

# Businesses to benefit from alternative dispute resolution methods: analysts

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Businesses can derive benefit from alternative dispute resolution methods, particularly mediation, which is already available in the country, to resolve commercial and investment disputes, analysts said yesterday.

Mediation can be especially a good alternative to the costly and time-consuming judicial process, they said. The government has already brought about a number of amendments to laws to make mediation mandatory in civil and money loan cases, in keeping with established practices in the developed world.

"These provisions cannot be implemented in the absence of awareness about the benefits of alternative dispute resolution methods," said Mahbubur Rahman, chairman of Bangladesh International Arbitration Centre (BIAC). He spoke at a workshop jointly organised by BIAC and Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) at the latter's auditorium in the capital.

The workshop aimed to create awareness about resolution of commercial disputes outside the court through mediation, accord-



Mahbubur Rahman, chairman of Bangladesh International Arbitration Centre, attends a workshop on commercial mediation, jointly organised by BIAC and Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, at the chamber's auditorium in the capital yesterday. Latifur Rahman, BIAC Council member; Syed Nasim Manzur, president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and Hossain Khaled, president of DCCI, were also present.

ing to a statement from BIAC.

An enabling framework is necessary for entrepreneurship to flourish in trade and investment, Rahman said, while moderating the workshop.

"One key requirement is quick and cost-effective methods to resolve commercial and investment disputes. However, in regard to Bangladesh, we have a long way to go."

BIAC has developed facilities and professionals who are highly qualified and trained by world renowned institutions to help mediation grow, he said.

"We are committed to providing our businesses with the required infrastructure and facilities to take advantage of the law amendments."

The first international arbitration institution of the country,

BIAC started its operations in April 2011. The International Chamber of Commerce Bangladesh, DCCI and Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) are the sponsors of the centre.

But it has not gained the popularity as hoped by the sponsors earlier, though business communities around the world are increasingly adopting alternative means to resolving conflict, as conven-

tional routes are blamed to be costlier and time-consuming.

This led BIAC to seek assistance from the government in popularising the alternative dispute resolution system.

The sponsors believe the system could cut the courts' burden of dealing with commercial and business disputes. It has called for making rules so people go to the centre to have their disputes settled before going to court.

The courts in Bangladesh, like in many other countries, are overburdened. There are as many as 2.4 million cases pending, of which roughly one million are civil cases, according to BIAC.

The BIAC has great potential but people do not know much about it, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said earlier.

Latifur Rahman, chairman and chief executive of Transcom Group; Syed Nasim Manzur, president of MCCI; Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury, former adviser to the caretaker government; Barrister Fida M Kamal, former attorney general; Helal Ahmed Chowdhury, former managing director of Pubali Bank, and Hossain Khaled, president of DCCI, also spoke.

# Tofail urges G7 to help build sustainable garment supply chain

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Bangladesh has urged G7 countries to provide greater support to build a sustainable global supply chain to uphold justice and give fair prices to local garment makers.

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed made the call for the G7 countries to impress upon retailers to help build a fairer and sustainable global supply chain.

He also spoke of the various efforts by the country and its garment sector in adhering to a range of international social and environmental standards over the decades, at the consultation programme on developing a sustainable global supply chain in Berlin, Germany.

Ahmed also spoke of the policy, legislative, regulatory, and administrative measures taken by the government in the past two years, following the country's worst industrial accidents in April 2013.

The government, owners and workers in Bangladesh are collaborating with global actors in stabilising the industry that employs over four million women and men in Bangladesh, he said.

He assured G7 stakeholders of Bangladesh's commitment to continue with necessary changes, as was agreed under the Bangladesh Sustainability Compact.

Even though many of the changes are unique compared to most other parts of the world, he assured the meeting that Bangladesh is a compatible and safe place to buy manufactured goods from.

Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi and Germany's Minister for Labour and Social Affairs Andrea Nahles and Economic Cooperation Minister Gerd Muller also spoke.

A sustainable global supply chain and decent work will figure high in the agenda at the G7 summit in Germany this summer.



A Rouf Chowdhury, chairman of Bank Asia, and Pran Gopal Dutta, vice chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, attend the opening of a hostel for nursing students funded by the bank, on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in Dhaka on Sunday.

## Deutsche Post says e-commerce boosted profits in 2014

AFP, Frankfurt

German postal and logistics giant Deutsche Post said Wednesday it met its earnings targets last year thanks to the strong performance of its international express and German parcel business and remains confident for the current year.

"Despite a still challenging environment we delivered a solid performance in 2014, by building on our strong market position in e-commerce and emerging markets," said chief executive Frank Appel.

Net profit slipped by 1.0 percent to 2.071 billion euros (\$2.2 billion) last year, the group said.

But underlying or operating profit climbed by 3.5 percent to 2.965 billion euros on a 3.1 percent increase in revenues to 56.63 billion euros.

Sales growth was "supported by steady volume and revenue gains in the international express and German parcel businesses in particular," the statement said.

The former state monopolist has been able to make up for the decline in its traditional letter delivery business expanding its online commerce and parcel delivery.

The group's Post-eCommerce-Parcel (PeP) division booked a 2.6 percent increase in revenues to 15.7 billion euros, and the express delivery division reported an increase of 5.7 percent to 12.5 billion euros.



M Nazeem A Chowdhury, head of consumer banking at Eastern Bank, and Sohail Majid, head of sales and marketing at Novoair, sign an agreement at a programme in Dhaka recently. The bank's cardholders can now buy Novoair's holiday package for Cox's Bazar without any interest through a six-month instalment plan.

