

BTCL lowers internet domain fees

UNB, Dhaka
Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited has lowered the annual fees for allocation and registration of dot bd (.bd) and dot bangla (.bangla)

domains and fixed it to Tk 800, up from the varying rates of Tk 5,000, Tk 15,000 and Tk 25,000.
The domains will be allocated and registered on 'first-come first-serve' basis, BTCL said in a press release issued on Tuesday.

Govt getting ready to celebrate LDC graduation

FROM PAGE B1
The CDP's five-day triennial review meeting will start on March 12 16 in New York and it is expected that Bangladesh would be included in its graduation list.

To celebrate the beginning of the graduation process, the government has planned to organise various programmes from March 20 to March 25.

The cabinet committee on economic affairs yesterday approved necessary expenditure to purchase goods and services directly to arrange different functions in Dhaka.

A finance ministry official said the Economic Relations Division (ERD) will make the expenditure from its own budget.

The ERD told the committee that it would directly purchase the goods and services from experienced firms and event management companies.

A function will be arranged at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka on March 22 to witness the graduation.

A UN recommendation letter for the graduation will be handed to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

NGOs, civil society organisations, and prominent personalities from home and abroad will be invited to the day's event.

The following day, an international seminar will be held at the Radisson hotel.

The capital will be adorned with colourful banners, festoons, lightings and flags. Stickers depicting development activities will be pasted on buses, cars and other vehicles.

At district and upazila level, video contents and theme songs will be played at various important roads, intersections and landmarks.

The culture and information ministries will carry out publicity on development activities through traditional music genres such as Jaari Gaan, Pala Gaan and folk songs.

Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter will be used to publicise the country's development.

The print media will carry write-ups and editorials and the electronic media will air discussions on the country's development success.

The ministries will observe service week from March 20 to March 25.

The programmes that would be organised outside of the capital would be financed by the fund earmarked for the observation of the Independence Day.

The graduation entails opportunities and challenges alike for Bangladesh, according to an ERD report.

The challenges include Bangladesh losing trade facility in case of export, and concessional loans. So, the ERD has undertaken an initiative to prepare a report on the impact of the graduation.

The CDP will review Bangladesh's progress in 2021, and after a three-year transition period official graduation from the LDC category will take place.

Following graduation in 2024 Bangladesh, would probably be given a three-year transition period before it loses duty-free, quota-free market access to the European Union under the Everything but Arms initiative for LDCs, according to the CDP.

After 2027, provided that it ratifies 27 conventions on human and labour rights, environment and governance, Bangladesh may be expected to gain access to the generalised system of preferences plus (GSP+), giving it dedicated preferential tariff rates.

Five countries have so far graduated from LDC status: Botswana in 1994, Cape Verde in 2007, the Maldives in 2011, Samoa in 2014, and Equatorial Guinea in 2017.

There are still 33 LDCs in Africa, 13 in Asia and the Pacific and one in Latin America and the Caribbean, totaling 47.



Mosharrar Hossain, minister for housing and public works, and Alihussain Akberali, chairman of BSRM, open a plant of the company at Mirsarai in Chittagong on March 3.

Chinese consortium withdraws most conditions

FROM PAGE B1
One sticky provision was the price the Chinese consortium was willing to pay for per share.

It had offered Tk 22 per share. Many stock brokers had thought that the price was fixed.

But the DSE said the price is not fixed. If the DSE distributes any dividend it would affect the price.

In its clarification to the BSEC, the DSE said the price adjustment is a common practice. However, the potential strategic investor has agreed to waive the condition.

Another condition said the DSE would have to take approval from the consortium in case of winding up of the company, appointment of liquidator, sanction of scheme of liquidation or restructure, purchase of any intellectual property, valuation and offer price of share under the planned initial public offering and appointment of auditor.

The BSEC raised questions about the legal basis of the provisions, and the DSE conveyed

the regulator's queries to the Chinese consortium.

Another condition had said the DSE would have to take permission from the consortium in case of borrowing more than Tk 10 crore, arrangements with creditors amounting to Tk 10 crore and investment of more than Tk 10 crore.

