

World Wide Web inventor opposes Australia's news payment plan

AFP, Sydney

World Wide Web inventor Tim Berners-Lee says Australia's plan to force digital giants to pay media outlets for news content is "unworkable" and undermines a "fundamental principle" of the internet. Canberra is pursuing world-first laws that would require Google and Facebook to compensate Australian news organisations, or pay millions of dollars in fines.

The aggressive move to check the tech giants' power has prompted blowback from the US firms, with Facebook warning Australians could be blocked from sharing articles on its "News Feed", while Google has been experimenting with hiding local news in searches.

Berners-Lee, a computer scientist who created the web in 1989, said in a submission to an Australian Senate inquiry he is "concerned that the code risks breaching a fundamental principle of the web by requiring payment for linking between certain content online". "The ability to link freely -- meaning without limitations regarding the content of the linked site and without monetary fees -- is fundamental to how the web operates, how it has flourished till present, and how it will continue to grow in decades to come," he wrote.

In the submission dated January 18,

Berners-Lee said he supports the need for publishers to be "properly rewarded" for their work but "constraints on the use of hypertext links are not the correct way to achieve this goal". "If this precedent were followed elsewhere it could make the web unworkable around the world," he wrote. "I therefore respectfully urge the committee to remove this mechanism from the code."

"The Office of the US Trade Representative has also urged Australia to abandon its "burdensome" plan, saying there could be "long-lasting negative consequences" for consumers and companies. Canberra's initiative has been closely watched around the globe, as news media worldwide suffer in an increasingly digital economy where big tech firms overwhelmingly capture advertising revenue.

The planned legislation has received widespread support from Australian media organisations, many of which have been hit hard by a drop in revenue during the coronavirus pandemic. The digital giants have also made submissions to the inquiry, with Facebook urging a return to the voluntary code of conduct first mooted by Canberra. "Facebook remains willing to pay Australian news publishers for news content made available on Facebook, as long as it is subject to genuine commercial considerations," it said.

Economy showing signs of turnaround

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He also stressed on reforms of revenue management and the financial sector.

The first quarter review on budget implementation showed that public expenditure declined 7.57 per cent to Tk 62,914 crore in the July-September period of fiscal 2020-21 from Tk 68,068 crore in the same period a year ago.

Implementation of the annual development programme also dropped in the first quarter of the current fiscal compared to the same period a year ago.

Revenue collection by the National Board of Revenue, however, grew 4.11 per cent year-on-year to Tk 49,960 crore during the period, according to the report presented by Kamal.

The finance minister also hoped that private sector credit flow would grow because of increased foreign and local investment after the implementation of government mega projects.

Citing 32 per cent growth in government borrowing in the July-September period, Kamal said increased government borrowing would not create any problem in financial sector management.

Payra port logs Tk 253cr in revenue so far

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"Payra port is being constructed for the economic development of this southern town. Through this port, our trade relations at home and abroad will be further developed and the country's economy will be strengthened," the minister said.

Special facilities will also be provided in this port for investors, he said.

Later that day, the minister also visited the Kuakata beach.

The national assembly passed the 'Pigeon Seaport Authority Act, 2013' on November 3, 2013 and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the construction work on November 1, 2013.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury inaugurated the dredging activities on January 17 to maintain a depth of 6.3 metre in the Rabnabad channel.

Kattali Textile didn't cooperate during audit

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The Financial Reporting Council (FRC) should take action against Kattali Textile because such disclaimer from auditor proves it has some suspicion, said Torikul Islam, a stock investor.

"If the company has no bad intention, then why it did not cooperate with the auditors?" Islam said, adding that its directors were recently penalised so suspicion is logical.

The stock market regulator imposed a penalty of Tk 50 lakh each on the directors of Kattali Textile for non-compliance with securities laws in connection with the utilisation of IPO proceeds, the DSE said in a disclosure published on August 25 last year.

The penalised directors are Md Anwarul Haque Chowdhury, Md Mokarrom Anwar Chowdhury, Eian Apparels and Lucky Corner. Nasreen Hoque, chairman of Kattali Textile, and its managing director

Md Emdadul Hoque Chowdhury were also penalised.

The company's stocks traded at Tk 10.90 yesterday.

Mohammad Mohiuddin Ahmed, executive director of the Financial Reports Monitoring Division at the FRC, said they would soon check why the company did not cooperate with its auditor.

The disclaimer of opinion expresses that the auditor is in the dark about the company due to a lack of cooperation.

