

Etihad Airways offers up to 30pc discount

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Etihad Airways now offers up to 30 percent discount on business and economy class tickets for guests travelling from Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong to over 350 popular destinations in UK, Europe, South America, Middle East, Africa, USA and Canada.

Etihad's biggest ever seat sale for 2015 was launched in corporation with the carrier's equity code share partner airlines across the world, the airline said in a statement yesterday. The tickets can be availed for bookings between February 25 and March 3, for out-bound travel between February 25 to December 12 this year and for return travel within March 11, 2016, the airline said in a statement yesterday.

US citizens will enjoy pre-clearance facility at Abu Dhabi International Airport—reducing the connecting times for onward flights in the US—and receive their luggage at the final destination directly, Etihad said.

The Abu Dhabi based Etihad began international operation in 2003, according to the statement.

The airline has equity investments in airberlin, Air Serbia, Air Seychelles, Aer Lingus, Alitalia along with Jet Airways and Virgin Australia.

Credit, money data offer glimmer of hope for eurozone

AFP, Frankfurt

New credit and money supply data for the 19-nation eurozone on Thursday offered tentative signs that the region's battered economy is slowly mending, analysts said.

The European Central Bank calculated that loans to the private sector -- a gauge of the single currency's economic health -- fell by just 0.1 percent in January, after long years of declines. The fractional drop marked an improvement over the previous month when loans to the private sector had contracted by 0.5 percent.

The long and deep financial crisis in the 19 countries that share the euro has squeezed lending, thus dampening economic activity.

Looking at the eurozone money supply as a whole -- which the ECB regards as a barometer for future inflation -- there was also an improvement, with the broad M3 money indicator growing by 4.1 percent in January from a year earlier, faster than the 3.8 percent recorded in December.

Analysts welcomed the data.

"Today's money and credit data from the ECB surprised on the upside again," said Berenberg Bank economist Rob Wood.

While headline growth of private sector

loans was still slightly negative, "that represents a significant turnaround over the past six months," Wood said.

The ECB's comprehensive assessment of banks last year along with significant economic progress in most of the former crisis countries were "gradually feeding through to stronger money and credit dynamics in the single currency area," the expert said.

"We look for eurozone growth to return to trend rates by the summer, though we remain cautious for the first quarter given the continued fighting in Eastern Ukraine and the Greek turmoil in recent weeks," he cautioned.

BayernLB economist Johannes Mayr was also confident that the latest data "reinforce the picture of a slight pick-up in economic momentum in the euro area."

But IHS Global Insight analyst Howard Archer viewed the data as "somewhat mixed for the ECB."

The ECB's range of monetary policy measures "are succeeding in lifting money supply growth," Archer said.

There were also signs of modest underlying improvement in the credit data, "but the fact that bank lending dipped in January itself highlights that there is still a long way to go," Archer said.

German unemployment at new post-unification low

AFP, Frankfurt

German unemployment fell in February to the lowest level since the country reunited in 1990 as growth in Europe's biggest economy picks up, official data showed on Thursday.

The number of people registered as unemployed in Germany fell by a seasonally-adjusted 20,000 to 2.812 million in February, the Federal Labour Office said.

Analysts had been expecting a much shallower decline of 8,000 this month.

The unemployment rate -- which measures the jobless total against the working population as a whole -- was steady at 6.5 percent, also the lowest level since west and east Germany reunited in 1990 after the fall of the Berlin Wall the previous year.

In raw or unadjusted terms, the jobless total decreased by 14,600 to 3.017 million and the jobless rate eased to 6.9 percent in February from 7.0 percent in January, the labour office said.

Normally, unemployment rises in the winter as the cold weather forces companies in sectors such as construction to lay off workers.

"The German economy expanded by 1.6 percent in 2014, thanks to robust growth at the start and at the end of the year. In the fourth quarter alone, gross domestic product (GDP) grew by a seasonally-adjusted 0.7 percent, driven mainly by private consump-

tion and construction investment," the labour office said.

"During the course of 2015, the economy will continue to improve. The labour market is relatively unaffected by any economic volatility and continues to develop positively," it added. Economists welcomed the better-than-expected data.

"The data show very clearly that the positive trend is strengthening in the new year," said BayernLB economist Stefan Kipar.

The national minimum wage introduced in Germany at the start of the year "has so far not had any negative effect on the official data," the expert said. He suggested that the comparatively mild weather at the turn of the year might have offset any negative effects from the minimum wage.

ING DiBa economist Carsten Brzeski said the German labour market "is continuing its success story, providing further evidence of strengthening domestic demand."

