

আপনার সংসার গুছিয়ে দিচ্ছি আমরা।
 এসআইবিএল ইসলামিক কনজুমার ফাইন্যান্স।
 আপনার সংসার পোছানোর আসবাবপত্র, শিক্ষা সামগ্রী, ইলেক্ট্রনিক ও অন্যান্য জোগানপত্র কেনার সুন্দর সমাধান দিচ্ছি আমরা।
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 যে কোন প্রয়োজনে ০৯৬৯২০০৯২২

Star BUSINESS

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Elevated Expressway stuck in limbo

MD FAZLUR RAHMAN
 Bangladesh's first PPP project, the Dhaka Elevated Expressway, is stuck in limbo after the foreign partner found no funding and the contractor backed out.
 China Railway Construction Corporation was originally hired as the engineering, procurement and construction contractor for building the highway.
 "But the Chinese company now wants out," said an official of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway Public Private Partnership Project.
 The developer, Italian-Thai Development Public Company, can change the EPC contractor if it thinks that it would serve the project better, said Quazi Md Ferdous, the project director.
 A South Korean firm will be appointed as the new EPC contractor, but Ital-Thai is yet to officially notify Bangladesh about the change.
 Ferdous however could not say why CRCC backed off.
 The 20km-long expressway will run from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Sonir Akhra near the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway, with five connecting points to pick-and-drop traffic.
 The change in EPC contractor added to Ital-Thai's woes. Ital-Thai has been facing trouble in raising funds from international sources since it was awarded the project six years ago.
 In 2014, three years after its ground breaking by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the developer had signed a \$1.062 billion contract with CRCC for the project, a senior official of the Bridges Division said.
 CRCC could not be reached for comments as emails to the address stated on its website bounced back.
 The name of China Development Bank as a financier had also surfaced; it was said the lender would provide \$750 million for the first phase of the \$1.2 billion project. Bangladesh will bear 27 percent of the cost.
 Sources said the Chinese bank has also backed tracked.
 China Development Bank also did not respond to emails from The Daily Star.
 Ital-Thai has now turned to Bangladesh to raise the amount and has even managed some

HIGHLIGHTS

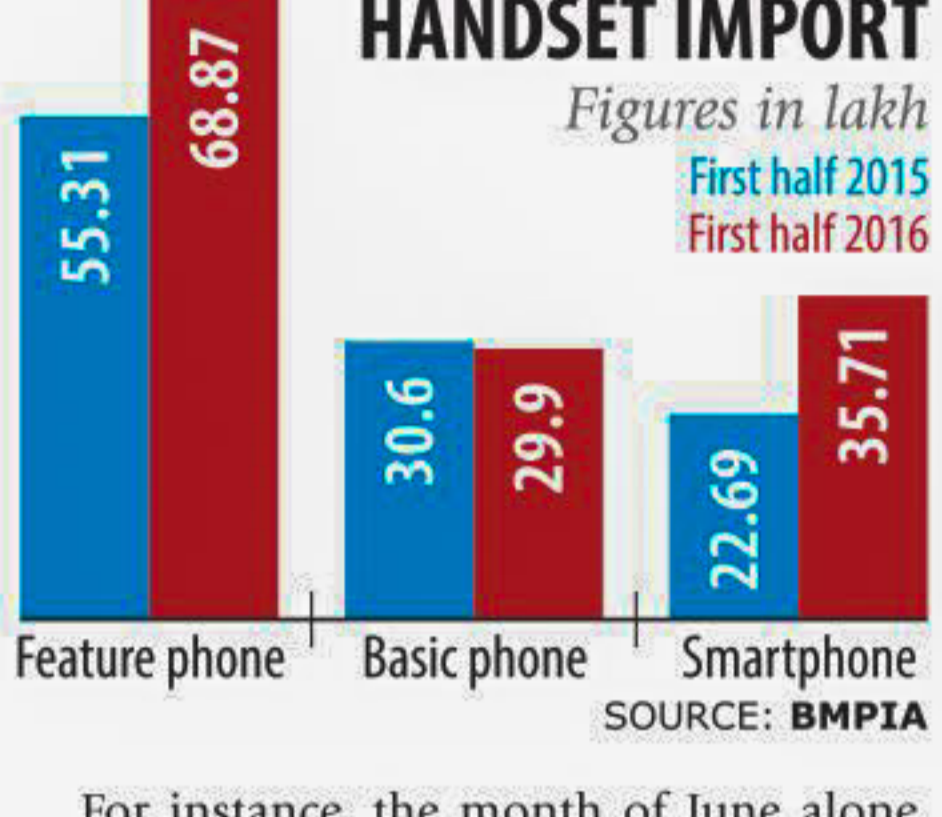
- Main contractor backs off; new contractor to be appointed
- 10% piling work completed so far
- Financial closure might take place in October
- The elevated expressway may partially open in 2018
- The project to cost \$1.2b
- Bangladesh to bear 27% of the cost
- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the construction of the 20km expressway in April 2011
- The first phase runs from airport to Banani, the second from Banani to Moghbazar, and the third from Moghbazar to Kutubkhali

