief Hydrographer

**Tender Notice**

- Separate tenders in two sets (original & duplicate) are invited from reputed ship repairing firms in Bangladesh for overhauling including bearing renewal of main engine, generator engine & dredging engine turbocharger, overhauling/renewal of fuel pumps including other repairs/over hauling & supply works. Detailed description on the matter and tender terms & conditions shall be given in tender schedule.
- Tender should be submitted in sealed condition at the office of the undersigned by 12-00 hours of 06-12-2004 and shall be opened on the same day at 12-30 hours in presence (if any) of the tenderers. However, if under any circumstance, it is not possible to open tender on that day, then tender shall be opened on the next day.
- Tk 20,000/= (twenty thousand) only should be submitted with the tender as tender security in the form of Pay-Order/Bank Draft from any bank scheduled with Bangladesh Bank in favour of the Port Authority. Tenure of tender should remain valid up to 120 (one hundred twenty) days from the date of acceptance of tender.
- The said works should be completed within 120 (one hundred twenty) days from signing of contract agreement.
- Tender schedule can be collected against Pay-Order/Bank Draft for Tk 1000/= (one thousand) only (non-refundable) from, besides the office of the undersigned, also the Office of Chief Finance & Accounts Officer/CPA & this Authority's Liaison Office at Dhaka (House No. 49/C, Road No. 4/A, Dhanmondi Residential Area) and Office of the Divisional Commissioner, Chittagong during office hours. However, tender can be collected from the office of the undersigned also by depositing cash through Treasury Challan (at Sonali Bank, Port Branch) in Port Fund. No tender schedule will be sold on the date of submitting & opening tender.
- Chittagong Port Authority reserves the right to reject any tender or all tenders any time prior to approval of tender.

DFP-25752-26/10  
G-1069

**Chief Hydrographer**  
Chittagong Port Authority

## Twist in US-Asia shrimp war with soybean boycott threat

AFP, Washington

American soybean growers have warned the US government against imposing anti-dumping duties on shrimp imports from Asia, citing a threat from the region to retaliate by boycotting soybean imports.

But a US shrimp lobby group pressing for the tariffs, the Southern Shrimp Alliance, termed Thailand's boycott threat "economic terrorism" and told the government not to bow to the demands of the soybean industry.

The American Soybean Association (ASA) in a letter to Secretary of Commerce Donald Evans said the outcome of a shrimp antidumping petition against Thailand as well as China, Vietnam

and India could have "a direct and serious impact" on the local soybean industry.

The ASA was particularly concerned over a threat by nine private trade groups in Thailand, representing virtually all business consumers of US soybean exports, that "have agreed to ban imports of soybeans and soybean meal" if the Commerce Department imposed antidumping duties on Thai shrimp.

"US restrictions on frozen shrimp, a primary export from a number of countries involved, have the very high potential to alienate the very customers that are so valuable to US soybean exporters," ASA President Neal Bredehoeft said in the letter, according to the Shrimp Industry Task Force on Thursday.

The task force is a coalition of seafood importers and restaurants that complained the duties would force higher shrimp prices and hit consumers.

ASA also warned that the duties could lead to lost business by soybean farmers and exports of American soybean products to Asia.

Among the four countries, China is a top importer of soybeans from the United States, taking in 8.29 million tonnes last year, an increase of nearly 100 percent over the previous year, valued at 2.2 billion dollars.

"Large quantities of soybean meal are used as feed for farm-raised shrimp in these countries, and a great deal of that is produced from soybeans exported from the United States," Bredehoeft said.

**Directorate General Defence Purchase**  
Ministry of Defence  
New Airport Road, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215

**Tender Notice**

1. Sealed tenders in local/foreign currency are invited from local/foreign bonafide traders/firms (not necessary to be enlisted in DGDP) for selling of the following items of Bangladesh Air Force. Non-enlisted firms, if any, would require to submit security deposit with the offer (as per the rate mentioned in the tender schedule).

Sl. No	Name of items & qty	Date of selling		Date of opening	Currency	Tender No.	Cost of I/T
		From	To				
a.	Phased out MIG-21 Aircraft and its Engine, Equipment, Tools, Tester & Test Equipment	13-11-2004	30-11-2004	02-12-2004	Local/ Foreign	8340/AP-1	1500.00

2. Tender schedule with detailed specifications/conditions will be available on payment (non-refundable) on any working day between 1000 hrs to 1300 hrs. The tender will be opened on the specified date at 1000 hrs in presence of the bidders (if present).

ISPR/Misc/04/971  
DFP-26349-2/11/04  
G-1063

**Squadron Leader**  
for Director General