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Star BUSINESS

DHAKA THURSDAY AUGUST 4, 2016, SHRABAN 20, 1423 BS

Citycell seeks more time to pay dues

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

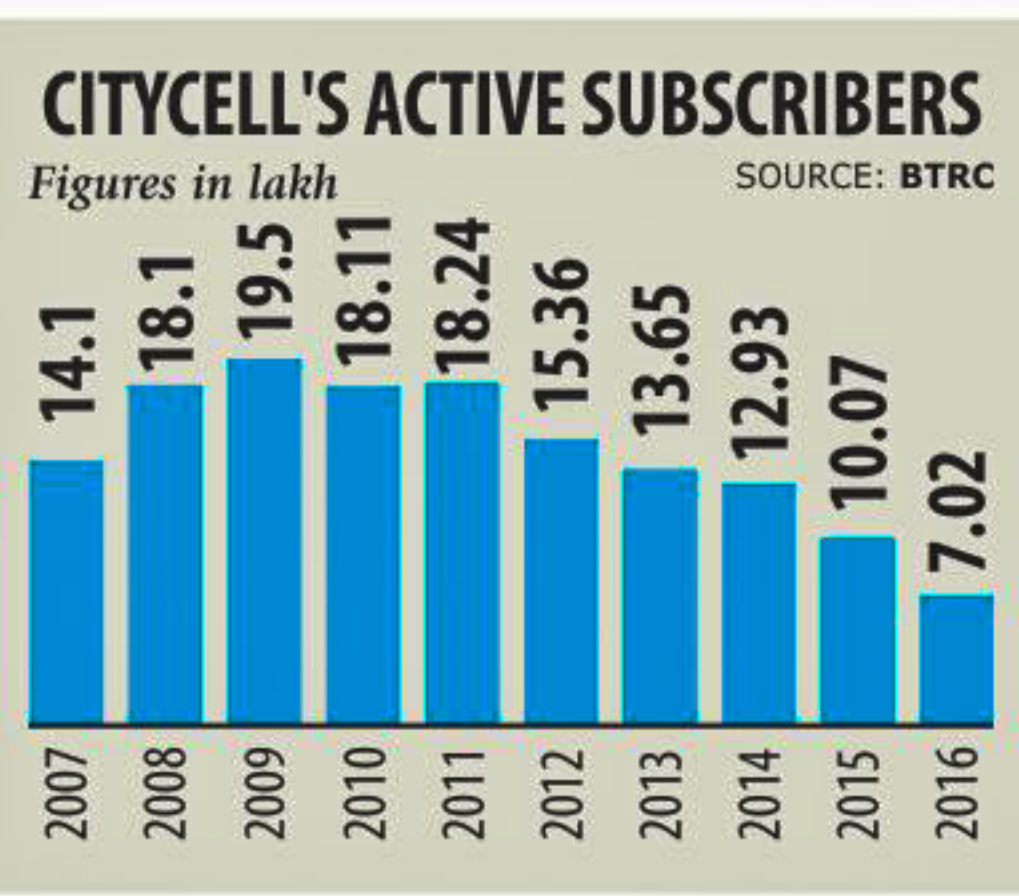
Citycell sought time until December 31 to clear its outstanding charges as the telecom regulator has decided to cancel its spectrum for the failure to pay Tk 477.51 crore in dues despite several reminders.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission in a public notice on Sunday also asked Citycell subscribers to switch to any other operator by August 16.

The oldest mobile phone operator of the country applied for additional time on Monday but BTRC Chairman Shahjahan Mahmood told The Daily Star that a time extension is unlikely.

"Citycell came up with the same kind of request eleven times in the past, and every time we considered their appeal, but they didn't pay the dues," he said.

Mahmood, however, said they will put forward the Citycell plea to the telecom



ministry and a final decision will be taken there.

"The decision to shut down Citycell's operations came from the government. We had only informed the government of

crore, annual spectrum fee Tk 27.14 crore, VAT Tk 39.92 crore and late fee at Tk 135 crore, according to the notice.

Mehboob Chowdhury, chief executive officer of Citycell, in the letter to BTRC, said: "It has been an extremely difficult task to bring new investment in Bangladesh and Pacific Bangladesh Telecom Ltd (the owning company of Citycell) in particular."