"We want to see why the company did not present all the required documents," he added.

"Our area was locked down due to Covid-19, so the auditors were not able to come physically," said Sattabrata Das, company secretary of Kattali Textile.

"We sent them all documents to check," he said, adding that the auditors did eventually visit them in last December.

PK Halder among 16 stock gamblers fined

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The investors broke securities rules while trading shares of Northern Jute Manufacturing, Information Services Network, Fine Foods and Stylecraft.

Stocks of Information Services Network and Fine Foods doubled within one month in July.

However, Stylecraft and Northern Jute

Manufacturing stocks have been in a downturn in the last few months.

In the commission meeting the stock market regulator fined Bali Securities Tk 2 lakh for keeping insufficient funds at its consolidated customers' bank account, lending its directors and their wives and giving margin loans for non-marginable securities.

Labour standards to decide fate of GSP Plus in EU

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Moazzem said the EU suggested nine areas of action for Bangladesh to qualify for the GSP Plus benefit.

Some gaps need to be plugged in the EU's nine-point action plan for Bangladesh to avail the GSP Plus status after its graduation, the think-tank said.

One of the major gaps lies in the freedom of association as factory workers still need the participation of 20 per cent of their colleagues to form a union. The threshold was reduced from 30 per cent through an amendment to the labour law.

However, the 20 per cent threshold is still high when considering that many factories have thousands of workers.

Besides, representatives of various workers' organisations complain that union leaders are only allowed to be selected from workers of the establishment concerned.

This enables employers to force out union leaders by firing them for other reasons, such as 'unruly behaviour'.

However, the term 'unruly behaviour' was not properly defined in the labour law, said Moazzem.

He said that as per the law, the government has the power to stop a strike or lockout if there is concern of "serious hardship to the community" or if the protest is "prejudicial to national interest".

However, the related terms are not properly defined by law in the discriminatory anti-strike provisions.

Strikes are prohibited in an enterprise during the first three years of operation if it is "owned by foreigners or is established in collaboration with foreigners".

There is no clearly defined role of the participatory committees as they are not empowered with the right to bargain.

No definition was provided for 'disorderliness' or 'disorderly behaviour', which proved to be particularly difficult to understand for less educated workers, Moazzem added.

He said Bangladesh has already ratified the worst forms of Child

Labour Convention. Through the 2018 amendment to labour law, employing children under the age of 12 in any factory or establishment has been prohibited and is a punishable offence.

Eliminating child labour in order to move towards the ratification of the Minimum Age Convention will be difficult due to the socio-economic conditions of Bangladesh, where many children work in order to provide for themselves and their families.

The Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006, and its amendments do not explicitly address the issues of violence against workers and workplace harassment.

There are no explicit laws for addressing workplace related violence issues. Even worker unrest is sometimes considered a criminal offence. Police force also gets involved in the event of an unrest turning violent, although the unrest usually stems from industrial disputes, according to the CPD's research director.

There are other laws in place to prevent violence against women, which would also be addressed in criminal courts if they turn into 'criminal offences', but harassment in the workplace is not clearly identified by the law.

And so, the consequences of such actions are not yet delineated.

Moazzem said Bangladesh has made much progress in labour rights but some progress is needed in 9 to 10 areas for further improvement to obtain the GSP Plus status to the EU after graduation.

Meanwhile, Rahman said obtaining the GSP Plus status is important for Bangladesh since the EU is the country's largest export destination.

"Labour rights and human rights need to be improved for obtaining the GSP Plus," Rahman said.

Some three fifths of Bangladesh's total exports and two thirds of the total garment export are destined for the EU, where they enjoy duty free access under the EU's EBA scheme, he added.

However, this generous preference on export would be eroded when the

country graduates to a developing country in 2024, as per the rules of the EU GSP facility for LDCs.

In the case of graduation, the EU allows a three-year grace period for preparation.

Arshad Jamal Dipu, vice-president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, and Mohammad Hatem, vice-president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, urged the government to amend the labour law with a focus on domestic issues.

For instance, some 98 per cent of the country's industrial units are run by local entrepreneurs, said Dipu.

"So, the issues of the local entrepreneurs should be addressed in the labour law," he added.

Dipu went on to say that international buyers should pay 20 to 25 per cent more than the current price for garment items from Bangladesh as it would make local suppliers more competitive.

