

GP greets 10,000 users for feedback

CEO along with employees of the operator meets with clients as part of its Customer First Day programme

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Grameenphone employees yesterday met with 10,000 of their customers to inquire about the quality of their services and to better understand their needs as part of the operator's 'Customer First Day' programme.

As many as 1,500 employees, including Chief Executive Officer Rajeev Sethi, visited 160 locations in the country to get feedback from their customers.

In the capital, Grameenphone employees visited 110 spots while Sethi also met with the students of Independent University Bangladesh on the university campus.

The programme was organised as part of Grameenphone's plan to improve their customer relations, officials said.

The mobile operator started observing the day in 2014 under an initiative of Telenor Group, the majority shareholder of Grameenphone. The operator connected with their fans through Facebook last year.

Telenor observed October 8 as 'Customer First Day' in all its 13 business units across the world.

"Customer First Day is very special to us as it gives Grameenphone employees an opportunity to interact directly with customers across the country," said Marcus Adaktusson, director for commu-

nications at Grameenphone.

"The ambition is simple: listen, learn and make sure that we turn the feedback into better products and services."

"We know that there are many things we are doing well, but we also know there are things that we can do better—so a big thanks to the more than 10,000 customers who gave us feedback today and who help us improve every day," he added.

During the interaction with customers, management and employees asked questions on both the positive areas and areas that need improvement.

Earlier in the day, Sunil Kanti Bose, chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, inaugurated the programme for Bangladesh at GP House.

Sigve Brekke, president of Telenor, inaugurated it from Norway for all its 13 markets.

Through the interaction, officials found that customers mostly complained about the prices of the products.

The market leader will now compile all the data and decide on their next course of action, said a senior executive. "We will use it as a field survey to offer the best services."

As of August, Grameenphone has 5.54 crore active customers and of them, around 1.75 crore are connected to the internet.

Three-day tourism fair kicks off in Sylhet

STAR BUSINESS DESK

A three-day international tourism fair—Sylhet Travel Mart—started in Sylhet yesterday.

Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, information affairs adviser to the prime minister, inaugurated the fair at Rose View Hotel.

Aparup Chowdhury, chairman of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, and Kazi Wahidul Alam, editor of the Bangladesh Monitor, were also present.

Some 18 organisations, including airlines, tour operators, hotels, resorts, amusement parks and organisations providing tourism related services, are exhibiting their products and services in the fair.

Exhibitors, including US-Bangla Airlines, Long Beach Hotel, Rose View Hotel, Ocean Paradise Hotel, Sea Shell Hotel, and Jinghua Bangla Tours, are offering special discounts on different services at the fair, which will remain open from 11am to 8pm.

Bangladesh Monitor, a travel publication, has organised the event for the second time in association with the Airlines Club of Sylhet, according to a statement of the publication.

Dell in talks to buy data storage company

REUTERS

Dell Inc, the world's third largest personal computer maker, is in talks to buy data storage company EMC Corp, a person familiar with the matter said, in what could be one of the biggest technology deals ever.

A deal could be an option for EMC, under pressure from activist investor Elliott Management Corp to spin off majority-owned VMware Inc.

The terms being discussed were not known, but if the deal goes through it would top Avago Technologies' \$37 billion offer for Broadcom. EMC has a market value of about \$50 billion. Dell is also in talks with banks to finance an all-cash offer for EMC, the person told Reuters on condition of anonymity as the talks were confidential.

Dell spokesman David Flink and EMC spokesman Dave Farmer declined to comment.



Rakshit Hargave, managing director of Nivea India Pvt Ltd for India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan; Siddharth Chirannia, finance director; and Kuldeep Sharma, head of exports, pose at a press meet organised by International Distribution Company Bangladesh (IDC), during their visit to Dhaka on Monday. Santanu Nandy, country sales development manager of Nivea in Bangladesh, and Ashraf Bin Taj, managing director of IDC, the local distributor of Nivea, were also present.

H&M praises progress in Bangladesh factory safety

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Fire exits are one of the most fundamental requirements for a supplier in order to be allowed to produce for H&M, according to the statement.

