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## Citycell fined Tk150cr for VoIP involvement

MD HASAN

Citycell, the country's oldest mobile phone operator, has been fined Tk 150 crore by the telecoms regulator for its involvement in illegal VoIP or international call termination.

The company has already paid Tk75 crore to the telecoms watchdog - Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) - and the rest of the amount will be paid within a short time in two instalments, BTRC sources said.

"We discovered Citycell's involvement in illegal VoIP in May last year during a raid in the company's Mohakhali office," said a high official of BTRC, adding,

"Following a understanding with the BTRC the company paid Tk75 crore this month and will pay the rest of the money by March."

The high official said the joint force drive against VoIP is still going on. Officials at Citycell refused to comment on the fine.

Citycell is the fourth mobile operator to be fined for their involvement in the VoIP scandal. Grameenphone, the country's largest operator, was fined Tk168.40 crore, AKTEL Tk 145 crore and banglalink Tk125 crore. In total, Tk 588.4 crore will be deposited to the government exchequer as compensation.

VoIP made it possible to terminate international calls illegally, as only Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB), the state owned body, had the right to do this.

The business proved extremely

lucrative to the VoIP operators as well as the mobile companies who benefited from the traffic.

While the business was much talked about during the last four-party alliance government no actions were taken to stop the practice.

The present caretaker government took the issue seriously and started drives against illegal VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) users from January, 2007.

BTRC sources said law enforcers raided Citycell's Mohakhali office in May 2007 and found huge amounts of VoIP equipment. Later, BTRC also filed a case at Gulshan police station against Citycell.

Citycell is the country's only CDMA (code division multiple access) mobile phone operator. It launched its operations as country's first telecoms operators 14 years ago. The company domi-

nated the mobile telephony market until the entrance of its first rival Grameenphone in 1997.

Now, SingTel Asia Pacific Investments Pte Ltd owns 45 percent, Pacific Motors Limited owns 31.43 percent and Far East Telecom Limited owns 23.57 percent shares in the company.

In November 2007, the number of Citycell subscribers was 1.38 million.

Since January 2007, BTRC and joint forces have detected several dozen illegal VoIP operations.

AKTEL, the second mobile operators, blamed its recent fall in subscribers on the VoIP scandal last year.

"We were badly and psychologically affected by the VoIP case," Dato' Yusof Annuar Yaacob, chief executive officer of Telekom Malaysia (TM) International, told The Daily Star on Thursday.

## Ctg chamber seeks DFID help to develop infrastructure

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) yesterday stressed the need for developing infrastructure especially for roads, power and energy to help achieve private sector's growth, and sought assistance from DFID in this regard.

The chamber leaders at a meeting with the high officials of Department for International Development (DFID), a UK-based donor agency, also emphasised the importance of setting up more export processing zones and specific zone for agro-based products.

