

সমৃদ্ধির (শোপান) দ্বিগুণ আয়ের শ্রেষ্ঠ উপায়

সমৃদ্ধির (শোপান) দ্বিগুণ আয়ের শ্রেষ্ঠ উপায়

সর্বাধুনিক প্রযুক্তি ও সমৃদ্ধ ব্যাংকিং সেবায় আমানত দ্বিগুণ করুন স্বল্পসময়ে

ইসলামী শরী'আহ মূদারাবা নীতির ভিত্তিতে পরিচালিত

যে কোন প্রয়োজনে ০৯৬১২০০১১২২



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Realtors' woes compounded by blockade

They lost Tk 792cr in the last 22 days

SUMAN SAHA

The real estate sector has incurred losses of around Tk 792 crore over the last 22 days due to the non-stop blockade, which has knocked the sector's supply chain.

"Our sector is passing through a very difficult time as we are unable to bring in raw materials," said Liakat Ali Bhuiyan, vice-president of the Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh.

As a result, most realtors are keeping construction work on hold. "Yet, the workers' wages have to be paid regardless of work being done or not."

On average, the daily overhead cost of a real estate company is around Tk 3 lakh, meaning the blockade is causing losses of Tk 36 crore to REHAB's 1,200 members a day.

The recent political violence has emerged as the latest setback to the real estate sector, said Toufiq M Seraj, managing director of Sheltech, which has around 25 ongoing projects in Dhaka.

"We have to stop or slow our construction work due to insufficient materials," he said, adding that his company procures construction materials such as rod, cement and stone from various parts of the country.

But the non-stop blockade has disrupted the supply chain, said Seraj, also a former president of REHAB.

AT A GLANCE

- Realtors lose Tk 36cr a day due to blockade
- Transportation costs rise 50%
- Apartment sales fall more than 60%
- REHAB has 1,200 members who build 15,000 flats a year
- The sector employs 1 lakh skilled people and another 35 lakh in linkage industries

Construction is a very complex sector as its workflow depends on the smooth supply of materials, said Tanveerul Haque Probal, managing director of Building For Future Ltd.

Blockades and strikes affect mostly the projects that are at their final stages, as most of the artisans who add the finishing touches live outside of Dhaka and cannot travel to and from the worksite, he added.

Even if they manage to get deliveries of their raw materials, they have to pay higher transport fares.

READ MORE ON B3

Safe food act to be effective from Feb 1

SOHEL PARVEZ

The government is going to start implementing the Safe Food Act 2013 from the beginning of next month to fight adulteration and protect public health.

Last week, the public administration ministry issued notices to appoint three members out of the five-member Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA). A member-secretary has also been appointed.

"We expect to appoint a chairman of the authority by tomorrow (today) and we will implement the law from February 1," Food Minister Md Qamrul Islam told The Daily Star by phone yesterday.

In a gazette issued on Monday, the food ministry said the law would come into force on February 1. This was issued after the government appointed two professors from the University of Dhaka and a former member of Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) as members of the food safety authority.

READ MORE ON B3

GP may be left out of first round of airwave auction

ABDULLAH MAMUN

Grameenphone may not be able to take part in the upcoming auction of 1,800 megahertz spectrum band on April 30.

Operators who have spectrum less than 20 MHz in the GSM bands -- 900 MHz and 1,800 MHz -- that provide voice services are eligible to participate in the auction, according to a guideline.

Grameenphone is the only operator that has more than 20 MHz spectrum in those bands.

The guideline on assignment of spectrum was sent to the telecom ministry recently for approval.

If the entire sellable spectrum of 10.6 MHz is not sold in the first round of auction, Grameenphone will be able to take part in the second round, according to the guideline.

It means that in the first round of auction, only Banglalink, Robi, Airtel, Teletalk and Citycell will be offered to purchase two blocks of spectrum -- 5.6 MHz and 5 MHz each.

But if any block remains unsold after the first round, Grameenphone will be called in to participate, according to the guideline.

Grameenphone has termed the policy 'discriminatory'.

Mahmud Hossain, chief corporate affairs officer of Grameenphone, said, "We are yet to see any indication of the promised resolutions from the government. Moreover, we also noted during the meeting at the ministry that there are discriminatory provisions in the proposed spectrum auction."