funds from local lenders.
 BRAC EPL Investments, the lead arranger for raising loans for the project until late last year, raised Tk 940 crore from four local banks, said one of its senior officials.
 RSA Capital, a local private capital firm, says it is in talks with Ital-Thai to raise \$350 million for the developer in phases, said Sameer Ahmad, founder and a senior partner of the firm.
 Since Ital-Thai struggles to raise adequate funds on time, the construction of the expressway is moving at a snail's pace.
 Government officials said there were delays on both Ital-Thai's and Bangladesh's sides.
 But officials of the project said the Bangladesh side has made up for the lost time and sorted out its limitations by acquiring and handing over the land to the developer.
 The developer has received all the permissions it had sought for from the Bangladesh government.
 "Now it seems that the delay is more on the side of the developer," Ferdous said, adding that the financial closure has not been carried out and Ital-Thai has not raised enough funds to accelerate the process.
 Senior officials of Ital-Thai led by its President Premchai Karnasuta visited Dhaka on August 17-18.
 At that time, the visiting officials told the

Bangladesh side that the Thai company had almost mobilised all the necessary funds to be required for the expressway.
 Ital-Thai will complete the financial closure in October, according to Ferdous.
 Once the developer completes the financial closure, it will have to finish the project in three and a half years.
 Ital-Thai did not respond to an e-mail seeking clarification.
 Despite struggling to raise funds from outside, the developer has carried out tasks such as design engineering and feasibility study and is continuing piling from its own funds and the funds raised from sources in Bangladesh.
 Piling started in August 2015 and will continue for 30 months.
 Abrar A Anwar, chief executive officer of Standard Chartered Bangladesh, which has lent heavily in the country, said if there is right structuring it is possible to raise this type of funds.
 Ferdous hopes to partially open the elevated expressway in 2018, when two out of the three phases of the project is expected to be complete. The distance of the Phase I and Phase II is 13km.
 The Bangladesh Bridge Authority awarded the project to Ital-Thai in January 2011, under which construction was supposed to start within six months by completing the two sides' obligations of land handover and submitting financial closure.
 The project also faced a blow in 2013 when the government changed the route of the expressway, compelling the two sides to sign a revised agreement in December that year.
 About the progress of the project, the website of the Bridges Division says the land acquisition for the first tranche is complete, while that of the second and the third tranches were ongoing.
 The developer has prepared the construction yard. The preparatory work is ongoing, it said. The website puts the physical progress at about 7 percent.
 The project holds immense importance to Dhaka city as all major highways entering the capital from Chittagong, through Padma bridge and Aricha through Ashulia will be connected with the project, making exit and entry faster.

