

# Social business centre opens in New Zealand

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**  
A Yunus Social Business Centre (YSBC) was opened recently at Lincoln University in Christchurch, New Zealand.  
This is the first YSBC in the country, said a statement from Yunus Centre in Dhaka yesterday.  
Lincoln University will also offer PhD scholarships on social business

through the centre, according to the statement. Prof Muhammad Yunus attended the formal opening ceremony to launch the YSBC.  
The Nobel laureate was in New Zealand at the invitation of Aera Foundation to discuss ways to uplift the Maori communities.  
He was greeted in Auckland by Mayor Phil Goff. The mayor shared various socio-economic challenges

faced by the city and sought Prof Yunus's counsel on how social business may be used to tackle them. From New Zealand Prof Yunus went to Australia to sign a memorandum of understanding with Griffith University in Brisbane, Queensland. He launched an YSBC at the university on Tuesday. With this new YSBC, the number of YSBCs across the world has reached 33.

# Rooppur power plant to hold conference for local suppliers

**STAR BUSINESS DESK**  
ASE Group of Companies, a subsidiary of Rosatom State Nuclear Energy Corporation, and Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission will hold a conference on procurements for Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, Rosatom said in a statement yesterday.  
"The purpose of the event is to ensure transparency in work with Bangladeshi suppliers," the company said.  
The conference for potential suppliers of equipment and materials for Rooppur NPP, which is currently under

construction, will take place at Le Meridien hotel in Dhaka on April 17.  
The agenda will include design requirements imposed during construction of the facility, tendering procedures and supply terms, logistics and equipment manufacture quality assurance, according to the statement.  
"As the general contractor, we plan to involve, as much as possible, Bangladeshi enterprises in construction of Rooppur NPP, the largest energy project of the country which has tremendous importance for its economy," said Alexander Khazin,

senior vice president for international projects at ASE Group of Companies.  
"The main purpose of the conference is to inform Bangladeshi companies about possibilities of participation in the Rooppur NPP project," said Maksim Yelchishev, vice president for bangladeshi projects of ASE Group of Companies. "We would like to cover the market as much as possible. This will not only allow us to optimise costs but also to ensure top quality of the products which is a prerequisite for construction of such a complex facility as a nuclear power



Yasir Azman, chief marketing officer of Grameenphone, and Seungwon Youn, managing director of Samsung Electronics Bangladesh, attend the launch of Samsung Galaxy S8 and S8+ for the Bangladesh market, at GP House in Dhaka on April 11.



Abu Hena Mohd Razeed Hassan, deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank, opens the relocated Motijheel branch of HSBC in the capital. Francois de Maricourt, CEO of HSBC Bangladesh, was also present.

## Opec over-delivers on oil cuts in March

**REUTERS**  
Opec countries cut oil output in March by more than they pledged, according to figures the group published in a monthly report on Wednesday, as it sticks to an effort to clear a supply glut that has weighed on prices.  
But the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries also raised its forecast of oil supplies from non-member countries in 2017 as a recovery in oil prices encourages US shale drillers to pump more, reducing demand for the group's oil this year.  
Compliance in March by the 11 Opec members with output targets under a supply cut deal averaged 104 percent, according to a Reuters calculation based on production figures Opec published.

## Toyota robot to keep elderly mobile, one step at a time

**REUTERS**  
Toyota Motor Corp said it will commercialise rehabilitation robots later this year when it makes its robotic walk assist system available for rent, joining Honda Motor Co in marketing mobility devices for Japan's ageing population.  
A decade after it began developing rehabilitation robots, the world's No.2 automaker on Wednesday said the system would be ready to hit the market by the end of 2017, two years after Honda launched a similar device.