"As our presence in Bangladesh is long-term, it contributes not only financially to the individual factory, but also to the development of the textile industry as well as to the Bangladeshi community as a whole."

Any delay of the work of the Accord is therefore of great concern to the company, H&M said.

The company, however, said it is correct

that the other buyers within the Accord are experiencing some delays. There have been problems with deliveries of new upgraded fire doors and sprinklers due to import delays since these products are not available in Bangladesh, the company said. Delays are also caused due to the workload that the Accord inspectors asked to complete to ensure safety, H&M said. The Accord has completed primary inspection of 1,600 out of 5,000 garment factories in Bangladesh.

Of all the factories that H&M is working with, less than 300 meet the Accord requirements for operation.



Mikail Shipar, labour and employment secretary, and Md Faizur Rahman, director general of Bangladesh Labour Welfare Foundation, receive a cheque for the government's share in the profits earned by Syngenta Bangladesh in 2014, from Md Aminul Islam, country HR business partner of Syngenta Bangladesh, and Md Mosheur Rahman, finance services lead, in Dhaka on Sunday.



Touhidur Rahman, managing director of Libas Textile, and AH Aslam Sunny, first vice president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, pose at the signing of a consultation agreement on Wednesday. The association will help Libas to attain "Leadership in energy and environment design" certification from the USA-based Green Building Council.

Sanofi trying to get French workers to work longer hours

AFP, Paris

Sanofi has opened talks to get some of its French employees to work longer hours, but unions charged Wednesday the drugmaker which posted a net profit of over two billion euros doesn't have a competitiveness problem.

A Sanofi spokesman confirmed that the talks which opened last month are aimed at "maintaining the competitiveness of our French sites in a durable manner."

France several years ago gave companies under financial pressure greater flexibility to negotiate changes in working conditions, but union leaders at Sanofi questioned whether the company really faced a competitiveness problem.

A company document consulted by AFP said management aims to improve productivity by 20 to 25 percent at some of its French pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities to match those in eastern Europe.

A CFDT trade union leader said management had talked about increasing working hours, cutting the number of days off, rearranging work patterns and requiring workers to carry out additional functions.

Shrimp industry's woes see no end

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Exporters blamed the slide in shipments on the Western customers' shift towards the lower priced vannamei, supplied in ample quantity by India, Thailand and Vietnam; slow economic recovery in the Eurozone; and the weakness of the euro and the Russian ruble.

Processors usually receive ample orders from foreign buyers between the months of September and November, said Shoyeb Mahmud, general manager of Jahanabad Seafood Ltd, a leading exporter of shrimp and seafood.

"But the order flow this year has not been encouraging. We are waiting for good days to return," he said.

Md Golam Mostafa, senior vice president of BFFEA, claimed processors suffered up to 40 percent losses for falling prices of shrimp in the international market. As a result, many exporters suffer from cash crunch to buy shrimp from farmers, he said.

"We bought raw materials at higher

prices earlier. But shrimp is a perishable item and we cannot hold that for long. We have no option but to sell processed shrimp to trim losses."

Mostafa said low global demand and fund shortage at the exporters' end also hurt farmers and others in the shrimp supply chain. Farmers are forced to sell their produce in the domestic market to recoup part of their investments, he said.

Mostafa urged the government to take steps so that banks transfer 40 percent of Tk 1,159 crore working capital loans of frozen food processors to blocked account.

Last month, the fisheries and livestock ministry also recommended that finance ministry take steps to transfer working capital loans of frozen food exporters to blocked account for a period of 10 years.

The ministry also suggested increasing the rate of cash subsidy for fish exports, along with a hike in prices of shrimp and fish at which cash subsidy is determined.

Indonesia's small firms struggle, dealing economy another blow

REUTERS, Pasuruan

Fuad Fultoni has been selling wooden furniture from Pasuruan city on the eastern side of Indonesia's Java island for 15 years: gazing out as his workers sat idly in an empty showroom, he says business has never been so bad.

"People don't have the purchasing power for things like this anymore," Fultoni said, gesturing towards intricately carved tables, chairs and cabinets on display. "Now they are prioritising their primary needs."