Smartphone imports soar 57pc in six months

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM
 Smartphone imports rose 57.44 percent in the first half of 2016 from a year earlier, in a development that will bring cheers to mobile operators and the government alike as it strives for a Digital Bangladesh.
 Between January and June, 35.71 lakh pieces were brought into the country, according to Bangladesh Mobile Phone Importers Association.
 "It is quite exciting that in every four handsets that we import, one is a smartphone," said Rezwanaul Hoque, general secretary of BMPIA.
 Last year, the ratio was one in five, he said, adding that it will definitely become bigger in the next few years.
 During the January-June period, the industry imported a total of 1.35 crore handsets, up 23.84 percent year-on-year.
 Smartphones accounted for 26.35 percent of the imports in the first half of 2016, in contrast to 20.88 percent a year earlier.
 This year, the importers aim to sell 90 lakh smartphones.
 "We are optimistic about our market's growth, going so far as to forecast a trebling of market share in the next five years," said Hoque, who is also a director of mobile giant Symphony.
 Symphony's low-cost smartphones are dominating the segment. The local brand accounted for 43.8 percent of the total smartphones imported during the period.
 Though Samsung is far behind Symphony in import quantity, it superseeded the local brand in import value.
 Samsung accounted for 18.8 percent of the smartphone imports in the first half of the year, but the import value of handsets was 34 percent. In contrast, Symphony's import value stood at 30.3 percent.
 Another local brand, Walton, accounted for 9 percent of the smartphone imports in the first half, Chinese manufacturers Huawei and Oppo 5.3 percent and 3.5 percent respectively, Indian brand Lava 6.2 percent and other brands 13.4 percent.
 "Smartphones will rule the future market," Hoque said.
 People now celebrate their special occasions by gifting smartphones -- a development that is fuelling the segment's growth.



For instance, the month of June alone, which preceded Eid-ul-Fitr, the biggest festival in the country, saw a third of the 35.71 lakh smartphone imports.
 Currently, the average price of a smartphone is about Tk 3,200, importers said.
 In the feature phone and basic phone segments, Symphony maintained its unsailable lead as in previous years, accounting for 42.3 percent of the basic phone and 29.3 percent of the feature phone imports in the first six months.
 Non-branded sets came in second in both the segments, where the average price is Tk 1,200.
 The BMPIA said the first half handset import figures would have been higher were it not for the high duty, which discourages bringing in mobile phones into the country through the legal channel.
 Currently, about 30 percent of the nine crore active handsets in Bangladesh were brought in through illegal channels.
 More than 95 percent of the handsets imported in Bangladesh are manufactured in China and they are subjected to 25 percent duty.
 A few years back, the import duty was around 10 percent and the illegal import ratio then was around 10 percent.
 The BMPIA also expressed its dissatisfaction over the 37 percent tax for handsets assembled in the country.
 Companies like Symphony are ready to set up assembling plants in Bangladesh but the heavy tax is acting as the impediment, Hoque said.
 "Importing the handsets from China makes more economical sense to us right now," he added.

BTRC to crack down on importers of illegal radio devices

STAR BUSINESS REPORT
 The telecom regulator yesterday said it will crack down on the importers of illegal radio frequency devices like mobile handsets and tablet computers.
 The development came hours after the seizure of an illegally imported robot and several "spy devices" at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka. The customs officials detained a man in this connection.
 However, officials of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission said conducting drives against importers of illegal radio devices is their routine work.
 Alerting all involved in such business, BTRC issued a notice saying importers of illegal devices will be brought to book.
 "It has been observed in recent times that some dishonest businessmen or agencies are importing, distributing, showcasing, renting and selling radio frequency devices like mobile phones, tablet PCs, walkie-talkie sets, repeaters, fixed wireless phones, modems and other devices," the notice said.
 According to the import policy of the country, BTRC approval is mandatory prior to the import of any radio frequency devices, the regulator said.
 Earlier the telecom watchdog ran drives several times and seized thousands of illegally imported handsets. Around 30 percent of the mobile devices are imported illegally, which causes a huge revenue loss to the government, according to Bangladesh Mobile Phone Importers' Association.
 Traders have to pay 25 percent tax for importing handsets or mobile devices and if they can dodge the tax, they can save one fourth of the import costs, which is a reason behind the rise in illegal imports.

