



Catkin, a species of tall grass with a tuft of soft downy white flowers, can be seen everywhere in the industrial estate set up by the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation in Barguna as entrepreneurs are not showing much enthusiasm in securing land for higher costs. As a result, only eight out of 61 plots have so far been allotted. PHOTO: COLLECTED

# Barguna BSCIC estate off to a slow start

Only 8 plots allotted in two years

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Only eight out of 61 plots have so far been allotted in the BSCIC industrial estate in Barguna as entrepreneurs are not showing much enthusiasm in securing land for higher costs in the coastal district well-known for agricultural produce and fisheries.

As a result, common reed, a species of tall grass with a tuft of soft downy white flowers, has covered the open space of the estate set up by the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC).

In 2011, the government approved a project worth Tk 7.8 crore to establish the estate in the district town with a view to developing industries and creating 2,200 jobs.

The district administration acquired 10.20 acres of land in Croc in December 2014 and handed it over to the BSCIC.

But as the site was not developed on time, the project cost increased by Tk 11.16 crore and the deadline was extended to 2016 in the first revision.

The contractor failed to make the project ready even during the extended period, forcing the government to push back the deadline to December 2018 and raise the cost to Tk 18.80 crore.

In December 2020, the BSCIC Barguna was finally ready to award plots to prospective entrepreneurs.

Sixty-one plots in three categories – A, B and C – have been prepared for entrepreneurs.

There are 27 plots in the ‘A’ category with each having 6,000 square feet



of area, while 19 ‘B’ type plots have a 4,500-square-foot of area and 15 ‘C’ category plots have 3,500 square feet of area each.

But in the last two years, only eight plots could be allotted to small industrialists.

Among the initial plot owners are Sabbir Ahmed and Mohammad Zubayer.

The two entrepreneurs have formed a joint venture company and are now working to set up the necessary infrastructure for a bakery factory and an oil mill, both over 6,000 square feet of area.

The bakery is expected to go into production by next month where bread, biscuits and other food items will be produced.

The oil mill, which is expected to begin production in March, will process sunflower oil, said Ahmed.

Mir Khairul Ahsan, Iqbal Hussain and

Wali Ullah, all residents of the Barguna town, did not make the initial payments after getting the allotment of plots. So, the allotment has been cancelled.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Ahsan called the price of the plots very high.

The price of each decimal of land has been fixed at Tk 2 lakh. As a result, the price of the plot that he received stood at around Tk 27 lakh.

“It is very difficult to make a profit after buying a piece of land at such a high price. Besides, there are costs to set up factories, begin production and paying wages to the workers,” Ahsan said.

Kazi Tofajjel Haque, deputy manager of the Barguna BSCIC, said initially, the agency had awarded 20 plots, but the allotment of 16 plots had to be cancelled due to the recipients’ failure to make down payments by June this year.

Later, 16 more plots were awarded, but

down payments have been made against only four plots. The allotment for the remaining 12 plots has been cancelled.

Regarding the entrepreneurs’ objection to the price of the plot, Haque said, “The price of the plot has been determined on the basis of the cost of the project.”

According to the official, the Barguna BSCIC has tried its best to create interest among the entrepreneurs in taking the plots.

“I met with the deputy commissioner and the Barguna Chamber of Commerce and Industries. We hope half of the plots can be allotted this year.”

Abdur Rashid, president of the district chapter of the National Association of Small & Cottage Industries of Bangladesh (NASCIB), says efforts are being made to generate interest among the small industrialists so that they come forward, take the plots and set up industries in the BSCIC industrial estate.

“We hope that the plots will be allocated quickly and small industrialists will set up factories and start production.”

Jahangir Kabir, president of the Barguna Chamber of Commerce and Industries, says agriculture and fisheries are the mainstays of the economy in the coastal district.

“No industry has been established here. If entrepreneurs from outside of the district come forward, we will help them.”

Habibur Rahman, deputy commissioner and president of the Barguna BSCIC, said, is also hopeful of awarding more plots by the end of 2022.

“All the plots will be allotted by June next year,” he said.

## United Power makes Tk 1,000cr profit in FY22

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

United Power Generation Distribution Company logged a profit of around Tk 997 crore in fiscal year 2021-22 although it was a year-on-year decrease of 8 per cent, something it cited was due to the devaluation of the local currency against the greenback.

In a disclosure on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) website yesterday, the company stated that fuel oil prices had increased in the international market.

The Russia-Ukraine war has led to global economic uncertainties, energy supply shortages and a significant price volatility.

Spending behind oil purchases rose significantly due to the rapid devaluation of the local currency, said the company.

