

Bangladeshis spend lowest on mobile phone in South Asia

MD HASAN
Bangladeshis spend less on mobile phone use than any other people in South Asia, a new study reveals.
The study, conducted by LIRNEasia, a regional policy and regulation think tank, found that Bangladesh ranked No 1 in terms of affordability of cost by the low, medium and high mobile users in both prepaid and postpaid, followed by Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka.
LIRNEasia calculated OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) baskets in three levels using volume of calls and SMS per month. According to the study, a low prepaid user means a person who talks 68 minutes per month on an average and low postpaid user means a 207-minute talking time per month.

In the case of medium users the study considers 175-minute and 535-minute talking time per month for prepaid and postpaid customers. And high user means 378-minute talking time for prepaid and 1155-minute talking time for postpaid.
In purchasing parity (PPP) terms, reflecting affordability, Pakistan has been adjudged the most affordable, followed by Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India in the prepaid segment. In the Saarc region, Afghans spend the highest on mobile phone use.
Industry insiders said stiff competition among the six mobile phone operators has led to tariff reduction, resulting in reducing operator's average revenue per user to Tk146 a month, which is the main reason for the affordability in cost. Among the eight South

Asian countries, for the low user, essentially the poorer user, the average monthly cost of using a mobile in Bangladesh is as low as \$2.46 per month in case of prepaid. In the case of low users in prepaid basket, Pakistan (\$3.34), India (\$3.72) and Sri Lanka (\$3.83) followed Bangladesh. Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives were brought under the study.
The study said average monthly-prepaid mobile cost for a medium user in Bangladesh is \$5.86, whereas Pakistan's cost is \$8.12, India's \$8.93 and Sri Lanka's \$9.41.
In the case of high user, Bangladesh also is the cheapest market. The study found that for high prepaid users average monthly expenditure is \$12.31, followed by

Pakistan's \$16.92, India's \$18.32 and Sri Lanka's \$20.046. Afghanistan is on the top list in terms of cost that ranges from \$8.33 for low user to \$43.34 for higher user.
For postpaid users, the lowest-use basket is in Bangladesh (\$7.14), followed by India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
Commenting on the study, country's leading telecom operator Grameenphone's Chief Executive Officer Anders Jensen said, "This shows that affordable prices are a prerequisite to growth and we can deliver growth beyond expectations in a competitive market."
"However, to continue the growth we have to make it profitable, which means all cost elements including taxes must be rationalised," he said.
"Now we are in a position to increase the penetration rate

further from less than 25 percent as the tariffs have become much more affordable for a larger number of people. However, the operators must be in a position to make continued investments to increase capacity and introduce new technologies," Jensen said.
Calculating in PPP, Bangladesh obtained the second position in monthly-prepaid basket at all users level. Average prepaid mobile cost for a low, medium and high user in Bangladesh is \$11.66, \$27.79 and \$58.37 respectively. In Pakistan it is \$10.57, \$25.69 and \$53.55 at the level of low, medium and high user.
In the case of postpaid PPP, Bangladesh holds the lowest position at both the medium and high user level. But it has been adjudged the second (\$33.83) at low user level, followed by Pakistan (\$33.32).

Govt likely to announce revised budget month-end

STAR BUSINESS REPORT
The government is likely to announce the revised budget for the current fiscal by the end of this month or in first week of April.
Sources said officials at the finance and planning ministry have already prepared the final draft of the revenue budget and Annual Development Programme (ADP).
"Usually, the revised budget is placed in June along with the proposed budget for the next fiscal, but from now on the revised budget will be placed in March under the newly approved Public Resources and Budget Management Ordinance, 2008," said a finance ministry official.
Under the ordinance, the finance ministry will place quarterly review report of the budget to the Parliament, the official said.
The size of the ADP in the revised budget for the 2007-08 fiscal amounts to Tk 22,500 crore, 52 percent of which would come from domestic sources, while the rest would come from foreign sources.
Tk 26,500 crore was originally allocated for ADP.
A planning ministry official said the revised ADP is likely to be placed during the National Economic Council (NEC) meeting on March 24 or 25 for approval.
The official said, "The revised revenue budget is almost at its final stage with some issues still to be decided on."
"Total subsidy requirement of different ministries is around Tk 16,000 crore for the 2007-08 fiscal," he said.

