

Germany to provide €180m for cooperation projects

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Germany will provide around €180.81 million (approximately Tk 2,265 crore) for bilateral development cooperation projects in Bangladesh that focus on a number of mutually agreed core areas.

Of the total support, €45.8 million will be in the form of technical cooperation and the rest in the form of financial cooperation.

The projects involve renewable energy and energy efficiency (€50.5 million), socially and environmentally sound supply chains, trade, and infrastructure (€12 million), sustainable urban development (€95.5 million) and protection of biodiversity (€6 million).

The projects also cover technical and vocational education and training (€5 million) and combating domestic violence against women and children (€7 million).

Two agreements were signed in this regard between the two countries at the Economic Relations Division (ERD) yesterday. Md Shahriar Kader Siddiky, secretary to the ERD, and Achim Tröster, German ambassador to Bangladesh, signed the agreements, according to a press release of the ERD.

After signing the agreements, the ERD secretary mentioned that one of the hallmarks of the bilateral cooperation was a commitment to fostering economic growth and prosperity.

Germany has been a crucial partner in supporting Bangladesh's efforts to strengthen its infrastructure, expand its industrial base, and enhance its competitiveness in the global market, he said.

He also said through initiatives such as technical assistance, capacity building, and investment promotion, Germany has played a pivotal role in empowering Bangladesh to realise its economic potential and improve the livelihoods of its people.

National Bank recovers Tk 900cr bad loans till Oct

Says Chairman Abdul Awal Mintoo

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

National Bank has been able to recover about Tk 900 crore of defaulted loans as of October and initiatives are underway to recover another Tk 400 crore by this year, said its chairman, Abdul Awal Mintoo, yesterday.

He was addressing a press conference at its head office in the capital's Banglamotor to inform of the bank's overall condition and progress in reformative measures taken by the board of directors since its formation 100 days ago.

National Bank has been facing significant financial challenges for bad loans, irregularities, and governance failures for over a decade, particularly since 2009, after Sikder Group took control of the lender.

"The irregularities that took place at National Bank are multidimensional and multilateral. However, the situation will never reach a point where customers will not get money," said Mintoo.

"Initially, we are trying to bring a balance between withdrawals and deposits. So, it will take two or three more months to ensure smooth cash flow," he said.

For 2022 and 2023, the bank reported a combined loss of Tk 4,758 crore.



Abdul Awal Mintoo

For the third quarter of 2024, the bank reported a loss of Tk 698.68 crore, a 40 percent increase compared to the same period last year.

Rising interest expenses on deposits and borrowings and the inability to recover loans have contributed to this situation. Customers have been complaining of being unable to withdraw money from the bank due to a cash crunch.

Bangladesh Bank has intervened multiple times, dissolving the board of directors to restructure the bank's governance. Recently, the central bank provided Tk 4,000 crore in liquidity support to mitigate the cash crunch.

The overall economy, including the banking sector, is going

through an extreme recession and liquidity crisis, said Mintoo.

"A large part of this loss is due to panic and rumours among the common people. As a result, customers and depositors are becoming confused and their confidence in the banking sector is decreasing," he said.

However, National Bank is actively working alongside garment manufacturers and other industries, which are the major drivers of the economy, he said.

The bank is striving to ensure timely payment of salaries and allowances of garment workers and also provide letter of credit (LC) facilities, said Mintoo.

In recent times, National Bank has also been playing a strong role in enabling remittance inflow, he said.

The board of directors is focusing on two initiatives—bringing back laundered money in association with Bangladesh Bank and World Bank and taking steps to set assets of defaulters to recover bad loans, he said.

Moazzam Hossain, vice-chairman of the bank, said with the central bank's cash support, the bank would preliminarily try to ensure fund withdrawals for emergencies of customers, such as for medical treatment.

Stocks fall after two-day gains

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Major indices of the stock market in Bangladesh fell yesterday on gaining for two days as investors opted for caution in their trades amidst political and economic uncertainties.

The last few days were downbeat for investors and the market centring Bangladesh's foreign credit rating being downgraded by US-based agency Moody's.

Both the Dhaka and Chattogram bourses witnessed low participation of investors but a lot of sale requests.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), edged down by 5.34 points, or 0.10 percent from that on the day prior, to close at 5,192.

The other two indexes showcased a mixed performance.

READ THE FULL STORY ONLINE

Teletalk launches SIM card delivery service

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Teletalk Bangladesh has launched a trial version of an online service which will enable customers to order and receive SIM cards directly through the postal network.

