

আপনার বিআরটিএ ফি এবং সকল ইউটিলিটি বিল এসআইবিএল এর যে কোন শাখার মাধ্যমে জমা দিন



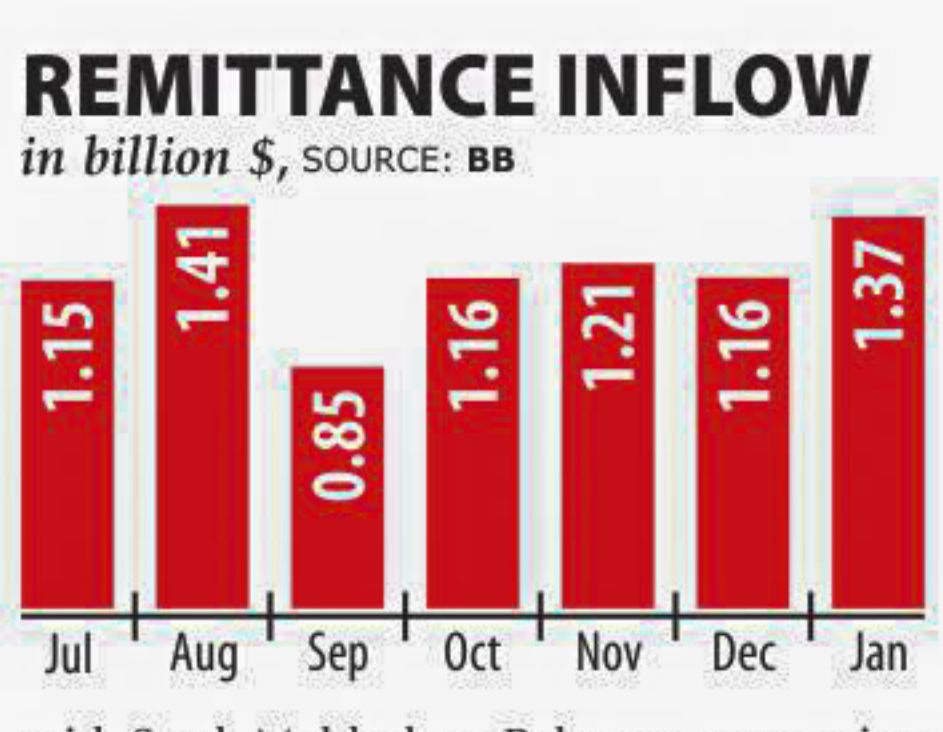
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Star BUSINESS

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Remittance finally looks up in Jan