VIOLATION OF BOND FACILITY 4 business houses agree to pay Tk14.5cr duty

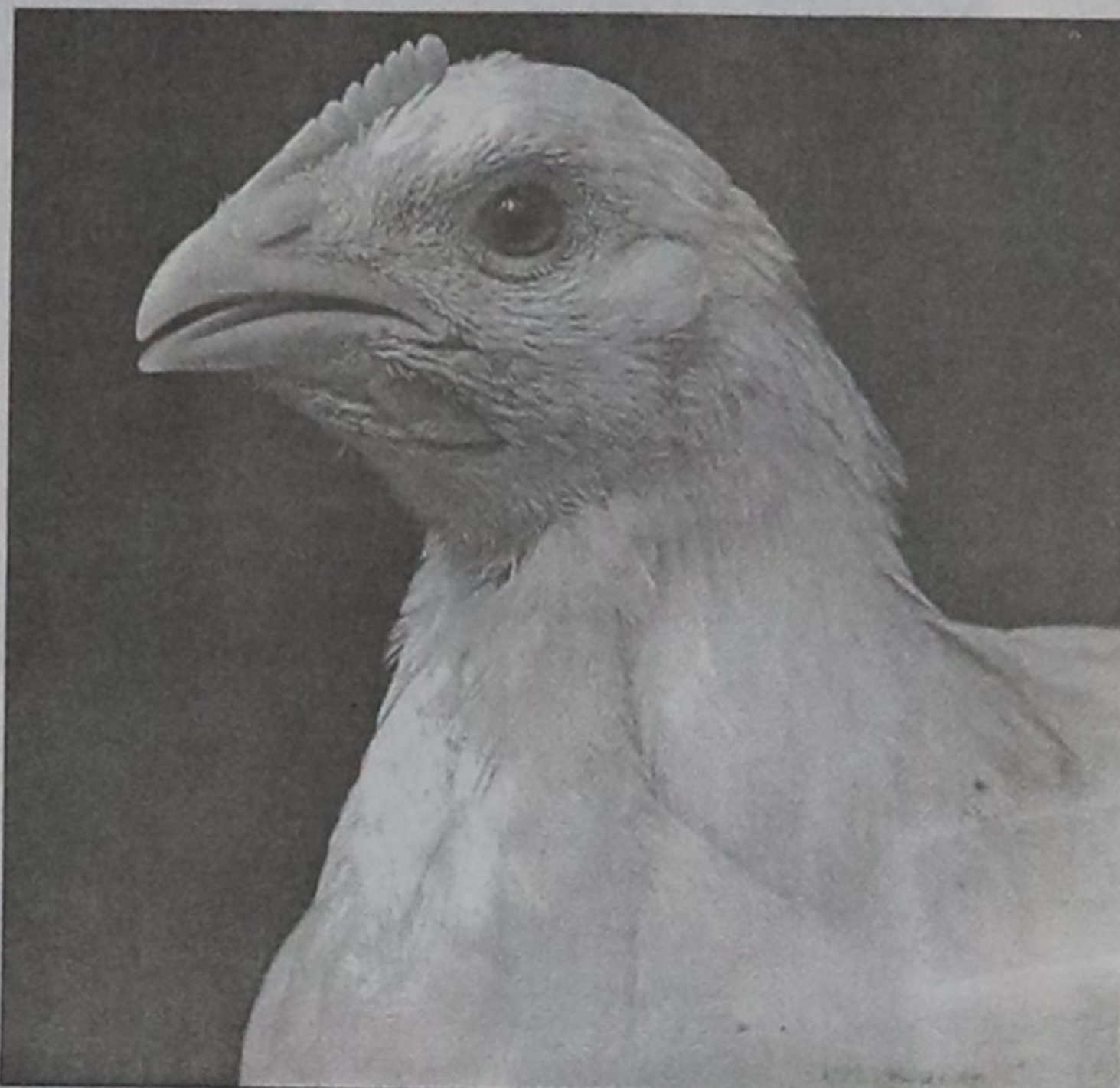
ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD, Ctg
Four business houses have agreed to pay Tk 14.5 crore in duty after they were found breaching conditions relating to duty-free import of machinery.
After a meeting with Chittagong Customs House officials and representatives of taskforces on Monday S Alam Group, Perfect Group, Mostafa Group and Fahim Sanitaris on Monday said they will pay the amount by Thursday.
According to sources, the four importers imported capital machinery with zero duty under bond facility for setting up export-oriented factories in the country. The duty on the machinery ranged between 5 percent and 7 percent.
The importers imported machinery duty-free giving guarantee for exporting of at least 80 percent of the products of the factories. The importers also pledged to make payment of the exempted duty if conditions of the bond facility are violated.
Such duty-free import facility was aimed at boosting industrialization.
An investigation carried out by taskforces revealed that many of the importers using the bond facilities are not using the machinery or materials of duty-free imports for export purposes.
Many of them are not exporting their products. Some importers of machinery even did not set up any factories rather they sold the machinery and equipment in local markets.
The malpractice has deprived the government of a huge amount of revenue, revealed the taskforce investigation.
A high official said the amount of evaded duty will be over Tk 300 crore.
According to sources, S Alam Group evaded duty of Tk 5 crore, Perfect Group Tk 5.37 crore, Mostafa Group Tk 1.69 crore and Fahim Sanitaris Tk 2.46 crore.
However, Far Ceramic -- another participant of the negotiations with customs officials and taskforces members, claimed to have used all machinery and materials they imported under bond facility.
The importer said it has exported its products and will produce all the related documents in the next meeting on Thursday, said the sources.
Chittagong Customs Commissioner (Import) Nasir Uddin presided over the negotiations where C&F agents were also present.