The labour market "remains the backbone of the German economy. Thanks to earlier reforms, ageing and immigration from crisis-battered eurozone countries, (it) has become solid as a rock and less affected by short-term volatility of the economy," Brzeski said.

Combined with low inflation and wage increases of around 3.0 percent, it came as no surprise that German consumers were currently very optimistic, the expert said.



Ali Reza Iftekhar, managing director of Eastern Bank, and Md Nurul Islam, head of MetLife for Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar, exchange documents of a deal at a programme in Dhaka recently. The bank's loan customers will enjoy exclusive benefit from MetLife insurance.

তিতাস গ্যাস ট্রান্সমিসন এন্ড ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন কোং লিঃ

ইলেকট্রিক্যাল এন্ড কন্সল্ট্যান্ট কর্পোরেশন

১০৫, কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম এভিনিউ, কাওরান বাজার বা/এ, ঢাকা-১২১৫

আপনার রাস্তার কাজ শেষ হয়ে থাকলে এখুনি গ্যাসের চুলটি নিভিয়ে ফেলুন।

জ্বালানি নিরাপত্তা সর্বোচ্চ অধ্যক্ষিকার

দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয় ও দাখিলের সময়সীমা পরিবর্তন

কাজের নামঃ কোম্পানীর প্রধান কার্যালয়ে স্থাপিত সিভিলিয়ান ব্র্যান্ডের ২টি লিফট (১নং ও ২নং) এর বার্ষিক পরিচালনা, রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ ও মেরামত কাজ প্রসঙ্গে।

সংশোধনী

	পূর্বের তারিখ	সংশোধিত তারিখ	
১১।	দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়ের তারিখ ও সময়	২৩/০২/২০১৫খ্রিঃ হতে ১৪/০৩/২০১৫খ্রিঃ তারিখ সকাল ০৯৩০ ঘটিকা হতে ১০:৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত (সকাল বয়সিক)।	২৩/০২/২০১৫খ্রিঃ হতে ১৪/০৩/২০১৫খ্রিঃ তারিখ সকাল ০৯৩০ ঘটিকা হতে ১০৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত (সকাল বয়সিক)।
১৪।	দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১৪/০৩/২০১৫খ্রিঃ তারিখ বেলা ১২৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।	১৬/০৩/২০১৫খ্রিঃ তারিখ বেলা ১২৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১৫।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	১৪/০৩/২০১৫খ্রিঃ তারিখ বেলা ১৫৩০ ঘটিকার পরিসর (অপারেশন), তিতাস গ্যাস টি এন্ড ডি কোং লিঃ এর অফিস কক্ষে।	১৬/০৩/২০১৫খ্রিঃ তারিখ বেলা ১৫৩০ ঘটিকার পরিসর (অপারেশন), তিতাস গ্যাস টি এন্ড ডি কোং লিঃ এর অফিস কক্ষে।

উল্লেখ্য দরপত্রের অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী অপরিবর্তিত থাকবে।

উপ-মহাব্যবস্থাপক
ইলেকট্রিক্যাল এন্ড কন্সল্ট্যান্ট কর্পোরেশন
ফোন-৮১৮৯৩৬৮

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Special Security Force
Prime Minister's Office
Tejgaon, Dhaka

Invitation for Open Tender

1.	Ministry/Division	Prime Minister's Office.				
2.	Agency	Special Security Force.				
3.	Procurement entity name	Deputy Director (P&P), SSF.				
4.	Source of funds	Revenue of GOB of Financial Year 2014-15.				
5.	Tender package No.	662/1/P&P-201 and 662/1/P&P-205				
6.	Tender name	Procurement of Base set, Canopy and Surveillance Kit.				
7.	Brief description of works					
	Ser	Description of the items	Lot	Quantity	Price of tender document	Earnest money
	a.	Procurement of Base set with all standard accessories (details are in the schedule)	01	10 pcs	1,000.00	Tk. 55,000.00
	b.	Procurement of Canopy and Surveillance Kit	02	Canopy-03 Pairs and Surveillance Kit-50 pcs	1,000.00	Tk. 30,000.00
8.	Time of work	June 2015.				
9.	Eligibility of tenderers	Must be principal dealer/supplier having min 05 years of experience of these kinds of supply/maintenance.				
10.	Amount of tender security	Earnest money (refundable) in the form of Pay Order or Bank Draft or Irrecoverable Bank Guarantee in the name of DG SSF.				
11.	name and address of the office(s) selling tenders document	Deputy Director (P&P), Room No. 146, ICC Block, Special Security Force, Prime Minister's Office, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215. Phone: 88-02-9112082, Fax: 88-02-9143406.				
12.	Name and address of the office(s) receiving tenders	Gate No. 4, Prime Minister's Office, Nakhalpara (near Old MP Hostel), Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215.				
13.	Name and address of the office(s) opening tenders	Deputy Director (P&P), Room No. 146, ICC Block, Special Security Force, Prime Minister's Office, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215.				
14.	Last date and time for selling tender document	15 March 2015, up to 1200 hrs.				
15.	Last date and time for submission of tender	16 March 2015, 1100 hours local time, tenderers and authorized representatives are allowed to attend. Tender will be opened at 1115 hours on the same date.				
16.	Special instruction	a. All other instructions are described in the tender documents. b. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject whole or part of any tender/offer.				