Rensje Teerink, ambassador of the EU in Dhaka, said Bangladesh should make a roadmap to address the labour rights issues to be eligible for the GSP Plus status. At the end of last December, an important meeting was held between the EU and the government in this regard, she said.

Belal Hossain Sheikh, director of the Department of Labour, said the labour ministry will launch a database within a month on trade union registration and dispute settlements.

Calling for more labour courts in the industrial zones, Razequzzaman Ratan, president of the Socialist Labour Front, said there are some 20,000 cases pending in the labour courts and 10,000 cases in the labour tribunals.

The national action plan, which the government has been making, needs tripartite consultation, said Tuomo Poutiainen, Bangladesh country director of the International Labour Organisation.

"The country needs continuity of reforms to improve the standards and governance of the labour law," Poutiainen added.

Radiant Pharma acquires Julphar for Tk 140cr

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Besides, there is no requirement to take permissions afresh to continue production of Julphar's existing products because only ownership has changed, said Zahedee.

Zahedee said along with them, two to four other local companies as well as Indian companies were interested in buying the Julphar.

"We have reached a final stage in the overall analysis. As part of which we have signed an acquisition agreement and we have been in charge since July 15 last year. The acquisition process between the partners is over," he said.

But Bangladesh Bank has some rules for giving clearance, which are being abided by. "Once the clearance is received, I can say that the acquisition process has been completed," he noted.

Zahedee said he acquired 100 per cent share of the company. Julphar had 80 per cent share while the rest belonged to RAK Pharmaceuticals.

Julphar Bangladesh started its journey on July 31, 2009. The state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities on a 228,705 square feet area is located

42 kilometres north of Dhaka under Sreepur upazila of Gazipur district.

The facilities have the strength of general manufacturing unit, dedicated cephalosporin unit, advanced three layer floors, prototype R&D laboratories, effluent treatment plant (ETP) and advanced water treatment system with recycling facilities.

Presently Julphar Bangladesh has more than 120 products including antibiotics/antimicrobials, anti-ulcerants, anti-inflammatory, anti-hypertensive, oral anti-diabetics, antiviral, oncology, dermatological and nutritional supplements.

The company is said to be in strict compliance with WHO GMP and USFDA & TGA guidelines and sourcing active pharmaceutical ingredients mainly from certified sources.

It is claimed to be the only company in Bangladesh to have achieved a GPM compliance certification from The Ministry of Health, UAE.

But this journey is abruptly coming to a close within a decade.

According to former officials of the Julphar, its business had been going very well up until 2016.

At the end of 2016, Selim Solaiman

joined as its new CEO for Bangladesh. Ever since he took charge, the multinational practices of running the company's business has declined.

At one stage Julphar faced losses. Besides, like all other multinationals, they had to adapt to the prevailing business environment in the country. But in context to its peers, it was not able to give out gifts and benefits to doctors on a massive scale. The Julphar failed to increase its profits, the officials claimed.

Meanwhile, the Julphar staff at a press conference in Economic Reporters Forum yesterday demanded that the multinational provide compensation as per rules before packing its bags.

The sacked staff also demanded profit shares, welfare shares and equitable distribution of 35 per cent of factory sales.

They alleged that the company did not inform them of the developments one year in advance and had forced them to resign.

AHS Yusuf Hyder, former Khuna zonal manger, and Md Rasheduzzaman, former Mymensingh area manager, spoke at the event.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, RHD
Barishal Zone, Barishal.
Phone & Fax No. 64651/ 2175022.
Email: acebar@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 35.01.0651.015.07.009.20-176 Dated: 19/01/2021.

Invitation for Tenders (International)

