Bangladesh’s banking sector risk has been assessed as ‘moderate’ by international credit rating agency Moody’s, which said it reflects sizeable contingent liability, risks from state-owned banks.

Bangladesh has been ranked 34th in the World Economic Forum’s Inclusive Development Index’s (IDI) list of emerging economies, ahead of South Asian competitors India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka but behind Nepal.

Global economic activity continues to firm up. Global output is estimated to have grown by 3.7 percent in 2017, which is 0.1 percentage points faster than projected in the fall and ½ percentage points higher than in 2016.

A three-day countrywide fair titled “Development Fair 2018” was held on 11-13 January, 2018. Mercantile Bank Limited participated in “Development Fair 2018”.

MERCANTILE BANK NEWS
Main Branch of Mercantile Bank Limited has shifted at new premises on Sunday, 4 March 2018. New address of Main Branch is 63 Dilkusha C/A, Motijheel, Dhaka-1000.

DISCOVER BANGLADESH
Nijhum Dwip is the island of silence and tranquility, having splendid natural beauty. The eye-catching and very quiet environment of this island really justifies its name.

MD. QUAMRUL ISLAM CHOWDHURY
AMD & CBO
Mati ul Hasan
AMD & CRO

MD. ZAKIR HOSSAIN
DMD & DCBO
Adil Raihan
DMD & CSBO

Research & Planning Team
Editorial

Bangladesh economy kept its momentum in FY18 with GDP expanding at 7.65 percent, above the 7.28 percent growth recorded a year earlier. And the per-capita income also got an impressive boost by $142 to $1752 in the FY2018 from $1610 in the previous FY2017. In March, point to point inflation declined to 5.68% from 5.72% in the previous month. Despite such multiple faster economic growth, there are some downside risks to the near-term economic outlook. The upward trend in Lending Rate led by rise in fund/deposit cost for the last few months created challenges in Banking Sector. Strong coordination in monetary and fiscal measures are needed to mitigate inflationary risk in the near future. Amidst this, Bangladesh has become eligible for graduation to a Developing Country from the LDC. We hope that Bangladesh will attain the status of super middle income country by 2031 and be a developed country by 2041 surpassing all headwinds.

MBL is always playing an important role to contribute meaningfully towards amelioration of the economic condition of the country by investing/deploying fund in the diversified thrust sectors of the economy. Besides, the management is always aware of the compliance issues as prescribed by the regulatory bodies and at the same time to maximize the profitability of the bank and stay focused on remediation of non-performing assets and at the same breath expansion of quality assets across the borrowers and businesses.

We in our relentless effort intend to make value addition in our this humble endeavor to publish quarterly bulletin wherein analytical bent of mind will be the dominating factor for having better insight on the run of events in our socio-economic landscape. Any suggestions, advices from any quarters will highly be appreciated and will act as a beckoning light in our journey ahead.

Disclaimer

“MBL Insight” is limited publication of Mercantile Bank Limited (MBL). The contents of this publication have been collected through various sources of public information that are believed to be reliable and MBL has taken reasonable care to ensure that such information is accurate.
As a large taxpayer, Mercantile Bank Limited has been awarded crest from LTU of National Board of Revenue.
Mercantile Bank becomes strongest local Bank

2018 will be milestone of success: Chairman

The classified loans of Mercantile Bank have come down to only 3.79 percent in 2017 against 5.13 percent of 2016 and about 19 percent of the national. This is an operational success of the bank management and strong supervision of the board of directors. The bank is now the ‘strongest local bank’ of the country.

Fast growing Mercantile Bank Limited has achieved 97.11 percent growth in Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) financing in 2017 by investing Tk. 2866 crore. Not only in SME financing Mercantile Bank has performed highly appreciating growth in all of its operation areas in 2017. The bank is also stood at one of the highest tax payer organizations of the country.

Mercantile Bank emerged as a leading commercial bank to provide efficient banking services and to contribute socio-economic development of the country. The bank commenced its operation on June 2, 1999. It provides a broad range of financial services to its customers and corporate clients. The Board of Directors consists of

A.K.M. Shaheed Reza
Chairman

Kazi Masihur Rahman
Managing Director & CEO
The bank has played a remarkable role in boosting agriculture sector of the country by providing Tk. 417 crore loans at lowest rate and soft term interest. The agriculture financing of the bank in 2016 was Tk. 320 crore. Mercantile Bank has paid tax and VAT to the national exchequer of Tk. 472 crore in 2017 against Tk. 385 crore of 2016, registering 22.59 percent growth. The highly experienced management team led by renowned banker and economist Kazi Masihur Rahman, the Managing Director & CEO, has been rendering international standard banking and financial services to the nation targeting to create job opportunities directly and indirectly. The management is also guided by the efficient board members headed by the chairman A.K.M. Shaheed Reza. The bank has set up an example in the financial market of Bangladesh by the dynamic services. The chairman said, “Mercantile Bank been able to establish a ‘brand value’ by its dedicated customer service.” Due to the strong financial footing, Mercantile Bank could be able to face any challenges, Shaheed Reza added. The year 2018 will be the year of ‘milestone of successes’ for Mercantile Bank, Shaheed Reza hopes.
March is International Women’s Day, a day dedicated to pursuing equal rights for women. This day is globally celebrated for women’s social, political, and cultural achievements from the past and present, while pushing for progress for future generations. The theme for International Women’s Day 2018 was “Press for Progress”. Mercantile Bank Limited celebrated International Women’s Day flamboyantly at the New Sindurpur Hall, FARS Hotel & Resorts, Bijoynagar, Dhaka on March 8, 2018 evening with echoing this slogan - “আমাদের অধীনের নবীন পুরুষের সমান অধিকার”.

Female executives & officers of the bank wearing purple, the official color of International Women’s Day, participated in the event. Al-Haj Akram Hossain (Humayun), Chairman of Mercantile Bank Securities Limited; Alhaj Mosharref Hossain, Director of the Bank & Kazi Masihur Rahman, Managing Director & CEO of the Bank inaugurated the International Women’s Day celebration event by cutting a Cake.

The Managing Director & CEO of the Bank delivered his speech about the significance of Women’s contribution in social development of Bangladesh. DMDs and senior executives of the bank were present on the occasion. Female employees are also delivered their speech on the occasion. The day was celebrated with a grandiose program including motivational speech and recognition of women for their contribution, cultural program, magic shows and attractive raffle draw. The great gala event ended with buffet dinner.
Glimpse of International Women’s Day Celebration 2018
Among the 57 banks in Bangladesh, the four state-owned banks and three other private banks face the capital crisis as per the data collected on September 30, 2017. The amount of capital deficit in the four state-owned banks is Tk. 7,626.23 crore and in three private banks its Tk. 1,791.20 crore. So, the total capital deficit in the (seven) banks is Tk. 941.43 crore, Finance Minister AMA Muhith told the parliament.

Bangladesh’s banking sector risk has been assessed as ‘moderate’ by international credit rating agency Moody’s, which said it reflects sizeable contingent liability, risks from state-owned banks. Bad debt has been dogging the banking sectors in Bangladesh with the total amount of capital deficit in state-owned banks of Sonali, Rupali, Janata and BASIC standing at more than Tk. 76.26 billion. The government had injected Tk. 102.72 billion into state banks as recapitalization facility from FY2006 to FY2017, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said in parliament.

The government moves to give funds for recapitalization of state-owned banks (SoBs). The government had earmarked Tk. 20 billion as budgetary allocation to recapitalize the banks in need. The Basel-III regulatory framework has raised capital-adequacy requirement for banks, which most SoBs fall short of.