Hospitals and other care providers would be able to rent the system, designed for patients with lower limb paralysis, for 350,000 yen (\$3,196.93) per month plus an initial fee of 1 million yen. "The (system) will help to provide assistance to the elderly by enabling them to live more independent lives and to also provide support for their care-givers," Toyota said in a statement.  
Japan is greying faster than the rest of the world, with the number of people aged 65 or older accounting for 26.7 percent of the population in 2015, dwarfing the global average of about 8.5 percent.

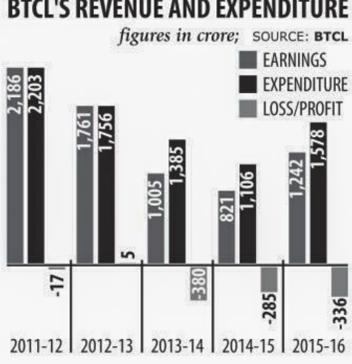
## Tannery workers left in the dark

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Shahin Ahmed, president of Bangladesh Tanners Association, "If any worker wants to go to Savar, we will hire him/her, or terminate them with four months' salary."  
Astahar Ali, a union leader at another factory, also said that the workers have not been given assurance for their service benefits or continuation of jobs at Savar.  
Moreover, the workers have been passing tough days without water, gas and power supplies in the last five days, especially, the women and children who lived on the factory premises. "We are buying food from restaurants with our last deposited money."  
The workers will not be paid as it will take at least five months for production to start at

the new site, he said, adding they will face more trouble as the month of Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr are just around the corner.  
Security guards at the old units are guarding leather goods worth billions of taka with lanterns at night for a lack of power, he said. The factory owners will not be able to export goods and thus, not pay the workers, he said.  
Mohammad Mainuddin, a machine operator, said accommodation, medical facilities and transportation facilities are not ready yet at Savar.  
"So if any worker falls sick, he might not be rushed to hospitals quickly for treatment. We need assurance of such facilities as soon as possible," Mainuddin said.

## BTCL posts record loss of Tk 336.44cr

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However, a senior BTCL official said the company is incurring a loss of about Tk 30 crore every month, although the government has injected enough money into the company.  
He went on to blame the losses on the repeated severing of its copper and optical fibre cables during development works on roads and drains. BTCL earns about Tk 40 crore each month but it has to spend about Tk 70 crore mainly for repairing the cables, he added. Another top official said the speed and signalling capacity of the cables decrease due to the repeated damages.  
BTCL also noted a 51.28 percent year-on-year rise in revenue to Tk 1,578.45 crore in fiscal 2015-16.  
Its revenues from international incoming calls soared 14 times to Tk 583.17 crore after the company kept its call routing rate unchanged whereas the other international gateway operators hiked it.  
Last year, the other IGW operators had



increased the termination rate from 1.5 cents per minute to 2 cents, but BTCL kept it unchanged at 1.5 cents. The company also did well in the internet and data business segment: it saw 60 percent revenue growth to Tk 73.69 crore.

## Development spending still not picking up

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Although ADP allocation increases every year, its performance is evaluated by calculating amount used out of the total outlay, which is called the implementation rate.  
The implementation rate this year is still low in comparison to the historical trend.  
Development spending has been slow since fiscal 2012-13 in terms of percentage of the total outlay.  
In the first nine months of fiscal 2012-13, ADP implementation stood at 47 percent, with the rate progressively declining since.  
Although the spending of local funds increased, which was the main reason behind the rise in ADP implementation, the utilisation of foreign funds is still on par with last year.  
During the July-March period of the fiscal year, nearly 45 percent of the government's own fund for the year was utilised, up from 42 percent a year earlier.  
However, foreign fund utilisation during the period stood at 41.81 percent, which was 47.45 percent last year at this point.  
Only three of the ten large ministries and divisions that got 73 percent of the total allocation registered higher than the average implementation rate during the period.