01 Ministry/Division	Ministry of Road Transport & Bridges, Road Transport & Highways Division.		
02 Agency	Roads & Highways Department.		
03 Procuring Entity Name	Additional Chief Engineer, RHD, Barishal Zone, Barishal.		
04 Procuring Entity Code	Not used at Present		
05 Procuring Entity District	Barishal		
06 Procurement Nature	Works		
07 Procurement Type	ICT		
08 Invitation for	Construction of 1180M Long Bridge over the river "Andermanik" including Bank Protection and related work of Payra Port first Terminal Project (PPFTP)		
09 Invitation Ref No	03/ADP/PPFTP/WD-06/PAT/2020-2021.		
10 Date	19/01/2021.		
KEY INFORMATION			
11 Procurement Method	One Stage Two Envelope Tendering Method		
FUNDING INFORMATION			
12 Budget and Source of Fund	Development Budget of GOB.		
13 Development Partners (if applicable)	None		
PARTICULAR INFORMATION			
14 Project / Programme Code (if applicable)	2242604		
15 Project / Programme Name (if applicable)	Payra Port's First Terminal and Related Facilities Development Project (PPFTP); MoS		
16 Tender Package No.	WD-06		
17 Tender Package Name	Construction of 1180M Long Bridge over the river "Andermanik" including Bank Protection and related work of Payra Port first Terminal Project (PPFTP) under Patuakhali Road Division.		
18 Tender Publication Date	19/01/2021		
19 Tender Last Selling Date	08/03/2021 at 05:00 P.M		
20 Tender Closing Date and Time	08/03/2021 at 01:30 P.M		
21 Tender Opening Date and Time	09/03/2021 at 02:00 P.M		
NAME & ADDRESS OF THE OFFICE(S)			
-Selling Tender Document (Principal)	Office of the Payra Port Authority, 75-76 Kakral (10 th Floor) Dhaka, Bangladesh.		
-Selling Tender Document (Other)	1. Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Barishal/ Jhalakathi / Pirojpur / Bhola / Patuakhali / Barguna. 2. Executive Engineer, RHD, Planning Division-1, Sarak Bhaban, Tejgoan Dhaka. 3. Executive Engineer, RHD, Documentation & Procurement Division, Tejgoan Sarak Bhaban, Tejgoan Dhaka. 4. Divisional Commissioner, Barishal.		
-Receiving Tender Document	Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, RHD, Barishal Zone, Barishal.		
-Opening Tender Document	Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, RHD, Barishal Zone, Barishal.		
23 Place/Date/Time of Pre-tender Meeting	Place	Date	Time
	Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, RHD, Barishal Zone, Barishal.	01/02/2021	11:30 AM
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER			
24 Eligibility of Tenderers	<p>The Minimum number of years of general experience of the Tenderer in the construction work as a Prime contractor or Subcontractor shall be 10 (ten) years (counting backward from the date of publication of IFT)</p> <p>The minimum specific experience as a Prime Contractor or Subcontractor or Joint Venture Partner in similar nature of construction work of at least 700 (seven hundred) meter 4-Lane bridge with viaduct/Flyover on the Highway or over river channels) successfully completed in a Single contract with a value of minimum 400.00 (four hundred) crore or USD 47.162 million within last 10 (ten) years.</p> <p>For the purpose of similar nature, complexity and methods/ Construction Technology, the contract shall be a Highway/equivalent to National Highway standard (combination of road and Bridge works or separately Bridge works) construction works.</p> <p>(a) At least one Multispan Four Laning Bridge/Flyover Built over the river channel(s) or on the Highway</p> <p>(b) The Length of the 4-Laning Bridge with viaduct including Box Girder not less than 700.00 meter shall be required.</p>		
25 Brief Description of Works	Construction of 1180M Long Bridge over the river "Andermanik" including Bank Protection and related work of Payra Port first Terminal Project (PPFTP) under Patuakhali Road Division, during the fiscal year 2020-2021.		
26 Brief Description of Physical Services	None		
27 Price of Tender Document	USD 235.87 or BDT 20,000.00 in favour of Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Patuakhali Bank Draft/Pay Order		
28 Lot No	Identification of Lot	Location	Tender Security Amount
1	Construction of 1180M Long Bridge over the river Andermanik including Bank Protection and related work of Payra Port first Terminal Project (PPFTP) under Patuakhali Road Division.	Kalapara, Patuakhali, Bangladesh	USD 2.17 million or BDT 18.45 (Eighteen Crore Forty Five Lakh) Crore.
EMPLOYER DETAILS			
29 Name of Official Inviting Tender	Abu Hena Md. Tareq Iqbal		
30 Designation & Address of Official Inviting Tender	Additional Chief Engineer, RHD, Barishal Zone, Sarak Bhaban, Barishal. Tel: 880-431-64651, Fax: 880-431-2175022.		
31 Address of Official Inviting Tender	RHD, Barishal Zone, Sarak Bhaban, Barishal.		
32 Contact Details of Official Inviting Tender	Telephone: 0431-64651, Mob: 01730-782782, Email: acebar@rhd.gov.bd		
33	The Procuring Entity reserves all the rights to accept any Tender or reject any or all tender without assigning any reasons.		

(Signature)
Abu Hena Md. Tareq Iqbal
ID No. 001500
Additional Chief Engineer (C.C), RHD
Barishal Zone, Barishal.

GD-141