The Financial Institutions Division has sought the consent of the Prime Minister’s Office for banking licence for proposed Citizen Bank while the Bangladesh Bank is reportedly under pressure for three more banking licences before the next general elections although the sector is already overcrowded with 57 banks and mired by scams.

The Bangladesh Bank has lowered the required general provision against unclassified housing finance from 2 percent to 1 percent to allow the banks to extend more loans for housing. The central bank said the move aims to promote growth in the real estate sector by encouraging the banks to participate in housing finance. It issued the order with retroactive effect from Dec 31 last year.

Bangladesh Bank has extended by six months the time to adjust advanced-to-deposit ratio or ADR that measures loans as the percentage of deposits for commercial banks. On Jan 30, 2018 the central bank said the move aims to curb aggressive lending. The central bank had said banks must adjust the ratio gradually by June 30, 2018. Now it has stretched the deadline to Dec 31.

The central bank has started work on calculating the country’s House Price Index (HPI) on a regular basis. The housing sector has contributed around 8.0 percent of the Gross Domestic Product over the last few years. The same sector along with its backward linkages industries also directly added Tk. 3.0 billion annually to the national exchequer, which is around 12-14 percent of the economy.

The central bank has planned to slash the limit of advance-deposit ratio (ADR) to help check any possible liquidity pressure on the market due to ‘aggressive lending.’ The ADR of all banks is likely to be re-fixed at 80.50 percent for conventional banks and at 88 percent for Sharia-based Islamic banks. The existing ratios are 85 percent and 90 percent respectively.
Disbursement of SME loans by banks and non-bank financial institutions to female entrepreneurs declined by 10.71 per cent or Tk 572.67 crore in 2017 compared with that in 2016, although their male peers received nearly 15 percent more SME loans last year. The latest BB data showed that banks and NBFIs extended Tk 4,772.99 crore in loans to the enterprises owned by women last year, while the figure was Tk 5,345.66 crore in 2016. Loan repayment by the female entrepreneurs, however, increased by Tk 1,632.96 crore to Tk 4,834.54 crore in last year from Tk 3,201.58 crore in the previous year. SME loan disbursement to male entrepreneurs increased by 14.94 percent to Tk 1,57,004.34 crore in 2017 from Tk 1,36,589.72 crore in the previous year.

(Ref: newagebd.net)

Bangladesh Bank (BB) has signed agreements with 24 banks and financial institutions (FI) for disbursing 7,033 million yen as soft loans to potential borrowers under foreign direct investment.

(Ref: thefinancialexpress.com)

Bangladesh Bank has decided to lodge a case against Philippines’ Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC) within three months if they do not return the remaining money that was stolen from the central bank’s foreign reserve account back in 2016. From the $81 million that was stolen, $66.46 million is yet to be retrieved.

(Ref: dhakatribune.com)

Nearly 12 percent of the board members of different banks in Bangladesh are women, a development that can give them a sense of pride. Two banks state-owned Janata and private UCB—have female chairpersons in their boards. In 48 public and private local banks, 74 out of the 618 directors are women and 30 out of 40 private commercial banks have at least one female director in their boards. In the fourth generation banks that came in the market in 2013, women have 15 percent shares on the boards.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

The overall deposit rates started creeping up since the beginning of this calendar year. On an average, the term deposit rates are now hovering between 9.00 percent and 10.00 percent. The weighted average spread between lending and deposit rates came down to 4.41% in January 2018 from 4.44% in the previous month, according to the central bank’s latest statistics. It was 4.72% in January 2017. The weighted average rates on deposits rose to 5.01 percent in January last from 4.91 percent in the previous month while interest on lending stood at 9.42 percent against 9.35 percent, the BB data showed.

(Ref: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

The banking sector topped the annual turnover chart on the premier bourse in 2017 replacing engineering, power and textile sectors riding on increased participation by general investors and sponsor-directors as well. In the just-concluded year, the banks listed with Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) featured a total turnover of above Tk. 492 billion and captured 22.68 percent of the annual market turnover. After four years, the banking sector again topped the annual turnover chart in 2017 following the rally of listed banks mainly observed since June, 2017.

(Ref: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) has signed agreements with 24 banks and financial institutions (FI) for disbursing 7,033 million yen as soft loans to potential borrowers under foreign direct investment.
Mobile account users have fallen by a staggering one crore in just six months after the central bank cracked down on illegal accounts by strengthening compliance. Active mobile money accounts declined by a third to 2.07 crore in January this year from its peak of 3.07 crore last August, according to central bank data.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

In a dialogue on Operational Issues of Banks held at Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM), Experts have called for a stronger Credit Risk Management (CRM) aimed at reducing credit risks of the country’s banking system by nearly 88 percent. Moreover, an efficient risk management system can be a potential tool for making the right decision. They also emphasized empowering Credit Risk Officers (CRO) by giving enough space in the decision-making process.

(Ref: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

Agriculture loan disbursement rose 4.47 percent year-on-year to Tk. 12,702 crore in the first seven months of the current fiscal year, according to central bank data. In July-January, eight state-owned commercial and specialized banks disbursed Tk. 5,299.41 crore in agriculture loans. The amount is 55.26 percent of their total annual farm credit lending target of Tk. 9,590 crore. Private and foreign banks lent Tk. 7,402.76 crore to the sector during the period, which is nearly 70 percent of their total annual farm lending goal of Tk. 10,810 crore.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

Only 7 percent of the fresh loans given by Agrani Bank in the last three years had defaulted. In 2016, its classified loans accounted for 22.10 percent of its loans. It declined to 16.02 percent in 2017. At the end of December 2017, Agrani’s total default loans stood at Tk. 5,115 crore, which is 16 percent of the total outstanding loans. In 2017, the number of Agrani’s loss-making branches came down to 43 from 78 in 2016.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

The inflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) increased slightly in the first half (H1) of the current fiscal year (FY18). In gross terms, it increased to $1.75 billion in July-December period of 2017 from $1.03 billion in the same period of 2016, latest central bank statistics show.

(Ref: thefinancialexpress.com)

The exporters of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector will get 10 percent subsidy for exporting software, Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) and hardware. BB has also announced 15 percent subsidy for exporters of the synthetic and fabric made shoes and accumulator battery. But the subsidy will not be applicable to the exporters who produce their products in Export Processing Zone (EPZ), Economic Zone (EZ) and Hi-Tech Park (HTP).

(Ref: observerbd.com)

Agent banking logged in stellar growth figures in 2017, just two years after full-fledged roll-out of the service, as people in remote areas embrace this innovative form of financial service. For instance, deposit collection through agent banking soared more than 5 times to Tk. 2,000 crore and remittance disbursement more than 6 times to Tk. 1,982 crore last year.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

### Number of Mobile Banking Account Holders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figures in crore</th>
<th>Aug’17</th>
<th>Sep’17</th>
<th>Oct’17</th>
<th>Nov’17</th>
<th>Dec’17</th>
<th>Jan’18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>2,577</td>
<td>2,577</td>
<td>2,577</td>
<td>2,577</td>
<td>2,577</td>
<td>2,577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Account</td>
<td>1,214,367</td>
<td>1,214,367</td>
<td>1,214,367</td>
<td>1,214,367</td>
<td>1,214,367</td>
<td>1,214,367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deposit</td>
<td>Tk. 319cr</td>
<td>Tk. 319cr</td>
<td>Tk. 319cr</td>
<td>Tk. 319cr</td>
<td>Tk. 319cr</td>
<td>Tk. 319cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>Tk. 109cr</td>
<td>Tk. 109cr</td>
<td>Tk. 109cr</td>
<td>Tk. 109cr</td>
<td>Tk. 109cr</td>
<td>Tk. 109cr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### INDICATORS OF AGENT BANKING SHOW RAPID GROWTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agent</td>
<td>1.646</td>
<td>2.577</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlet</td>
<td>2.601</td>
<td>4.157</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Account</td>
<td>544,536</td>
<td>1,214,367</td>
<td>123%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deposit</td>
<td>Tk. 381cr</td>
<td>Tk. 319cr</td>
<td>268%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>Tk. 109cr</td>
<td>Tk. 109cr</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remittance</td>
<td>Tk. 310cr</td>
<td>Tk. 1982cr</td>
<td>540%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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. In January, 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. 

