

Laptops with pirated software seized in Dhaka

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Taskforce, in a drive on Thursday, seized 69 laptops installed with pirated Microsoft software from a shop in Gulshan-1 in the capital.

The taskforce, along with the officials of Copyright Office and law enforcement agencies, conducted the raid after a month-long investigation, according to a statement.

There have been numerous efforts by the government to warn and educate retailers, but to no effect, Md Manzurur Rahman, convener of the IPR Taskforce, said in the statement.

"We are now taking actions against the entities selling or dealing in pirated and unlicensed software, and want to remind companies that their pirated software business is a breach of copyright law," he said.

The use of pirated software also increases the risk of cyber crimes, he added.

"We applaud the government's commitment to promoting intellectual property rights. This is a major milestone in Bangladesh's effort to protect intellectual property," said Sonia Bashir Kabir, country manager of Microsoft Bangladesh.

"All corporates and retailers should take this as a serious message and stop using or selling pirated software."

A case has been filed and the Anti-Corruption Commission will investigate it, said Sirajul Islam, officer-in-charge of Gulshan Police Station.

"Piracy is theft and it should not be tolerated. It is now the right time for the law enforcement agencies to show that intellectual property rights of the country should be respected," said Barrister ABM Hamidul Mishbah, founder of Bangladesh Copyright and IP Forum.

German carmakers party under China cloud

REUTERS, Frankfurt

Flush with cash and confidence after years of rising sales, German carmakers are used to reaping industry-leading returns. But with Chinese demand abruptly slowing, the profit engine has begun to sputter, overshadowing the glitz of the Frankfurt auto show which opens on Tuesday.

For the home team of BMW, Daimler and Volkswagen, as well as European rivals such as PSA Peugeot Citroen, China's downturn also threatens to weigh on already weak emerging markets and put a damper on recovering demand at home.

"Auto sector earnings have peaked," Bernstein analyst Max Warburton warned investors on Friday, noting the broad array of new German luxury models about to be unveiled in Frankfurt - and aimed squarely at the world's biggest auto market. "Go see these products while you can," he said. "Few would even exist if it weren't for China."

Japanese businesses launch mascot for Bangladesh

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Bantora Kun will promote Bangladesh, both as a country and a preferred destination for Japanese investment. Bangladesh is second to China as a garment exporter worldwide, and on the natural front, it possesses the world's longest unbroken sea beach at Cox's Bazar.

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed inaugurated the mascot at a function at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka.

Bantora Kun is a joint initiative of the Japanese Commerce and Industry Association in Dhaka, a body of Japanese businessmen in Bangladesh, and Japan External Trade Organisation. More than 230 Japanese companies are operating in Bangladesh at present.

Bangladesh gives priority to Japanese entrepreneurs and is working on creating a special economic zone for Japanese investors in Chittagong, the commerce minister said.

"This is a good beginning as we are eager to brand Bangladesh positively in parts of the world, said Ahmed.

"Japan, as a close friend, has taken that responsibility, and the Japan Chamber of Commerce will also work as Bangladesh's ambassador."

Trade between Japan and Bangladesh is close to \$2.5 billion, but there is scope to increase it to \$4 billion, especially by increasing Bangladesh's exports, he said.

Bangladesh exported goods worth \$900 million to Japan and imported goods worth around \$1.5 billion last fiscal year. The minister said Bangladesh's exports to Japan, especially garment items, have been increasing due to the duty-free benefit enjoyed by all Bangladeshi products, except glove items and arms and ammunition.

"Bangladesh's tiger image will create a better understanding of the country and inspire Japanese businesses to interact with Bangladesh more, on all fronts," said Masato Watanabe, Japanese ambassador to Bangladesh.

Watanabe said he considers Bangladesh as a potential economic hub for the South Asian region, which encourages businesses to invest more in the country.



From right, Saydul Alom, acting country director of Islamic Relief Bangladesh; Mike Robson, country representative of the Food and Agriculture Organisation in Bangladesh; and Shelina Afroza, fisheries and livestock secretary, attend a seminar on livestock vaccination at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka yesterday. Story on B1.