Digitise all spheres to reap benefit of new tech: analysts



Fredrik Haren

MD FAZLUR RAHMAN
 Companies across the globe should embrace digitisation in all possible spheres to reap the benefit of the advancement in technology, analysts said.
 "For any transformation, the people who will get it will turn out as winners and those who will not get it will be losers," said Fredrik Haren, a global conference speaker.
 "It is like globalisation; the people who became part of globalisation became richer and the people who didn't were left behind," he told The Daily Star in an interview in Dhaka early this month.
 Haren, a Swedish national, was in Dhaka to attend the sixth edition of a communication summit at Le Meridien hotel in Dhaka, which was attended by around 350 professionals from the creative communication industry and related sectors.
 Bangladesh Brand Forum in association with Cannes Lions and The Daily Star organised the summit -- COMMWARD Excellence in Creative Communication.
 Haren is an author and speaker on business creativity. He has delivered more than 2,000 presentations, lectures and workshops



Kaushik Roy

in over 60 countries.
 He compared digitisation with a typhoon and advised companies to prepare accordingly.
 "Companies need to understand that the typhoon is already here and they have to have higher sense of urgency about the issue. We need to change our behaviour."
 In 1995, Haren wrote his first book titled "Internet and Marketing" where he said how things would change by 2000 because of the advancement of technology and the internet.
 "But nothing happened. It was not because technology or idea was not there. It was because people were not willing to understand how big the change was. It took 20 years. Now we are ready and that's the big difference," he said.
 "I think we are going to see an absolute explosion of innovation in all areas because we have started to understand the tool that we have been given."
 Haren said people should focus on the transformation part of the digitisation which is much bigger. "We have to develop our creative ability to better understand how we can use all of the possibilities."
 As everything is becoming digital, advertising and communication are becoming part of business, he said.
 On the sidelines of the conference, Kaushik Roy, president of brand strategy and marketing communication of India-based Reliance Industries Ltd, also talked about digitisation. He said the internet would be all-pervasive.
 "In the old world, electricity moved everything. In the new world, digitisation will be like electricity," Roy said.
 "The future is going to be: from the light bulbs to fans to almost everything we use in our daily life can be controlled by the internet."
 "There is no way you can survive without going digital. You have to introduce the power of data in everything you do. You can't manage customers without having a digital interface. So, the old method of doing things physically or in paper is not going to be viable."
 Roy said digitisation should be for the sake of creating jobs and raising growth and prosperity of the common men.
 He said because of digitisation a number of jobs will disappear. "So, new jobs will have to be created. That is going to be a key challenge."
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Big show on ICT in Oct

STAR BUSINESS REPORT
 A three-day exposition—Digital World 2016—will start in Dhaka on October 19 to showcase Bangladesh's success in digitisation and adoption of ICT.
 The country's biggest ICT exposition is expected to create a platform for a free flow of ICT-related ideas with global ICT think-tanks, organisers said.
 ICT experts will share their knowledge at the event guiding the nation toward achieving its vision for Digital Bangladesh by 2021, they said.
 Finance Minister AMA Muhith presided over a meeting yesterday at the finance ministry for successful organisation of the show, which is expected to see three lakh visitors.
 The government seeks to highlight its seven years of success in digitisation before the investors and development partners and show where the country will reach in future.
 Government organisations will showcase their digital services at the show that will take place at International Convention City Bashundhara. Over 100 ICT experts will share their views on different sessions at the event.
 Twelve seminars with five demonstration sessions will be organised at the expo where 40 ministries and divisions will take part, organisers said.
 Bangladesh Computer Council under the ICT Division will arrange the event in cooperation with Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services and Access to Information Programme under the Prime Minister's Office.
 The Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh, Internet Service Providers Association Bangladesh, Bangladesh Call Centre and Outsourcing, Bangladesh Women in IT and CTO Forum may also join the show as organisers like previous years.

সুস্টেট মোবাইল ব্যাংকিং
 এক নতুন সেবার দ্বার
 ফিস দেওয়ার চিন্তা
 ভুলে যাবেন এবার

সহজ
 সুস্টেট মোবাইল ব্যাংকিং

ফাস্ট সিকিউরিটি
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