

NBR spurs BTRC to speed up long-delayed spectrum auction

Staff Correspondent

THE National Board of Revenue on Wednesday requested the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission to speed up the auction process of remaining 2G and 3G spectrums which has been delayed for months.

'We requested BTRC to speed up the auction of 2G and 3G spectrums as it involves huge amount of government revenue. BTRC assured that it is taking preparation to speed up the auction process,' NBR chairman MD Nojibur Rahman told New Age after a meeting with BTRC on Wednesday.

BTRC acting chairman Ahsan Habib Khan was present in the meeting.

He said that BTRC works is the regulator of the mobile phone industry and it is important for NBR to have a regular contact with it.

'We also decided to sit with them on a regular basis to secure the revenue collection from the sector,' he said.

The revenue collection by the telecom regulator declined by 64 per cent in the just concluded fiscal year



A file photo shows a man browsing the internet on his mobile phone in Dhaka. The National Board of Revenue on Wednesday requested the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission to speed up the auction process of remaining 2G and 3G spectrums which has been delayed for months.

— New Age photo

2014-15 compared with the previous FY as it failed to meet the auction deadline for remaining spectrums and reduced the international call termination charges.

BTRC collected Tk 4,000

crore by the end of June whereas it collected a record Tk 10,016 crore in the previous fiscal year because of first auction of 3G spectrum.

The initial target of BTRC's revenue collection

was set at Tk 13,829 crore in 2014-15 fiscal year but the target was lowered to Tk 6,902 crore in the revised budget as the spectrum auction scheduled for April did not take place.

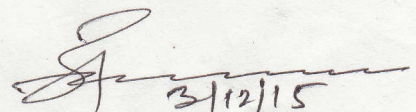
Data shows that the BTRC collected Tk 5,404 crore from the market in FY13. It also collected Tk 6,957 crore in FY12, Tk 3,047 crore in FY11, Tk 2,370 crore in FY10 and Tk 3,195 crore in FY09.

Meanwhile, the post and telecommunications ministry has recently decided to complete the spectrum auction of 2G and 3G services before completion of the proposed merger of mobile operators Robi and Airtel.

The guidelines for 1800 band (2G) and 2100 band (3G) are currently pending before the finance ministry for approval, ministry officials said.

The BTRC was set to hold the spectrum auction of 2G and 3G in April but failed to do so because of lack of participation of the operators and delay in government approval of the auction guidelines.

According to the auction guidelines, 10.60MHz spectrum is available in two blocks for auction in 1800 band or 2G and 15MHz spectrum in three blocks is available in 2100 band or 3G for the auction.

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