Tanbhir Ahmed
Deputy Director (P&P)
For Director General

Qantas roars back into black after aggressive cost-cutting

AFP, Sydney

Australian carrier Qantas on Thursday roared back into the black after an aggressive shake-up to stem mounting losses, posting its best interim result in four years helped by a revival in its international arm.

The Aus\$203 million (US\$162 million) result in the six months to December 31 marked a stunning turnaround from a net loss of Aus\$235 million in the same period in 2013 and smashed analyst forecasts.

Underlying profit before tax -- the airline's preferred measure of financial performance -- was Aus\$367 million, compared to a loss of Aus\$252 million previously, which was driven by record fuel costs and fierce competition.

The reversal in fortunes -- after a record annual loss of Aus\$2.84 billion in the last financial year -- comes on the heels of a ruthless cost-cutting drive that has seen thousands of jobs axed, aircraft deliveries deferred and growth at Asian offshoot Jetstar frozen.

Chief executive Alan Joyce said the result showed the group was executing the right plan.

"The decisive factor in our best half-year result for four years was our com-

plete focus on the Qantas transformation programme," he said.

"It's clear that without the impact of transformation, we would not be announcing a profit today. What sets this transformation apart is that we are reducing costs permanently while at the same time delivering Qantas' best ever fleet, product and service.

"We are meeting or exceeding all our targets as we build a sustainable future for Qantas with an emphasis on growing long-term shareholder value."

The result was boosted by strong performances across all of the airline's divisions, with both domestic and international operations in profit.

Domestic earnings improved to Aus\$227 million while the struggling international arm moved into the black for the first time since the global financial crisis with a Aus\$59 million profit, a Aus\$321 million turnaround.

The carrier also enjoyed reduced depreciation due to a fleet restructure, a 2.1 percent boost in revenue to Aus\$8.07 billion and savings from lower fuel prices.

Its low-cost Jetstar offshoot performed well, turning a loss into a profit with the brand growing in Asia and now flying to 66 destinations across 16 countries in the region.

IBM targets \$40b in cloud, other growth areas by 2018

REUTERS

International Business Machines Corp, which ruled computing in the age of the mainframe, is targeting \$40 billion in annual revenue from the cloud, big data, security and other growth areas by 2018.

The aggressive target, set by IBM executives at the company's annual investor meeting in New York on Thursday, is the latest step for the technology giant towards emerging, high-margin businesses, and away from its previous strongholds in hardware and servers.

The \$40 billion will come from areas which IBM calls its "strategic imperatives," namely cloud, analytics, mobile, social and security software.

That would represent about 44 percent of \$90 billion in total revenue that analysts expect from IBM in 2018.

Those businesses generated \$25 billion in revenue for IBM last year, or 27 percent of its total \$93 billion in sales.

The company said it would shift \$4 billion in spending to its "strategic imperatives" this year.

Revenue at IBM has gradually shrunk

over the past three years as it sold off its unprofitable units in businesses such as low-end servers, semiconductors and cash registers.

IBM Chief Executive Virginia Rometty has said she was happy to jettison revenue from such unprofitable businesses, which she dubs "empty calories."

IBM revenue has now fallen for the past 11 quarters, while earnings growth has been sporadic.

The company says its long-term plan is to hit "low single-digit" revenue growth and "high single-digit" growth in operating earnings per share. Last year IBM withdrew its long-term plan to hit \$20 per share in operating earnings for 2015.

IBM stood by its January forecast of \$15.75 to \$16.50 in operating earnings per share for 2015. Analysts expect \$16.02, on average, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S.

But the company, which gets more than half its revenue from overseas, said the strong U.S. dollar would crimp sales by more than 6 percent this year. In January, it had expected a currency-exchange dent to revenue of 5 percent to 6 percent.

Trade ties with Philippines to be strengthened

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But the impact might be noticed three or four months from now, he said.

Regarding the export of apparel items, the minister said international retailers are putting in more work orders after the clean slate given by Accord and Alliance upon completion of preliminary inspection of more than 2,500 garment factories.