"In the circumstances, we cannot make an investment decision before these critical issues are resolved," he said.

The telecom regulator proposed each megahertz spectrum in the 1,800 MHz band at a starting price of \$30 million, which is efficient for voice services in urban areas. This is also a business-friendly band for 4G or long term evolution (LTE) services.

Md Sarwar Alam, secretary and spokesperson of Bangladesh

	Subscriber (Million)	Spectrum (900, 1800, 2100 MHz)	Spectral Efficiency (Subscriber/MHz)
GP	51.2	32	1.6
BANGLALINK	30.68	20	1.5
ROBI	25.25	19.8	1.3
AIRTEL	7.47	20	0.37
TELETALK	3.8	25.2	0.15

Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, said the regulator has proposed this policy to create a level-playing field among the operators so that no operator holds excess spectrum.

He said Grameenphone already has 22 MHz of GSM spectrum, which is enough to provide good quality services. Other operators need more spectrum to provide quality services, which will create competition among the operators, he added.

When new technology will be allowed, Grameenphone will be able to provide new services but some other operators will not, as they have fewer spectrum in the 1,800 MHz band, Alam said.

At the same time, he said the regulator has already allowed operators to share towers and is now working to allow active infrastructure sharing, which will reduce investment costs.

Through active infrastructure sharing, operators will be allowed to share their switches or base stations.

The regulator also proposed the 2,100 MHz band at \$22 million per megahertz, which the operators currently use for 3G services. All the operators are eligible to participate in the auction to purchase 15 MHz of airwave in this segment.

Another official of Grameenphone said the operator may have more spectrum than others, but it is also serving the maximum subscriber base of 43 percent in the market. So, in the future, Grameenphone will require more spectrum to offload LTE services, the official added.

In 2011, when 2G licences of the mobile operators were renewed, Grameenphone paid much higher than other operators.

All the mobile operators in Bangladesh had almost the same amount of spectrum -- around 15 MHz -- when they received licences, but later in 2008 and 2013, Grameenphone purchased additional spectrum that took the operator ahead compared to other operators in terms of airwave sharing.



Visitors look at an automatic food packaging machine at a stall at the Dhaka International Plastic, Packaging, and Printing Industrial Fair at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital yesterday.

Plastic fair kicks off amid high hopes

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

All roads led to Dhaka for the top plastic, packaging and printing goods and equipment makers from home and abroad yesterday, when a four-day grand fair kicked off.

More than 260 manufacturers from 16 countries including Bangladesh set up shops at the 10th Dhaka International Plastic, Packaging, and Printing Industrial Fair, organised by Bangladesh Plastic Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BPGMEA) and Chan Chao International Company Ltd, Taiwan.

One such exhibitor is Polycell, which came all the way from Korea to popularise its plastic foam machine, said Soony Park, an assistant manager of the company.

The fair offers a chance to meet local as well as foreign buyers, said Atiqur Rahman, a manager at Padma Group of Converters, which is showing products mostly used in the pharmaceutical industry.

To make the best of the opportunity, Bengal Group of Industries, one of the top plastic goods producers in

the country, has kept with a dedicated corner for its export-oriented household and industrial products.

RFL, which exports to 36 countries, had a number of foreigners at its stall when the correspondent dropped by.

So popular were its household products that the company finished half of its allotted stock for the fair on the first day alone, said Nayem Noman, the stall in-charge.

Artisan Craft (BD) Ltd is another company participating in the fair, hoping to cement its reputation as a quality manufacturer of cooling machine systems.

Despite being the only local manufacturer of industrial cooling system, it still has to fend off stiff competition, said its Managing Director Shahed Hassan.

"We operate in an environment where many believe that the local products are not of good quality. But that is not true -- we are producing quality products."

Hatim Polymer Ltd, which exports household products to eastern India, is using the fair to launch its new CPVC pipes, said its Zonal Manager Habibur Rahman.

The local plastic industry has the potential to become a major foreign currency earner after the garment industry, according to analysts.