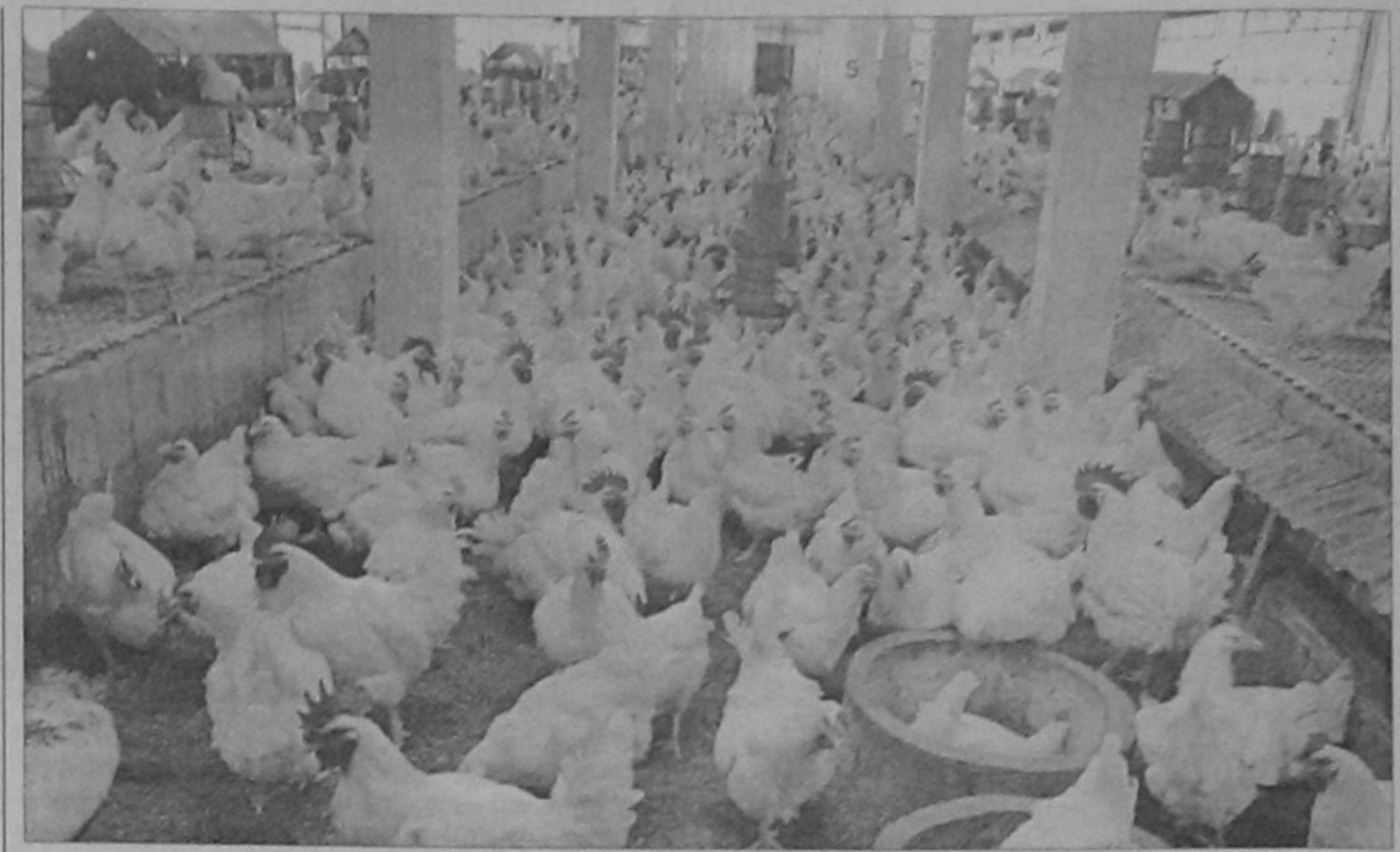
CCCI President Saifuzzaman Chowdhury at the meeting referred to insufficient gas supply to industrial zone in Chittagong and demanded adequate gas supply from national grid to solve the problem.

The chamber president also demanded a four-lane Dhaka-Chittagong toll highway and sought assistance from DFID to implement such project.

DFID Senior Private Sector Adviser Richard Boulter, Private Sector Adviser Dr Mashur Reaz and CCCI Senior Vice President MA Latif, among others, were present at the meeting.

In a bid to increase both local and foreign investment, DFID continued efforts to help set up special economic zones in different regions here, said Richard Boulter.

MA Latif put emphasis on running Chittagong Port as an autonomous organisation on the basis of public-private partnership.



A file photo of a poultry farm. Poultry farm owners in the country want a government subsidy on imported feed ingredients as the production cost of poultry feeds is surging.

## Farmers seek poultry feed subsidy to save industry

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Poultry industry players want the government to subsidise imported feed ingredients in the face of a surge in poultry feed prices.

"A majority of entrepreneurs will be forced to shut down their businesses unless the government provides subsidy for poultry feed ingredients," said Moshir Rahman, convener of Bangladesh Poultry Industries Co-Ordination Committee, comprising representatives from nine associations of the industry.

The prices of poultry feed ingredients such as maize, soybean have been rising in the international market on increased use of bio-fuel instead of fossil fuel.

Now we have to purchase a kg of maize and soybean at Tk 17 and Tk 33. In the months of June-July we procured those items by Tk 12 and Tk 18, Moshir said.

Moshir claimed that nearly half of the poultry farms faced closure in the last six months due to increasing cost of production,

resulting from steady rise in feed ingredients and poor demand for poultry meat.

An outbreak of Avian Influenza early last year has also affected the country's poultry industry, operators said.

