

Star BUSINESS

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Rajuk's delay in okaying new project designs stifles housing growth

Blames REHAB

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Developers yesterday blamed city planners for unprecedented delays in approving new project designs, which has stifled growth in the sector.

Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) leaders blamed officials of the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakya (Rajuk) for holding up around 2500 new project designs that have been pending for the last 15 months.

"Because of the lack of design approvals developers cannot start construction work at the sites in a timely way, something that is causing huge financial losses," Engineer Tanveerul Haque Probal,

general secretary, REHAB, said at a press conference held at the National Press Club.

Delays mean developers have to face increases in project cost as the prices of construction materials increase day by day, Tanveer added.

He said REHAB will not be able to arrange any housing fair at home or abroad in the future because without having design approval they are unable to showcase projects, as buyers are not interested in investing in unapproved housing projects.

Tanveer said the Rajuk officials have approved more than 9000 designs for individual projects during the period, but they are yet to approve any project put forward by the REHAB members.

Another holdup has been the

failure of Rajuk officials to approve any land development proposals since the Private Land Development Policy approved in 2004, he added.

The housing association leaders demanded immediate intervention of the government and the ministry concerned to solve the problem.

They also demanded budgetary measures in the coming budget to support the housing industry in the country.

Mohammad Abdul Awal, president, REHAB, chaired the conference where REHAB members Mokarram Hossain Khan, M Saiful Islam, Syed Sirajul Haque, Sayed M. Akhter and MGR Nasir also attended.

CTG PORT NCT MANAGEMENT

Finish pre-qualification process to appoint pvt firm in 10 days

Shipping adviser asks officials

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Shipping Adviser M A Matin yesterday asked the officials of the shipping ministry to complete the pre-qualification process for appointing a private operator for new mooring container terminal (NCT) at Chittagong port within ten days.

He was chairing a meeting at the ministry on various projects under the Annual Development Programme (ADP).

Official sources said the adviser expressed his dissatisfaction over the delay in the appointment of such a private company which would be assigned to operate the NCT.

The progress of 20 development projects under the ministry for the year 2006-07 was reviewed in the meeting. A total of Tk 317.90 crore was allocated for these projects, now at various stages of implementations.

Matin told reporters after the meeting that the ministry initiated a number of development projects that were stalled earlier.

The projects include setting up of 3 landing stations in three upazilas in the costal belt, replacing old ferries, conducting capital dredging in the river Karnaphuli for maintaining navigability, procuring a scanner machine at the Chittagong port, maintaining the Dhaka-Mongla and Chittagong-Mongla river routes, resuming development project for completing the circular waterway around Dhaka city, setting up of a flyover on an approach road to Chittagong port.

The adviser also asked the officials to start the second phase of the circular waterway from Ashulia to Kanchpur. The first phase, Sadarghat to Ashulia, was completed earlier, the meeting was told.

Govt may cut discretionary power of tax officials

NBR chairman says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The government is actively considering curtailing the discretionary power of the customs and tax officials, the chief of the tax administration told businesspeople in the port city Sunday.

Steps have already been taken to remove businessmen's fear about what they call harassment by the tax officials, said Badiur Rahman, chairman of the National Board of Revenue.

He said they would put their efforts in easing the tax collection system besides checking tax evasion.

Badiur was exchanging views at a pre-budget meeting with the leaders of the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and

Industry (CCCI) at its auditorium here.

CCCI President Saifuzzaman Chowdhury in his address put up a 21-point proposal which includes, among other things, keeping the prices of essentials steady, infusing dynamism into business activities through removing businessmen's fear of harassment by tax officials and taking measures to develop the farm sector.

The NBR chief assured the CCCI leaders that reduction in duties on essentials and incentives for the farmers and agro-industries to alleviate poverty are the priorities in the next budget.

Badiur Rahman said as a part of the efforts to keep the prices of essential commodities steady, the government has already exempted

some commodities like rice and pulse from duty, while it is preparing to propose for reducing duty on some other commodities like powdered milk and baby food in the next budget.

The next budget would also have some strategies for poverty alleviation, he added.

He said measures would be taken to ensure that the incentive provided in the agricultural sector reaches out to the bonafide farmers, instead of the middlemen.

CCCI Senior Vice President MA Latif, directors Md. Amirul Haq, Mahfuzul Haq Shah and Nasir Uddin Chowdhury spoke at the meeting, also attended by NBR Member (VAT) Mohammad Alam and other senior officials and a huge number of businessmen.

Dhaka Bank arranges Tk 68cr for new paper mill

A major paper mill will be set up at Shantapara of Ghorashal in Narsingdi district.

The new factory Capital Board Mills Limited (CBML), a sister concern of Capital Paper and Pulp Industries Ltd, will mainly produce newsprint, duplex board and liner paper with yearly production capacity of 30,000 tonnes.

Dhaka Bank Ltd has arranged a Tk 68 crore syndicated term loan for the project. Three other banks of the syndication are Arab Bangladesh Bank Limited, Uttara Bank Limited and The Premier Bank Limited, according to a Dhaka Bank press release.

The company is set to start trial production by 2008.

Shahed Noman, managing director of Dhaka Bank Limited, Kaiser A Chowdhury, president & managing director of Arab Bangladesh Bank Limited, Shaikh Aminuddin Ahmed, consultant and head of CRM of Uttara Bank Limited, and Nurul Alam Chowdhury, additional managing director of Premier Bank Limited, signed the deal on behalf of their organisations at a hotel in Dhaka on Thursday.