At least Fultoni is still in business. He says hundreds of small furniture enterprises in the town have shut, bringing mass layoffs, after sales plunged and the cost of imported raw materials such as thinner and paint shot up.

Small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) like his account for at least 50 percent of Indonesia's economy, but

they have been sideswiped by the rupiah's slide to 17-year lows against the dollar, faltering consumption and a jump in minimum wages.

The struggle of SMEs—traditional pillars of the economy that rescued Indonesia from the depths of the 1998 financial crisis—is bad news for President Joko Widodo, himself a former furniture businessman who is now battling the weakest growth in six years.

The growing ranks of jobless may widen the rich-poor divide and push up crime in Indonesia, dealing a blow to the man-of-the-people image that swept Widodo from small-town mayor to governor of Jakarta and then, a year ago, to the presidency.

A monthly central bank survey showed that consumers were pessimistic about the economic outlook in September, the first time since August 2010, mainly due to rising unemployment.

6th Extraordinary General Meeting

Venue: Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel, Dhaka
Date: 8th October, 2015

DHAKABANK LIMITED

Reshadur Rahman, chairman of Dhaka Bank, presides over the bank's sixth extraordinary general meeting at Radisson hotel in Dhaka yesterday. Shareholders of the company decided to raise Tk 300 crore through issuing non-convertible privately placed second subordinated bond of the bank.

Now 'right moment' for carbon tax: IMF chief

AFP, Lima

The time is right for governments to introduce taxes on carbon emissions, which would help fight global warming and raise badly needed revenue, IMF chief Christine Lagarde said Wednesday.

"It is just the right moment to introduce carbon taxes," Lagarde said at the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in Lima, Peru.

The issue is in the spotlight two months from a key United Nations conference in Paris tasked with delivering a comprehensive carbon-cutting pact to save the planet from the potentially catastrophic impact of global warming.

Besides discouraging pollution, Lagarde said, taxing greenhouse gas emissions would have the added bonus of helping governments boost their revenues at a time when many countries have dipped heavily into their "fiscal buffers" to get through a prolonged rough patch for the global economy.

Removal of barriers can boost South Asia trade 3.5 times

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The road to regional prosperity lies in facilitating seamless movement of goods, capital and people across the entire region, said Lyonpo Norbu Wangchuk, economic affairs minister of Bhutan.

The South Asian region is the least economically integrated and that has placed all the regional economies at a competitive disadvantage, said Nirmala Sitharaman, state minister for commerce and industry of India.

After India extended duty-free, quota-free facilities to the least-developed countries in South Asia, exports from the nations to India increased.

To accelerate economic integration, the minister underlined the need for the region to establish free trade areas, she said.

Nitin Gadkari, Indian minister of road transport and highways, said his ministry plans to set up an international arm of the National Highways Authority to steer the connectivity projects with the neighbouring countries.

The international arm could also extend its expertise to the South Asian countries for the development of roads, highways, expressways and bridges.

He also gave emphasis on the use of waterways and railways as they are less costly.

Gadkari admitted that inland waterways will not only offer economical transportation of passengers and bulk cargo between different parts of India but it can also facilitate greater trade flows with the neighbouring countries like Bangladesh. The government of India is working to establish a 'waterport' in Sahibganj of Jharkhand to accelerate import and export of goods between India and Bangladesh.

India has also planned to establish multi-modal hubs in Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, and Sahibganj, and Haldia in West Bengal. The tonnage of barges for these waterways will be enhanced through special design to handle larger volumes of passenger traffic and cargo, he added.

2016 will be a year of progress for capital market: regulator

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BSEC Commissioner Helal Uddin Nizami, CSE Chairman Abdul Mazid, Central Depository of Bangladesh Chairman Sheikh Kabir Hossain and CSE Managing Director Wali-ul-Marooof Matin also spoke at the inaugural function.

Stockbrokers, stock dealers, merchant banks, asset managers, banks, non-bank financial institutions and insurance companies are participating in the fair, which will remain open from 10am to 8pm. Some 200 market experts are available at the venue to respond to queries made by investors.

A total of 98 stalls have been set up at the event. Four seminars are focusing on exchange traded funds, personal portfolio management, initial public offerings and capital market reforms.