

BTRC to unlock more low-band spectrum to boost coverage

MAHMUDUL HASAN

The telecom regulator has decided to allocate spectrum from the 850 MHz and Extended GSM (EGSM) bands for a month-long trial to examine potential interference between the two frequencies. The move is part of a broader effort to eventually assign this spectrum through auction or other regulatory mechanisms, with the goal of ensuring better services and improved network reliability across the country. The decision was made at a recent commission meeting.

"It's just a trial and any band can participate," said Md Emdad ul Bari, Chairman of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC).

"After assessing the trial results and interference implications, we will allocate

spectrum from these bands through auction or other appropriate regulatory mechanisms," he added.

The EGSM band is an extension of the standard GSM 900 MHz range, offering additional radio frequencies for mobile operators. It allows networks to handle more users at once, improve coverage, and deliver better call and data quality, particularly in areas where connectivity is otherwise weak.

Its low-frequency nature also ensures strong indoor penetration and wide-area connectivity, making it crucial for urban and rural network reliability.

However, the 850 MHz and EGSM bands sit adjacent to each other, meaning signals from one can leak into the other. This can cause interference, receiver overload, and degraded service quality if not carefully managed. Both

bands are nonetheless highly valued for enabling wide coverage with fewer towers.

According to BTRC documents, 8.4 MHz of EGSM spectrum (880-888.4 MHz paired with 925-933.4 MHz) will be assigned to operators for four weeks at no financial cost.

The commission's technical committee and operators will jointly collect and analyse data, then submit a consolidated report.

This is not BTRC's first attempt to utilise this band. In 2024, a plan to assign EGSM spectrum to Grameenphone was shelved after objections from Robi Axiata and Banglalink, which cited high filter costs, potential coverage degradation, and concerns over market imbalance.

A proof-of-concept test also flagged interference risks.

After BTRC awarded 700 MHz spectrum earlier this year, Robi sought allocation in lower frequency bands, prompting the regulator to commit to addressing that demand. A technical committee was then formed to manage the spectrum shortage and ensure coexistence between the two bands.

At a February 3 meeting, operators were asked to specify their requirements. Robi and Banglalink each requested 3.4 MHz from the EGSM band, totalling 6.8 MHz, along with a four-week interference trial.

Grameenphone, which recently acquired 10 MHz in the 700 MHz band, said it has no immediate plans for either band but raised concerns about cross-border interference and regional harmonisation. Teletalk has not yet submitted any plans to the regulator.

Oil prices little changed

REUTERS, Singapore

Oil prices were little changed in choppy trade on Monday, as investors awaited clarity on the status of talks between the US and Iran even as they remained wary about sustained supply losses due to shipping disruptions.

Brent crude futures rose 76 cents, or 0.7 percent, to \$109.79 a barrel at 0656 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate crude futures were trading 53 cents, or 0.5 percent lower, at \$111.01 per barrel.

The pricing moves in Asia trading on Monday were dwarfed by an 11 percent surge for WTI and an 8 percent rise for Brent during the previous trading session on Thursday, the biggest absolute price increase since 2020.

On Sunday, Trump ratcheted up pressure on Tehran, threatening in an explosive-laden Easter Sunday social media post to target Iran's power plants and bridges on Tuesday if the strategic Strait of Hormuz is not reopened. Still, prices were largely unchanged on Monday.

Iran and the United States have received a plan to end hostilities that could come into effect on Monday and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a source aware of the proposals said on Monday.

AB Bank signs MoU with iRONman to support SME dealers

STAR BUSINESS DESK

AB Bank PLC has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with iRONman Company Ltd, a metal industry supplier based in Rupganj, to establish a strategic partnership aimed at supporting the financial requirements of the company's listed dealers and distributors.

Under the agreement, financing support will be provided through the bank's SME product, named "Uttaran".

Md Arijul Islam Mollick, head of SME banking at the bank, and Muin Rahman, managing director of iRONman Company Ltd, signed the MoU at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently, according to a press release.

Reazul Islam, acting managing director and chief executive officer of the bank, attended the signing ceremony as the chief guest.

ZM Babar Khan, additional



Muin Rahman, managing director of iRONman Company Ltd, and Md Arijul Islam Mollick, head of SME banking at AB Bank PLC, pose for a photograph during the signing of a memorandum of understanding at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: AB BANK

managing director of the bank; Iftekhar Enam Awal, chief business officer; and Md Nazmul Alam, chief executive officer of

the metal supplier, along with other senior officials from both organisations, were also present at the event.

Ecneec scraps one project

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established a review committee, to be led by Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, the prime minister's finance and planning adviser, to assess all projects under the Annual Development Programme. The committee will examine the feasibility and economic rationale of each project, with authority to recommend cancellation, revision, or continuation.

