

Bangladesh achieves response capability to mitigate cyber-attacks

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh has achieved response capability of Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRT) to mitigate the targeted cyber-attacks through a cyber-drill conducted by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation-Computer Emergency Response Teams (OIC-CERT) on Tuesday.

OIC-CERT is an international platform mainly for member states of the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) focusing on cybersecurity and knowledge sharing.

Bangladesh's cyber-security platform BGD e-GOV CIRT is among the government CIRT of 11 countries which also achieved the response capability.

The 11 countries are: India, Brunei, Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Tunisia.

The BGD e-GOV CIRT was developed by Leveraging ICT for Growth, Employment and Governance Project of Bangladesh Computer Council under ICT Division to deal with the cyber security related issues earlier, got membership from the OIC-CERT, an official of the ICT Division said.

The OIC-CERT Drill objectives are to measuring the incident response coordination, handling capabilities and readiness in facing the cyber-attacks.

EU, Canada launch free trade agreement while Britain eyes own deal

REUTERS, Brussels

The European Union and Canada will begin cutting import duties from Thursday on thousands of products and services in a reminder to Britain of the work it will take to replace the trade alliances it will give up when it leaves the EU.

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) will provisionally enter force on Thursday, eight years after negotiations began. It will be the EU's first major trade deal since it began implementing its South Korea agreement in 2011.

The Canada agreement is the EU's first trade pact with a G7 country, marking a success after its credibility took a beating from Britain's 2016 vote to leave the block.

It has since struck a deal with Japan and hopes for further agreements with Mexico and the Mercosur countries of South America by the end of this year.

British Conservatives in the European Parliament said on Wednesday that the EU-Canada deal would bring 1.3 billion pounds (\$1.76 billion) in benefits to Britain and said they hoped CETA's benefits for Britain would continue after Brexit.

"I believe CETA will become the gold standard of agreements and one we can tailor to suit the priorities of the British and Canadian economies post-Brexit," lawmaker Emma McClarkin said in a statement.

British Prime Minister Theresa May said in Ottawa on Monday that she and Canada's Justin Trudeau had agreed that CETA should be "swiftly transitioned" into a new UK-Canada deal after Brexit.

How fast that transition occurs will depend on how much post-Brexit Britain wants to tailor the deal, perhaps by including closer convergence on financial services, rather than largely copying what is in place.

CETA will abolish some 98 percent of customs duties, open up public tenders to companies and allow the EU to export more cheese and wine and Canada more pork and beef in quotas that expand over the next six years.

The 1,598-page CETA text is full of negotiated details, including the right of European companies to ship up to 537,000 knitted jerseys to Canada and Canadian companies' ability to send up to 196,000 square metres of carpet to Europe.

UK retail sales shrug off Brexit-fuelled inflation

AFP, London

British retail sales defied rising prices caused by Brexit to surge by a faster-than-expected 1.0 percent in August, the Office for National Statistics said on Wednesday.

Teletalk to 'die' if funds not injected: Tarana

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The prime minister also told everyone to consider Teletalk a government service provider and not as a business entity, Tarana said.

The state-owned operator's revenues are fast shrinking as customers complain of poor service.

"Teletalk is moving backwards every day," she said. In fiscal 2016-17, Teletalk's revenue shrunk about 28 percent year-on-year to Tk 710 crore -- the lowest in three years.

It also lost about 12.3 lakh active connections, which is 27.72 percent of its subscribers according to a BTRC report.



Muhammad A (Rumee) Ali, CEO of Bangladesh International Arbitration Centre, and Md Abdul Hamid Miah, CEO of Islami Bank Bangladesh, exchange the signed documents of a deal at a programme at the bank's head office in Dhaka. The deal will provide a framework to facilitate resolution of commercial, contractual and money loan disputes of the bank using alternative dispute resolution methods such as arbitration and mediation through expert services of the centre.

Rohingya crisis to take a toll on economy: Sanem

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"There should also be careful actions against hoarding so that such actions don't disrupt the supply chain."

The organisation said Bangladesh is at the risk of jobless growth phenomenon.

Between 2013 and 2016, the share of industry and manufacturing in employment declined for the first time in Bangladesh.

Job creation was negative in agriculture and very small in manufacturing, while there was a large employment generation in the service sector.