"We are now producing 40 lakh (4 million) of one-day old poultry chicks a week instead of 65 lakh (6.5 million) a year ago," he said, adding that the sales of poultry chicks now stood at about 35 lakh per week.

With Tk 5500 crore in total investment till mid-December 2007, the sector, supporting five million people directly or indirectly through 1.5 lakh poultry farms, constitutes 1.6 percent of Bangladesh GDP, according to the South Asia Enterprise Development Facility (SEDF), a multi-donor facility managed by the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank Group.

Moshir who is also the President of World's Poultry Science Association, Bangladesh blamed the less purchasing capac-

ity of the people for the fall in demand for poultry.

Ideally demand for poultry should have been increased due to the closure of such a large number of farms, he said, "But it didn't because people's purchasing capacity has eroded faster than that of the extent of the closure."

People are now refraining from purchasing poultry meat, he said.

Increased price of main food items such as rice pushed the month to month inflation to hit a 17-year high of 11.21 percent in November last year from 10.06 percent in October.

MM Khan, technical adviser of Bangladesh Poultry Industries Association, attributed the decline in demand to relatively lower prices of alternative protein sources such as fish.

People now require spending more money on rice and soybean.

The government may save the industry from its current critical situation if the government provided the producers subsidised poultry feeds, he said.

## Meghna Petroleum makes stock debut today

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Trading of shares in Meghna Petroleum, a state-owned enterprise, begins on Dhaka and Chittagong stock exchanges today.

The ICB Securities Trading Company, issue manager of Meghna, will offload shares on the first two days of trading for two hours a day. Normal trading will start on the fourth day, as there will be no trading on the third day.

Meghna will release 12 lakh shares worth Tk 12 crore, 30 percent of the company's paid up capital, through direct listing rules. The face value of each share has been fixed at Tk10.

Prospective investors will offer prices for buying shares in the first 10 minutes of the first trading day. Based on the offered price, the ICB Securities will start selling shares.

Buyers will be allowed to place an order of minimum 100 shares (one lot) or maximum 500 shares (five lots) at a time on the first seven trading days. No investor will be allowed to sell any shares during the first two days (on spot market). After the first two days' spot trading, the company shares will be traded on the public market. Odd and Block market operations will start with normal trading from the 8th trading day.

Meghna is a subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation. The activities of the company include procurement, storage and marketing of petroleum oil and lubricant products, bitumen and LPG in Bangladesh.

This is the fourth government entity, which got listed with the bourses under the direct listing regulations.

Earlier, Jamuna Oil Company started offloading its shares on the stock exchanges on January 9, while Dhaka Electric Supply Company and Power Grid Company of Bangladesh offloaded their shares on the bourses in 2006.

Meanwhile, price indices on the stock exchanges rose yesterday.

The DSE General Index increased by 21.83 points, or 0.72 percent, to close at 3014.99 points, while the DSE All Share Price Index rose by 18.3 points, or 0.72 percent, to finish at 2541.04 points.

The CSE Selective Categories Index also rose by 41.15 points, or 0.84 percent, finishing at 4925.78 points, while the CSE All Share Price Index increased by 58.18 points, or 0.76 percent, ending at 7663.74 points.

## China GDP to grow 10.2pc in 2008

ANN/ CHINA DAILY

China's gross domestic product (GDP) is projected to grow by 10.2 percent to reach 27.93 trillion yuan (US\$3.88 trillion) in 2008, and the consumer price index (CPI) is to jump by 4.4 percent, according to a report by the country's major think tank.

The report, issued on Friday by the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), predicted China's economy would continue to enjoy strong growth, driven by the favorable economic environment.

However, the report said, the growth would be slowed down by the fluctuating prices of resource commodities in the global and domestic markets, as well as long-standing systematic problems of China's economy.



Mirza Azizul Islam, finance and planning adviser, speaks at the inaugural function of Corporate Governance Week 2008, organised by Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), in Dhaka yesterday. Faruq Ahmad Siddiqi, chairman of Securities and Exchange Commission, Farooq Sobhan, president of BEI, and YRK Reddy, chairman of Academy of Corporate Governance and Yaga Consulting of India, are also seen.

## Lack of incentives obstacle to wider application of corporate governance

Finance adviser tells opening of Corporate Governance Week

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Lack of adequate incentives is an obstacle to wider application of corporate governance in the country, Finance and Planning Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam said yesterday.