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

Bangladesh Bank expressed dissatisfaction over banks’ sluggish recovery rate given the surge in non-performing loans in the first nine months of 2017. At the end of September last year, the banking sector’s total classified loans stood at Tk. 80,307 crore, up from Tk. 62,172 crore in December 2016. During the period, the banks managed to recover Tk. 10,340 crore. 

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

Defaulted loans are growing in long legal process. 55,262 cases involving Tk. 73,556 crore defaulted loans pending with courts as of June 2017. The amount stuck in lawsuits accounts for 10.05 percent of the banking industry’s total outstanding loans of Tk. 731,625 crore as of June last year. Of the Tk. 73,556 crore defaulted loans stuck due to lawsuits, 40 private commercial banks accounted for over Tk. 37,400 crore, eight state-run banks Tk. 34,965 crore and nine foreign banks Tk. 1,190 crore, BB data show. 

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

The US dollar continues to appreciate against the taka although the central bank injected more than $1.11 billion into the market so far in fiscal 2017-18 as it tries to keep the exchange rate stable. The BB sold $46 million to banks in the first eight days of January and $308 million in December. In total, it sold $1.11 billion to banks from July 1 to January 8 this fiscal year. The central bank sold $175 million and bought $1.93 billion in 2016-17. 

(Ref: thedailystar.net)
A sharp rise in overall production cost and increased competition from regional players has hit the local ready-made garment (RMG) industry hard. Industry leaders said Bangladesh is losing ground in global market. According to BGMEA, prices of Bangladeshi apparel items dropped by 3.30 percent in the US market and 4.71 percent in the EU market last year due to surge in competition from regional rivals. (Ref: thedailystar.net)

Nearly 3000 local agents of mobile financial service (MFS) providers are under intelligence agencies scanners after disclosure that they are involved in money laundering through their accounts. Bangladesh Bank (BB) in September last year, ordered bKash to suspend activities of its 2,887 agents as their accounts were found involved in making unusual money transfer violating the Money-Laundering and Terrorism Financing Act. (Ref: thedailynewnation.com)

Bangladesh’s foreign exchange reserves fell to $32.01 billion on 03.01.2018, the lowest since January last year, following the largest ever payments made to the Asian Clearing Union or ACU. According to central bank data, on that day, Bangladesh paid ACU $1,355 million to settle payments for imports. Before paying the ACU, Bangladesh’s foreign currency reserves were more than $33.3 billion, Bangladesh Bank data showed. (Ref: thedailystar.net)

The Palli Sanchay Bank (PSB), a specialised bank specifically targeting clients in rural areas, has finally started its commercial operations from December last year. A total of 300 upazila branches out of 485 approved branches have already started functioning while the rest are preparing to start operation shortly. (Ref: observerbd.com)

Banks wrote off Tk. 452 crore in the three months to June last year, up by over 18 times from Tk. 24.76 crore in the previous three months from October to December. Of the 12 banks that took the facility to clean up their balance sheets, City Bank topped the chart with Tk. 207 crore followed by Dutch-Bangla Bank’s Tk. 108 crore and Eastern Bank’s Tk. 101 crore, according to Bangladesh Bank data released. With the latest update, total written-off loans between January 2003 and June 2017 stood at Tk. 45,527 crore. Of the amount, 78 percent remained outstanding, meaning that banks’ efforts to recover the loans did not pay off. (Ref: thedailystar.net)
The credit disbursement for the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) increased by 21.60 percent in the first nine months of 2017 compared to the corresponding period in the last year, according to the Bangladesh Bank (BB) data. All banks and FIs have already disbursed over Tk. 1.23 trillion (Tk. 1,23,046.13 crore) loan in January-September period in 2017 which was over Tk. 218.53 billion (Tk. 21,853.99 crore) up compared to the same period in 2016.

(Ref: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

The unaudited operating profits of the country’s private commercial banks (PCBs) witnessed a remarkable growth in 2017. Most of the banks saw the profit in the just-concluded calendar year riding on higher import payments, enhanced credit flow to the private sector, and significant return from their capital market investments, according to bankers.

### Provisional Operating Profit of 25 PCBs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of banks</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al-Arafah Islami Bank</td>
<td>8,090</td>
<td>7,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Asia</td>
<td>6,710</td>
<td>5,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Bank</td>
<td>6,970</td>
<td>7,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch Bangla Bank</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>6,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Bank</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exim Bank</td>
<td>7,110</td>
<td>6,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Security Bank</td>
<td>4,700</td>
<td>3,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers Bank</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFIC Bank Ltd</td>
<td>5,040</td>
<td>4,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islami Bank (BD)</td>
<td>22,500</td>
<td>18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamuna Bank</td>
<td>4,850</td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercantile Bank</td>
<td>7,110</td>
<td>5,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual Trust Bank</td>
<td>4,170</td>
<td>3,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modhumoti Bank</td>
<td>1,510</td>
<td>1,060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Bank Limited</td>
<td>12,160</td>
<td>10,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCC Bank</td>
<td>5,300</td>
<td>4,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRB Commercial Bank</td>
<td>2,010</td>
<td>1,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRB Bank</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Bank</td>
<td>5,400</td>
<td>4,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premier Bank</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>3,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pubali Bank</td>
<td>9,150</td>
<td>7,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shahjalal Islami Bank</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>3,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Islami Bank</td>
<td>6,600</td>
<td>6,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Bank</td>
<td>9,010</td>
<td>8,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Bank</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>3,520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Ref: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)
মার্কেন্টাইল ব্যাংক লিমিটেড চালু করেছে ‘উদয়ন’ নামে একটি প্রকল্প। ব্যাংকটি এ প্রকল্পের আওতায় দেশের শিক্ষিত মেধাবী তরুণদের উদ্যোক্তা হিসেবে গড়ে তোলার নিমিত্তে ব্যবসা শুরুর জন্য অর্থ সহায়তা দিচ্ছে। মার্কেন্টাইল ব্যাংক লিমিটেড এরই মধ্যে নতুন কয়েকটি প্রতিষ্ঠানে সিড ক্যাপিটাল হিসেবে অর্থ বিনিয়োগ করেছে। উদয়নের এই উদ্যোক্তাদের নিয়ে দেশের জাতীয় দৈনিক “বণিক বার্তা” ধারাবাহিকভাবে রিপোর্ট প্রকাশ করছে। সাক্ষাৎকার গ্রহণ এবং রিপোর্ট প্রণয়ন করেছেন উক্ত পত্রিকার রিপোর্টার বকুল রায। তার মধ্য থেকে তিনটি প্রতিষ্ঠানের রিপোর্ট তুলে ধরা হলো।