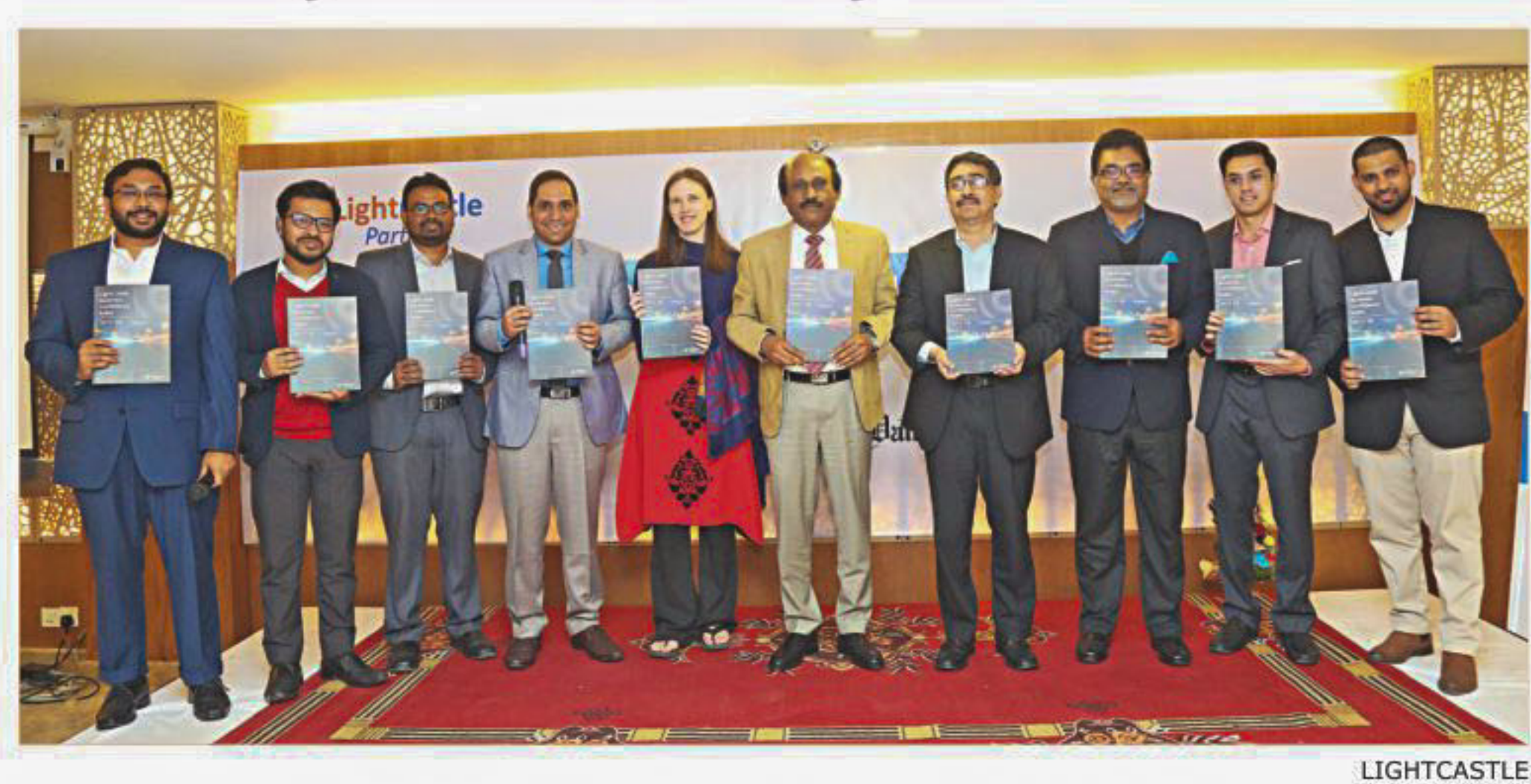
STAR BUSINESS REPORT
 Remittance is finally snapping out of its two-year-long slump, hitting a five-month high in January on the back of the depreciation of the taka against the US dollar.
 Last month, migrant workers sent home \$1.37 billion, up 37 percent from a year earlier and 18.55 percent from a month earlier, according to Bangladesh Bank data.
 Remittance is a major source of foreign currency for Bangladesh and its descent since fiscal 2015-16 has become a matter of concern for the government. Last fiscal year, the receipts were the lowest in six years.
 January's inflows take this fiscal year's receipts so far to \$8.31 billion, up 15.82 percent from a year earlier.
 The higher inflow reflected a confluence of factors, including the BB measures to bring remittance through banking channel by way of reducing the transaction cost, said Faisal Ahmed, chief economist of the BB.
 A strong pick-up in global economic activities, especially in the Middle Eastern nations, helped the country maintain the upward trend, he said, adding that the market-based exchange rate also had a positive impact on the receipts.
 "The near and dear ones of the Bangladeshi diaspora have been getting a favourable rate over the last few months,"



said Syed Mahbubur Rahman, managing director of Dhaka Bank.
 The local currency has been depreciating heavily against the American greenback for the last few months, prompting Bangladeshis living abroad to remit more money through the formal channel.
 On July 2 last year, the first business day of fiscal 2017-18, interbank exchange rate stood at Tk 80.60. On January 31, it was Tk 82.90.
 The central bank has recently strengthened its surveillance to check hundi, the illegal channel used to move funds cross-border, Rahman said.
 "This had a good result on the remittance flow," said Rahman, also the chairman of the Association of Banks, Bangladesh, a forum of banks' chief executive officers.
 MA Halim Chowdhury, managing director of Pubali Bank, echoed the same.

Businesses cautiously optimistic about economy: survey

STAR BUSINESS REPORT
 Bangladesh's top business executives have a reasonably high level of confidence in their economic outlook thanks to increased investment in power generation, green revolution and mechanisation in the agriculture sector, according to a new survey.
 Higher disposable income and consumer spending, growing health awareness, and the government's particular interest in the ICT sector also boosted the confidence level.
 ICT and IT-enabled services, pharmaceuticals, agro-processing, power and energy, footwear and garment hold the highest growth potential in the coming decade, said the LightCastle Business Confidence Index 2017-18.
 LightCastle Partners, a consulting firm based in Dhaka, unveiled the results of the survey of 102 top executives across 12 industries and spanning two major cities, namely Dhaka and Chittagong, at a programme held yesterday at the capital's Lakeshore Hotel.
 Interviews were carried out between September 26 and November 12, 2017.
 The confidence index aims to gauge business sentiments of private sector players representing a variety of industries across the economy.
 The survey showed business confidence went up from "low-to-moderate confidence of +39" in 2016 to "a cautiously optimistic confidence level of +43" in 2017. The index is determined on a scale of -100 to +100.
 However, some concerns still remain: classified loans condition, bureaucratic red tapes for



