

180 to get CIP status

140 are exporters, 40 chamber, trade body leaders

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government has selected 180 businesspeople to honour them with the commercially important person (CIP) status as part of efforts to recognise their contributions in national export and vital roles played in trade bodies in 2021.

Of the selected, 140 made their mark in exports while the rest 40 are the leaders of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) along with different associations and chambers.

The commerce ministry shared the information through a gazette notification on May 24.

The selection was made based on their performance in export earnings, employment creation, working conditions, payment to workers and employees, tax payments, innovation in marketing, technology use in product manufacturing and management.

The export category CIPs are selected from different sectors, including jute, leather and leather goods, woven and knit garments, specialised and home textile, fabrics, handy craft, light engineering, plastic, agro processing and agricultural products, ceramic, frozen food, pharmaceuticals, computer software and miscellaneous.

The CIP status will remain valid for one year. However, the CIPs can use the cards until the next group of CIPs is announced.

According to the gazette, every CIP will enjoy some government-provided benefits like being able to enter Bangladesh Secretariat using vehicles with stickers and get invited to national programmes and receptions accorded to citizens by city corporations and municipalities.

The foreign ministry will send letters of introduction to the embassies concerned in favour of the CIPs to avail visa whenever they travel abroad while the CIPs can also enjoy VIP lounges II at airports.

The CIPs will also get priority in booking seats in public transport like airlines, railway, buses and water vessels, the gazette also said.



The number of mobile subscribers in the country was up by about 3.5 lakh in April from that a month earlier, taking the total number to 18.42 crore.

PHOTO: STAR

Mobile subscribers grow in April

MAHMUDUL HASAN

Mobile subscriber numbers witnessed a slight growth in April, as two of the top operators made gains while the other two lost customers.

The number of subscribers was up by about 3.5 lakh in April from that a month earlier, taking the total to 18.42 crore.

The top two private mobile network operators – Grameenphone and Robi – collectively added about 4.5 lakh new customers while third-placed Banglalink and state-owned Teletalk lost about 1.30 lakh customers jointly.

This is the fourth consecutive month mobile subscriber numbers in Bangladesh have grown.

From July to December last year, the customer's base had declined by over 35 lakh.

Subscriber here means a biometric verified subscriber or subscription which was active (voice, data, SMS etc) at least once in the preceding 90 days.

Of the over 18 crore SIMs now in circulation, 12 crore are of unique users, Telecom Minister Mustafa Jabbar told The Daily Star recently. A person can use as many as 15 SIMs.

With 3.90 lakh new customers in April, top operator Grameenphone took its total number of customers to almost 8.05 crore.

Of the over 18 crore SIMs now in circulation, 12 crore are of unique users. A person can use as many as 15 SIMs.

"After the SIMs sales ban was withdrawn, we have been witnessing an incremental growth in our customer numbers," said Hossain Sadat, senior director for corporate affairs at Grameenphone Ltd.

This was the fourth consecutive month of growth witnessed by Grameenphone after months of downturn since July last year due to a ban on its SIM sales.

On June 29 last year, the telecom regulator banned Grameenphone's SIM sales until it "improves its quality of service, including bringing down the call drop rate." The ban was eventually lifted on January 2 this year.

During the six month ban period, it lost almost 50 lakh customers, taking a toll on the country's total mobile subscriber base.

In the last four months till April, Grameenphone added about 13 lakh customers.

With the new 1.5 lakh customers, second largest operator Robi's subscriber numbers stood at 5.57 lakh in April.

"The market has now turned into a highly competitive one as everyone is vying for acquiring customers," said Shahed Alam, chief corporate and regulatory officer at Robi Axiata Ltd.

"Recently we have invested in network expansion and have helped the customers to join our network for enhanced quality of services," he added.

Third-placed Banglalink lost 70,000 customers in April from that in March, a decline in customers witnessed after 20 consecutive months. Now it has 4.13 lakh customers.

The last time it lost customers was in August 2021.

Increase tax on the rich

Bangladesh Economic Association urges govt



STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA) yesterday proposed that the government increase tax on the rich while giving relief to lower-middle class people in the country.

"We should put reasonable pressure on the rich to increase government revenue," Abul Barkat, president of association, said at a press conference at the BEA office in Dhaka's Eskaton yesterday.

Barkat added that the ongoing inflationary pressure is the root cause of people's misery as they are being forced to break their savings or borrow funds in

order to make ends meet.

Besides, most middle-income people are reducing consumption with many having cut protein out of their diet. In addition, a lot of people are losing the ability to afford medicine.

The BEA yesterday came up with an alternative budget of about Tk 20.94 lakh crore for next fiscal year with the aim of elevating 70 to 80 per cent of the population to middle class so that inequality drops to a minimum level.