Foreigners, locals urged to up investment in yarn, fabric production

Cotton and textile convention begins

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The textiles and jute adviser has urged foreigners and locals to increase investment in yarn and fabric production to ensure a smooth supply for the garment industry.

"There are still considerable demand-production gaps of yarn and fabric to meet the country's domestic consumption. I hope foreign and local investors will take the advantage of the attractive investment facilities offered by the government," Geeteara Safiyya Chowdhury said.

She was addressing an inaugural function of a two-day international convention on cotton and textile titled 'Bangladesh Cotton and Textile Convention 2006' in Dhaka yesterday.

The adviser said it was apprehended that in the post-MFA (multi-fibre arrangement) era, export of textile products particularly RMG of Bangladesh would lose its market to other fabric producing countries. "But, the fact is that the export earnings from RMG and other textile products

experienced a spectacular growth in 2005-06," she said.

Such a high growth was possible due to the government's policy to support the primary textile and RMG sector, she explained.

The adviser hoped the convention will create an opportunity for the overseas suppliers of basic raw materials of textile industry, importers and exporters of textile machinery and textile products.

Cotton Bangladesh, a Dhaka-based international magazine, and International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC), Washington DC, USA in cooperation with Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), Bangladesh Cotton Association (BCA), and Globecot of USA are organising the convention under the theme of 'Opportunities for Increased Trade in Cotton Textiles'.

Organisers said the conference is focusing on the potential of growth in the world cotton and

textile trade and investment opportunities. It is also addressing regional trade flows in cotton and textile products and strategies to cope with increasing competition in a globalised economic environment, they said.

The organisers said around 250 participants including some 55 delegates from 19 countries are attending the convention.

Among others, Francoise Collet of the Delegation of the European Commission to Bangladesh, Terry Townsend of ICAC, Nasiruddin Najimov, first deputy minister of Foreign Economic Relations, Investments and Trade of Uzbekistan, BTMA Chairman Abdul Hai Sarker, BGMEA First Vice-president Mohammed A Salam, BKMEA Vice-president Bahauddin Mohammed Yusuf, BCA President Nazrul Islam Shuja, and Cotton Bangladesh Editor-in Chief Ahsan spoke at the inaugural function.

HSBC celebrates 'Greater China Trade Day' today

HSBC's trade teams across Asia-Pacific will celebrate 'Greater China Trade Day' today to promote the bank's capabilities to support trade with companies operating in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau, says a press release.

The value of the Greater China region's external trade grew at a rate of almost 16 per cent per year between 2000 and 2005, exceeding US\$3.6 trillion in 2006. Greater China has been a key driver of Asia's impressive external trade growth, which averaged 10 per cent a year over the same period.

HSBC employs over 2,000 staff in trade services in Asia-Pacific.

IFC gives \$5m trade finance facilities to Southeast Bank

International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector arm of the World Bank Group, yesterday announced that local Southeast Bank is joining its Global Trade Finance Programme under which IFC is providing the bank with 5 million dollars facility within the programme, says a press release.

The Global Trade Finance Program supports trade with emerging markets worldwide and promotes the flow of goods and services between developing countries. IFC provides partial or full guarantees against underlying trade instruments and covers the payment risk of participating issuing banks.

The programme allows issuing banks, such as Southeast Bank, to increase the volume and value of trade transactions, with enhanced tenors and access to competitive pricing terms.

Neaz Ahmed, managing director of the bank, welcomed the partnership and said this would help his bank expand network of correspondent banks and create new and valuable business opportunities for the clients in Bangladesh and across the world.

Per Kjellerhaug, IFC's country manager for Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal, said the programme is an important mechanism to get local banks into an active global network that facilitates transactions in challenging markets, promotes competitive financing, and builds correspondent bank relationships with new institutions on a low-risk basis.

SEC fines 3 firm directors

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has fined all directors of three textile companies - Sripur Textile Mills Limited, Kashem Silk Mills Limited and Kashem Textile Mills Limited -- for violation of securities rules.

The stock market regulator fined them for not holding annual general meeting (AGM) for the year 2006.

The fine of Tk 1 lakh each will have to be paid to the SEC within 15 days from the order issued yesterday, according to a press release.

The SEC also imposed a fine of

Tk 10,000 each on all the directors of the three companies for each day's delay in holding the AGM for the year 2006.

The punished directors are Sripur Textile Mills Chairman and Managing Director A Ahmed Yusuf and directors Professor Nurul Haque, AR Malik, Shafiqur Rahman and CH Mahtabuddin, Kashem Silk Mills Chairman/Director AKM Maidul Islam, Managing Director Khadiza Shamim and Director Selina Begum, and Kashem Textile Mills Chairman/Managing Director AKM Maidul Islam and directors Khadiza Shamim and Selina Begum.



PHOTO: SOUTHEAST BANK

International Finance Corporation (IFC) recently provided Southeast Bank with 5 million dollars as trade finance facility. Southeast Bank Deputy Managing Director Syed Imtiaz Hasib and IFC Regional Representative Per Kjellerhaug signed the agreement on behalf of the respective sides. Neaz Ahmed, managing director of the bank, was also present.



PHOTO: DHAKA BANK

Dhaka Bank Ltd arranges a Tk 68 crore syndicated term loan for Capital Board Mills Ltd. Senior officials of Dhaka Bank Ltd, Arab Bangladesh Bank Ltd, Uttara Bank Ltd and Premier Bank Ltd, signed the deal on behalf of their organisations in Dhaka on Thursday.