But the condition has been waived as well. The new threshold has been proposed at Tk 100 crore.

The consortium has retreated from another condition that had been seeking to make liability of directors unlimited and make it mandatory to take its permission while dealing with existing or potential asset of the company.

The consortium has also moved away from its demand to be appointed as co-chief technical officer as this violates the DSE's demutualisation scheme.

On the issue of governing law and jurisdiction, the consortium had wanted to follow the

laws of England. Now, it has agreed to be governed by the laws of Bangladesh, if required, the DSE said in the clarification.

The withdrawal of the conditions raised question as it is being done after the opening of the bid, according to a senior official of the BSEC.

KAM Majedur Rahman, managing director of the DSE, however, said none of these conditions in question violate laws. "We are following the regulators' observation so that we can find the best strategic investor."

BSEC officials said the consortium has agreed to withdraw or change them as many of the conditions do not comply with the law.

Meanwhile, the four-member committee of the BSEC, set up to analyse the proposal of the Chinese consortium, has been given five more working days to submit its report to the regulator after the expiry of the previous deadline yesterday.

New AMD for Premier Bank



STAR BUSINESS DESK

Md Abdul Jabber Chowdhury has recently been appointed as additional managing director of Premier Bank.

Prior to the appointment, he was a deputy managing director of United Commercial Bank, responsible for the bank's Chittagong division business, Premier Bank said in a statement yesterday.

He also served Shahjalal Islami Bank as deputy managing director from 2009 to 2014.

Jabber completed his master's from the University of Chittagong.

Women occupy 12pc of board seats in banks

FROM PAGE B1
However, the government has initiated various measures to empower women economically and politically, which is reflected through the appointment of women directors in the boards of state banks.

The government has recently appointed Luna Shamsuddoha as the chairperson of Janata Bank, creating a record of the first woman to chair a bank.

Moreover, the government has appointed eight female directors in the boards of four state banks -- Sonali, Janata, Agrani and Rupali.

Luna said the government should bring more women into the boards of banks from various professions in a bid

to empower women.
"At the same time, women need to improve their quality and capacity to lead an institution like a bank."

The central bank has also taken various measures to empower women financially by introducing refinancing scheme, collateral-free loan, low interest facility etc. The BB also compelled banks to open a dedicated desk for women entrepreneurs.

However, the banking watchdog does not have any policy to promote women in the boards of banks.

"In Bangladesh, quota system will not be good for companies as it will give chance to non-professionals to come into boards," said Luna.

Women triumph in e-commerce

FROM PAGE B1
Rene, whose turnover last year hit \$7 million, sells handmade leather goods worldwide by way of its e-commerce site.

"Internet has definitely become a powerful tool for women's empowerment in developing countries like Bangladesh."

Sanjana has no official data but she assumes that as many as 80 percent of the e-entrepreneurs in Bangladesh are women.

The reason women are succeeding in the e-commerce space, Sultana says, might have something to do with clichéd female characteristics.

"For online business, honesty and

patience are a must. But men tend to lack patience, sometimes," Sultana said.

Razib Ahmed, a director of e-Commerce Association of Bangladesh (e-CAB), also acknowledged the women's domination in the e-commerce landscape.

However, out of the association's 730 members, only few are female.

The reason being, to become an e-CAB member, some formalities and documentation like trade licences are needed. "Most of the women do business by way of Facebook."

At present, there are about three crore Facebook users and 8.08 crore active internet users in Bangladesh.

Radisson Blu Chittagong gets new MD



STAR BUSINESS DESK

Retired brigadier general of Bangladesh Army AKM Akhtaruzzaman has recently been appointed as managing director of Radisson Blu Chittagong Bay View.

He completed a military career for 33 years, attaining a blend of command, staff and instructional experience, including in Bangladesh's permanent mission to the United Nations, the hotel yesterday said in a statement.

He achieved an MBA from Royal University of Dhaka and a Master's in Defence Studies from National University, Bangladesh.

Jute could be next main driver of economy

FROM PAGE B1
Azad said the government recognised jute goods as a product of the agro-processing sector two years ago, but the finance ministry has not given the recognition yet. As a result, exporters are not getting the incentives, he said.