So far, direct taxes contributed about 46 per cent of the government's total revenue receipts this fiscal year while it is 72 per cent higher in the alternative budget, Barkat said.

"Changes in the government's revenue structure in our alternative budget are qualitatively diverse and aimed at addressing inequalities," he added.

The BEA's plan is expected to be around 2.7 times higher than that of the finance

minister's upcoming national budget.

Besides, the alternative budget is three times larger than the government's Tk 6.79 lakh crore budget for the current financial year.

The finance minister will likely place a budget of Tk 7.64 lakh crore for fiscal 2023-24 at parliament on June 1.

To finance the alternative budget, Barkat said revenue generation would contribute Tk 19.29 crore, which is 4.42 times higher than the revenue target for the current fiscal year. The remaining 7.8 per cent, or Tk 1.65 lakh crore, will be in deficit.

Of the revenue collected through the National Board of Revenue, tax on income, profit and capital it would make up about Tk 5.36 lakh crore, as per the alternative budget.

Also, it is possible to get Tk 2.12 lakh crore from wealth tax, Barkat said, adding that the BEA formulated the alternative budget with the aim of achieving six goals in the next 10 years.

Why insurance stocks surging

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But stocks of life insurance companies are rising mainly because of rumours, said the broker.

"Rumour has it that some big players are taking a stake in the insurance sector, so many investors are rushing towards these stocks."

Some investors are making investment decisions on the basis of speculation as most stocks have seen little movement in recent months owing largely to the floor price.

In July last year, the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) set the floor price of every stock to halt the free fall of the market indices amid global economic uncertainties. The floor was lifted for some companies in December before bringing it back for every firm in March.

Owing to the floor price, most stocks have become illiquid and investors fear that the shares could slide once the regulatory move is lifted completely since the economic uncertainty shows no sign of disappearing as the war rages.

"Most of our stocks rise without any logic and we always look for stocks that are backed by big players," said an investor.

"When big players invest heavily and try to manipulate a stock, many general investors believe that the share will rise as large investors will not let it fall primarily before dumping it."

Seeking anonymity, a top official of an investment bank says the news

related to making insurance obligatory for vehicles has given a much-needed fillip to investors and the manipulators are using this sentiment to their advantage.

"As the overall market has remained unattractive for many days, many investors are rushing to this group of stocks seeing some movement in the hope of making some short-term gains."

Of the 53 insurers that have witnessed an increase in the last one month, 16 rose more than 30 per cent, DSE data showed. Thirty-one firms advanced between 10 per cent and 29 per cent. Only six companies gained less than 10 per cent.

Among the individual firms, newly listed Trust Islami Life Insurance surged 154 per cent, Rupali Life Insurance climbed 81 per cent, and Islami Commercial Insurance Company, another newly listed insurer, climbed 59 per cent.

Stocks of Meghna Insurance, Global Insurance, Agrani Insurance, and Crystal Insurance jumped more than 40 per cent.

The fact that the rise of most of the insurance stocks has been driven by speculation was evidenced by the sharp increase of the newly listed insurers and low paid-up capital based stocks. On the other hand, most of the well-performing insurance companies rose slightly, said a merchant banker.

For example, Delta Life Insurance,

one of the leading life insurers in Bangladesh, rose less than 10 per cent. Reliance Insurance grew 11 per cent and Bangladesh General Insurance Company advanced 20 per cent.

In fact, most of the well-reputed companies have not moved much. For example, Grameenphone and Square Pharmaceuticals, two blue-chip companies, did not see any price movement in the last one month.

The upward movement of the overall insurance sector in the stock market comes although the business has been affected by the global economic crisis fueled by the Russia-Ukraine war.

On the DSE, 43 non-life insurance companies and 14 life insurance companies are listed. The non-life insurers have started to publish their financial reports for the year that ended on December 31.

Twelve non-life insurance companies have disclosed their earnings so far. Of them, eight saw lower profits and the rest registered a slight increase in earnings.

The listed insurance companies have not published their financial reports for 2022. But their asset growth could give a strong indication about their business scenario.

The asset growth of life insurance companies slowed in 2022, growing at 1.61 per cent year-on-year to Tk 45,715 crore. In 2021, the asset growth was up 2.54 per cent to Tk 44,992 crore, according to the IdrA.

Take steps to roll out

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All citizens aged between 18 years and 50 years based on their national identity card, including expatriate Bangladeshis, will qualify for the benefit, according to the act.

Currently, only employees of government, semi-government or autonomous organisations in Bangladesh receive pension benefits.

As the country is moving towards having a bigger number of aging people, the government should not waste time to move to the next step and to ensure allocations from the upcoming budget, he said.

