

NEIR key to curbing illegal phones

Mobile phone industry owners say it will protect consumers

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The Bangladesh Mobile Phone Industry Owners Association (MIOB) yesterday described the implementation of the National Equipment Identity Register (NEIR) as a major step towards consumer protection, market discipline, and ensuring the sustainability of the country's mobile phone industry.

At a press conference held at the InterContinental Dhaka, MIOB said NEIR would help identify and block illegal, counterfeit, and stolen mobile phones, reduce fraud and phone cloning, and create a level playing field for legitimate businesses.

MIOB said the government's decision to roll out NEIR from January 1, alongside a reduction in smartphone import duties to encourage legal imports, was timely and necessary to address long-standing irregularities in the sector.

MIOB President Jakaria Shahid said NEIR would bring discipline and transparency to the industry and protect consumers.

The measures would help organise the market, discourage illicit trade, and

strengthen consumer confidence.

It would play a critical role in preventing the use of illegal IMEIs, thereby limiting criminal activities linked to mobile phones.

He added that the system would also support fair competition and contribute to the growth of the digital economy, while boosting government revenue collection.

MIOB said more than Tk 3,000 crore – both local and foreign – had been invested in 18 smartphone manufacturing facilities across the country.

The industry directly employs around 50,000 skilled workers and supports another 50,000 people through dealerships, service centres, sales representatives, and retail operations.

Around 30 percent of the workforce is women, the association said.

Industry representatives also condemned the recent vandalism at the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) office in connection with protests over NEIR implementation, urging all stakeholders to resolve disagreements through lawful and peaceful means.

Short circuits still cause one in three fires

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general manager (operations) at AkijBashir Cables. "Others are not heat-resistant up to 105 degrees Celsius, making them vulnerable to failure under high load."

The use of impure or mixed copper significantly reduces conductivity and increases the risk of short circuits, added Akhteruzzaman, also an electrical engineer.

Recent incidents illustrate these risks. The devastating fire at the import cargo complex of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on October 18 last year was caused by electrical arcing and a short circuit, according to the probe report.

Md Aynal Haque, professor of electrical and electronic engineering at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), identified the

absence of proper electrical design, the use of substandard materials and unsafe usage by end-users as the core drivers of the problem.

"Many buildings are approved without any electrical design because Rajuk (Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha) does not require it," he said. "This leads to unsafe systems that are prone to faults."

He also warned about counterfeit electrical products, including fake branded cables, and hazardous practices such as overloading circuits with multi-plugs, which cause internal overheating.

Citing the airport fire, he reiterated the need for legal reforms, including mandatory design approvals and nationwide awareness campaigns. "Without regulation and awareness, we'll continue losing lives and crores of

taka to preventable fires."

A senior official of the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) echoed the concerns, calling for a comprehensive nationwide strategy to reduce fire incidents.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said a comprehensive approach was needed, including mandatory annual electrical safety audits for residential, commercial and industrial buildings and better access to certified electricians and quality materials, particularly in low-income areas.

Rafiqul Islam Rony, head of marketing and sales at BRB Cables, a leading wires and cables manufacturer, also blamed improper installation and the use of substandard materials for short circuit-related fire incidents.

"Many short circuits occur because cables are not selected based on the required load. For example, using a 300 RM cable instead of a 500 RM one creates a serious safety risk," he said.

Rony pointed out that incorrect cable laying, such as not using proper pipes, also contributes to the problem. "In many cases, low-quality cables are purchased from manufacturers who don't follow standards."

Faulty connections at machine points are another factor. "If the insulation isn't properly removed or carbon is not cleaned before making connections, it can result in short circuits," he said.

Even standard cables can fail if they are undersized or poorly installed, he warned. "When cables heat up under load, the risk of short circuits rises significantly."

Investment climate

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Rahman noted that weak export growth, low imports of capital machinery and difficulties in profit repatriation for some foreign investors reflected subdued private sector activity.

"Investment, particularly in job creating sectors, lacked the necessary stimulus in 2025," he said, stressing the need for stronger institutions and infrastructure to revive momentum in 2026.

Exporters, meanwhile, remain wary about the near-term outlook.

Mohammad Hatem, president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), said the past year was among the most difficult for export-oriented investors.

"There is no possibility of rebound within the next six months," he warned, citing banking bottlenecks, high costs and the withdrawal of export

incentives under IMF-backed reforms.

Business leaders also point to persistent structural challenges.

Taskeen Ahmed, president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), said high interest rates, liquidity shortages and stress in the banking sector continued to hurt SMEs, while energy shortages and inflation further dwindled confidence. Asif Ibrahim, former

chairperson of Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD), said, with GDP growth estimated at just 3.7 to 3.9 percent in 2025, the weakest in more than a decade, expectations for 2026 hinge on whether political stability translates into decisive reforms.