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নারীদের ভ্রমণে উৎসাহিত করছে ট্রিপজিপ

ট্রিপজিপ ভট্টাচার্য ভ্রমণের জন্য যেসব সেবা প্রয়োজন, তার সব একই প্ল্যাটফর্মে দিচ্ছে। অর্থাৎ ভ্রমণের জন্য ট্রাপোর্টেশন, ট্রিকিট ব্র্যাক, থাকার ব্যবস্থা, গতিবেগী পৌঁছানোর পর কোথায় থাকবেন, তার সব সেবা মিলিতে এখানে। কেউ ভ্রমণে গিয়ে গুল্ভ থাকার সেবা চাইলে আমরা সে ব্যবস্থা করি। বিদেশীরা টুরিস্ট গাইড চাইলে সেটেং সরবরাহ করা হয়। ট্রিপজিপ ভট্টাচার্য ভ্রমণ নিয়ে রিপোর্ট করার সুবিধা রয়েছে। একজন গ্রাহক একটি দর্শনীয় স্থান ধরে এসে আমাদের প্ল্যাটফর্মে অভিজ্ঞতা শেয়ার করতে পারবেন।
ম্যাকার্টিন্সের মতো একটি চ্যালেঞ্জিং উদ্যোগ নিয়ে আগ্রহী হলেন কেন?

হাতান্তর্যাত্রা তাজিয়াদের মূল লক্ষ্য হিসেবে কাজ করার কারণে প্রতি বছর আমাদের অভিজ্ঞতা থেকেই অনেক অসুবিধা প্রাপ্ত হয়ে ওঠে। বিশেষতঃ কোনো দিনীর চাহিদা শিক্ষা গ্রহণ করতে হয় এবং তা সহজতর হতে পারে। বাংলাদেশের চার অভিজ্ঞতা বিষয়ক সক্রিয়তার চেষ্টা করা হয়। এই রোেলের মাধ্যমে আমাদের অভিজ্ঞতা উত্সাহনাদের কাজ করছে।

ট্র্যুপজিপের মধ্যে একটি চ্যালেঞ্জিং উদ্যোগ নিয়ে আগ্রহী হলেন কেন?

ঢাকা জাতিস্বরূপ অফিসের হিসেবে কাজ করার কারণে প্রতি বছর আমাদের অভিজ্ঞতা থেকেই অনেক অসুবিধা প্রাপ্ত হয়ে ওঠে। বিশেষতঃ কোনো দিনীর চাহিদা শিক্ষা গ্রহণ করতে হয় এবং তা সহজতর হতে পারে। বাংলাদেশের চার অভিজ্ঞতা বিষয়ক সক্রিয়তার চেষ্টা করা হয়। এই রোেলের মাধ্যমে আমাদের অভিজ্ঞতা উত্সাহনাদের কাজ করছে।

ট্র্যুপজিপ কি দেশের বাইরে ভাবনা দিচ্ছে?

থ্রট্যাক, আমাদের দেশের বাইরেও ভাবনা দিচ্ছে। সেদিন আমাদের অস্থায়ী হতের সহায়তা সহ আমাদের আশুত্ত্বীর হচ্ছে যাতে ভাবনা ভালো থাকে। বর্তমানে এখানে আমা ১৩টি দেশে ভাবনা দিচ্ছে। উইকিপিডিয়া অনলাইনে হচ্ছে তত্ত্ব বহু কাজ করে এ নিয়ে উইকিপিডিয়ার বিভিন্ন স্টেট্স ও পার্টনারের সঙ্গে চিন্তিতে যাওয়ার বিষয়ে কাজ চলছে।

গ্রাহক নিরপেক্ষতার জন্য কী ধরনের ব্যবস্থা রয়েছে?

ট্র্যুপজিপ নারী ট্রেলোলারের নিয়ে কাজ করছে। কাজেই নিরাপত্তার বিষয়টিতে আমরা সহায়তা দেয়া যাচ্ছে অনেক ব্যাপারে। আমারা ‘সেলাইউইহেম প্রো’ নামে দাস্তার বাইরে ট্যাবলে ও কৃতিত্ব ‘তেঁ টিপ’ পরিচালনা করছি এবং কিছু বিভিন্ন সামাজিক পার্কে টিপ পরিচালনা করা হচ্ছে। ট্যাবলে যেমন প্রাত সেলাইউইহেম টিপ দুই কাজ হচ্ছে, তখন প্রথমে আমার মনে হচ্ছ নিরাপত্তার বিষয়টিতে কিছু করার যাচ্ছি।

মার্কসটিল্বিং ব্যাক্সর উপসর্গ’ প্রকল্পের ক্ষেত্রে প্যাটন সফরকার বলে মন করেন?

মার্কসটিল্বিং ব্যাক্সর উদ্যোগ প্রকল্পটি একটি চমৎকার উদ্যোগ হেরে উদ্যোগকারীর জন্য। তত্ত্বাবধানের উদ্যোগকারী কোনো ব্যাক্সর এক স্বাধীন জাতিস্বরূপ না। কুরাভো আইডিয়া হলে তার জন্য আমাদের বিশেষ তত্ত্বাবধান করা যাচ্ছে। এক্ষেত্রে মার্কসটিল্বিং ব্যাক্সর তত্ত্বাবধানের অনেক ভালো উদ্যোগ নিয়ে সুবিধা পাওয়া যাচ্ছে।
কর্মী ব্যবস্থাপনায় সফটওয়্যারভিত্তিক সেবা দিচ্ছে ল্যান্ডনক

ল্যান্ডনক ট্র্যাক কী ধরনের সেবা দিচ্ছে?
ল্যান্ডনক লিমিটেডের একটি প্রভাবশালী হলো ল্যান্ডনক ট্র্যাক। কোম্পানির নামের শেষে আমরা ট্র্যাক শব্দটি যোগ করেছি। কারণ হলো, কেউ যখন কোনো একটি পথ দিয়ে হীর্টে যায়, তখন সে ওই পথে তার পদটি রেখে যায়। বাংলাদেশে প্রচুর কোম্পানি আছে, যাদের কর্মীরা অফিসের বাইরে কাজ করেন। এ ধরনের কোম্পানিগুলোর কর্মী ব্যবসায়ন। অর্থাৎ বিক্রয় বা বিপণন প্রতিনিধিরা কখন কোনো আছেন, তাদের যোগভাবর রাখার প্রধান কর্মসূচীর একটি বড় ধরনের মাত্রাটি। কোম্পানি যে ধরনের হোক, কর্মীরা কখন কোনো আছে, কী করছেন, তার মাধ্যমে দিতে ল্যান্ডনক ট্র্যাক। বিভিন্ন খাতের প্রতিষ্ঠানকে তাদের কর্মীদের লাইভ টাইম অবস্থান জানানো ও পরিবর্তনের সুবিধা দিছি।