On the other hand, the company’s net operating cash flow per share decreased to Tk 1.89 from Tk 27.17 the previous year.

This was due to a significant increase in trade receivables for delays in payment of revenue bills by Bangladesh Power Development Board.

Based on the profits, the company’s board of directors declared a 170 per cent cash dividend for shareholders.

Stocks of the power generation company dropped 0.38 per cent from the last trading day to Tk 233 at the DSE.

## Stocks fall amid trading disruption

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

All major indices in Bangladesh dropped yesterday after an error that saw the withdrawal of the circuit breaker for all stocks at the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) delayed the starting of the trading session.

The beginning of the trading session was delayed by one and a half hours as the bourse had lifted the circuit breaker for all securities instead of 70 companies that declared their earnings a day earlier, said the exchange in a press release.

Currently, firms listed on the two exchanges of the country are allowed to go up by a maximum of 10 per cent and go down by a maximum of 2 per cent in a single day. But a day after a corporate disclosure is made, no price cap is applied.

The interruption prompted the DSE to extend the trading duration by 15 minutes. So, the market closed at 2:30pm yesterday, instead of 2:15pm usually.

Still, the DSEX, the benchmark index of the premier bourse, lost 43 points, or 0.68 per cent, to close at 6,334.

The DS30, the blue chip index, fell 0.90 per cent to 2,245 while the DSES, the shariah-based index, was down 0.90 per cent at 1,389.

Of the securities, 44 advanced, 91 declined and 231 remained unchanged. Turnover plunged 24 per cent to Tk 826 crore.

The three-day winning streak ended as cautious investors booked some profits on quick-gaining issues amid the revised trading hours, said International Leasing Securities Ltd, a brokerage house, in its daily market review.

Among the sectors, general insurance was up 1.8 per cent, ceramic rose 0.7 per cent, and IT added 0.5 per cent.

The service sector witnessed a 2.7 per cent correction, while the jute sector fell 2.2 per cent.

Navana Pharmaceuticals topped the gainers’ list, advancing 78 per cent. Chartered Life Insurance, Eastern Cables, Hakkani Pulp, and Bangladesh National Insurance surged more than 8 per cent.

Agricultural Marketing Company (Pran) suffered the highest fall, dropping 11 per cent. BDCOM Online, Rangpur Foundry, Indo-Bangla Pharmaceuticals, and JMI Hospital Requisite Manufacturing were also among the major losers.

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## Bata Shoe’s sales surge 51pc

It makes Tk 27cr profit in Jul-Sep

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bata Shoe Company (Bangladesh) Limited’s sales rose 51 per cent year-on-year to Tk 213 crore in the July-September quarter on the back of increased turnover during Eid festivals and promotional activities.

The multinational company’s sales increased 37 per cent year-on-year to Tk 744 crore in the January to September period as well.

Riding on the higher sales, the company made a comeback and booked a profit of Tk 27.50 crore in July-September after incurring a loss of Tk 14.76 crore in the previous quarter, according to the financial report of the company.

The shoemaker also narrowed losses in July-September of 2022: its earnings per share (EPS) were Tk 4.31 in negative in the quarter against Tk 8.36 in negative during the identical period a year earlier.

The EPS surged to Tk 20.11 in January-September from a negative Tk 10.80 in the same nine-month period of 2021.

The EPS increased compared to last year driven by higher revenue growth, especially for the increased sales during Eid festivals and promotional activities, said the multinational company in a filing on the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) yesterday.

The net operating cash flow per share (NOCFPS) improved to Tk 53.97 in January-September of 2022 from Tk 49.11 a year ago.

The NOCFPS went up for the higher revenue growth

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A woman walks past an outlet of Bata Shoe Company in the capital’s Farmgate yesterday. The multinational company’s sales witnessed a big jump in the July-September quarter on the back of increased turnover during Eid festivals and promotional activities. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## BSRM Steels logs Tk 327cr profit in FY22

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

BSRM Steels Limited posted a 7.6 per cent higher profit in the last financial year that ended on June 30.

It raked in Tk 327.83 crore in profit in 2021-22, which was Tk 304.52 crore a year earlier.

Thus, the steel making company reported earnings per share of Tk 8.72. It was Tk 8.10 in the year 2020-21.

The net asset value per share of the company rose to Tk 68.99 from Tk 62.38. But the net operating cash flow per share dropped to Tk 10.62 from Tk 20.87 in 2020-21.

The board of directors of BSRM Steels has recommended a 30 per cent cash dividend for 2021-22.

Shares of BSRM Steels rose 1.08 per cent to Tk 63.90 on the Dhaka Stock Exchange yesterday.