Finance Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, speaking at a post-meeting briefing, framed the session as the beginning of a systematic effort to clear a backlog of poorly justified public spending.

"We are currently going through what is effectively a backlog clearance process -- filtering out weaker proposals while advancing those deemed sound," he said. "Once this clean-up phase is complete, the remaining legacy projects will be resolved in a phased manner."

Meanwhile, Titumir, speaking about the review committee, said many projects had been approved without proper economic studies, with costs repeatedly inflated and returns consistently limited.

He called for a more accountable Annual Development Programme (ADP), noting that public capital expenditure had not kept pace with operating expenditure, with consequences for growth. "Projects will be evaluated on necessity, quality of surveys, cost control and long-term sustainability."

The five approved projects saw a combined cost increase of Tk 483.43 crore in their revised estimates, of which Tk 390.84 crore will be financed from state funds and Tk 92.59 crore from project loans.

Among the schemes, the General Social Infrastructure Development Project-2 (GSIDP-2), being implemented by the

Local Government Engineering Department, has been revised with its cost rising to Tk 1,450 crore and a new completion deadline set for June 2027.

The meeting also decided to increase the cost of the IT Training and Incubation Centre project to Tk 533.55 crore, with the timeline extended to June 2026. Besides, it revised a project to modernise diagnostic imaging facilities at eight divisional medical college hospitals, approving Tk 1,213.71 crore as cost and June 2028 as new deadline.

The meeting also approved the second revision of the Gopalganj Dental College and Hospital project, raising its cost to Tk 139.31 crore, with a target completion date of June 2026.

In contrast, the cost of the Char Development and Settlement Project-4 (CDSP-4) has been reduced to Tk 30.72 crore.

FICCI calls for clear tax roadmap

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The chamber also urged simplifying the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) programme and introducing clear, tangible benefits to encourage participation.

FICCI stressed that tax expenditure policies should align with national priorities and that all exemptions should have a sunset clause.

It also recommended setting clear performance evaluation criteria, with annual reviews to assess effectiveness.

"We are facing a period of global disruptions and domestic pressures, forcing businesses to constantly adapt," said Rupali Haque Chowdhury, president of FICCI, highlighting the growing strain on both local and foreign investors.

She stressed that Bangladesh's next stage of growth depends on the government's ability to implement clear, consistent, and forward-looking reforms, especially in taxation and regulations.

"A competitive and predictable business environment is essential to attract and sustain long-term investment," she said, adding that policy stability remains a major concern for investors in the country.

Calling for stronger public-private cooperation, Chowdhury said reforms must be inclusive. "The government and private sector cannot do this alone -- we must move forward together," she said.

At the event, NBR Chairman Md Abdur Rahman Khan told the

chamber that the focus would be on improving the business environment through better efficiency, rather than cutting tax rates immediately.

"It is very difficult for us to reduce taxes as we face significant pressure," he said. "We know the burden feels high, but it is not just about responsibility -- it mostly comes from our operational inefficiencies."

"The key question is how to make the system more efficient, especially by using technology. We welcome your ideas so we can progress together," he added.

Khan also said the corporate tax system will go fully online next year, aiming to solve many issues businesses now face, especially in dealing with tax offices.

GDP growth slows to 3%

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He said the slowdown deepened in the latest quarter as both public and private spending tightened ahead of national elections in February.

Usually, the government scales back annual development programme (ADP) spending before elections, while private investors adopt a wait-and-see approach, he said.

Remittance earnings rose about 20 percent year-on-year to \$8.67 billion in the second quarter, according to Bangladesh Bank data.

However, economists said the inflows have yet to translate into

stronger overall growth.

Mujeri said the current quarter shows little sign of a strong rebound, citing the ongoing war in the Middle East and the risk of higher fuel prices disrupting production across sectors.

Multilateral lenders, however, expect some recovery over the full fiscal year.

The World Bank has projected the economy will expand by 4.6 percent in this fiscal year ending June 2026, despite persistent inflation, falling exports and sluggish investment.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) expects growth to reach 4.9 percent in FY2025-26.

Export

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Business leaders proposed extending that period to six months. They also urged the central bank to stop the practice under which one defaulting business affects the classification status of its affiliated entities.

In addition, business leaders proposed extending the repayment period after loan rescheduling from the current four to five years to 10 years.