The inspection agencies found that more than 98 percent of the garment factories in the country are safe.

BPCCI President Rashed Maksud Khan said the government has rightly undertaken the policy of regional cooperation with the countries in Asia, particularly in South and South-East Asia.

Following the regional policy, Ahmed in June last year met with the commerce

minister of the Philippines and formed the Joint Economic Commission between the two countries, Khan said.

Bangladesh and the Philippines had signed a trade agreement in 1980. The first meeting of Joint Trade Committee was held in September 1989 and the second meeting in Manila in July 1997.

There is great potential for Bangladesh ready-made garments, ceramics, jute products and pharmaceuticals to be exported to the Philippines, he said.

At present, the balance of bilateral trade is in favour of the Philippines. In fiscal 2013-14, Bangladesh imported goods worth \$78.22 million from the Philippines and exported goods worth \$19.32 million, according to data from Export Promotion Bureau.

Bharti Airtel raises \$310m through share sale in tower unit

REUTERS, Mumbai

Bharti Airtel, India's biggest mobile phone operator by users, said on Thursday it had raised \$310 million through a secondary share sale in its mobile tower unit Bharti Infratel Ltd.

Bharti Airtel will use the funds primarily to reduce debt, the company said in a statement. Its equity holding in Bharti Infratel has reduced to 71.9 percent following the deal, it said.

Bharti Airtel, headed by billionaire Sunil Mittal, and around a third owned by Singapore Telecommunications, had net debt of nearly \$11 billion as of end-December 2014.

The company said it divested 55 million shares in the unit at a price of 350 rupees a share, a 3.7 percent discount to the Bharti Infratel stock's last 30-day average closing price.

Reuters reported on Wednesday that the company was looking at raising as much as \$415 million through the sale of shares in Bharti Infratel.

More Bangla content on way to Wikipedia

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"Our mission is to grow this content, and we are delighted to work with Grameenphone, encouraging thousands of young people to become Wikipedians and create thousands of new articles."

The Bangladesh government has already developed 17 lakh local contents or articles for its web portal, said Afzal Hossain Sarwar, policy expert of the Access to Information (A2I) programme of the Prime Minister's Office.

If the Wikipedia authority agrees to link the Bangla contents, people will get access to all those with a single click, he said.

Early in the morning at another event, Allan Bonke, chief marketing officer of Grameenphone, said: "To increase the number of internet users, we need to not only work on the development of relevant content, but learn to provide this content in the language that makes sense to the majority of the people in the country."

At the event, winners of a content development competition were awarded. The top three winners were presented a MacBook Pro, an HP Laptop and an iPad Air respectively.

As part of the joint competition, representatives from Grameenphone and Wikimedia Bangladesh visited seven regions and ran sessions for students, providing practical guidance on how to edit Wikipedia and inspiring them to edit Wikipedia.

In all, 400 students participated in the competition, of which 21 from seven regions were recognised at the gala event.

Large cap firms pull stocks up

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In the financial sector, banks rose 0.1 percent. Eastern Bank yesterday announced 20 percent cash dividend for the year ended on December 31 last year, according to the DSE website. During the period, the bank's earnings per stood at Tk 3.50 and net asset value at Tk 33.11.

For the same year, Mutual Trust Bank also recommended 20 percent stock dividend, which is yet to get board approval. The bank's earnings per share stood at Tk 3.12.

Shahjibazar Power Company was the most traded stock with 7.14 lakh shares worth Tk 13.09 crore changing hands, followed by IDLC Finance, United Commercial Bank, ACI, Lafarge Surma Cement, MJL Bangladesh, Summit Alliance Port, Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company, and Square Pharma.

National Tubes was the day's top gainer, posting a rise of 9.96 percent, while Dulamia Cotton was the worst loser, shedding by 5.75 percent.

Chittagong Stock Exchange also closed marginally higher with its selective categories index-CSCX-gaining 36.40 points, to close at 8,854.42.

On the CSE floor, 107 securities advanced, 81 declined and 44 remained unchanged on the port city bourse that traded 58.20 lakh shares and mutual fund units worth Tk 23.14 crore in turnover.

Forex reserves cross \$23b

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The price of oil has more than halved since September 2014, which has boosted the foreign currency reserves, as the country is fully dependent on imports for meeting its demand for petroleum products.

The Bangladesh Bank official said, when oil prices were high the country had to spend \$500 million per month to meet the import bills for oil. Now it costs \$250 million.

The reserves will, however, come down next month when the country pays \$1 billion to the Asian Clearing Union as import liabilities.

However, the reserves will still remain above \$22 billion, the official said.