BSRS-BSB merger on cards

STAR BUSINESS REPORT
The government is going for merger of Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha (BSRS) and Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (BSB) to strengthen their operations, Finance Adviser Dr Mirza Azizul Islam said yesterday.
The finance adviser said: "Merging between BSRS and BSB is under process."
Azizul Islam said since BSRS and BSB are doing the same job -- providing industrial credits -- he finds no reason to run these organisations separately.
"After merger these two institutions would be able to carry out work in a large scale," he told reporters, after BSRS

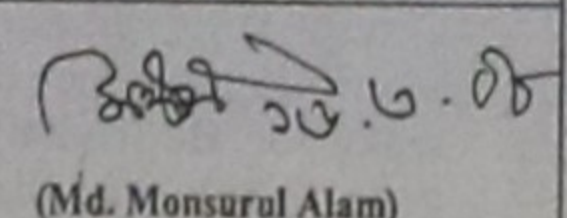
gave him a cheque for Tk 1 crore as dividend for the year 2007 at the Ministry of Finance.
The government has to amend the laws for the merger if the two organisations, sources in the finance ministry said. A new company has to be formed to operate the merged entity.
Replying to a question, Azizul said the government did not change its stand to offload shares in BSRS in the capital market.
Earlier, the caretaker government in 2007 decided to privatise the BSRS and accordingly formed a three-member committee to work on it.
BSRS was established in

1972 to provide credit facilities and other assistance to industrial concerns and to encourage the investment in Bangladesh. BSB provides financial and technical assistance to private and public sectors.
BSRS Managing Director Hafiz Ul Islam said the profit-making BSRS has made fresh efforts to strengthen its operations by reducing the classified loans and disbursing fresh loans.
Earlier, Asian Development Bank Country Director Hua Du made a courtesy call on the finance adviser and reassured Bangladesh of the Bank's continued support.