ল্যান্ডনক লিমিটেডের মতো একটি উদ্যোগ নিয়ে আমার হলেন কেন?
প্রতিষ্ঠাতার কল্যাণে কিছু বিষয় এখন আর মাজিক নয়, বাংলার ওগোল ম্যাপ সম্পর্কে আমার জানি। এখানে জুল করে আপনি আমার কাজকর্মী হন সাধারণ না মেয়ে পারেন। ল্যান্ডনক ট্যাকের ধারণাটি সেখান থেকেই পাওয়া। হাতাবাজার আমি ও আমার কর্মকর্তা বড়ো মিলে অনলাইনে দেশের বাইরের ট্র্যাকের কিছু কোর দিতে। সেখান থেকে ভালো একটি অভিজ্ঞতা ছিল। সে অভিজ্ঞতা এবং ওগোল ম্যাপ কাজে লগিতে আমারা একটি নিজস্ব প্ল্যাটফর্ম অনুর উদ্যোগ নিই। ওগোল ম্যাপে সর্বময় জন্য হোক দেখানো হয়। ধরন আপনি সে রাখা দিয়ে যাচ্ছেন, তার আশপাশের বিভিন্ন বা অস্থায়ী অক্ষাতের দেখতে পাচ্ছেন। কিন্তু আমারা ওগোল ম্যাপ কাজে লিগিয়ে মানুষের চলাচল দেখানোর চেষ্টা করতে শুরু করি।

ল্যান্ডনক লিমিটেডের গ্রাহক করা? গ্রাহক হওয়ার প্রতিয়া সম্পর্কে বলুন।
ই-কমার্স বা বিক্রয় ও বিপণনের কাজ করে এমন ছোট, মার্কেটিং বা বড় কোম্পানিও আমাদের ট্র্যাকে গ্রাহক। বর্তমানে দুটি পণ্য সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকে পরিকল্পনায় সেবা সরবরাহ করছি। শিপিগরাই এ দুই পণ্য প্রতিষ্ঠানের স্থলে পূর্ণাঙ্গ কার্যকর হওয়া আশা করছি। ল্যান্ডনক ট্র্যাকে সেবাটি আয়োজিত। কাজেই গ্রাহক হওয়ার জন্য আমাদের ওয়েবসাইটে গিয়ে নিবন্ধন করতে হয়। অথবা আমাদের সদৃশ সরাসরি মোথ্যাপোর মাধ্যমেও গ্রাহক হওয়া যাবে। ল্যান্ডনক ট্র্যাকে নিয়ে ভালো সাড়া পাচ্ছি।
ল্যান্ডক ট্রাক সফটওয়ারের মাধ্যমে কমিউনিয়ন এবং মনিটরিং ছাড়া আর কী নেয়া দিয়েছে?

কমিউনিয়ন এবং মনিটরিংয়ের পাশাপাশি একদম বিষয় প্রতিনিধিত্ব করা যেতে পারে কী পরিমাণ অর্থ সংগ্রহ করতেন, যা সম্পর্কে জানা যায় আমাদের সফটওয়ারে। এছাড়া সফটওয়ারটির মাধ্যমে অ্যাসাইনমেন্ট দেয়া যায়, যা বিভিন্ন পণ্য সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের বায় সংকেতকে ভুগিবার রাখে। ল্যান্ডক ট্রাকের কোন নেয়াটি একটি হোস্টিং সার্ভিস ব্যবহারের মাধ্যমে চলমান বস্তু প্রস্তুত করে। আর এটি অ্যালোন অ্যাপের মাধ্যমে আমাদের চারপাশে কী ঘটে যে তা দেখাতে পারে। বর্তমানে এসময় দ্বিপাক্ষিক প্রতিপত্তিগুলো দেয়া হয়; তাই যে নেয়া শুধু ব্যবসা যা ব্যবহার করা হয়।

ল্যান্ডক ট্রাক সফটওয়ারের কোন প্লটফর্মে পাওয়া যায়?

আইওএস প্লটফর্মের জন্য আমাদের সফটওয়ারটি এখানে উদ্যোগ করা হয়। বর্তমানে ল্যান্ডক ট্রাকিং সফটওয়ারের অ্যাপ্লিকেশন বিষয়কও যোগ দেয়। এটি উদ্যোক্তাদের কাছে একটি সুযোগ দেয় যাতে প্রযুক্তি ও টেকনোলজি সহ আমাদের কাজের সময় সময় কমাতে পারে।

অনাইন সেবাধারের ক্ষেত্রে গ্রাহকের পরিষেবা এবং পুরুষ সিদ্ধিসূত্র ইত্যাদি।

ল্যান্ডক ট্রাক কার্যক্রম সম্প্রসারণ

তিনটি বিষয়ের উপর সবচেয়ে বেশি গুরুত্ব দেয়। এগুলো হলো গ্রাহকের উপর, সেবা ব্যবহারি ও ফিজিক্যাল বা প্রতিযোগিতার কাছে প্রত্যেক প্রতিষ্ঠানের মধ্যে খুব বেশি বাধা দেখা যায় না।

ল্যান্ডক ট্রাক নিয়ে ভবিষ্যৎ পরিকল্পনা

গোল মাঝে আমারা সব স্থির বস্তু দেখতে পাই। ল্যান্ডক ট্রাক গোল মাঝে এবং তিফিকশন প্রযুক্তি কাজে পাগলিয়ে চলমান বস্তু প্রস্তুত করে। আমারা বিশ্বাস করি, গোল মাঝের স্থির বস্তু এবং ল্যান্ডক ট্রাকের চলমান বস্তু একটি স্টেট অ্যালোন অ্যাপের মাধ্যমে আমাদের চারপাশে কী ঘটে তা দেখাতে পারে।

মার্কেটইল ব্যাংকের ‘উদ্যোগ’ এর ক্ষেত্রে আমরা কিভাবে এই সময় পরিদীর্ঘ কার্যকলাপ পরিচালনা করি?

ল্যান্ডক ট্রাক লিমিটেডের উদ্যোগ একটি আমাদের মতো তরল উদ্যোগকারীর জন্য একটি পুরুষ উদ্যোগ। ২০১৫ সালে কার্যক্রম শুরু হওয়ার পরে একটি দীর্ঘ সময় বিনিময় জিগিতে। কিছু রাজস্থানের একটি স্ট্রিটাপ প্রতিষ্ঠানের জন্য বিনিময় পাওয়া বাইরের সহায়তা পাওয়া সত্তিতে কঠিন ছিল। মার্কেটইল ব্যাংক লিমিটেড এ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ কাজটি করেছে।

ব্যাংকের একটি স্ট্রিটাপ প্রতিষ্ঠানের ধারণার সম্পর্কে জেনে এবং সমান্তরা কিছু ভুলুমেট পর্যালোচনা করে অর্থনীতির এই উদ্যোগ ঘটান। মার্কেটইল ব্যাংক লিমিটেডের ‘উদ্যোগ’ প্রকল্পের সহায়তায় আমাদের প্রতিকূলতার ক্ষেত্রে একটি মার্কেটইল কার্যকারী সাহসিক হিসেবে আগ্রহ করার সাহস পাবেন।
দেশীয় প্রিন্টিং সেবা খাতের উন্নয়নে কাজ করছে প্রিন্টমার্ক

প্রিন্টমার্ক লিমিটেড সম্পর্কে বলুন

যুগের পরিবর্তনের সঙ্গে তাল মিলিয়ে মানুষকে আধুনিক সেবা প্রদানের লক্ষ্যে সৃষ্ট শীল ধারণা নিয়ে প্রিন্টমার্ক লিমিটেডের জন্ম। আমারা ডিজাইন, প্রিন্টিং এবং প্রমোশনাল সার্ভিসের জন্য যোগাযোগ ধরনের সেবা সরবরাহ করছি।

এমন একটি উদ্যোগ নিয়ে আগ্রহী হলেন কেন?