Khondker went on to say that the government formulated the act in line with National Social Security System (NSSS).

The NSSS is a long-term roadmap developed in 2015 for poverty reduction through the reformation of the country's social security structure building upon the existing network of diverse social security programmes.

But the government has to work soon to formulate the act's structural framework and action plan, said Khondker, who is also the chairman of

the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), an independent think tank.

Besides, he also stressed on the implementation of the NSSS, which includes a lot of aspects apart from pensions, through the allocation of adequate money in every budget.

"The implementation rate of the declared NSSS is very slow according to its roadmap," he said.

"If the government could implement the roadmap properly, many people would get the scope to come under the social protection systems," he said.

Apart from this, the economist also urged the government to ensure proper selection of beneficiaries across the country.

"Currently the government has 141 social safety net programmes. In the beneficiary selection process, there are many loopholes," said Khondker.

He said the criteria used for beneficiary selection for social security programmes need complete overhauling.

Provisions are also needed for automatic periodic updates of beneficiaries in line with social and economic development, he said.

He also criticised the government for failing to properly implement a National Household Database (NHD) project.

Initially known as Bangladesh Poverty Database, the NHD project was meant to help streamline the beneficiary selection process for social safety net programmes by gathering socioeconomic data of each household in the country.

It was implemented by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics with support from World Bank in 2013.

"Almost after a decade of the NSSS approval, the country could not yet establish a single registry system and install a robust management information system," said Khondker.

"We don't know what the fate of the NHD is. Even if it is now made available, the database has lost its relevance due to demographic transition or dynamism and large income growth," he said.

Moreover, the criteria for beneficiary selection, which were prepared in 2013, are still in use – raising questions over their usefulness as they lack dynamism and adaptability, he said.

Tax return filing crosses 30 lakh

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A lot needs to be achieved, said Nasiruddin Ahmed, former chairman of the NBR.

Still, the total number of tax returns submitted is just over one-third of the total number of people who have taxpayer identification numbers (TIN), he said.

As of April this year, the total number of registered taxpayers was

around 88 lakh, according to the NBR. Besides, a large number of people who have taxable income are out of the tax net.

Efforts to expand the tax net needs to be strengthened, said Ahmed, suggesting for increased automation and connectivity among the government's various agencies so that they can share and cross-match data to identify people with taxable income.

The requirement of the PSR for certain services has helped expand the tax base, although many people do not have taxable income, said Aminur Rahman, a former member of income tax policy at the NBR.

He said many people, such as pensioners and housewives, have savings certificates and the amount of investment has risen cumulatively over time.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

মন্ত্রিসভা শিক্ষা অধিদপ্তর

নির্বাচিত মন্ত্রিসভাসমূহের উন্নয়ন প্রকল্প (১ম সংশোধিত)

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তারিখ: ২৩/০৫/২০২৩খ্রিঃ

বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-নিমাত-৮১২

কারিগরি ও মন্ত্রিসভা শিক্ষা বিভাগের নিয়ন্ত্রণাধীন মন্ত্রিসভা শিক্ষা অধিদপ্তরের আওতাধীন বাস্তবায়নধীন 'নির্বাচিত মন্ত্রিসভাসমূহের উন্নয়ন প্রকল্প (১ম সংশোধিত)' সম্পর্কিত অস্থায়ী ভিত্তিতে প্রকল্প মেয়াদকালের জন্য নিম্নবর্ণিত পদে জনবল নিয়োগের নিমিত্ত বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের নিকট থেকে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রঃ নং	পদের নাম ও বেতন স্কেল/গ্রেড	পদের সংখ্যা	বয়সসীমা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা
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শর্তাবলী:

- জনপ্রশাসন মন্ত্রণালয় কর্তৃক প্রণীত চাকুরি নির্ধারিত আবেদন ফরম A4 সাইজ কাগজে পূরণপূর্বক স্বাক্ষরসহ প্রকল্প পরিচালক, 'নির্বাচিত মন্ত্রিসভাসমূহের উন্নয়ন প্রকল্প (১ম সংশোধিত)', মন্ত্রিসভা শিক্ষা অধিদপ্তর, ৭৯/২, কাকরাইল, রমনা, ঢাকা-১০০০ বরাবরে আবেদন করতে হবে। জনপ্রশাসন মন্ত্রণালয়ের ওয়েবসাইট www.mopa.gov.bd থেকে আবেদন ফরমটি ডাউনলোড করা যাবে।
- জনপ্রশাসন মন্ত্রণালয়ের ২২ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২২ তারিখের ০৫.০০.০০০০.১৭০.১১.০১৭.২০-১৪৯ নম্বর স্মারক অনুযায়ী আবেদনকারীর বয়স ২৫ মার্চ ২০২০ তারিখ সর্বোচ্চ বয়সসীমার মধ্যে থাকলে উক্ত প্রার্থী উল্লিখিত পদে আবেদন করার যোগ্য হবেন।
- আবেদনপত্র আগামী ০১/০৬/২০২৩খ্রিঃ তারিখের মধ্যে অফিস চলাকালে প্রকল্প পরিচালক, নির্বাচিত মন্ত্রিসভাসমূহের উন্নয়ন প্রকল্প (১ম সংশোধিত), মন্ত্রিসভা শিক্ষা অধিদপ্তর, ৭৯/২ (২য় তলা), কাকরাইল, রমনা, ঢাকা-১০০০ বরাবরে ডাকযোগে/কুরিয়ার সার্ভিসে পৌছাতে হবে।
- আবেদনপত্রের সাথে নির্বাচিত মন্ত্রিসভাসমূহের উন্নয়ন প্রকল্প-এর অনুকূলে উক্ত পদের জন্য ২০০/- (দুইশত) টাকার ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/সে-অর্ডার সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।
- আবেদনের সাথে শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা এবং অভিজ্ঞতার সনদের সত্যায়িত কপি সংযোজন করে দিতে হবে। সকল প্রকার মূল সনদপত্র (অভিজ্ঞতার মূল সনদপত্রসহ) মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় উপস্থাপন করতে হবে।
- আবেদন ফরমে সন্য তোলা ০৩ (তিন) কপি সত্যায়িত পাসপোর্ট সাইজ ছবি সংযুক্ত করতে হবে। নামের উপরে পদের নাম উল্লেখ করতে হবে।
- নির্ধারিত ফরম ব্যতীত অথবা ক্রটিপূর্ণ আবেদন গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
- সরকারি অথবা স্বায়ত্বশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে চাকুরীরত প্রার্থীদেরকে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে।
- উপযুক্ত প্রার্থীদের লিখিত/মৌখিক/ব্যবহারিক পরীক্ষার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান প্রার্থীদের প্রদত্ত যোগাযোগের ঠিকানায় চিঠির মাধ্যমে এবং মন্ত্রিসভা শিক্ষা অধিদপ্তরের ওয়েবসাইট (www.dme.gov.bd)-এ দেয়া হবে। আবেদনকারীর বর্তমান পত্র যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা সনদপত্র ১০ (দশ) টাকার অব্যবহৃত ডাকটিকিটসহ ৪.৫x৯.৫ সাইজের ফেরত খাম আবেদনের সাথে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।
- নিয়োগের ব্যাপারে কোনো প্রকারের সুপারিশ বা তথ্য প্রার্থীর অযোগ্যতা বলে বিবেচিত হবে। আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণ, বাছাই ও বাতিল করার পূর্ণ ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে।
- মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধার পুত্র/কন্যা ও পুত্র/কন্যার পুত্র/কন্যা এবং প্রতিবন্ধীর ক্ষেত্রে সরকারি বিধি মোতাবেক বয়সসীমা শিথিলযোগ্য।
- মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধার সন্তান, মুক্তিযোদ্ধার/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধার সন্তানের সন্তান হিসেবে প্রার্থীকে আবেদনপত্রের সাথে মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা-এর সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি (সরকারের সর্বশেষ প্রজ্ঞাপন অনুযায়ী সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি) সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।
- প্রকল্পের মেয়াদ পর্যন্ত নিয়োগকৃত জনবল বলবৎ থাকবে। প্রকল্প শেষ হওয়ার সাথে সাথে চাকুরি সংক্রিয়ভাবে সমাপ্ত হবে এবং নিয়োগপত্রই অব্যাহত থাকবে হিসেবে বিবেচিত হবে।
- কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোনো সময়ে কোনো কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে নিয়োগ সক্রমকে যে কোনো বিষয় বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।
- নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে সরকারের সর্বশেষ নিয়োগ বিধি/বিজ্ঞপ্তি অনুসরণ করা হবে।
- এ পদে পূর্বে আবেদনকারীদের পুনরায় আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নাই।

২৩/৫/২৩

মোঃ দীন ইসলাম
প্রকল্প পরিচালক (অতিরিক্ত সচিব)
নির্বাচিত মন্ত্রিসভাসমূহের উন্নয়ন প্রকল্প (১ম সংশোধিত)
মন্ত্রিসভা শিক্ষা অধিদপ্তর
কারিগরি ও মন্ত্রিসভা শিক্ষা বিভাগ, শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়

জিডি-৯২৪