Poultry traders urged to take bio-security steps

STAR BUSINESS REPORT
Speakers at a view-exchanging meeting yesterday urged poultry traders to take proper bio-security measures and build waste management systems in poultry markets to check the spread of bird flu.
Urging people to participate in the preventive and awareness programmes of different organisations to prevent bird flu, they said integrated efforts and participation of the people is a must in this regard.
Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) organised the meeting between the representatives of government and non-government organisations and poultry industry in the city.
Dr Golam Kibria, Civil Surgeon of Directorate of Health, said there is no need to be scared as the virus remains in the birds.
Dr Mosaddeq Hossain, chief veterinary officer of Central Veterinary Hospital, directorate of Livestock, said wearing gloves and masks, proper disposal of bird waste and building awareness is a must to check the spread of the virus.
"The hawking of chickens will be stopped and chickens examined before entering Dhaka and will be dressed in the slaughterhouses before sale," he said.
Maniklal Samadder, special assistant to the Chief Adviser, said though the poultry industry experienced huge loss following the outbreak of avian influenza, people started purchasing poultry chicks and eggs again.
This has been possible due to preventive initiatives and awareness publicity by different government and non-government organisations and media regarding bird flu, he added.
"Integrated effort of all is a must to bring back the poultry industry to its earlier position," urging the traders to ensure proper bio-security measures in their respective firms and in the markets.
Samadder said, "We have to continue these programmes round the year for the sake of our health and environment."
He also said the government has taken initiatives to formulate bio-security measures and build proper waste management system in the markets of other municipalities.
The government has almost finalised the poultry policy to ensure proper flourish of the poultry industry, he said.
DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka said it (bird flu) is a concern of all and we have to combat the spread of the virus together in the future.
Banks to be asked to suspend loan recovery from poultry farmers
STAR BUSINESS REPORT
In the context of an outbreak of bird flu in the country, the Bangladesh Bank (BB) yesterday decided that it would issue directives to commercial banks to suspend their initiatives to recover loans, disbursed to poultry farms, for one year.
"A circular will be sent to all commercial banks to this effect within a couple of days," said a central bank source.
Recovery of the principal amount will be suspended for one year and interest on the loan for six months so that the poultry businessmen can recover the losses due to bird flu.
The BB will also direct the commercial banks to disburse new loans to the poultry sector under easy conditions.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training 89/2 Kakrail, Dhaka. Invitation for Tenders (Goods)				
1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Labour & Employment			
2. Agency	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training			
3. Procuring Entity Name	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training			
4. Procuring Entity Code	3101			
5. Procuring Entity District	Dhaka			
6. Invitation for	Tender for Procurement of Vehicle (Microbus), Text & reference book.			
7. Invitation Ref No.	B.M.E.T/7 TTC/PIU/ Transport & Book/2008/137			
8. Date	16/03/2008			
Key information				
9. Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (National)			
Funding information				
10. Budget and Source of Funds	2007-2008, GOB			
11. Development Partners (if applicable)	N/A			
Particular information				
12. Project/Programme Code (if applicable)	5040			
13. Project/Programme Name (if applicable)	Establishment of 7 Technical Training Centers in Thakurgaon, Lalmonirhat, Chapainawabgonj, Khagrachori, Laxmipur, Narshingdi & Natore District (revised).			
14. Tender Package No.	02 (Two) Packages.			
15. Tender Package Name	Procurement of Vehicle (Microbus), Text & Reference Book.			
16. Tender Last Selling Date	16/04/2008			
17. Tender Closing Date and Time	17/04/2008		Time: 2.00PM	
18. Tender Opening Date and Time	17/04/2008		Time: 3.00PM	
19. Name & Address of the office (s)	Address			
- Selling Tender Document	Project Office: "Establishment of 7 Technical Training Centers in Thakurgaon, Lalmonirhat, Chapainawabgonj, Khagrachori, Laxmipur, Narshingdi and Natore" District (revised) (7 th Floor), & Training and Planning wing (3 rd Floor), B.M.E.T, 89/2, Kakrail, Dhaka.			
- Receiving Tender Document	Additional Director General (Training) B.M.E.T, 89/2, Kakrail (1 st Floor), Dhaka.			
- Opening Tender Document	Do			
20. Place / Date / Time of Pre-Tender Meeting	Do			
Information for Tenderer				
21. Eligibility of Tender	As per condition of STD			
22. Brief Description of Goods or Works	As per schedule			
23. Brief Description of Related Services	As per schedule			
24. Price of Tender Document (Tk.)	Tk. 1000/= Per Package			
25. Package No	Identification of Package/Lot	Location	Tender Security Amount (In Lac Tk.)	Completion Time
1.	Vehicle (Microbus)	Thakurgaon, Lalmonirhat, Chapainawabgonj, Khagrachori, Laxmipur, Narshingdi & Natore.	2.80	02 (two) months from the date of issuing work order.
2.	Text & Reference Book.	Thakurgaon, Lalmonirhat, Chapainawabgonj, Khagrachori, Laxmipur, Narshingdi & Natore.	0.22	Do
Procuring Entity Details				
26. Name of official inviting Tender	Md. Monsurul Alam			
27. Designation of official inviting Tender	Project Director			
28. Address of official inviting Tender	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, 89/2, Kakrail (7 th Floor), Dhaka-1000.			
29. Contact details of official inviting Tender	Tel No- 9355944	Fax No-9355944		
The procuring Entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders without assigning any reason there of.				
 (Md. Monsurul Alam) Project Director				