The service, rolled out through a commercial pilot on November 27, will initially be available at 11 post offices across Rajshahi, Naogaon, and Chapainawabganj. Nationwide availability through post offices in all districts is planned in subsequent phases.

Nahid Islam, adviser to the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and ICT, inaugurated the service at his office in Dhaka.

Restoring law and order

FROM PAGE B1

Exports and imports may increase slowly in the next three months due to the economic slowdown."

The MCCI also said remittances may decrease in October before increasing over the next two months, adding that foreign exchange reserves are likely to increase slowly during the second quarter of FY25.

However, inflation may increase in October but is expected to reduce in November and December, it added.

The trade body also said that business in the construction and real estate sector is still sluggish, mainly due to higher costs of property and the lower purchasing power of people as Bangladesh has yet to see a tangible economic pickup.

Besides, the higher prices of building materials have slowed overall construction work, according to the industry people.

The devaluation of the taka against the US greenback is one of the major reasons for the increase in construction costs. The exchange rate has increased to Tk 120-125 per US dollar from Tk 105-107 in January last year.

Amid inflationary pressures, labour and transportation costs

have also risen. Regarding the power sector, the MCCI said Bangladesh is currently suffering from load-shedding to the tune of around 200-2,000 MW daily as demand outstrips production.

Despite the shortfall in electricity generation, the Bangladesh Power Development Board has kept idle six furnace-oil-run power plants, with a capacity of around 600 MW, as the interim government is yet to decide on continuing operations under the "no-electricity, no-payment (NENP)" mechanism.

If these six plants received approval to continue electricity generation under the mechanism, they would be able to contribute to reducing at least one-third of the load shedding without any immediate investment from the government.

Typically, load shedding occurs for only 2-3 hours per day, equating to 30-40 percent of the time when additional power is needed.

At this plant-load factor, which is a measure of how efficiently a power plant is operating by comparing the actual energy it generates to its maximum potential, NENP plants are 8-15 percent cheaper than other high

sulphur fuel oil-based plants that require capacity payments.

Meanwhile, economic uncertainty has affected domestic revenue mobilisation, resulting in negative growth in the first quarter of the current fiscal year.

Revenue collection had also been affected by the political turmoil in the wake of the mass uprising that led to the ouster of the Awami League government, the MCCI said.

These naturally had an impact on the collection of customs duties, VAT and taxes.

According to provisional data of the National Board of Revenue, tax revenue collection decreased by 6.07 percent to Tk 70,902 crore in the July-September period of FY25 compared to Tk 75,487 crore in the same period of the previous year.

Meanwhile, foreign investors are hesitant to make fresh investments in the country due to its underdeveloped infrastructure, energy deficits and weak transmission infrastructure, lack of consistency in policy and regulatory frameworks, scarcity of industrial land, corruption, and non-transparent and inequitable application of rules and regulations.

What's the point of revolution

FROM PAGE B1

three-month high of 10.87 percent in October.

Besides, he called for increasing food security and strengthening the social safety net.

On the macro front, the economist advocated for prioritising the revival of private investment, resolving the tight liquidity and strengthening the energy sector.

To increase public investment, Debapriya said the government should hold a meeting with foreign development partners by December or January next year to inform them about the country's inclusive and sustainable development plan.

Debapriya, also a distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), suggested that the National Board of Revenue (NBR) should be digitalised, which would help the government increase revenue collection.

He said the government's measures to lower the inflationary curve have not been effective as price pressures still remain high.

He, however, said that the current high inflation rate was inherited from the previous government.

In his keynote, titled "Fixing the Macroeconomy: A Daunting Task Inherited from the Previous Regime", Mohammad Abdur Razzaque, chairman of RAPID, told the seminar that Bangladesh has

been paying the price for the previous regime's reckless macroeconomic management.

The country has faced high inflation, dwindling foreign exchange reserves and a depreciating currency, which was further complicated by poor governance and widespread corruption, Razzaque commented.

Despite the inflationary pressures, the previous government borrowed heavily from the central bank in an unprecedented manner, he said.

The RAPID chairman also credited the interim government for taking some positive steps, such as stopping fund embezzlement in the banking sector, reducing credit demand, increasing remittance inflows, improving bank deposits and expanding exports.

He also said that restoring macroeconomic stability is critical for transitioning out of least developed country (LDC) status. Uncertainty just ahead of the graduation also could deter foreign investment, he said, adding that exporters and investors need predictability.

"For LDC graduation, consider the importance of the Indian and Japanese markets as there will be an additional three-year transition period in other important markets," he added.

As a discussant, Shawkat Hossain Masum, head of national daily

Prothom Alo's online edition, said journalists criticised the previous government's reckless economic policies but were rarely heard.

