

BB rejects Dutch-Bangla Bank's Tk 1,000cr HQ purchase plan

MD MEHEDI HASAN and AHSAN HABIB

The Bangladesh Bank has rejected Dutch Bangla Bank's proposal to purchase a Motijheel building for more than Tk 1,000 crore to use as its corporate headquarters, saying the price was significantly inflated and the deal posed a conflict of interest involving the bank chairman's family.

Despite the rejection, the listed bank has yet to make a mandatory disclosure at the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE), where any price-sensitive decision must be communicated to shareholders.

"The bank should have issued a counter-disclosure once the central bank turned it down. Otherwise, how will general shareholders know the purchase has been cancelled?" said Saiful Islam, president of the DSE Brokers Association of Bangladesh.

Contacted, Abul Kashem Md Shirin, managing director and CEO of Dutch Bangla Bank, told The Daily Star that the central bank has not yet formally informed them about the rejection of the private lender's application. "So, we have not made any disclosure."

However, he did not comment on the issue of the high price of the building.

The building is owned by Amina Ahmed, mother of the bank's current chair, Sadia Rayen Ahmed

A senior official at the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) confirmed the regulator had also advised against approving the purchase, having found the proposed price excessively high.

On August 27, Dutch Bangla Bank informed the DSE that its board had agreed in principle to acquire the 21.5-storey building, pending regulatory clearance.

Arief Hossain Khan, executive director and spokesperson of Bangladesh Bank, recently said that the central bank reviewed the application and found the proposed valuation far above market price.

The regulator also noted that the building is owned by Amina Ahmed, mother of the bank's current chair, Sadia Rayen Ahmed.

Rayen Ahmed's father, Mohammad Shahabuddin Ahmed, previously served as chairman of the bank.

"Considering these factors, the central bank rejected the application," Khan said.

The building has a total area of 207,340 square feet, including 176,300 square feet of floor space and 31,040 square feet of basement. The building, proposed to be purchased at a cost of Tk 1,016 crore, was intended to serve as the bank's corporate headquarters.

According to Dutch Bangla Bank's 2024 annual report, its head office is already housed in the same building on rent. The lease agreement sets the initial rent at nearly Tk 2 crore a month, including Tk 130 per square foot for 151,014 square feet and Tk 5,000 per month for each of the 37 parking spaces.

On September 18, the DSE asked the bank to explain the rationale behind the high purchase price. In its

READ MORE ON B3

Beximco plans to reopen textile factories in new deal

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Beximco's textile division, which shut down its factories late last year due to financial problems, is set to reopen with support from Japan-Bangladesh ventures Revival Group Co Ltd and Revival Projects Ltd, alongside state-owned Janata Bank.

The initiative is also supported by US-based financing partner Ecomilli, founded by non-resident Bangladeshi professionals, said a joint statement by Beximco and Revival.

The reopening is expected to pave the way for more than 25,000 workers to regain their jobs.

Under the first phase, Revival and Ecomilli will invest \$20 million through back-to-back letters of credit (LCs). If factory performance and global demand allow, the investment could rise to \$100 million. Production is expected to restart by December 2025.

After last year's political change, Beximco faced high defaulted loans and limited access to new credit. Its Vice Chairman, Salman F Rahman, former private industry and investment affairs adviser to the previous prime minister, was jailed. The company closed all 16 factories in its Gazipur Industrial Park in December that year, affecting thousands of workers.

In the joint statement issued yesterday, Beximco and Revival said all former employees will be reinstated. They will also re-engage past international buyers and secure new global clients.

Khalid Shahriar, head of HR and compliance for Beximco's textile and garment division, told The Daily Star that the spinning and fabric units will reopen first, along with some garment lines. Full operations are expected within six months.