To counter this, there is a need for economic diversification and promotion of labour-intensive and highly productive sectors, the think-tank said.

The review also touched upon the SDGs.

A recent study by the Sanem for the Planning Commission shows that additional resources needed to implement the SDGs in Bangladesh will amount to 10 percent of the country's gross domestic product in 2017 and it can go up to 24 percent by 2030.

"Given the changing global scenario, Bangladesh will have to rely more on domestic sources to finance the SDGs, and this is, no doubt, a big challenge."

It is also important to note that the mere generation of resources would not ensure the implementation of the SDGs if institutional and governance related aspects are not properly addressed.

"Efforts need to be something extraordinary and a strong political commitment is needed to implement the SDGs."



Mosleh Uddin Ahmed, CEO of NCC Bank, and Md Ataur Rahman Prodhan, CEO of Rupali Bank, exchange the signed documents of a deal at a programme at the former's head office in Dhaka yesterday. Under the deal, NCC Bank launched MoneyGram remittance services through its new associate partner, Rupali Bank, which will disburse foreign inward remittance from all its 563 branches across the country once being collected from 200 countries through MoneyGram remittance service.

4G service by December

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From the 3G spectrum auction in 2013 the regulator earned about Tk 4,000 crore; a huge amount of spectrum remained unsold because of the high price.

In response to a question on the issue, Tarana said, after the planned spectrum auction the BTRC will issue a service quality guideline, which it will adhere to strictly. "We will be tough on operators this time if the operators cannot meet the service quality targets -- they will be penalised."

The auction in November is a chance for operators to purchase additional spectrum needed to lift their service quality, she added. Telecom Secretary Shyam Sunder Sikder along with senior officials of the BTRC were present at the press conference.

Meanwhile, mobile operators said 4G will never be successful as many of their concerns were not addressed in the final version of the guideline.

TIM Nurul Kabir, secretary general of the Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh, said they are hopeful that the government will revisit their concerns and assist them in launching 4G services as per the roadmap of 'Digital Bangladesh'.

The mobile operators do not consider the guidelines enabling enough. As a result, investors are not finding enough business potential and confidence to make such a large investment, Kabir told The Daily Star yesterday.

Meanwhile on Tuesday, the chief executive officers of the private mobile operators wrote to the state minister voicing their concerns about the charges.

The letter was signed by Banglalink CEO Erik Aas, Grameenphone CEO Michael Foley and Robi CEO and Managing Director Mahtab Uddin Ahmed. The operators will also have to retain the mobile subscribers' usage data for 12 years. They have also raised serious

concerns about the matter as it will increase their cost of doing business.

The BTRC will charge Tk 10 crore as 4G licence fees and Tk 5 crore as annual fee. The operators will have to share 5.5 percent of their revenues from 4G services with the government and forward 1 percent to the social obligation fund.

Meanwhile, Tarana yesterday called a meeting with the mobile operators on Sunday to discuss their concerns, said a telecom division official. "The prime minister has already approved the guideline -- can a state minister now change the guideline? Then what will be the ultimate meaning of this meeting," said a senior official of a mobile operator.

Tarana said she will not change any of the charges or fees but she can discuss how the service can be launched and how the government can help the operators mitigate any other challenges that can come up.

Website with all customs info goes live

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The website also contains the government's import and export policy orders, baggage rules, and international regulations, including anti-money laundering regulations, said a NBR statement.

One can get accurate information on the total tax incidence for a product from the website, Mozumder said.

By using the duty calculator on the website, one will get accurate information on how much duties and taxes he/she will have to pay for importing consignments.

Information on various trade incentives such as incentive for export, bonded warehouse benefits as well as on fees and charges are also available and easily downloadable from the website, Mozumder said in his presentation at the programme.

The NBR said businesses will also get information on the preferential tariff rates applicable for Bangladesh under regional trade pacts from the webpage.

One will also get information on transit and transhipment from the website.

"We are trying to convert the NBR into a digital NBR," said NBR Chairman Md

Nojibur Rahman at the launch ceremony.

"This website is dynamic. This will connect all our stakeholders."

Rahman, also a senior secretary at the Internal Resources Division, said the revenue authority is working to digitise its VAT and tax departments.