বাংলাদেশের প্রিন্টিং ব্যবসায় আধুনিকতার হোয়া দেয়ার মূল লক্ষ্য প্রিন্টমার্ক চিন্তার। বর্তমানে প্রিন্টিং ব্যবসায়ে খুব একটা মূল্যায়ন করা হয় না। আধুনিক প্রযুক্তি এবং মেশিনারিজের পাশাপাশি শিকিত কর্মকর্তা এবং কর্মচারী দ্বারা প্রিন্টমার্ক ব্যবসা পরিচালনা করছে। পরিবর্তনরত বাংলাদেশের ব্যবসায় এই উদ্দেশ্যে ছিল নিজে কিছু করব এবং কর্মসংস্থানের সুযোগ সৃষ্টি করা। বাংলাদেশের প্রিন্টিং সেবা খাতে উন্নয়নের লক্ষ্য নিয়ে দীর্ঘদিনের অভিজ্ঞতা কাজ লাগিয়ে প্রিন্টমার্ক লিমিটেডের নামে প্রিন্টিং স্টার্টআপের এ যাত্রা।

প্রিন্টমার্কের কী ধরন ও সেবা রয়েছে?

প্রিন্টমার্কের ধরন ও সেবা দেওয়াকে পাচ ভাগে বিভক্ত করা যায়। প্রথমত, বিভিন্ন ব্যবসায় প্রতিষ্ঠানের জন্য অপরিসীম বিজিনেস এবং আইডি কার্ড, লেটারহেড বা হ্যাপানো নাম-ঠিকানার প্রোজেক্টেশন পোস্টার্স, টেইল প্যাড, পিডি কাফার লোগোসহ কোম্পানি প্রোফাইল এবং কোম্পানি নিউজ স্টোরেইন যাবতীয় প্রিন্টিং পণ্য সরবরাহ করছে। দ্বিতীয়ত, আমারা ক্যাম্পেইন বা প্রমোশনাল ব্যাগ, মেনু কার্ড, টেবিল টপার, পোস্টারসহ সব ধরনের ব্যানার সরবরাহ করছি।

তৃতীয়ত, শিক্ষামূলক উপাদান যেমন প্রশিক্ষণ, গবেষণা ও গ্রেপ্তার বইয়ের পাশাপাশি প্রশিক্ষণ মনোযোগ সরবরাহ করে। চতুর্থত, উপাদানসংক্রান্ত বিভিন্ন ভিডিও প্রিন্টিং পণ্যের যেমন- রায়িং পেপার, ইনোভেটিভ বক্স, প্রিন্ট কার্ড, ডেক্ক ক্যালেন্ডার, ডিস্কার্ড এবং অন্যান্য কার্ড ও প্রিন্টেড চার্টের রিং সরবরাহ করছি। পঞ্চমত, এসবের বাইরে আমাদের কিছু সেবা রয়েছে যেমন-
প্রিন্টমার্কের গ্রাহক করা?
প্রিন্টিং এবং ডিজাইনের জন্য প্রিন্টমার্কের গ্রাহক হচ্ছে ব্যাংক, বীমা এবং খাবার ব্যবসায়ী। সেবা প্রদানকারী গ্রাহকদের মধ্যে অন্যতম ওয়েলফার্ড, বেসিক ব্যাংক, ডার্ন গ্রুপ, বাগড়ুম এবং প্রাণ।

প্রিন্টমার্ক নিয়ে ভবিষ্যৎ পরিকল্পনা করি?
বড় অর্থায়ন পেলে আরো আধুনিক কিছু মেশিন নিয়ে দেশের মানুষের কর্মসংঘঞ্জের সুযোগ সৃষ্টি করতে চাই।

বর্তমানে গ্রাহকদের ভালো মানের পণ্য ও সেবা দিয়ে আমরা সামনে এগিয়ে যেতে নিশ্চিত করছি।

প্রিন্টিং ব্যবসা খাতের কী ধরনের বুকি রয়েছে?
প্রযুক্তি পরিবর্তন এবং প্রাচীন-প্রাচীন এখন অনলাইনে হচ্ছে, এজন্য অনেকাংশে প্রিন্টিং কাজের প্রযোজনীয়তা কমে যাচ্ছে। এছাড়া প্রিন্টিং ব্যবসা খাতে এক ধরনের অসুস্থ প্রতিরোধিতা বিবাজ করছে।

মার্কেটাইল ব্যাংকের ‘উদয়ন’ প্রকল্প
আমাদের স্বপ্ন বাস্তবায়নে কতটুকু সহায়তা দিতে পেরেছে?
মার্কেটাইল ব্যাংকে লিমিটেডের ‘উদয়ন’ প্রকল্পে যখন প্রিন্টমার্ক লিমিটেডকে অন্তর্ভুক্ত করা হলো, সেটা ছিল এক অন্য রকম অভিজ্ঞতা। এ প্রকল্পের আওতায় প্রথম অর্থায়ন করা হয় প্রিন্টমার্ক লিমিটেডকে। যখন বিনির্দেশের অর্থ আমার অ্যাকাউন্টে চুকেছিল, সে অনুভূতি ভাবায় প্রকল্প করার মতো নয়। স্থির বলতে ব্যাসা শুরুর জন্য আমি কেবল থেকে কোনো সহায়তা পাইনি। কিন্তু উদয়ন প্রকল্পের আওতায় মার্কেটাইল ব্যাংকে একটা বড় অংকের বিনির্দেশ করেছে। এ বিনির্দেশ পাওয়ার জন্য আমাকে কাঠতাড় পোহাতে হয়নি।

বর্ত ব্যাংকের পক্ষ থেকে সময়বদ্ধকর স্টার্টআপ হিসেবে প্রিন্টমার্ককে চুকে দেয়া হয়। আমি মার্কেটাইল ব্যাংক লিমিটেডের কাছে কূটনেত্র। এ বিনির্দেশ আমার স্বপ্ন বাস্তবায়নে আরো উদসৃষ্টি করেছে। ধ্যাবাদ জানাই মার্কেটাইল ব্যাংককে।
DOMESTIC ECONOMY

- Growth of “broad money” continues to decelerate in the country. As of January last, the broad-money growth was 10.14 percent in a squeeze from corresponding period’s 14.0 percent in 2017, according to the outstanding stock prepared by the central bank of Bangladesh. In December last, it was 10.69 percent against 13.83 percent in December in 2016. Broad money, or M2 in economic parlance, is a measure of money supply that includes all elements of narrow money of M1 and ‘near money’.

(Ref: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

- Bangladesh has been ranked 34th in the World Economic Forum’s Inclusive Development Index’s (IDI) list of emerging economies, ahead of South Asian competitors India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka but behind Nepal. Nepal is ranked 22nd. India is ranked 62nd, Pakistan 52nd, Sri Lanka is 40th, the WEF says in the report.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

- Bangladesh scored 51.1 in economic freedom remaining the 128th freest country in the world in the ‘2018 Index of Economic Freedom’, published by the Heritage Foundation. Bangladesh, which ranked 29th among 43 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, has an overall score below the regional average score of 61 and global average of 61.1, said the report.

(Ref: newagebd.net)

- Government’s tax-revenue collection suffered about a Tk. 148-billion shortfall until January of this fiscal year against its target mainly for slow-paced reform to expand the tax net, sources said. However, compared to the previous corresponding period, the NBR achieved 15.37 percent growth in revenue collection, while the current target has been set expecting around 35 percent growth. Last year, revenue growth was 19.78 percent in July-January period. The tax authority collected Tk. 1.10 trillion in tax revenue in the first seven months of FY 2017-18 against its target set at Tk. 1.25 trillion for the period.