He said they were trying to bring a US operator to Bangladesh and a discussion is ongoing.

BTRC in April filed a case against the operator to realise the dues.

Citycell started its operations in 1993, though its licence was awarded in 1989.

Singapore's SingTel owns 44.54 percent shares in Citycell, Pacific Motors 37.95 percent and Far East Telecom 17.51 percent.

Shareholders had been trying for the last few years to sell the licence of the operator but did not find any interested party.

Sonali calls off auction of Salman's property

The Beximco owner gets stay order from HC

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Sonali Bank was blocked from auctioning off mortgaged property owned by Salman F Rahman despite all preparations, due to a last-minute stay order from the High Court.

The auction was scheduled to be held yesterday at the state-owned commercial bank's headquarters in Motijheel from 10am to 3pm, but has now been called off after the court order arrived on August 1.

"As there is a three-month stay order by the court, the auction was not held," said Fanindra Tribedi, general manager of Sonali's local office, adding that the bank's lawyers will take the necessary further steps.

Sonali had arrived at the decision to auction off property owned by ASF Rahman

and Salman F Rahman, chairman and vice-chairman of Beximco Group, after its calls for repayment of Tk 228.19 crore in loans went unheeded.

The property includes 33 decimals of land and constructed buildings on it and is located on Road No. 2 in Dhanmondi.

About 10 years ago, Sonali lent Tk 165 crore to GMG Airlines, of which Beximco Group is the majority shareholder.

The HC has stayed the effectiveness of Sonali's auction notice for three months and also issued a rule upon the authorities concerned to explain in four weeks as to why the notice should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench came up with the order after hearing a petition filed by Salman

Rahman challenging the legality of the auction notice against him, his lawyer Shah Monjurul Hoque told The Daily Star yesterday.

Sonali officials said they have repeatedly requested the two borrowers to repay the loans and also served legal notices on them.

If the bank cannot realise the total loan through the auction, it will then file a case with the Money Loan Court.

Rahman, vice-chairman of Beximco Group, on July 28 told The Daily Star that he obtained a stay order from the HC against the loans being classified as defaults. So, the bank cannot show the loans as a case of defaults.

"It's not a big deal. We will settle it in eight to 10 days," Rahman said at the time.

The top businessman said as GMG is not part of Beximco Group the loan remains unresolved. Also, the change of chairman and managing director at Sonali has delayed the settlement of loans.

Following a petition filed by the Beximco vice-chairman, the HC in April issued an order so the businessman is not treated as a defaulter, said his lawyer on July 28.

GMG had started its commercial operation in 1998 as the country's first private airline. After the global economic meltdown in 2008, and the price hike of jet fuel in the international market, the carrier started feeling the pinch.

The operation of the airline has remained suspended since 2012.

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Dutch envoy expresses satisfaction over security steps

EXPORTS TO THE NETHERLANDS

In millions of \$

FY11-12	691.3
FY12-13	712.47
FY13-14	858.13
FY14-15	840.34
FY15-16	845.92

SOURCE: EPB

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Dutch ambassador to Bangladesh yesterday expressed satisfaction over the government's security measures in response to the recent militant attacks in Dhaka and Kishoreganj.

"We are confident that the government is making progress in securing the country," Ambassador Leoni Cuelenaere said after a meeting with Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed at his secretariat in Dhaka.

"We have to talk about security, the whole world has to talk about it," said the envoy.

"One thing I particularly appreciate is that the government is raising awareness among the public, because you cannot fight this battle alone," she said.

Cuelenaere also praised the progress made in worker safety in the garment sector after the Rana Plaza building collapse that took the lives of more than 1,100 in April 2013.

"My country is happy with the progress that Bangladesh made in the RMG sector. That is also a reason why my minister is coming to Bangladesh again. I think this is the third or fourth time she is coming here," Cuelenaere said.

The Dutch government is going to organise a conference on sustainable sourcing in the Netherlands next month to discuss more responsible business behaviour in sourcing of garments by the stakeholders.

"You have made tremendous progress. We think that it is important to keep that progress going," she said.

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Beximco plans to set up solar power plant in Gaibandha

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Beximco Power Co Ltd along with a Chinese company is set to build a 200-megawatt solar power plant in Gaibandha, in line with the government's plan to generate 10 percent of power from renewable sources by 2020.