Of the three areas, customs has made good progress, he added.

MA Mannan, state minister for finance and planning, said the capacity of the revenue authority will expand following the launch of the website.

Bangladesh has acceded to the World Customs Organisation's Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC). The country has ratified the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), said Khandaker Mohammad Aminur Rahman, NBR member of customs modernisation.

This new customs website is very comprehensive and it helps Bangladesh comply with the RKC and information provisions of the WTO TFA, he said.

USAID Bangladesh Mission Director Janina Jaruzelski said the website will serve as a single repository of customs information.

Petrobangla to form joint ventures for LNG import

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The minister said 500 mmcfd of LNG would be imported every day from April next year, which will be used in Chittagong region.

Another 500 mmcfd of LNG will be added to the national pipeline in October 2018. "This LNG will be used in the central parts of the country."

He said although the Chittagong region would be served initially, the impact would be felt in other parts of the country.

The government has also taken up plans to establish LNG-based power plants.

Hamid said the LNG would be blended with the local gas before being supplied to industries. "Although the gas price will go up to some extent, it would be helpful for them ultimately."

The LNG imports will bump up the supply for consumers by 37 percent.

The country has been dogged by serious gas shortages for a long time now, crippling industries. It currently has a supply of about 2,700 mmcfd from various gas fields against the demand for 3,300 mmcfd.

POWER PLANT

United Enterprises & Co Ltd is going to set up a 200 MW furnace oil-based power plant at Mymensingh and run it for 15 years. The government will buy electricity from the company at a rate of Tk 8.4166 per kWh.

Yesterday the cabinet committee on purchase approved the proposal for buying the electricity. In the 15 years the government will be paying Tk 17,640 crore.

Spinners struggling for port congestion

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Now, the average turnaround time of ships at the port is 2.97 days, down from 10 days in the aftermath of the breakdown of the two cranes.

"If the cotton importers can submit the documents timely we can deliver the goods in normal time, like in three days."

However, the port authority does not have any special arrangement for cotton importers, Alam said.

He suggested the cotton importers should use Pangaon river port for reducing transport cost and time.

In 2016, Bangladesh imported 6.5 million bales of cotton, and of the amount only 0.7 million bales were imported through Benapole land port, according to Monsoor Ahmed, secretary of the BTMA.

Bangladesh's cotton import will creep up to 7.1 million bales in 2017-18, further consolidating its position as the world's largest importer of the fibre, according to the United States Department of Agriculture.

Bangladesh has overtaken China after the latter stopped sourcing due to ample stocks of its own.

In 2016-17, seven million bales were imported; one bale equals 480 pounds or 218kg, and the cotton year begins on August 1 and ends on July 31.

Local growers can only supply less than 3 percent of the yearly demand, leading to imports worth over \$3 billion.

The 430 local spinning mills can supply nearly 90 percent of the yarn for the knitwear sector and 40 percent of the fabrics needed by the woven sector.

Visit of H.E. the Netherlands Ambassador to Dutch-Bangla Pack Ltd. Factory



On the 29th of August, 2017 the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Bangladesh, Her Excellency Ms. Leoni Cuelenaere visited the production facilities of Dutch-Bangla Pack Ltd. (DBPL), the leading manufacturer of Flexible Intermediate Bulk Containers (FIBCs) or Big Bags in Bangladesh. A joint-venture between Dutch and Bangladeshi partners, the DBPL factory is situated in Gazaria, Munshiganj. The Dutch Ambassador laid the foundation stone for an expansion project of the production facilities and visited a newly built recycling and plastic waste management plant. Ambassador Cuelenaere conveyed her profound appreciation for the environment and worker friendly joint venture which understands so well what "People, Planet, Profit" means. Ms. Monnajan Khanam, a Senior Adviser from the Netherlands Embassy and Members of the Board of Directors, high officials and employees of Dutch-Bangla Pack Ltd. were present during the event.



Gazi Yar Mohammed, head for retail banking at One Bank, and Sohail Majid, deputy director for marketing and sales at US-Bangla Airlines, attend an agreement signing ceremony. The bank's credit cardholders and employees will get interest free instalment facility for six months under "SmartEMI" plan for both domestic and international routes while purchasing tickets from sales outlets of the airline.

ONE BANK