(Ref: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

- The National Economic Council approved the revised annual development programme at Tk. 1,48,381 crore, slashing the size of the outlay by Tk. 4,950 crore or 3.23 percent from the original ADP adopted for the current fiscal year of 2017-2018. The size of the original ADP was Tk. 1,53,331 crore with an estimation that Tk. 96,331 crore would come from the domestic fund and Tk. 57,000 crore would come from the foreign source as project assistance.

(Ref: newagebd.net)

- The government’s spending rose by 4.8 percent year-on-year to Tk. 46,654 crore in the first quarter of the current fiscal year. The government presented a hefty Tk. 400,267 crore budget for the current fiscal year. Year-on-year, non-development expenditure increased by 2.3 percent to Tk. 36,129 crore while the development expenditure rose by 39.1 percent to Tk. 10,528 crore.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)
Bangladesh’s current-account deficit widened almost eight times or by $4.76 billion in the first half (H1) of this fiscal over the corresponding figure, as outgoings far outstripped incomings. According to latest statistics of the central bank the current-account deficit in the July-December period marked a sharp widening from $0.54 billion in the same period of the past fiscal year.

*Ref: thefinancialexpress.com.bd*

Private sector credit growth continues its forward thrust despite liquidity crisis and rising interest rates as businesses jump into an expansion mode. In January, private sector credit growth stood at 18.36 percent, up from 18.13 percent the previous month and way past the ceiling of 16.8 percent set for the latter half of fiscal 2017-18.

*Ref: thedailystar.net*

In the first half of fiscal 2017-18, the government’s net borrowing from the banking sector was in the negative, according to data from the Bangladesh Bank. Between July and December last year, the government repaid Tk. 3,980 crore to scheduled banks and Tk. 3,896 crore to the central bank. On the other hand, between July and November last year, net sales of savings certificates edged up 4.19 percent year-on-year to Tk. 21,172 crore.

*Ref: thedailystar.net*

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. 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.

*Ref: thedailystar.net*

Bangladesh’s Trade With Myanmar
In millions of $

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Import</td>
<td>9.65</td>
<td>13.45</td>
<td>13.67</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>38.23</td>
<td>2373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export</td>
<td>794</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Ref: thedailystar.net*

Bangladesh needs to clock in at least 10 percent economic growth for the next two decades if it wants to become a developed country by 2041, said Takehiko Nakao, president of the Asian Development Bank. Going by Bangladesh’s current GDP growth rate of 7 percent, the per capita income would hit $6,000 after 20 years, which is half the threshold for an advanced economy. China grew at 10 percent or more for about two decades and its per capita income now stands at $8,000.

*Ref: thedailystar.net*
The country’s overall imports grew by 11.66 percent in the first seven months of the current fiscal year (FY), 2017-18, mainly due to higher import of food grains and fuel oils, officials said.

Actual import in terms of settlement of letters of credit (LCs) rose to US$ 29.65 billion during the July-January period of FY 18, from $26.55 billion during the same period of the previous fiscal, according to the central bank’s latest statistics.

(Ref: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

Agriculture plays a three times more powerful role than non-agriculture when it comes to poverty reduction, according to a joint study of the Brac and the UK’s Department for International Development. The study found that a 1 percent increase in agricultural income would reduce poverty by 0.39 percent. In contrast, a 1 percent rise in non-agriculture income will alleviate poverty by 0.11 percent.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

Jute production witnessed 8% increase in 2017 comparing previous year. Farmers produced 9.2 million bales of jute in 2017 while it was 5 million bales in 2016. The jute sector is currently producing 240 types of jute products. According to UNB, the world market for jute bags will reach US$2.6 billion by 2022. Bangladesh can use this opportunity.

(Ref: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

Over 28,000 new women entrepreneurs will be created across the country in the next five years in a bid to make them self-employed, according to an official document. The document on the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s 10 Special Initiatives also mentioned that a plan has been taken to provide training to over 56,100 women by June 2020 for engaging them in various income-generating activities, reports BSS.

(Ref: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

Small enterprises need incentives and policy support to become formal as the graduation entails costs and lots of barriers, experts said. They came up with the suggestion as they found that despite Bangladesh’s positive economic development for more than a decade, employment in the informal or unorganized sector has been increasing constantly.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

### Food Supply Projections by 2030

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surplus (+), Deficit (-)</th>
<th>In millions of tonnes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>-2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>-1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulses</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh Water fish</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: LABOUR FORCE SURVEYS, BBS

### Informal vs Formal Jobs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In % of total employment</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2002-03</th>
<th>2005-06</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>87.4</td>
<td>86.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: LABOUR FORCE SURVEYS, BBS
The government has granted 10 percent cash incentive to the ICT industry against their exports. Exporters will get it retrospectively from July 2017. Companies in EPZ and hi-tech parks are not eligible for incentive. Govt. aim to earn $5 billion by 2021 from ICT exports, create 2 lac jobs. Export earnings from ICT were above $800 million in the last year.

Bangladesh was suspended in June 2013 after the Rana Plaza building collapse in April. The then Obama administration gave 16 conditions to be fulfilled for regaining the trade privilege. Bangladesh fulfilled the conditions and twice submitted reports to the United States Trade Representative. But the US has not reinstated the trade privilege; rather it always calls for further improvement of the situation.

Classification and provisioning rules will be relaxed for loans going to small and medium enterprises in order to encourage banks to lend more to SMEs. At present, 20 percent of all bank loans are supposed to go to SMEs, and the BB will raise it to 25 percent by 2025, said Bangladesh Bank Governor Fazle Kabir. Of the 25 percent SME loan, a minimum 10 percent will have to go to women entrepreneurs, he said. The total SME loan in the banking sector stood at Tk. 744,102 crore as of September last year. Women borrowers got only 3.5 percent of the loans.

Germany has once again emerged as Bangladesh’s largest export market overtaking the United States in July-February of the current fiscal year 2017-18 due to slow growth in readymade garments export to US market. Export earnings from Germany in the July-February period of FY18 stood at $3.92 billion which is $23.22 million higher than earnings from the US $3.90 billion in the period. At the end of 2016-17 fiscal, export earnings from the US stood at $5.84 billion while the earnings from Germany were $5.47 billion in the period, the EPB data showed.
Remittance’s upbeat start to 2018 continued into February, which saw inflows soar 22.13 percent year-on-year to $1.14 billion on the back of the depreciation of the taka against the US dollar. On July 2 last year, the first business day of fiscal 2017-18, the interbank exchange rate stood at Tk. 80.60. On February 28, it was Tk. 82.96. The inflows take this fiscal year’s receipts so far to $9.46 billion, up 16.55 percent from a year earlier, according to data from the BB.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

Malaysia’s Second Home programme continues to magnetize more Bangladeshis raising the illicit fund transfer from the country. A total of 3,746 Bangladeshis have so far invested in the Malaysia’s My Second Home (MM2H) programme, making Bangladesh the third largest investor in the scheme after China and Japan, according to statistics available with the official website of the scheme.