Bijon Islam, CEO of LightCastle, Asif Ibrahim, a former president of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Mamun Rashid, managing partner of PwC Bangladesh, unveil a survey report of LightCastle at the capital's Lakeshore Hotel yesterday.

doing business, recent slump in garment prices, transportation and logistical hassles and infrastructure bottlenecks such as port congestions.
 The business people surveyed said the government bureaucracy and a lack of unity among state entities slow down operations.
 Raw material import dependency, especially in the cement and pharmaceutical industries; the per unit fall in value in the garment sector; and working capital management in the ICT sector were identified as major problems.

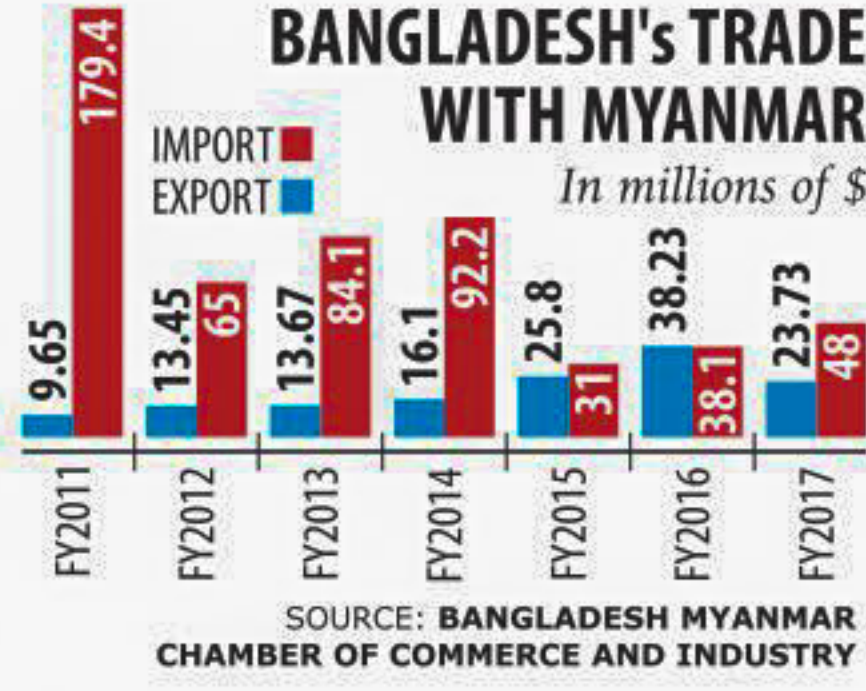
PROMISING SECTORS	BOTTLENECKS
ICT & ITES	Regulatory challenges
Pharmaceuticals	Poor infrastructure
Agro-processing	Dearth of skills
Power & Energy	Lack of access to finance
Footwear	External shocks
Garments	

Pension scheme for all: Muhith

STAR BUSINESS REPORT
 All people of Bangladesh will be brought under a pension system, AMA Muhith, finance minister, said yesterday.
 "There will be an outline in the upcoming budget to include the 16 crore people under the pension scheme."
 He was addressing a programme at Bangladesh Secretariat to launch Electronic Fund Transfer (ETF) for pensioners.
 "The implementation of the pension scheme will be done gradually after the finance minister draws its outline," said Muslim Chowdhury, finance secretary.
 The newly introduced ETF will help the retired civil servants to receive their pensions without any hassle and within a short time, he said.
 At the event, Mohammad Muslim Chowdhury, secretary-in-charge of the finance ministry, said the government has taken public finance management reform initiatives to maintain macroeconomic stability and accelerate pro-poor growth.
 The reform initiatives will also ensure aggregate fiscal discipline, increase operational efficiency and give a boost to the government's receipt and payment systems.
 He said the newly introduced digital system for pension transfer for the civil servants was only for the existing pensioners.
 The government is also working to create a national database to centralise all information of employees to cut bureaucratic tangles faced when drawing pensions, he said.