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT
GRAMEEN MUTUAL FUND ONE
RECORD DATE

Consequent to determination received from the Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC) as regards to the pre-requisite of compliance and specific performance of Rule 46(2) of the SEC (Mutual Fund) Rules 2001, AIMS of Bangladesh Limited is pleased to announce a RECORD DATE for GRAMEEN ONE, the first Scheme of GRAMEEN MUTUAL FUND ONE on March 25, 2008.

All Unitholder(s) whose name appear on the Register of the Fund on the Record Date will be issued with an 'Entitlement' for subscription under private placement of same number of units of Tk10 each against respective holding(s) at par for a total amount of Tk17 crore with minimum of 500 units or multiples thereof in the Tk125 crore "GRAMEEN ONE : SCHEME TWO", the proposed second scheme of the Fund under sponsorship of Grameen Bank.

'Entitlement(s)' will be ready for hand delivery from the office of AIMS of Bangladesh Limited at Unique Trade Center (UTC), 8 Panthopath (Level 6), Karwan Bazar, Dhaka 1215 during normal office hours of weekdays from April 01, 2008 to April 03, 2008. Thereafter, those will be dispatched through courier service to the respective mailing addresses at the risk and responsibility of the recipients. Subscription against the 'Entitlement(s)' will be collected between April 01, 2008 to April 10, 2008.

AIMS of BANGLADESH LIMITED
Unique Trade Center (UTC), Level 6, 8 Panthopath, Karwan Bazar, Dhaka 1215
Telephone : 913 6432-4 (three lines), Fax: 913 6162-3 (two lines)
Email : hello@aims-bangladesh.com; Web : www.aims-bangladesh.com

বাংলাদেশ অভ্যন্তরীণ নৌ-পরিবহন কর্তৃপক্ষ
১৪১-১৪৩, মতিঝিল বা/এ, ঢাকা-১০০০
শ্রেণি বিভাগ, ঢাকা
দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি
নং ১৭/২০০৭-০৮

