

Press release

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Akij Food and Beverage Ltd. runs a Starlinger PET bottle-to-bottle recycling line in Bangladesh

Dhaka-based food manufacturer Akij Food and Beverage Ltd. (AFBL), a member of Akij Venture Group, is producing its own rPET for the company's brand beverage bottles.

AFBL decided to start bottle-to-bottle recycling to reduce the growing environmental burden, as well as for economic reasons. "On a competitive market, recycling is the best solution to improve environmental conditions", said Mohammed Sadikur Rahaman, Plant Operations Director at AFBL. "If you look inside our state-of-the-art recycling facility, you see mountains of used plastic bottles which were thrown away after being used once and became a threat for our environment. Now, each year billions of them will be turned into PET flakes and pellets in order to become new bottles."

The Starlinger recoSTAR PET 165 HC iV+ installed at AFBL's production site in Dhaka has taken up operation beginning of April 2022. It turns PET flakes into food-contact rPET pellets and has a production capacity of up to 1,800 kg/h. The recycling process starts with a two-stage heating and drying phase of the washed flakes for optimum preparation for the extrusion process. After extrusion, filtering and pelletising, the produced rPET pellets undergo vacuum treatment in the downstream SSP reactor. This increases the intrinsic viscosity (IV) and effectively decontaminates the pellets so that they can be used for food-contact applications. AFBL currently includes a share of 20 % to 40 % of recycled PET in its beverage bottles for water and carbonated soft drinks.

AFBL sources the used bottles from various vendors on the local market. To achieve the high-quality rPET needed for food-contact applications, the input material must be thoroughly washed to effectively remove foreign substances such as polyolefins, metals, dust and dirt, and separated according to its quality. During the extrusion process, the Starlinger high-vacuum degassing and melt filtration processes ensure that the melt is free from aromatic substances and volatile contaminants that may cause quality impacts (bubbles or smells) in the produced PET regranelate.

"We opted for a Starlinger system because it complies with European Commission Regulation (EC) No 282/2008 and fulfils the high quality demands required for our product", said Mohammed Sadikur Rahaman. "In Bangladesh, the recycling business helps to clean up the environment and allows making a profit at the same time. However, it is a big undertaking, and we face serious challenges and also competition. Due to Bangladesh's growing economy a lot of recyclable products such as plastic bottles or casings of electric appliances and computer equipment are entering the market and provide potential feedstock for plastics recycling."

Akij Food and Beverage Ltd. was founded in 2006 and manufactures snacks and beverages for the national and international market, exporting its products to 26 countries. It is part of Akij Group, one of the largest industrial conglomerates in Bangladesh. The diverse business portfolio of the group comprises companies in the



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textile, jute, food and beverage sectors as well as in the cement, ceramics, printing, packaging, and consumer products industries.

www.akijfood.com

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Image 1: The Starlinger recoSTAR PET 165 HC iV+ installed at AFBL turns post-consumer PET bottle flakes into food-contact rPET pellets and has an output of up to 1,800 kg/h.
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About Starlinger recycling technology

Starlinger recycling technology is a division of Austrian-based Starlinger & Co GmbH, world market leader in the field of machinery and complete lines for woven plastic packaging production. For more than 30 years Starlinger recycling technology has been providing machinery solutions for the recycling and refining of a wide scope of plastics such as PE, PP, PA, PS, BOPP and PET. Starlinger PET recycling systems produce food-safe rPET and are approved for use in food applications by many globally operating brand owners as well as various national and international authorities. The worldwide sales and service support network and technical consulting service help customers to achieve optimum results in the manufacturing process.

Starlinger is a participant of the United Nations Global Compact, the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative, and adheres to the principles for responsible business set out therein.

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