The state minister called for producing skilled workforce as every year a lot of foreign currency is spent to hire foreign experts to run textiles and jute sectors.

Currently, there are six colleges, 12 diploma institutes and 26 vocational institutes for textiles, said Azam.

Md Shamsul Alam, director general of the Department of Jute, said Bangladesh gets Tk 1 on selling a garment item at Tk 4 but retains the whole amount in case of jute.

He expects a maund or around 40 kilogrammes of jute to sell for Tk 3,000 by 2021.

Jute traders get bank loans at 20 percent interest while other exporters can borrow from the export development fund at only 2 percent interest, said A Berek Khan, secretary to Bangladesh Jute Mills Association.

Mahmudul Hasan, chairman of Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation, said they needed investment from either the government or the private sector to commercially produce paper from jute, something already proven in laboratories.

Moreover, by making viscose and paper pulp from jute at home, Bangladesh can save Tk 1,700 crore while earning \$7 billion from jute and jute goods exports a year, he said.

AFM Akhtaruzzaman, former director of Bangladesh Forests Research Council, said it was also possible to make high-value papers such as that for cheques, stamps and currency notes with jute.

Abul Kasem Khan, DCCI president, called for enacting an act on mandatory use of jute and jute goods.

In a keynote paper, Rashedul Karim Munna, managing director of Creation Private Ltd, said many renowned car brands like BMW, Audi, Mercedes-Benz, Renault, Chrysler, Mitsubishi and Volvo have started making different environment-friendly components using jute.

"So, the government should make a policy to export \$5 billion-\$7 billion worth jute in the next seven years," he said.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Project Director
Clean Air and Sustainable Environment (CASE) Project
Department of Environment
Paribesh Bhaban (3rd Floor), E-16, Agargaon,
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Request for Bids Goods (One Envelope Bidding Process)

Memo No.: Paribesh/CASE/DoE-AF-G2/232/2018/187 Date: 06 March, 2018
Country: Bangladesh

Name of Project: Clean Air and Sustainable Environment (CASE) Project
Contract Title: Equipment for a Central Air Quality Lab

CREDIT No.: IDA Credit No. 5924-BD
RFB Reference No.: DOE-AF-G2

1. Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Clean Air and Sustainable Environment (CASE) Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for Equipment for a Central Air Quality Lab.
2. The Department of Environment (DoE) now invites sealed bids from eligible Bidders for Equipment for a Central Air Quality Lab-AAS Coal Vapor, Spectrophotometer, Mercury Analyzer, VOC Analyzer, Portable PM Monitor (Dust Track), Semi-Micro Balance, Micro-Wave Disaster etc.
3. Bidding will be conducted through international competitive procurement using a Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" July 2016 ("Procurement Regulations"), and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.
4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from Office of the Project Director, CASE Project, DoE component, email: pdcasedoe@gmail.com and inspect the bidding document during office hours 0900 to 1700 hours (Except Friday and Saturday) at the address given below. A pre-bid meeting shall take place on March 21, 2018 at 11.00hrs local time (GMT+6hrs) at the address mentioned below.
5. The bidding document in English may be purchased by interested Bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of equivalent USD 20.00 (twenty US dollars). The method of payment will be Pay Order/Bank Draft in favour of "Project Director" Clean Air and Sustainable Environment (CASE) Project from any schedule bank of Bangladesh. For overseas delivery, the bidder may obtain the bidding document by instructing any international courier service to collect the same from the address mentioned below. The bidder may download soft copy of the Bidding Documents from the website of DoE (www.doe.gov.bd). The soft copy is only for viewing purpose. The bidder must purchase bidding document to participate in the bidding process.
6. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before April 23, 2018; 15.00hrs local time (GMT+6hrs). Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of Bidders designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below April 23, 2018; 15.15hrs local time (GMT+6hrs).
7. All Bids must be accompanied by a "Bid Security" of USD 10,000.00 (ten thousand US Dollar) or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency.
8. The address(es) referred to above is (are):

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