However, the Bangladesh Bank (BB) and other regulators are making efforts to encourage the practice here, added the adviser.

His comments came at the inaugural function of Corporate Governance Week 2008, organised by the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), in Dhaka.

Entrepreneurs are reluctant to practise corporate governance now since it involves costs for implementation, but the practice will

definitely benefit corporate bodies in the long run, Azizul said without elaborating.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Salehuddin Ahmed said the BB has taken initiatives to ensure corporate governance practices in banking and financial sectors.

"We have made credit rating mandatory for all banks," he added.

Micro-credit Regulatory Authority (MRA) is going to frame a set of norms for micro-finance institutions to ensure governance practices, said the BB governor, who is also the chairman of the MRA.

Faruq Ahmad Siddiqi, chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission that has introduced

corporate governance guidelines for listed companies, said the SEC is getting good responses from companies.

Faruq Ahmad also said the practice of corporate governance is relatively a new phenomenon in Bangladesh where corporate entities are dominated mostly by family ownerships.

Farooq Sobhan, president of BEI, said the BEI has initiated a project with the support of the Netherlands embassy in Dhaka to raise awareness and set standards of corporate governance in Bangladesh.

The theme of the corporate governance week is 'Corporate Governance for Growth, Development and Sustainability'.

## Malaysia eyes 40,000 tourists from Bangladesh this year

Local agent of KL firm offers reduced cost

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Malaysia is aiming to receive more than 40,000 Bangladeshi tourists in 2008, attracted by cheaper airfares and hotel costs, the local agent of Tourism Malaysia said in Dhaka yesterday.

Launching this year's brochure, Tourism Malaysia Road Show, at a press conference, Golden Holidays said the number of Bangladeshi tourists traveling to Malaysia has grown steadily during recent years, from around 25,000 in 2005 to more than 35,000 in 2007. The goal is to reach 50,000 by 2010.

These figures exclude those traveling to that country for medical treatment or business.

Malaysia is currently celebrating the 50th anniversary of its independence, said Abdul Malek Bin Abdul Aziz, High Commissioner of Malaysia in Bangladesh. Tourism is one of the primary sources of income of Malaysia, which earned US\$ 43 billion from the sector in 2007, said the high commissioner. Last year around 20 million tourists visited Malaysia.

As part of the effort to attract Bangladeshi visitors Golden Holidays is offering packages focusing on family tourists. One package reduces the current price of US\$388 to US\$ 299 for three days and two night's tours of Penang and Langkawi. The package includes a range of visits and the opportunity to participate in local festivals, said the Golden Holidays officials.

Other packages offered by Tourism Malaysia are Kuala Lumpur and Genting for US\$ 410, Kota Kinabalu for US\$ 548, and Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok for US\$ 400.

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Malaysian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Abdul Malek Bin Abdul Aziz speaks at a press conference organised in Dhaka yesterday to mark the launch of Tourism Malaysia Road Show, a campaign to attract Bangladeshi tourists to Malaysia that is aiming to receive more than 40,000 tourists from the country this year.

## Warid Telecom merges its prepaid packages

Warid Telecom has merged its all prepaid packages into a complete package, says a press release.

Dubbed as "Zem", the new combined prepaid package offers Tk 0.99 call rate from 9am to 5pm to other operators. Now all Zem connection comes at a price of Tk 99 with Tk 99 welcome talk time.

Moreover, the customers will enjoy Tk 0.25 call rate in Warid to Warid call and Tk 0.99 to other operators from 12am to 8am. Call rate for regular hours is Tk 1.80. The existing prepaid subscribers will continue to enjoy their present tariff plans.

The company has streamlined its prepaid portfolio to serve consumers more comprehensively.

## US automakers face onslaught in 2008

AFP, Detroit, Michigan

After years of crisis, the big three US automakers face another brutal year with demand expected to dip again due to an economic downturn threatening to snuff out 2007's timid recovery.

The world's major automakers will exhibit upcoming models and the concept cars of the future from Sunday as media previews kick off for the Detroit motor show. But the extravaganza comes amid gloomy predictions for the market.

"It's pretty clear that demand in the US will decline during 2008," Bruce Clark, an analyst at Moody's financial research group, told AFP.

"At this point we are anticipating total retail shipments of about 15.7 million units. But actual shipment levels could be even lower depending on the overall state of the US economy."