He said the country's economic downturn began in 2019, even before the Coronavirus pandemic, as the central bank's foreign currency reserves dwindled.

"The pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war further worsened the situation," he commented.

Masum said containing inflation will take more time. However, the government needs to improve public confidence in its steps to counter the price pressures.

During the launching of the Open Budget Survey (OBS) 2023 Bangladesh Results at the same seminar, RAPID Executive Director M Abu Eusuf said Bangladesh has a transparency score of 37 out of 100.

It assesses the online availability, timeliness and comprehensiveness of eight key budget documents using 109 equally weighted indicators and scores each country on a scale of 0 to 100.

A transparency score of 61 or above indicates a country is likely publishing sufficient information to support informed public discourse on the budget.

ERF President Mohammad Refayet Ullah Mirdha chaired the session while ERF General Secretary Abul Kashem moderated the seminar.

Tax hike dents mobile subscriber base

FROM PAGE B1

Officials of mobile network operators said they typically bear the lion's share of taxes on SIM cards, often providing them free of charge.

However, with the increase in taxes, smaller local market players like Banglalink and Robi are struggling to continue subsidising SIM cards, unlike larger ones like Grameenphone, which have greater financial resources.

"We have seen the number of subscribers decreasing over the past few months. I believe this is happening for a couple of reasons," said Taimur Rahman, chief corporate and regulatory affairs officer at Banglalink.

"First, due to the current economic situation, the number of new

customers joining or returning to the network has declined. Another reason is the increased SIM card tax, which now makes it very difficult for mobile operators to subsidise SIM cards as heavily as they did in the past.

"This issue is even more challenging for smaller operators. Larger players are still able to offer greater subsidies, which creates a competitive imbalance in the market," he added.

Banglalink alone lost about 8 lakh customers in September following a drop of 18 lakh customers in July and August, shrinking its subscriber base to 4.16 crore.

This represents a decline of 0.84 percent month-on-month, 2.85 percent quarter-on-quarter for the July-September period, and 1.22

percent year-on-year for the operator. Robi's subscriber base also came down to 5.79 crore after it lost about 5 lakh customers in September and a combined 12 lakh in July and August.

This represents a decline of 0.48 percent month-on-month and 1.63 percent quarter-on-quarter for the July-September period. However, on a year-on-year basis, it witnessed 0.26 percent growth in September.

Shahed Alam, chief corporate and regulatory officer at Robi Axiata, said smaller operators are unable to offer the same level of subsidies as before due to the tax hike.

"Moreover, the internet shutdown in July and August adversely affected smaller operators due to the multi-SIM scenario."

READ THE FULL STORY ONLINE

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"দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-০৩/২০২৪-২০২৫"

স্মারক নং- ২২৩/১(২৫)/রেশন

তারিখ-২৭/১১/২০২৪খ্রিঃ।

২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বৎসরের ৩য় কোয়ার্টারের (জানুয়ারী/২০২৫ মাস হতে মার্চ/২০২৫ পর্যন্ত সময়ের জন্য) রেশন সামগ্রী মস্তুর ডাল ও সয়াবিন তেল এবং ৩য় ও ৪র্থ কোয়ার্টারের (জানুয়ারী/২০২৫ মাস হতে জুন/২০২৫ পর্যন্ত সময়ের জন্য) পোলাও-এর চাউল, জ্বালানী কাঠ ক্রয়, গম পেয়াই, ডেড ষ্টক মালামাল বিক্রয়, চাউল, গম ও চিনি পরিবহনের এর নিমিত্তে "পিপিএ/২০০৬ ও পিপিআর/২০০৮" এবং এ-সংক্রান্ত তৎপরবর্তী সংশোধিত বিধি-বিধান মোতাবেক অভিজ্ঞ ঠিকাদার/ সরবরাহকারীর নিকট হতে নির্ধারিত সিডিউল সীলমোহরকৃত খামে প্রতিযোগিতামূলক পৃথক পৃথক দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

১।	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	:	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়/পুলিশ বিভাগ।
২।	সংস্থা	:	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।
৩।	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান	:	পুলিশ সুপার, লালমনিরহাট।
৪।	কি কারণে দরপত্র আহ্বান	:	জেলা পুলিশের রেশন সামগ্রী ক্রয়।
৫।	দরপত্র সূত্র নং	:	স্মারক নং- ২২৩/১(২৫)/রেশন, তারিখ-২৭/১১/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ।
৬।	তারিখ	:	২৭/১১/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ।
৭।	দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি	:	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র।
অর্থের উৎস:			
৮।	বাজেট ও অর্থনৈতিক খাত	:	রাজস্ব খাত।
তথ্যাদি:			
৯।	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ	:	০১/১২/২০২৪ খ্রিষ্টাব্দের মধ্যে।
১০।	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	:	২২/১২/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ বিকাল ১৭.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১১।	দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের সর্ব শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	:	২৩/১২/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা।
১২।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	:	২৩/১২/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ দুপুর ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।
১৩।	দরপত্র মূল্যায়নের তারিখ ও সময়	:	২৪/১২/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকা।