FBCCI also recommended introducing low-cost green financing facilities to encourage investment in renewable energy, including solar power, to reduce energy costs.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
মহাপরিচালকের কার্যালয়
জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা গোয়েন্দা
সেগুনবাগিচা, ঢাকা।

তারিখ: ২৩ চৈত্র ১৪৩২ বঙ্গ।
০৬ এপ্রিল ২০২৬ খ্রি।

২০২৬-২০২৭ অর্থ বছরের জন্য
সরবরাহকারী/ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি ও নবায়ন করণের বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ক্রম	পদের নাম ও সম্মানী	বয়স	পদের সংখ্যা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা	কর্মপরিধি	নির্ধারিত সময়
১.	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ					
২.	সংগ্রহকারী সত্ত্বার নাম ও ঠিকানা					
৩.	অর্থের উৎস					
৪.	ক্রয়/সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি					
৫.	কাজের বিবরণ					
৬.	আবেদনপত্র বিক্রয়ের শুরু তারিখ					
৭.	আবেদনপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ					
৮.	আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়					
৯.	আবেদনপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়					
১০.	আবেদনপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম					
১১.	আবেদনপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবী					
১২.	আবেদনপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা					
১৩.	আবেদনপত্র জমা দেয়ার স্থান					
১৪.	আবেদনপত্র দাখিলের সময় প্রদেয় তথ্য					
১৫.	আবেদনপত্রের মূল্য (নতুন)					
১৬.	আবেদনপত্রের মূল্য (নবায়ন)					
১৭.	বিশেষ নির্দেশনা					

(মোঃ আশিকুর রহমান)
উপপরিচালক (প্রশাসন)

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তারিখ: ০২.০৪.২০২৬

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ হাউজ বিল্ডিং ফাইন্যান্স কর্পোরেশন (বিএইচবিএফসি)-এর সদর দফতর এবং ঢাকাস্থ জোনাল ও শাখা অফিসসমূহে কর্মরত কর্মকর্তা-কর্মচারী ও তাদের পরিবারবর্গকে জরুরী চিকিৎসা সেবা প্রদান করার জন্য নিম্নবর্ণিত পদসমূহে সম্পূর্ণ অস্থায়ী ভিত্তিতে (খন্ডকালীন) নিয়োগের জন্য বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। নিয়োগপ্রাপ্ত চিকিৎসককে সরকারী কর্মদিবসে নির্ধারিত সময়ে কর্পোরেশনের সদর দফতর ভবনে দায়িত্ব পালন করতে হবে।

ক্রম	পদের নাম ও সম্মানী	বয়স	পদের সংখ্যা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা	কর্মপরিধি	নির্ধারিত সময়
০১	চিকিৎসক মাসিক সম্মানী: ৪০,০০০/- টাকা উৎসব বোনাস: মাসিক সম্মানীর ৫০% (সর্বোচ্চ ২টি)	২৫-৬০ বছর	০২ জন (পুরুষ-১জন ও মহিলা-১ জন)	বিএমডিসি কর্তৃক স্বীকৃত মেডিকেল কলেজ/ডেন্টাল কলেজ হতে ন্যূনতম এমবিবিএস/বিডিএস ডিগ্রী; বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল ও ডেন্টাল কাউন্সিল কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদ; চিকিৎসা কাজে কমপক্ষে ০৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা;	জটিল ও দীর্ঘমেয়াদি রোগের চিকিৎসা; স্বাস্থ্য তথ্য পর্যবেক্ষণের মাধ্যমে বিশেষ চিকিৎসা নিশ্চিতকরণ; নিয়মিত স্বাস্থ্য পর্যবেক্ষণ; মৌলিক স্বাস্থ্য তথ্য সংরক্ষণ; মুখ গহ্বর ও দন্ত সেবা নিশ্চিতকরণ;	সকাল ১০ ঘটিকা হতে বিকাল ৬.০০ ঘটিকা। (প্রতিদিন) কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত ২(দুই) শিফটের যেকোন একটিতে দায়িত্ব পালন করতে হবে।

শর্তাবলী:

- প্রার্থীকে জন্মসূত্রে বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী নাগরিক হতে হবে;
- আবেদনপত্রের সাথে প্রার্থীকে পূর্ণ জীবন বৃত্তান্ত, সদ্য তোলা দুই কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সত্যায়িত ছবি, সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা সনদের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি এবং আনুষ্ঠানিক কাজগপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে;
- আবেদনপত্র আগামী ২০.০৪.২০২৬ তারিখের মধ্যে প্রশাসন বিভাগ, সদর দফতর, বাংলাদেশ হাউজ বিল্ডিং ফাইন্যান্স কর্পোরেশন বরাবর পৌছাতে হবে;
- সাক্ষাৎকারে অংশগ্রহণের সময় সকল কাজগপত্রের মূল কপি সঙ্গে আনতে হবে;
- ক্রটিপূর্ণ/অসম্পূর্ণ আবেদন কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে;
- পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোন প্রকার টিএ/ডিএ প্রদান করা হবে না;
- নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত বিষয়ে নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে;

(আবু বকর সিদ্দিক খান)
উপমহাব্যবস্থাপক (প্রশাসন)
ফোন- ০২ ২২৩৩৮২৫৩২