Niaz Habib, managing director of Dhaka Bank, and Sujoy Kanjilal, director of Ria Money Transfer for South Asia, pose at an agreement signing ceremony on September 7. Customers of Ria Money Transfer can send money to their families and friends in Bangladesh through the bank.



Anis A Khan, managing director of Mutual Trust Bank, presents a plaque, certificate and honorarium to Md Monir Hossain, a traffic constable of Chittagong Metropolitan Police. Monir rescued a little boy named Sazzad Hossain from drowning at Nimtala in Chittagong on August 30.



SM Abu Mohsin, chairman of NCC Bank, inaugurates the relocated premises of the bank's branch at Laila Centre in Kamal Bazar, Chittagong yesterday. Golam Hafiz Ahmed, managing director, was also present.

Bank for pensioners in the offing

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The finance ministry in its proposal in light of the recommendations of the Commission suggested setting up a separate office under the finance division.

The International Monetary Fund also recommended the government take a separate initiative for the pension-related works, as the number of pensioners and the benefits for them are increasing every year.

The benefits for the pensioners have been raised much under the new pay scale too.

To pay the additional facility granted to the pensioners under the new pay scale, an extra Tk 3,691 crore will be required on top of the allocation of Tk 6,981 crore in this year's budget, according to the finance ministry.

At present, the pensioners get 80 percent of their last basic salary, which has been raised to 90 percent under the new pay scale.

The minimum net pension has been fixed at Tk 3,000.

There will be Tk 1,500 monthly as medicare allowance of up to 65 years of age; the existing amount is Tk 700.

For the over-65s, it will be Tk 2,500 instead of the existing amount of Tk 1,000.

The commission recommended allowing a government employee to take up voluntary retirement after 20 years in service. But, it has been kept unchanged at existing 25 years.

The age for going into retirement due to physical inability has been set at five years of service instead of existing 10 years.

The IMF has made an analysis on the basis of the existing pay scale and advised the implementation of a contributory pension scheme for civil servants to replace the current non-contributory regime.

It also recommended reforms to the government pension fund via the creation of notional accounts and an investment fund to accumulate the system's assets.

Consideration could also be given to institutionalising a non-contributory pension regime for the poor, as the existing transfer mechanisms to the elderly poor are very low.

Vaccine scarcity causes livestock deaths

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Livestock is one of the most important subsectors in agriculture, contributing 1.78 percent to the overall gross domestic product and 11 percent to agriculture GDP.

It creates 20 percent direct and 50 percent indirect employment opportunities and generates 4.31 percent of the country's total exports.

Per capita per day meat consumption is 24.38 gram against the requirement of 120 gram.

Milk consumption is 67.95 millilitres against the requirement of 260 millilitres.

The annual per capita egg consumption is 48 pieces, whereas the requirement is 105 pieces, according to Bangladesh Economic Review 2014.

Preventing the death of livestock and poultry animals is crucial for Bangladesh, as the country falls far short of meeting its own demand of protein, said ASM Golam Hafeez, chairman of the Department of Agricultural Finance at BAU, the team leader of the study.

Only 10 percent of the vaccines needed for the livestock and poultry animals are locally produced, and the ratio of a qualified veterinarian to animals is 1:170,000.

No livestock staffers are employed at the union or village level, he said, while presenting the study.

M Alimul Islam, professor of microbiology and hygiene at BAU; M Wakilur Rahman, associate professor of rural sociology at BAU; M Saiful Islam, scientific officer of Bangladesh Livestock Research

Institute; and Mirza Safaruh, an independent researcher, co-authored the study, conducted between May and July involving 450 farmers from poor households.

Of the 450 farmers, 12.88 percent said distance is a problem in getting vaccines.

Nearly 14 percent said vaccines do not work and 30 percent said it is not available on time.

Some 32 percent said vaccines are expensive, while 41 percent blamed the weak publicity of vaccination.

More than 60 percent said there is unavailability of suitable vaccines.