১৪।	দরপত্র ডকুমেন্ট/সিডিউল বিক্রয়কারী অফিস	:	১। পুলিশ সুপার, লালমনিরহাট-এর কার্যালয়। ২। ডিআইজি, রংপুর রেঞ্জ-এর কার্যালয়।
	দরপত্র গ্রহনকারী/অফিস	:	পুলিশ সুপার, লালমনিরহাট-এর কার্যালয়।
	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান।	:	পুলিশ সুপার, লালমনিরহাট-এর কার্যালয়।

১৫।	দরপত্র সম্পর্কিত তথ্য:	:	১। হাল ন্যাঙ্গাল ট্রেড লাইসেন্স ২। আয়কর সনদ ৩। ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদ ৪। ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি সনদ ৫। অন্যান্য যোগ্যতা ও শর্তাবলী যাহা টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট/সিডিউল (PG-2/PG-3)-এ উল্লেখ আছে।
১৬।	মালামালের বিবরণঃ	:	

	আইটেম	পরিমান	সিডিউলের মূল্য প্রতিটি (অফেরতযোগ্য)	জামানতের পরিমান	কাজ সম্পন্ন করার সময়
১।	মস্তুর ডাল (দেশী-উন্নতমানের ৩,৫০০, ৪,০০০ ও ৫,৫০০ কেজির স্বচ্ছ পলিপ্যাক)	২২০ কুইন্টাল	=১০০০/-	=৮৫,০০০/-	কার্যাদেশ মোতাবেক ত্রৈমাসিক ভিত্তিতে।
২।	সয়াবিন তৈল-ভিটামিন "এ" সমৃদ্ধ (BSTI অনুমোদিত)	২১০০০ লিটার	=১০০০/-	=১,১০,০০০/-	ঐ
৩।	জ্বালানী কাঠ (আম খড়ি)	চারিহা মোতাবেক	=৫০০/-	=৪,০০০/-	ঐ
৪।	পোলাও-এর চাউল (কাপিঞ্জিরা)	৩০০০ কেজি	৫০০/-	=১৪,০০০/-	ঐ
৫।	গম পেয়াই (৫ কেজি ও ২ কেজি স্বচ্ছ পলিপ্যাকে)	চারিহা মোতাবেক	=৫০০/-	=৯০,০০০/-	ঐ
৬।	ক) গমের পুরাতন খালি চটের বস্তা (৫০ কেজির) বিক্রয় খ) চাউলের পুরাতন খালি চটের বস্তা (৩০ কেজির) বিক্রয় গ) চিনির পুরাতন খালি সিলিন্ডের বস্তা বিক্রয়	মজুত অনুযায়ী	=৫০০/-	=৪,০০০/-	ঐ
৭।	ক্লিনসহ পরিবহন (চাউল, গম ও চিনি)	চারিহা মোতাবেক	=৫০০/-	=৬,০০০/-	ঐ

দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারীর বিবরণঃ	
১৭।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম : মোঃ তরিকুল ইসলাম।
১৮।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবী : পুলিশ সুপার, লালমনিরহাট।
১৯।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা : পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, লালমনিরহাট।
২০।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম : email: splalmonirhat@police.gov.bd
২১।	বিশেষ শর্তাবলী :

ক) নির্দিষ্ট সময়ের পর আর কোন দরপত্র গ্রহন করা হবে না।

খ) কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন অথবা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহন কিংবা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

গ) দরপত্রে উল্লেখিত যে কোন আইটেমের পরিমান বৃদ্ধি অথবা কমানোর বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের ক্ষমতা রয়েছে।

ঘ) পিপিএ/২০০৬ ও পিপিআর/২০০৮ মোতাবেক সকল শর্তাবলী কার্যকর হবে।

২৭/১১/২০২৪

(মোঃ তরিকুল ইসলাম)

বিপি-৭৮০৮১১৮২১৫

পুলিশ সুপার লালমনিরহাট

ফোন-০২৫৮৯৯৮৬৮১৩/ফ্যাক্স-০২৫৮৯৯৮৬০১২।

GD- 1072