Rohingya crisis hits trade with Myanmar

REFAYAT ULLAH MIRDHA
 The ongoing Rohingya crisis has impacted Bangladesh's exports to Myanmar as operations at the Teknaf land port, the main gateway to the neighbour, have almost come to a halt for the influx of refugees, businessmen said.
 Since August 2017, more than half a million Rohingyas have arrived at Cox's Bazar from the northern Rakhine province of Myanmar after troops and Buddhist mobs burned down their villages and killed civilians.
 Between the months of July and December last year, exports to Myanmar declined 12.08 percent year-on-year to \$10.04 million, according to data from the Export Promotion Bureau.
 Over the last two months, trade through Teknaf land port declined to less than 10 percent, according to SM Nurul Hoque, president of the Bangladesh Myanmar Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
 But both the countries' business communities want continuation of trade even during these delicate times, he said, while citing the case of India and



Pakistan.
 Trade worth few billions of dollars takes place between India and Pakistan despite a fragile relationship.
 "Businessmen of both sides are waiting for restoration of normalcy so that trade takes place again in full swing."
 Myanmar is one of the best destinations for Bangladesh for sourcing basic commodities and timber.
 It can also be a good export destination for Bangladesh's steel, cement and garment items as the neighbouring country's economy is opening up after 50 years of military regime, he said.

Bandwidth price cut by 15pc

STAR BUSINESS REPORT
 Wholesale internet bandwidth price has been slashed by up to 15 percent to discourage imports from India and increase its usage, said officials of Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Ltd (BSCCL).
 With effective from yesterday, the price cut will initially benefit mostly international gateway operators and internet service providers, said the company's top officials. "It will take some time for the reduction benefit to reach end users," said Mashiur Rahman, managing director of BSCCL.
 The lone state-owned submarine cable company fixed Tk 310 for each megabit per second (Mbps) of bandwidth in its first submarine cable landing station in Cox's Bazar, he said.

BTRC to earn \$100m in tech neutrality fees

STAR BUSINESS REPORT
 The telecom regulator yesterday gave Robi the go-ahead for tech neutrality as the country's first mobile operator in 900 Mhz and 1800 Mhz bands, as part of plans to boost telecom service quality.
 BTRC expects to earn over \$100 million by offering tech neutrality to the operators, except for Teletalk and Citycell, said Shahjahan Mahmood, chairman of BTRC.
 In December, the regulator set February 20 as the deadline to apply for tech neutrality in the two bands. Of the five operators, Robi has so far applied for tech neutrality.
 With tech neutrality, the operators would be able to offer services through any technology—2G/3G/4G/LTE—by using any of the frequencies they have.
 On Sunday, Robi will pay Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission around \$40 million as fees to use its 25.4 megahertz spectrum, which it was using only for 2G services. To enjoy the tech benefit, market leader Grameenphone has to pay \$47 million for 22 MHz spectrum, Banglalink \$32 million for 15 MHz and Teletalk \$32 million.
 A Grameenphone official said they will apply next week Citycell, which went out of service in October 2016, will have to pay \$14 million for tech neutrality if it gets 4G licence.

Berger, Fosroc to jointly produce construction chemicals

STAR BUSINESS REPORT
 Berger Paints Bangladesh has tied up with UK-based construction solutions provider Fosroc International to set up a joint venture company that would produce construction chemicals.
 Rupali Chowdhury, managing director of Berger, and Ian Watt, group CEO and director of Fosroc, signed the deal on behalf of their respective organisations at Le Méridien Dhaka on Wednesday.
 Each party will hold equal stakes in the entity, Berger Fosroc Ltd, which will be built at an estimated cost of Tk 60 crore.
 Berger Fosroc Ltd will provide solutions to all sectors of the construction industry, specialising in solutions for building construction, industrial facilities, power plants and all types of transportation and civil infrastructure.



Used in making plastic goods, these pellets are now being made in Bangladesh. The photo was taken yesterday at a four-day "International Plastics Fair-2018" jointly organised by the Bangladesh Plastic Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association, and Yorkers Trade & Marketing Service Co Ltd at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

WB gives \$300m to help upgrade cash transfer schemes

STAR BUSINESS REPORT
 The World Bank (WB) yesterday approved a \$300 million project to help improve transparency and efficiency of Bangladesh's major cash transfer programmes targeting about five million financially insolvent elderly persons, widows and people with disabilities.
 The Cash Transfer Modernisation Project will help the Department of Social Services shift the programmes' operating processes from a manual, paper-based system to an automated, integrated, and electronically managed one, according to a WB statement.
 "Bangladesh has cut by half the number of people living in extreme poverty. This is a remarkable achievement. Yet many people remain poor and vulnerable," said Qimiao Fan, WB country director for Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal.
 "The WB is helping the government modernise its safety net programmes by improving pro-poor targeting, streamlining administrative systems, and addressing programme fragmentations. This will help reach people in need and use public resources more effectively," the statement says.
 The project will help upgrade the department's management information systems identifying potential benefit recipients and integrate the system with the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics' national household database.
 For more secure and accessible payments to beneficiaries, the system will be linked to payment service providers.
 Using existing digital systems, the project will further develop an integrated social protection service delivery system, help build human resource capacity and improve citizen engagement.