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# star BUSINESS

DHAKA WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 27, 2017, POUISH 13, 1424 BS

## Incoming BGMEA chief decided, but not by ballot

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association is set to get a fresh batch of leaders next year but like last time there will not be an election to select them -- as per the wishes of a section of influential businessmen.

Usually, the general members of the BGMEA vote to elect the leaders of the garment sector's apex trade body for a two-year tenure.

But, in 2015, no election took place, after the two panels -- Sammilito Parishad and Forum -- had announced their nominees. But later, the Forum nominees pulled out, leaving the Sammilito Parishad's presidential candidate victorious by default.

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## A stellar year for ICT

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

Bangladesh's ICT sector will bid farewell to 2017 on a high note as the year saw digital services thrive, exports hit a new peak and local companies go global.

Experts and entrepreneurs termed the passing year as 'dynamic' as the whole digital ecosystem progressed to the next level.

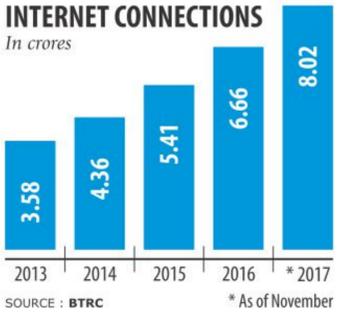
### FLASHBACK 2017

"In 2017, we observed that lots of new business windows have opened up banking on the digital platform," said Yasir Azman, deputy chief executive officer of Grameenphone.

Some of them began operations in 2016 but got momentum this year; 2018 will only take the narrative forward for them.

The massive strides were only possible because of the political stability and youth engagement, said Azman, who is also the chief marketing officer of the country's leading mobile phone operator.

The telecom industry acquired 1.35 crore active internet connections in the first eleven months, while the mobile operators added 1.67 crore active SIMs into their network, according to Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission.



At the end of 2016, the consumption of internet bandwidth was about 380 gigabits per second. Last week, it hit 540 Gbps, said industry experts.

In another achievement, the BTRC also finalised a certification process for setting up mobile assembling plants in the country.

Two local firms -- Walton and Symphony -- have set up plants, with Walton already marketing its locally-assembled products.

Some other companies, including foreign brands, are watching the developments with keen interest, as in the budget for fiscal 2016-17 the government slashed the customs duty for mobile components meant for local assembling by 36 percent-age points to 1 percent.

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## Highway robbery vexes apparel exporters

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Apparel exporters are increasingly getting worried about the robbery of garment- and cotton-laden covered vans on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway as it throws them off their tight delivery schedules.

For instance, Noman Group, the country's largest apparel exporter that counts retailers like IKEA, H&M,

Kmart, Walmart and Carrefour as its major customers, was subjected to three instances of robbery in the past one and a half years.

The company, which managed to recover some of the lost goods with the help of police, had to count losses of more than Tk 1 crore, according to its Executive Director Md Shahidullah Chowdhury.

But what was more damaging was

that the episodes put the company in an awkward position with its buyers.

"It is very difficult to make the buyers understand that the goods were stolen by robbers on their way to the port. All they care about is the timely delivery of goods," Chowdhury said, while calling for thicker police presence on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway.

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## Crane operators' demo stalls Ctg port container handling

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Container handling at some jetties of the Chittagong port was hampered yesterday as ship crane operators staged a demonstration for an hour over financial benefits.

They demanded that they be listed with the port workers unit to get the benefits of a listed worker.

The protest affected four container ship jetties under GCB Terminal and four jetties in New Mooring Container Terminal, Fazle Ekram Chowdhury, president of Ship Handling and Terminal Operators Owners Association, told The Daily Star.

Several hundred workers under the banner of Chittagong Port Users Workers League brought out processions from different areas, including Barik Building Moor and Saltgola Crossing, to meet with a rally at Nimtala intersection around 10:30am.

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