The development comes after the cabinet committee on public purchase yesterday approved the proposal from the power ministry for Beximco Power and TBEA Xinjiang Sunoasis to build, own and operate the power plant.

The government will buy solar power at Tk 12 per unit from the plant for 20 years. For that, it will have to pay an estimated amount of Tk 7,778 crore.

Beximco Power and Xinjiang Sunoasis will bear the costs, including for the land, setting up of sub-station and 35-kilometre transmission line, according to the power ministry's proposal.

Between October 2015 and April 2016, the government has given approval to five companies aiming to generate 332 megawatts of solar power.

The government will pay the plants Tk 11.12 to Tk 13.6 per unit of power.

Of the five plants, the largest will be located in Teknaf in Cox's Bazar by SunEdison Energy Holding (Singapore), of 200 MW.

The government will purchase power from this company at Tk 13.69 per unit.

The cabinet committee also gave the nod to another proposal for setting up a 5MW peak solar energy at Goainghat in Sylhet.

THE PROJECT AT A GLANCE

Beximco Power and TBEA Xinjiang SunOasis will supply power to govt for 20 years

Govt will pay the companies about Tk 7,778cr

The power plant will be set up at Sundarganj upazila in Gaibandha

By 2020, govt will produce 2,000MW from renewable energy sources

The plant will be set up by Japan's Eiki Shoji Co Ltd and Sun Solar Power. The government will purchase power from the company at a rate of Tk 11.12 per unit for 20 years.

Besides, the purchase committee also awarded the consortium of Harbin Electric International Company and Jiangsu Etern Company of China the licence to set up a power plant at Khulna with the generation capacity of 200MW to 300MW.

The government will pay the consortium Tk 2,370 crore. The purchase committee extended the tenure of Aggreko International Projects Ltd by another three years.

The company has set up an 85MW gas-based power plant in Brahmanbaria, whose tenure expired in April.

During the extended period, the government will buy power from the company at a rate of Tk 3.13 per kWh, which was Tk 3.27 previously.

At yesterday's purchase committee meeting, a record 27 proposals were approved, 20 of which were from the power sector.

The committee also gave the green light to expansion of electricity lines by Rural Electrification Board in parts of the country, including setting up 6.54 lakh power poles at a cost of Tk 1,496 crore.

It also approved a proposal for appointment of a consulting firm for an elaborate feasibility study for Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib International Airport.

Japan's Nippon Koei Co Ltd has been selected for the work at a cost of around Tk 120 crore.

GIS map to show locations of all optical fibre cables

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The telecom regulator yesterday launched the country's first web-based interactive GIS map of optical fibre cables, which will help the government and non-government agencies in their future digital planning.

A geographic information system (GIS) is a computer programme for capturing, storing, checking, and displaying data related to positions on Earth's surface. GIS can show many different kinds of data on one map.

Around 12 government organisations and private companies already laid 54,228 kilometres of fibre optic cables across the country. The map shows the district-upazila-level connectivity and the technical aspects of the optical fibre cables.

Shahjahan Mahmood, chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, launched the GIS map at a press conference at his office.

The map will help boost the government's digitisation programme, he said.

Different companies have laid fibre optic cables haphazardly across the country since 1997, and now there is a map to show the location of all the cables, he added.

He said the map would play an important role in implementing any government or private project related to connectivity.

However, permission would be required to use the map, Mahmood said.

READ MORE ON B3

OPTICAL FIBRE CABLE
laid by operators

OPERATORS	CABLE (IN KM)
Summit	20,670
Fiber@Home	15,468
BTCL	4,935
PGCB	4,402
Banglalink	3,001
Grameenphone	2,490
Railway	2,105
Others	1,157
Total	54,228

Four more Japanese caught over ATM heist

AFP, Tokyo

Japanese police arrested four people Wednesday in connection with a multi-million dollar bank heist, including a member of a group affiliated with the country's biggest organised crime syndicate.

The 1.8 billion yen (\$17.8 million) haul reportedly involved more than 100 people making a series of cash withdrawals from some 1,700 ATMs across Japan using fake credit card data from a South African bank.

Investigators had already made at least two arrests after launching a nationwide manhunt in May but are yet to unveil exactly how the crime was organised and carried out.

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