He stressed that economic diversification, robust reforms and targeted investment in infrastructure and human capital are essential this year.

Microcredit bank plan

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Mohammed Helal Uddin, executive vice chairman of the Microcredit Regulatory Authority (MRA), acknowledged that the draft, at which stage it is now, remains "incomplete", particularly on the question of how existing assets and liabilities would be converted into bank capital.

Some MFIs hold assets or liabilities worth Tk 30,000 crore to Tk 50,000 crore. The draft does not yet explain how these amounts would translate into paid-up capital, he said.

"That part is still missing," Helal Uddin admitted. "The draft will undergo further changes. That is why a technical group is already working on it."

Only after this process is completed, he added, would it be possible to assess the final shape of the ordinance.

Several broader questions also remain unresolved. If these entities continue to provide microcredit, how different will they be from existing MFIs? If they become banks, they would fall under the supervision of the Bangladesh Bank – so what will their tax treatment be?

"There is still scope to work further on these issues, and that is exactly what the technical team is doing," Helal Uddin said.

"The Bangladesh Bank, the finance ministry and other stakeholders are also providing their opinions. Through this process, the draft will reach a more complete stage. Only then can it be judged whether this truly poses a concern for the sector."

Asked why major sector players were not consulted during drafting, Helal Uddin conceded that some institutions now objecting were not consulted, while stressing that discussions did take place with other stakeholders. He also noted that once the law is finalised, detailed rules and regulations would be developed, which should clarify many implementation issues.

The draft defines microfinance banks as social businesses. Under this model, investors would recover their

capital gradually through dividends over many years. In real terms, inflation would erode their returns. For example, an investment of Tk 100 recovered over 15 years would lose much of its value.

"If an investor cannot recover any part of the principal at all, then what incentive is there to invest? That question is still not clearly answered," Helal Uddin added.

REGULATORY DUALITY

Regulatory confusion is another flashpoint. The draft suggests licences would be issued by the Microcredit Regulatory Authority (MRA), raising the prospect of dual or even multiple oversight.

Mustafa K Mujeeri, executive director of the Institute for Inclusive Finance and Development (InM), argued that if these institutions are banks, they should be regulated solely by the central bank.

"A dual system never works well," he said.

State-owned banks already operate under overlapping authority from the Financial Institutions Division and the Bangladesh Bank, and their performance has suffered as a result. Adding the MRA could introduce a third layer of supervision, further complicating oversight, Mujeeri warned.

"In India, microfinance banks are regulated by the Reserve Bank of India. Bangladesh should proceed only after a sound and practical assessment," he said.

Mujeeri also pointed to disagreement within the sector. "It should be examined whether any vested interest is influencing the process," he added.

Rather than moving quickly, he argued that policymakers should conduct a thorough assessment of whether the model would genuinely benefit poor borrowers.

On profitability, he was direct. "Anyone investing here would naturally expect dividends," Mujeeri said. "If there is no dividend, why would someone invest? This issue requires much deeper examination before any final decision is made."

BTRC lowers cap for spectrum

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"We welcome the regulator's decision to reduce the spectrum acquisition limit, as it will prevent any operator from hoarding spectrum," said Shahed Alam, chief corporate and regulatory affairs officer of Robi Axiata.

The auction faces another complication as 20MHz of the 700MHz band remains tied up in a long-running legal dispute.

In 2007, the BTRC allocated 12MHz of the band to broadband service provider Always On Network Bangladesh Ltd before the frequency was approved for mobile services, leaving a significant portion currently unavailable for auction.

Meanwhile, the government has approved a 10 percent reduction in the base price of the 700MHz band. The base price is now set at Tk 237 crore per MHz for a 15-year licence period, down from Tk 263 crore per MHz. Despite the cut, mobile operators say the spectrum remains expensive and above global benchmark rates.

NBR split

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founded in 1972, and replacing it with the Revenue Policy Division and the Revenue Management Division under the finance ministry.

While the government described the change as essential to modernising the tax system, NBR officials opposed the ordinance, citing a lack of consultation and concerns over diminished roles for tax and customs cadres.

The prolonged unrest at the NBR has finally subsided after the government took tough measures, including forced retirements, suspensions, transfers, and anti-corruption operations.

NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 2163 OF 2025

- Incepta Pharmaceuticals Limited (Transferee-Petitioner)
- Incepta Vaccine Limited (Transferor-Petitioner)
- Incepta Chemicals Limited (Transferor-Petitioner)
- Incepta Herbal & Nutricare Limited (Transferor-Petitioner)
- Incepta Hygiene and Hospicare Limited (Transferor-Petitioner)
- Transuniverse Distribution Limited (Transferor-Petitioner)

– VERSUS –

Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms (Respondent)

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under Section 228 read with Section 229 of the Companies Act, 1994 for sanctioning the Scheme of Amalgamation for the amalgamation of Incepta Pharmaceuticals Limited (the "Transferee-Petitioner") with Incepta Vaccine Limited, Incepta Chemicals Limited, Incepta Herbal & Nutricare Limited, Incepta Hygiene and Hospicare Limited, and Transuniverse Distribution Limited (collectively the "Transferor-Petitioners"), whereby the entire undertaking of the Transferor-Petitioners as going concern is proposed to be transferred and vested in Transferee-Petitioner was filed and moved before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. After the preliminary hearing, Justice Ahmed Sohel, the Hon'ble Justice of the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh vide Order dated **02.12.2025** in the company Matter No. 2163 of 2025 was pleased to admit the application and directed the Petitioners to convene separate meetings of all the shareholders and creditors of the Petitioners, for the purpose of placing the Scheme of Amalgamation, proposed to be made between the Petitioners, before the shareholders and creditors and approving the same. The Hon'ble High Court Division was also pleased to direct the Petitioners to file an Affidavit-in-Compliance within **03 (three) months** from date of order (within **02.03.2026**).

Under the circumstances, by dint of this Notice pursuant to the Order of the Hon'ble High Court Division, all members and creditors of the Petitioner companies are hereby requested to attend the meetings at the registered offices of the Petitioner companies at **40, Shahid Tajuddin Ahmed Sarani, Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208, Bangladesh**, on the following dates and times for the purpose of considering, and if thought fit, approving the Scheme of Amalgamation proposed to be made between the Transferee-Petitioner and Transferor-Petitioners:

Company Name	Type of Meeting	Date	Time
1. Incepta Pharmaceuticals Limited	Members	22.01.2026	10.00 AM
	Creditors	22.01.2026	02.00 PM
2. Incepta Vaccine Limited	Members	22.01.2026	10.00 AM
	Creditors	22.01.2026	02.00 PM
3. Incepta Chemicals Limited	Members	22.01.2026	10.00 AM
	Creditors	22.01.2026	02.00 PM
4. Incepta Herbal & Nutricare Limited	Members	22.01.2026	10.00 AM
	Creditors	22.01.2026	02.00 PM
5. Incepta Hygiene and Hospicare Limited	Members	22.01.2026	10.00 AM
	Creditors	22.01.2026	02.00 PM
6. Transuniverse Distribution Limited	Members	22.01.2026	10.00 AM
	Creditors	22.01.2026	02.00 PM

All members and creditors are requested to attend the said meetings either in person or through a duly authorized representative (with a letter of authorization) at the scheduled time.

Anyone interested to contest the application may appear before the Hon'ble High Court Division in person or through an Advocate on the date on which it is heard. A copy of the application may be collected from the registered offices of the Petitioner companies.

Yours faithfully,

Md Anisul Hassan
Barrister-at-Law
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh
Mobile No. 01755-606972
Address: Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed & Associates,
Flat 1C, Concord Ovalash, House No. 62,
Road No. 11/A, Dhanmondi, Dhaka 1209, Bangladesh

Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology
Dhaka-1000
Office of the Chief Engineer

e-Tender Notice

CE/Tender Notice No. 11/25-26(046-050)/E-446(35) Date: 06/01/2026

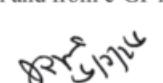
e-Tender is invited and published in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for following procurement.

Tender ID/ Re-Tender	Tender name	Tender document last selling/ downloading date and time	Closing & opening date & time
1195853	Renovation Works of Guard Room at Polashi Residential Area, BUET.	18-Jan-2026 16:00	19-Jan-2026 16:00
1202313 Re-Tender	Repairing & Re-Strengthening Works of Architecture Academic Building Porch Top.	18-Jan-2026 16:00	19-Jan-2026 16:00
1202936	Replacing Existing Wooden High Window Fram With MS Box at Machine Shop, BUET.	18-Jan-2026 16:00	19-Jan-2026 16:00
1203127	Repairing, Plastering & Painting Works at 1st Floor of Dr. M.A. Rashid Administrative Bhaban, BUET.	18-Jan-2026 16:00	19-Jan-2026 16:00
1205188	Repair and Installation of 01 No. Generator Turbocharger for Genset No. 01 (One), 2MW, 3520c (New) at BUET Power Plant.	18-Jan-2026 16:00	19-Jan-2026 16:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


Dr. A.K.M. Jahangir Alam, PEng
Chief Engineer

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