The three US manufacturers used to hold 95 percent of the market, but this has been chiseled to just over half as Asian firms seized 47 percent with Japan leading the charge, according to the firm Autodata.

Japanese giant Toyota for the first time passed Ford in the US auto sales rankings in 2007, taking second place behind General Motors (GM). Ford was pushed back into third place, with Chrysler in fourth.

European makers pose less of a general threat with around seven percent of the US market, but hold an edge in sales of deluxe vehicles.

Restructuring by GM from 2005 and soon afterwards by Ford and Chrysler helped them begin closing the gap with the Japanese in terms of quality and productivity.

## Germany girds for rough economic ride

AFP, Berlin

Germany has again lowered its 2008 economic growth forecast and hatched a plan to fend off a possible global recession, Der Spiegel magazine reported in its issue to be released Monday.

The report cited the economy ministry's annual report, to be presented to the cabinet in coming weeks, that growth this year would

only reach 1.8 percent.

The German government, whose economy is the largest in the 15-nation eurozone, lowered the 2008 estimate to 2.0 percent from 2.4 percent in October.

The report gave a sunnier outlook for the labour market, saying 300,000 new jobs would be created next year, leading the annual average number of people on the dole to sink to 3.5 million from 3.78

million in 2007.

But it said exports, the traditional motor of the German economy, would falter due to the strength of the euro against the dollar and the high price of oil.

It said those factors along with the US mortgage crisis and market turmoil would have a negative impact on the global economy and outlined a plan of action if the trend spiralled into a recession.

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**শ্রমিক সরবরাহ সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

১। কাজের নাম	: পিজিসিবি'র বিভিন্ন দপ্তর, উপকেন্দ্র ভবন ও গোডাউন পাহারা দেওয়ার জন্য নিরাপত্তা প্রহরী সরবরাহ।
২। বিড ডকুমেন্ট প্রাপ্তি, জমা ও খোলার স্থান	: পাওয়ার গ্রীড কোম্পানী অব বাংলাদেশ লিঃ (পিজিসিবি), রেড ক্রিসেন্ট কনকর্ড টাওয়ার (৬-৭ম তলা), ১৭ মহাখালী বা/এ, ঢাকা-১২১২। লেটার হেড প্যাচে আবেদন ও অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্রের কপি দাখিল সাপেক্ষে বিড ডকুমেন্ট বিক্রয় করা হইবে।
৩। বিড ডকুমেন্টের মূল্য	: প্রতিটি বিড ডকুমেন্টের মূল্য ২০০/- (দুইশত) টাকা মাত্র (অক্ষেরযোগ্য)। পাওয়ার গ্রীড কোম্পানী অব বাংলাদেশ লিঃ (পিজিসিবি) এর অনুকূলে পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফটের মাধ্যমে পরিশোধ করিতে হইবে।
৪। বিড ডকুমেন্ট বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	: ৩০/০১/০৮ইং দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
৫। বিড ডকুমেন্ট জমা দানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	: ৩১/০১/০৮ইং দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
৬। বিড ডকুমেন্ট খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	: ৩১/০১/০৮ইং দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
৭। আর্নেস্ট মানি	: দরপত্রের সহিত ২,০০,০০০/- (দুই লক্ষ) টাকা আর্নেস্টমানি হিসাবে বাংলাদেশের যে কোন তফসিলি ব্যাংক হইতে পাওয়ার গ্রীড কোম্পানী অব বাংলাদেশ লিঃ (পিজিসিবি) এর অনুকূলে পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফটের মাধ্যমে দাখিল করিতে হইবে।
৮। কাজ সমাপ্তির সময়সীমা	: কার্যদেশ প্রাপ্তির ১ (এক) মাস।
৯। ঠিকাদারের যোগ্যতা	: বিগত ০৫ (পাঁচ) বৎসরে ন্যূনতম পাঁচটি সেক্টর কর্পোরেশন/বৃহৎ কোন বিদেশী সংস্থার অনুরূপ কাজের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকিতে হইবে।
১০। পাওয়ার গ্রীড কোম্পানী অব বাংলাদেশ লিঃ (পিজিসিবি) কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা যে কোন দরপত্র বাতিল করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করেন।	

মহাব্যবস্থাপক  
(সিএডএ)