Subsequently, Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed said in his inauguration speech that the government would leave no stone unturned for the sector to hit the \$1 billion-mark in exports by 2021.

Last fiscal year, the industry raked in \$85.78 million, up from \$84.51 million in fiscal 2012-13.

Other than providing cash incentives for export of plastic products, the government would also set up an industrial park for the industry, the minister said.

Jasim Uddin, president of BPGMEA, and Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, also spoke.

The fair, which is being held at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, is open to visitors from 12pm to 8pm. Entry to the fair is free of charge.

At present, plastic products worth Tk 20,000 crore are produced and marketed locally per year, according to BPGMEA.

STAR

New IPO subscription system gets green light

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Investors will be able to apply for primary shares through stockbrokers and merchant banks instead of commercial banks from April under a new IPO subscription system.

The new system, which has been approved by the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission yesterday at a meeting, will cut down the processing time to less than one month from the existing two months and above.

As per the new subscription mechanism, to participate in an initial public offering an investor will have to give instruction in a pre-scripted paper or electronic form to the stockbrokers or merchant banks with whom a beneficiary owner's account is maintained.

The applicant's instruction should come within 25 working days from the publication date of IPO prospectus.

The form should contain the customer ID, name, BO account number, number of securities applied for, total amount and category of the applicant.

Money will have to be available in the customer's account; no margin facility, advance or deferred payment will be allowed for IPO subscription.

After verifying the availability of the fund, the stockbroker or the merchant bank will block the amount equivalent to the application money and accumulate all the applications or instructions received up to the subscription closing date.

READ MORE ON B3

Beacon Pharma to invest Tk 290cr for expansion

New units to come on stream by 2016

GAZI TOWHID AHMED

Beacon Pharmaceuticals, a leading medicine exporter, will invest Tk 160 crore to set up a new unit to expand the production of anti-cancer drugs.

The company is putting in an additional Tk 130 crore to start two new units -- oral liquid and cephalosporin (antibiotics).

The oral-liquid unit will begin production in July and the cephalosporin unit in December. The oncology unit will come on stream by the end of 2016 with an annual capacity of producing medicines worth Tk 250 crore, said Mohammad Ebadul Karim, managing director of the company.

With the three new units, the company will have five units with a total capacity of producing medicines worth Tk 750 crore a year.

"We are expanding our production capacity in response to growing demand for anti-cancer medicines in Asian, African and Latin American markets."

Beacon, the first local anti-cancer medicine exporter, sells products to Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Uzbekistan and Ghana, Karim said.

"We are receiving very good responses from Asian markets."

The company exported more than Tk 9 crore of medicines last year, registering around 100 percent growth, compared to the previous year. Of the exported products, 85 percent were oncology items.

Beacon that began exports in 2012 produces 62 oncology products. "We have set a target to export products worth more than Tk 15 crore this year."

The company accounts for 40 percent of the anti-cancer medicine sales in the local market, followed by Roche Bangladesh, the local arm of the Swiss healthcare company.

"We are selling some anti-cancer medicines at prices that are a tenth of the price of

BY THE NUMBERS

- NEW ONCOLOGY UNIT TO COST TK 160CR
- TWO ADDITIONAL UNITS FOR ORAL LIQUID, ANTIBIOTICS TO COST TK 130CR
- EXPORTS MORE THAN TK 9CR IN 2014
- EXPORT TARGET MORE THAN TK 15CR FOR 2015

foreign companies," Karim said.

The locally produced anti-cancer medicines are at least 30 percent cheaper than imported ones, he added.

The company's annual turnover stood at Tk 225 crore last year.

The company's shares traded between Tk 16.5 and Tk 17 to finally close at Tk 17 yesterday, according to Dhaka Stock Exchange.

The anti-cancer drug market in Bangladesh is growing at 20 percent a year due to an alarming rise in cancer patients.


Locally-produced drugs are meeting 86 percent of the country's demand, while the remaining 14 percent is met through imports, according to Intercontinental Marketing Services, an international research firm. The number of cancer patients is growing in Bangladesh due to adulterated food and a polluted environment, according to the company.

In 2012, 15 lakh people were diagnosed with cancer, up from 12 lakh a year ago, according to the National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital.

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