

## Sonali Aansh's profits more than triple

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Sonali Aansh Industries' profits more than tripled in the third quarter of the current financial year on the back of higher export turnover.

Earnings per share were Tk 1.78 in the January-March period of 2022, up 263 per cent against Tk 0.49 in the same period a year ago, according to the un-audited financial statement of the manufacturer of traditional, non-traditional and diversified quality jute products.

The EPS was Tk 3.05 in the July-March period, against Tk 0.75 attained in the identical period last financial year, an increase of more than 305 per cent year-on-year.

Net operating cash flows per share, a measure of a firm's financial strength, also more than tripled to Tk 18.80 in the nine-month period, compared to Tk 6.08 a year ago.

The net asset value, which indicates a company's total assets minus its total liabilities, was Tk 228.71 per share as on March 31 compared to Tk 226.28 on the same day in 2021.

Sonali Aansh Industries is an export-oriented company and supplies jute yarn, fabrics and finished goods such as bags and footwear to its buyers in European countries, India and China, Md Ahsan Habib, chief financial officer of the company, told The Daily Star.

Shares of Sonali Aansh closed 2.91 per cent higher at Tk 473.40 on the Dhaka Stock Exchange yesterday.

## Publish data properly

BSEC urges listed companies

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Some listed companies do not regularly publish their financial data on their website and so, investors struggle to analyse and take decisions, said Shaikh Shamsuddin Ahmed, a commissioner of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC).

"Some companies do not publish their audited reports on their website so the BSEC asked them to update their data but despite repeated letters, they have not replied," he added.

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Women entrepreneurs such as these face a myriad of difficulties in running their businesses and so, certain processes such as the issuance of trade licences and accessing bank loans should be simplified, according to Business Initiative Leading Development.

# Ease taxation, licensing for women entrepreneurs

Business Initiative Leading Development suggests in a report

AHSAN HABIB

The trade licence issuance process needs to be simplified and moved online while simplification of the bank loan process is also needed to help boost women owned businesses, according to a report by Business Initiative Leading Development (BUIDL).

At present, women owned businesses constitute 7.2 per cent of the 80 lakh businesses in Bangladesh, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

In its report, the private think-tank said the formalisation of e-commerce-based businesses should be easy.

Collateral free loans, simplification of value-added tax (VAT) and other tax policies, popularisation of the BSCIC online market and export facilitation through the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) is also recommended.

The report was prepared after arranging a number of awareness workshops countrywide for women owned business along with women's chambers.

The objective of the workshops was to increase awareness on general business information and the business registration processes along with export-import procedures and the online services adopted by the government.

Build reached an audience of around 27,000 through its virtual workshops. The report will be published today.

Women entrepreneurs face challenges mostly for business formalisation, cumbersome trade licensing process and high renewal fee, getting collateral free loans and loans from stimulus packages, lack of knowledge on effective marketing and branding, and inadequate

distribution channels.

Other challenges shared by women owned business are: lack of a coordinated platform for women entrepreneurs' trade facilitation, lack of knowledge regarding TIN-VAT registration and return submission, lack of demand-based training facilities, applying for trade licences in case of online business, poor buyer-seller linkage within and beyond the country, raw material availability and branding non-traditional products.

Many women entrepreneurs were adversely affected by the coronavirus pandemic and so, the think-tank recommends ensuring easy access to loans and incentives for them.

The trade licence issuance process needs to be simplified and made fully digital. In addition, the company registration process as well as licence and renewal fees need to be rationalised for micro or cottage women entrepreneurs, it said.

Besides, the renewal frequency of trade licences can be extended from one year to two to seven years as it may reduce some hassles for entrepreneurs, the report says.

Also, the process of securing digital identification numbers, trade licences and tax identification numbers should be integrated so that entrepreneurs can run their business comfortably.

A large number of women entrepreneurs operating micro and cottage businesses through Facebook can be registered under digital business identification numbers, BUIDL said.

Commercial banks can arrange training and established help desks that can be more functional so that women entrepreneurs can be informed about loan information and come up with the related documents to qualify for getting collateral free loans.

Guidelines for processing small loans can be prepared and circulated as the process for securing low amounts of credit should not be same as that of a big loan.

Popularisation and implementation of the credit guarantee scheme should be followed by each scheduled bank so that women entrepreneurs can apply for loans without collateral and Bangladesh Bank should take effective steps in this regard.

Women chambers can initiate support for their members and help get the group loan facilities provided by the BSCIC.

A help desk at the VAT office could assist women entrepreneurs to find the category of exempted and non-exempted sectors in respect to VAT registration.

To facilitate trade, women entrepreneurs recommend launching country-wise import requirement identification processes. This means identifying which products are needed by each country.

The Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) can expedite continuous training on export-import procedures and it can also share the yearly trade fair calendar so that potential participants can better prepare. The organisation could also reduce registration fees for women entrepreneurs.

Meanwhile, the BSCIC could enhance marketing facilities both locally and globally along with establishing buyer-seller linkage for women entrepreneurs through online channels.

A system can be developed in BSCIC to collect products from a number of cottage or micro entrepreneurs and export those products through a single platform.

The EPB can also help identify suitable sectors for businesswomen considering the local and international demands so that they can expand operations, BUIDL said.

## Inclusive development needs disability-friendly budget

MOHAMMAD REJAUL KARIM SIDDIQUEE

Rokeya (pseudonym), a hearing-impaired woman who is facing mental illness, was advised by her doctor to take psychotherapy for six months. Rokeya and her family failed to find a therapist who knows sign language. Therefore, her doctor prescribed some medicines as an alternative treatment. Rokeya is now being addicted to the medicines that are causing other health issues. Rokeya has the right to access the best available health services according to laws and policies, but the government has no plan to allow her to exercise this right progressively by allocating a yearly budget that can ensure accessible health services for all persons with disabilities.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) sets out to ensure the realisation of all human rights of all persons with disabilities. As a State Party to this convention,

Bangladesh has a responsibility to ensure inclusive development where meaningful participation of persons with disabilities will be ensured in the budgeting process, revenue generation and expenditures, implementation, monitoring and other stages of the public budget.

The interest of persons with disabilities has to be paid attention duly during the budget-making process. No national or international jurisprudence has prescribed a concrete and comprehensive guideline for CRPD-compliant budgeting, but we may identify some elements of CRPD-compliant budgeting in line with the general principles (Article 3) and general obligations (Article 4) of the CRPD.

The political will of a state for the development of a particular section of the population is demonstrated in its legal framework. Practically, the public budget statements reflect the real intention of the government.

Due to commitments made to the international communities, the governments of least-developed and developing countries may enact various laws and policies in consistency with the international human rights instruments, but the sincerity and diligence of the government in implementing these laws and policies is evident from the availability, reduction or increase of annual budget allocations in relevant sectors.

For example, if the laws and policies call for the government to promote an inclusive education system, it is naturally expected that the government will take steps every year to realise inclusive education progressively and allocate the budget accordingly. If the government does not allocate this money, it can be assumed that the implementation of a truly inclusive education system is not really on the government's priority list.

Therefore, persons with disabilities and organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), NGOs, international NGOs and donors should carefully follow and analyse the national budget statement. Based on the results of the analysis, the OPDs and allies should advocate with the government to influence the budget-making process.

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## PANDEMIC SHOCKS

# US firms still struggle to deal with inventories

AFP, New York

More than two years into the Covid-19 pandemic, American businesses are still struggling to manage their inventories in a feast-or-famine cycle caused by fickle consumer demand.

"We have way too much inventory right now," said Ginny Pasqualone, chief executive of Sparkledots, a children's clothing manufacturer.

"It's important that we have a large selection of merchandise that our clients can choose from," she said, but store traffic has been hit by inflation concerns, with some customers "very scared that they're not going to survive another recession."

For now, Sparkledots is holding more goods in inventory, but that ties up company capital and limits its ability to add to its 18-worker staff.

"It sucks our growth for the future," Pasqualone said.

Such is the dilemma affecting businesses of all sizes. Large store chains like Walmart, Target and Macy's have acknowledged in recent weeks that they misread consumer patterns, leaving them with excess supplies of appliances, casual clothing and bicycles.

Bicycles were a hot commodity early in the pandemic, prompting surprisingly large orders, said Wayne Sosin, owner of Workman Cycles, a New York manufacturer best known for its tricycles.

"Retailers bought whatever they could as if bike sales would continue to have unprecedented demand," Sosin said. "It was so obvious to me that (this) would not last."



South Pars gas field facilities are seen in the southern Iranian port town of Assaluyeh on the shore of the Gulf.

PHOTO: AFP/FILE

## Oman, Iran ink deals on oil field, gas pipelines

AFP, Muscat

Oman and Iran signed deals to develop two gas pipelines and an oil field along their maritime border, Oman's energy minister said Saturday, less than two weeks after Iran's president visited the sultanate.

The visit by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on May 23 came amid stalled international talks to revive a deal on Tehran's nuclear programme, leaving the Islamic republic under sanctions.

At the time, the official Oman News Agency reported that the countries had signed memoranda of understanding concerning oil and gas, but did not provide details.

On Saturday, the agency quoted energy minister Mohammed al-Rumhi as saying the agreements were "related to the development of the two gas pipeline projects linking the two countries and the Hengam oil field".