READ MORE ON B3

Swiss firm to run Pangaon container terminal for 22 years

Deal likely today; Laldia terminal pact also expected

KEY POINTS

- » Terminal was constructed in 2013 at a cost of Tk 154cr
- » The aim was to reduce pressure from Dhaka-Ctg highway and railroad corridors
- » The terminal also promised swift transport of import and export boxes at low costs
- » Businesses lost interest due to high freight rates and lengthy clearance times



STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The government has finalised the process to appoint Switzerland-based logistics firm Medlog SA to manage and operate the Pangaon Inland Container Terminal in Keraniganj for 22 years.

An agreement is expected to be signed today between the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) and the Swiss firm, a subsidiary of the global shipping line Mediterranean Shipping Company, CPA Secretary Md Omar Faruk said.

The CPA will also sign a 33-year agreement with APM Terminals BV, a

PANGAON ICT AT A GLANCE

Yard: **55,000** square metres
Length of jetty: **180** metres
Container storage capacity: **1,550** TEUs (laden), **1,100** TEUs (empty)



Dutch subsidiary of the AP Moller-Maersk Group, to develop and operate the Laldia Container Terminal at Chattogram port under a public private partnership framework, he added.

The CPA is signing these deals at a time when different organisations are opposing the government's plan to lease various terminals of Chattogram port to foreign companies.

The Pangaon terminal was built on the Buriganga River in 2013 by the CPA and the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority to reduce cargo pressure on

READ MORE ON B3



Garment exports to US rise 5% in Jul-Oct

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Garment exports to the USA, the country's largest single export destination, increased by 5.14 percent to \$2.59 billion during July-October, despite facing a 20 percent reciprocal tariff imposed by the US under President Donald Trump's administration.

The USA accounted for 19.92 percent of Bangladesh's total garment exports during this period, according to data from the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) compiled by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

IPDC ডিপোজিট | ১৬৫১৯

Local exporters face a 35.5 percent duty on shipments to the USA, which includes the 20 percent reciprocal tariff and the previous 15.5 percent Most Favoured Nation (MFN) tariff.

Bangladesh's 20 percent reciprocal tariff rate gave local exporters a competitive advantage over other garment-exporting nations, which face slightly higher tariffs.

Ramzul Seraj, managing director of Elite Group, said that although his company's shipments to the USA were slow in August and October, the inflow of work orders from US bound retailers and brands started increasing in November.

"The uncertainty is over now, as the tariff rate for Bangladesh is fixed lower compared with a few other countries. I hope the inflow of work orders from US buyers will also increase in the near future," Seraj told The Daily Star over the phone.

READ MORE ON B3

Trust SME BANKING
tailored business solution

Trust Uddoyog

CMSME Financing for New & Innovative Entrepreneurs

Start Your Dream Journey
Financing for Service, Technology & Processed Product Sectors

Up to BDT 1 Crore
60 months

Trust Bank PLC.
A Bank for Financial Inclusion

To Know More
16201

Sammilito Islami Bank
may bring in foreign investors
Governor says

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) wants to bring in strategic foreign investors for the new shariah-based Sammilito Islami Bank, which is being created through the merger of five troubled Islamic lenders, according to BB Governor Ahsan H Mansur.

Days after the central bank gave the preliminary approval for the new bank, the governor said yesterday that the process is underway.

At the inauguration of the Bangladesh Islamic Finance Summit 2025 at Sheraton Dhaka, he said the new bank will be strong after a fresh public fund injection. It will begin the journey as a publicly owned institution.

"We would like to be handing over to strategic international investors as well as an eventual IPO [initial public offering]," he said in his speech as the chief guest. "That process is on."

Mansur said he expects Sammilito Islami Bank to become the strongest in terms of financial position. It will start with the highest level of capital in the sector, with paid-up capital of Tk 35,000 crore.

He hoped it could turn a profit even in its first year because of the large injection of liquidity.

A week earlier, the central bank sent letters to First Security Islami Bank, Union Bank, Global Islami Bank, Social Islami Bank and Exim Bank, informing them of the decision to merge the five commercial lenders under the Bank Resolution Ordinance 2025.

Administrators have already been appointed to carry out the process, after which the merged entity will operate as Sammilito Islami Bank.

READ MORE ON B2