বাংলাদেশ অভ্যন্তরীণ নৌ-পরিবহন কর্তৃপক্ষের অধীনে নিম্নবর্ণিত সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজের অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন ত্রিকাদারদের নিকট হইতে "দীর্ঘ মেয়াদী বনন প্রকল্প" এর আওতায় নিম্নবর্ণিত কাজসমূহের জন্য নির্ধারিত ক্ষমতা দক্ষ-গুমারী (Itemwise) সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাইতেছে। উক্তব্য, দরপত্রটি দরপত্র দলিলের অংশ হিসাবে বিবেচিত হইবে। দরপত্র উদ্ভূত দর প্রচলিত বাজার দরের সহিত সংগতিপূর্ণ হইতে হইবে। "The Public Procurement Regulation-2003" অনুসারে দরপত্র মূল্যায়ন করা হইবে এবং CPTU কর্তৃক প্রস্তুতকৃত STD অনুযায়ী চুক্তি স্বাক্ষর করিতে হইবে।

১। প্রকল্পের নাম	১। দীর্ঘ মেয়াদী বনন প্রকল্প।
২। তহবিলের উৎস	২। বাংলাদেশ সরকার।
৩। দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়ের অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	৩। (ক) হিসাব বিভাগ, বাসনৌপক ভবন, ১৪১-১৪৩, মতিঝিল বা/এ, ঢাকা-১০০০। (খ) হিসাব বিভাগ, টার্মিনাল বিল্ডিং, সদরঘাট, বাসনৌপক, ঢাকা।
৪। দরপত্র দলিল গ্রহণের অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	৪। (ক) প্রধান প্রকৌশলীর দপ্তর, শ্রেণি বিভাগ, ৭ম তলা, বাসনৌপক, ১৪১-১৪৩, মতিঝিল বা/এ, ঢাকা। (খ) নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর দপ্তর, প্রকৌশল বিভাগ, বাসনৌপক, সদরঘাট, ঢাকা।
৫। দরপত্র দলিল খোলার অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	৫। প্রধান প্রকৌশলীর দপ্তর, শ্রেণি বিভাগ, ৭ম তলা, বাসনৌপক, ১৪১-১৪৩, মতিঝিল বা/এ, ঢাকা।
৬। দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	৬। ০২/০৪/২০০৮ তারিখ (বুধবার), অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
৭। দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়ের তারিখ ও সময়	৭। ০৩/০৪/২০০৮ তারিখ (বৃহস্পতিবার), ১২০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
৮। দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	৮। ০৩/০৪/২০০৮ তারিখ (বৃহস্পতিবার), ১৪০০ ঘটিকা।
৯। কাজের সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ	

স্টাফ নম্বর	কাজের নাম	টেন্ডার সিকিউরিটির টাকার পরিমাণ	প্রতিদেয় দরপত্র দলিলের মূল্য (অফিসের তহবিল)	কাজের সময়সীমা
০১।	আড়িঢাল বা নদীর বদলুনি-টরাক-মাদারীপুর নৌ-পথে ড্রেজিংয়ের নিমিত্তে বনন সহায়ক কাজ।	১৪,০০০.০০	৪০০.০০	ড্রেজিং কাজ চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত
০২।	আড়িঢাল বা নদীর বদলুনি-টরাক-মাদারীপুর নৌ-পথে ড্রেজিংয়ের নিমিত্তে ড্রেজিংকৃত মাটি প্রতিস্থাপনের জন্য মাটির ভাইক মারা কম্পার্টমেন্ট নির্মাণ কাজ।	১৬,০০০.০০	৪০০.০০	-

১০। দরপত্র অংশগ্রহণকারী ত্রিকাদারকে দরপত্রের সাথে নবানবকৃত লাইসেন্স, জাট, আয়কর, ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজের অভিজ্ঞতা সনদের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি সংযোজন করিতে হইবে।
১১। কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতীতে কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ কিংবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

মোঃ গোলাম রব্বানী
তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী (পুর)
শ্রেণি বিভাগ, বাসনৌপক, ঢাকা
জিডি-১২৮৭