## EBL, Novoair launch easy package for Cox's Bazar trip

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Eastern Bank has teamed up with Novoair to offer the bank's cardholders a holiday package for Cox's Bazar with a flexible payment plan, the bank said in a statement yesterday.

EBL cardholders can now pay for the airline's holiday package in up to six monthly instalments, under the bank's zero instalment programme.

Travellers who make a two-way trip

from Dhaka to Cox's Bazar by Novoair will enjoy free return tickets and accommodation in any of the hotels like Sayeman Beach Resort, Ocean Paradise, Seagull, Long Beach and Praasad Paradise, it said.

The offer will remain valid until June 30.

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## Global campaign for 'golden rice'

FROM PAGE B1

Along with Manila-based International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Bangladesh is now at the forefront in developing golden rice. However, crops derived through agricultural biotechnology and genetic engineering are often met with opposition from the anti-GMO lobbies.

The Allow Golden Rice Now campaign that began on March 4 will run in Bangladesh for four days and tour the Philippines and India up to March 20, as these are the few countries where vitamin A deficiency is a major cause of child mortality.

"Two million children and many mothers die each year from a lack of this essential vitamin. It is the greatest cause of child death today. Golden rice is the obvious cure, but because it was created with genetic science, Greenpeace and the anti-GMO movement fervently oppose it," Moore said.

On August 8, 2013, Greenpeace instigated the destruction of golden rice scientific field trials at the IRRI in the Philippines. The Allow Golden Rice Society is actively campaigning for the approval of the rice so it can be delivered to the 200 million children who are deficient in vitamin A.

"All we ask is that Greenpeace and their allies make an exception for golden rice in their opposition to GM crops," he said. "Millions of lives are at stake."

The members of the Golden Rice South Asia Tour also include Horst Rehberger, a senior German politician; Uwe Schrader, a German expert in biotechnology, and Hans-Jörg Jacobsen, a German heading Plant Biotechnology at the Institute of Plant Genetics of Leibniz University in Hanover.

"I want to seek solutions to different problems and not just oppose one thing or the other," Moore told The Daily Star.

He deplored that some 250,000 to 500,000 vitamin A-deficient children become blind every year, half of them dying within 12 months of losing their sight. "This tragedy can be eliminated with golden rice... but has been blocked by Greenpeace for over a decade. During that time over eight million children have gone blind and then died."

Moore and his campaign team lauded Bangladesh for being the first among all Asian nations in introducing GM vegetable - Bt Brinjal. "We will see Bt Brinjal fields on Friday," Moore said, adding that they also sought to meet Bangladesh's agriculture minister on Thursday.

## France's Areva to cut 1,500 jobs in Germany

AFP, Paris

French nuclear group Areva, which incurred massive losses last year, is looking to cut around 1,500 jobs in Germany by the end of 2017, a company spokesman said Wednesday.

At a meeting between management and employees on Tuesday, Areva's chief Philippe Knoche said the company planned to slash 1,500 full-time-equivalent jobs by the end of 2017 including 500 to be carried out this year, the spokesman said.

Wolfgang Niclas, representative for the IG Metall union, said earlier that 1,000 jobs were on the line in 2016 and 2017, confirming a report in the French business daily Les Echos.

Areva employs more than 5,000 people across eight sites in Germany.

## Central packing house to boost vegetable exports

FROM PAGE B1

The packing centre is being built by the Department of Agricultural Extension under a Tk 138-crore project to strengthen the country's phytosanitary capacity such that entry and exit of pests and diseases by way of agricultural produce are obstructed, said Md Ahsan Ullah, the project's consultant.

The construction of the packing house began in January, according to Marina Jabunnaher, senior monitoring officer of the phytosanitary capacity strengthening project.

Shipments of fruits and vegetables targeted to Bangladeshis living abroad rose 13 percent year-on-year to \$96.57 million in the first seven months of the fiscal year, according to data from the Export Promotion Bureau.

## Stocks slip back into red amid selling frenzy

FROM PAGE B1

Shasha Denims dominated the turnover chart with 61.91 lakh shares worth Tk 24.06 crore changing hands, followed by Shahjibazar Power Company, Ifad Autos, Lafarge Surma Cement, and ACI.

Northern Jute Manufacturing was the day's best performer, advancing 9.17 percent, while Bank Asia was the worst loser, slumping 13.95 percent.

Chittagong stocks also fell yesterday with the bourse's selective category index, CSCX, shedding 105.07 points to close at 8,509.08 points.

Losers beat gainers 174 to 30, with 30 securities remaining unchanged on the port city bourse that traded 75.88 lakh shares and mutual fund units worth Tk 28.28 crore in turnover.



Rubaba Dowla, chief service officer of Airtel Bangladesh, and Shoraez Shahjahan, country director of Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA), exchange documents of an agreement at a programme at Airtel's head office in Dhaka yesterday. Airtel will provide the selected workers of IPA with pre-paid connections to facilitate use of mobile money accounts.



Abrar A Anwar, chief executive officer of Standard Chartered Bank, and Mohd Noor Ali, managing director of Unique Hotel and Resorts, owner of the Westin Dhaka, attend the signing of an agreement at a programme in the capital on Monday. The bank has approved \$35 million term loan to fund the ongoing expansion programmes of the hotel.



Rubel Aziz, chairman of City Bank, attends the inaugural of the bank's new online branch at Sonargoan Janapath in Uttara, Dhaka on Tuesday. Badrudduz Choudhury, deputy managing director of branch banking, was also present.