They are: power division (57.96 percent), housing and public works ministry (67 percent), local government division (51.38 percent).  
The other five ministries spent much lower than the average, with the bridges division managing only 35.52 percent implementation. The bridges division got most of the allocation for the construction of Padma bridge.  
Of the remaining large ministries, the railway ministry spent 30.72 percent, road transport and highways division 39.18 percent, secondary and higher education division 33.41 percent, science and technology ministry 28 percent.  
Two ministries managed the average implementation rate of 45 percent: health and family welfare ministry (44.24 percent) and primary and mass education (45.76 percent).  
Though the ministries could not go ahead much in ADP implementation, the state-owned enterprises set a new record.  
Implementation by state-owned enterprises during the July-March period stood at 73 percent of their total outlay of Tk 4,232 crore.  
In reality, the state-owned enterprises' performance did not improve; rather, their allocation was slashed, which flattered their implementation rate. Their original allocation was Tk 12,664 crore.

## No bar to punish NRB Commercial Bank chairman, MD: SC

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In the notice issued to Farasath, the central bank asked him to show cause in 10 days why action should not be taken against the board of NRB Commercial Bank.  
The central bank in another notice asked Mujibur to explain in 10 days why he should not be removed from the post of managing director of NRB Commercial bank, the lawyer said.  
Following a writ petition filed by Farasath and Mujibur, the HC on March 28 ordered the authorities not to create any obstruction in discharging duties by them and issued a rule asking them to explain why they should not be directed to give the copy of inspection report to them, Barrister Chowdhury said.  
He also said the SC yesterday dismissed the writ petition of Farasath and Mujibur, as writ petition is not acceptable.  
Meanwhile, NRB Commercial Bank's Vice President Masum Haider, who said he was present in the court during the proceedings of the case, told The Daily Star that the SC directed BB to dispose of the letter sent by Saidur Rahman, father of Tushar Iqbal, within three weeks.

## Thai Dusit teams up with Lakeshore for Tk 150cr hotel

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Bangladesh's economic growth has attracted global hospitality companies, said Atique Rahman, group executive director of Lakeshore Hotels. "The potential in the hospitality industry is huge," he said. Ante Baric, director, development of Dusit International, also spoke at the function.  
Founded in 1948, Dusit International has 29 properties located in Thailand, the UAE, the US, China, the Maldives, the Philippines, India, Egypt and Kenya.

## Summit Group signs 149MW power deals

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The cost of electricity stands at Tk 20 per kilowatt-hour unit. But Summit's power plant will sell electricity to BPDB at Tk 7.15 per unit if it uses heavy fuel or at Tk 2.80 when using natural gas, said Khan in a statement.  
Nasrul Hamid, state minister for power and energy, Ahmad Kaikaus, power secretary, and Khaled Mahmood, chairman of BPDB, were also present at the signing ceremony.  
Atkin Alliance, a Sri Lanka and Bangladesh

joint venture, won the international tender for the project in 2011. But it could not implement the project due to a shortage of land. Later, Summit bought the shares of Atkin Alliance. The project is now expected to start commercial operation in March 2018.  
The plant will be connected to Summit Technopolis Ltd, a joint venture between Summit Group of Bangladesh and Infinity Infotech Parks of India, in the Kaliakoir Hi-Tech Park.



Marcia Bernicat, US ambassador to Bangladesh, receives a crest from Tapan Chowdhury, managing director of Square Pharmaceuticals, during her visit to a factory of the pharmaceuticals maker at Kaliakoir in Gazipur yesterday.



Nasrul Hamid, state minister for power, energy and mineral resources; Muhammed Aziz Khan, chairman of Summit Group; Md Mozammel Hossain, managing director of Summit Ace Alliance Power Ltd, and Mina Masud Uzzaman, secretary of Bangladesh Power Development Board, attend a deal signing ceremony at Bidyut Bhaban in Dhaka yesterday. Summit Power signed the power purchase agreement with Board and implementation agreement with the ministry for 149MW IPP-Summit Ace Alliance Power Ltd in Gazipur. Story on B1