Shelina Afroza, fisheries and livestock secretary, said people are not only unaware of vaccination but also about the schedule to provide them to the livestock and poultry animals.

"We also need to give them better feed," she said, while calling on the private sector to work alongside the government to take vaccination facilities to the dairy and poultry farmers.

She said the ministry has proposed doubling the workforce at the livestock and fisheries department. "We would be happy if it goes up by at least 20 percent."

Mike Robson, country representative of the Food and Agriculture Organisation in Bangladesh, said vaccination has no alternative, but reliance on vaccination is not enough.

"We have to maintain healthy animals and for that a healthy environment. We have to give them nutritious feed to improve their productivity. There has to be a focus on

production management and value chain."

He said the FAO stands ready to help Bangladesh. "We want to see good decisions being made for the betterment of the sector."

The study report said the government should empower and provide more funds to the Department of Livestock Services so that the state agency can produce more vaccines to prevent death of cattle and poultry.

Besides, policy support has to be provided so that the private sector feels encouraged to produce vaccines at lower costs.

The reliance of imported vaccines for cattle and poultry has to be reduced.

Besides, facilities aimed at diagnosing emerging, re-emerging and trans-boundary diseases for livestock and poultry have to be made available at union levels, it said.

Shah M Ziqrul Haq Chowdhury, member director of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council, opposed the import of vaccines as they do more harm than good: their quality is not good.

He also urged the government to empower the BLRI.

BAU Professor WMH Jaim said the scarcity of field-level manpower, poor quality of service and vaccine and weak transport system are a reality.

Saydul Alom, acting country director of Islamic Relief Bangladesh, chaired the seminar, while Paresh Chandra Modak, dean of the agricultural economics and rural sociology faculty at BAU, also spoke.

Jute exporters left in the lurch over India's policy change

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India does not allow imported jute or jute yarn to be used in producing jute sacking.

But all Indian jute millers produce jute sacking with imported jute from Bangladesh, he said.

Abdul Jalil, deputy director of Benapole land port, said half of the jute and jute goods exports to India are shipped through the port, but it has remained suspended since Thursday.

Bangladesh exports 20 to 30 lakh bales of jute to India through the Benapole port a year.

Indian importers have given at least Tk 117 crore in advance to Bangladeshi's jute mill owners, according to Kolkata-based Jute Products Importers Association.

Similarly, Bangladeshi mill owners have exported goods worth Tk 58 crore on credit. There are orders for jute goods worth Tk 470 crore.

Bangladesh, which is the largest producer and exporter of jute in the world, exported raw jute and jute goods worth \$868 million last fiscal year, according to the Export Promotion Bureau. Of them, India imported \$100 million.

Govt to bear costs of audit into mobile operators

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The regulator also informed the government that it allocated Tk 40.88 crore for audits into different mobile operators in the current fiscal year.

Once the audits into Grameenphone and Robi are done, the regulator will initiate similar initiatives for other operators.

The BTRC had Grameenphone audited in 2011 by a firm that claimed the telecom company owed Tk 3,034 crore to the government. Grameenphone later took the matter to court and won, as the audit was declared illegal.

An attempt to inspect Banglalink at the same time failed as the appointed auditor, Ahmed Zaker & Co, could not finish the job.

After the twin fiascos, the BTRC decided to appoint new audit firms.



Syed Md Ali Jahid, chairman of EDIB International, opens the 34th branch of NRB Commercial Bank at Mainamati in Comilla yesterday. Farasath Ali, chairman of the bank, was also present.



Md Ahsan-uz Zaman, managing director of Midland Bank, and Md Munir Chowdhury, company secretary of Dhaka Power Distribution Company, attend the signing of an agreement at the DPDC head office in Dhaka. The bank will collect bills for the utility company.



Shagufa Anwar, chief of communication and business development of United Hospital, and Abdul Khalek, director of finance at Berger Paints Bangladesh, exchange documents of a corporate agreement. Staff members of Berger and their dependants will enjoy discounted medical services at the hospital.