(Ref: thedailynewnation.com)

Chinese mobile phone brands are building up their presence in Bangladesh, doubling their share within a year. In 2017, Chinese brands accounted for 22 percent of the smart phones imported, up from 12 percent a year earlier, according to local importers. The global leading Chinese brands’ import more than doubled to 39.40 lakh units in 2017 from a year earlier, whereas the overall market grew only 11 percent to 3.44 crore, according to data collected by the top importers of the country

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

Bangladesh has among the lowest mutual fund investment in the world, offering a vast untapped opportunity for local asset managers. Bangladesh’s asset under management to gross domestic product ratio is a mere 0.48 percent, according to Brac EPL. In contrast, the ratio is 10.73 percent in India and 31.02 percent in Thailand. The global average is 32 percent. Mohammed Rahmat Pasha, managing director and chief executive of UCB Capital Management, blamed the Bangladeshi fund managers’ poor performance for the abysmally low ratio.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>9,902</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>4,372</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>7,891</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>35,821</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Mobile Device Imports in Bangladesh
Volumes in percentage of total imports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Chinese</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Global</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Local</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Importers

AUM to GDP ratio
AUM-asset under management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>AUM to GDP ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>0.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>10.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>31.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global average</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: BRAC EPL
Net foreign investment in the Dhaka Stock Exchange plummeted to Tk. 94 crore in the negative in March. In February, foreign investors sold shares worth Tk. 487 crore against the purchase of Tk. 392 crore, according to the country’s premier bourse. A month earlier, the net foreign investment was Tk. 187.24 crore.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

The Beijing-based Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is set to provide a $60 million loan for a power project in Bangladesh to take its exposure in the country to $285 million, which is 6.6 percent of its total portfolio. The amount will go towards building a 220-megawatt combined cycle power plant in Bhola, the total cost of which would be $271 million. Islamic Development Bank and local Infrastructure Development Company will provide the remaining funds.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

Foreign direct investment in the country declined by 13.5 percent to $2.02 billion in 2017 from $2.33 billion a year ago, showed Bangladesh Bank provisional data. According to the World Investment Report 2016, the net FDI inflow in Bangladesh was $2.33 billion in 2016.

(Ref: newagebd.net)

Denim exports to the US, Bangladesh’s single largest export destination, sank 31.48 percent year-on-year to $295.04 million in 2016. It is not just Bangladesh, denim exports from China, the largest apparel supplier to the US, declined as well in 2016: by 36.30 percent to $627.30 million, according to data from the Bangladesh Denim Expo.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

According to the Demutualisation Act 2013, 40 percent of the stock exchange’s shares should be allocated to DSE members, 25 percent to international stock exchanges and 35 percent to the public. The consortium of the Shanghai Stock Exchange and the Shenzhen Stock Exchange is one step closer to the 25 percent stake of the Dhaka Stock Exchange and becoming its strategic partner after the premier bourse’s board accepted its proposal. Approval from the stock market regulator is the final hurdle for the Chinese consortium, which offered Tk. 990 crore for the shares as well as technical support worth $37 million (about Tk. 300 crore). The Indian consortium has offered Tk. 675 crore for the shares and wanted two seats at the DSE board.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)
In a major leap forward, Bangladesh has become eligible to graduate to a developing country from a least developed one as it has met all the three criteria for the first time for getting out of the LDC bloc. The Committee for Development Policy (CDP), a United Nations panel, made an announcement on the country’s eligibility at a meeting at the UN headquarters in New York. Two other countries Myanmar and Laos have also become eligible to leave the LDC bloc. The three criteria are Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, Human Assets Index (HAI) and Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI).

(TheRef: thedailystar.net)

The Islamic Development Bank or IDB has approved €94.7 million in loans for housing projects in rural Bangladesh. The €94.7 million project is meant to build accommodations for low-income people in suburban and rural areas and elevate their living standards. The government needs to repay €85.1 million within 18 years on a 2 percent interest rate. It has a two-year grace period. The rest €9.33 million needs to be repaid within 25 years with a 1.35 percent interest rate. It has a seven-year grace period.

(Ref: observerbd.com)

In gross terms, FDI increased to $1.75 billion in July-December period of 2017 from $1.03 billion in the same period of 2016, latest central bank statistics show. Thus the amount increased by only 0.80 percent during the period under review.

(Ref: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

Europe’s largest economy Germany expanded 0.6 percent between October and December, official data showed, highlighting the country’s economic strength as politicians struggle to form a government. The figure follows up growth of 0.9 percent in the first quarter of 2017, 0.6 percent in the second, and 0.7 percent in the third -- all adjusted for price, seasonal and calendar effects.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

The country’s export earnings in the first seven months of this financial year 2017-18 grew by 6.55 percent to $21.32 billion from $20.01 billion in the same period of FY17. Export earnings in the July-January period of the FY 18 fell 0.23 percent short of the government set target of $21.37 billion, according to the Export Promotion Bureau data.

(Ref: newagebd.net)

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Unctad) has said that of the 45 LDCs, only five countries including Bangladesh achieved economic growth at seven percent or higher in 2017. The four other countries are Djibouti (+7pc), Ethiopia (+8.5pc), Myanmar (+7.2pc), and Nepal (+7.5pc) while Bangladesh achieved +7.1pc growth that year.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)
Earnings of the business process outsourcing sector rose 24 percent year-on-year to about $210 million last year, riding on the massive expansion in the area in the last few years. Currently, more than 40,000 young people work in about 100 companies in the sector in Bangladesh and the figure will reach 100,000 by 2021.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

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. In January, 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.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

Garment exports to India soared 66.41 percent in the first six months of the fiscal year. Between July and December last year, garment shipments to the neighbouring country fetched $111.33 million, according to data from the Export Promotion Bureau.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)
Rice imports stood at 22.59 lac tonnes in July-December of fiscal 2017-18, the highest since 1998-99 when a record 30.67 lac tonnes of rice were bought from external sources in the full fiscal year, according to food ministry data. The government imported 5.08 lac tonnes of rice in July-December. In December, the Food and Agriculture Organization said total paddy production would fall in 2017 by 3 percent to 5.08 crore tonnes, a five-year low. It estimated paddy output at 5.21 crore tonnes in 2016.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

Garment exports to non-traditional markets rose 3.77 percent year-on-year to $2.56 billion in the July-January period of the current fiscal year thanks to preferential trade benefit and fiscal incentive. Apparel shipments fetched $2.47 billion in the same period last fiscal year, according to data from the Export Promotion Bureau. In 2008, garment exports to the emerging markets stood at only $800 million. Since then it started climbing and rose five times to $3.90 billion in 2015-16.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

Bangladesh is projected to be among the fastest growing least developed countries in 2018, according to a new report of the United Nations. In Bangladesh, the growth of gross domestic product is expected to remain above 7.1 percent in 2018 and 7.2 percent in 2019, according to the UN’s flagship publication on expected trends in the global economy. Inflation is expected to be 5.4 percent in 2018 and 5.5 percent in 2019 in Bangladesh. According to the report, fiscal deficit continues to be moderately high in Bangladesh, at about 5 percent of GDP.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

Revenue collection grew 18 percent year-on-year to Tk. 75,308 crore in the July-November period of the current fiscal year. The collection grew at a faster pace in the current fiscal year compared to the previous year but missed the target of Tk. 84,066 crore for the five-month period, according to the National Board of Revenue.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)
A SUCCESS STORY OF “SMART LEATHER PRODUCTS”

Leather is a unique commodity that links grassroots villages with high societies and traditional practices with emerging technologies. For many developing countries, leather and leather manufacturers constitute a dependable source for export trade and foreign exchange earnings. For Bangladesh, there is great potential for the leather industry to become one of the country’s major foreign exchange earners, experts say. After readymade garments (RMG), this sector is playing a vital role in our national economy, contributes huge amounts of export earnings. Most leather goods and footwear manufactured here are export oriented. According to the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), leather exports totalled USD 116.73 million in the last fiscal year 2016-2017; the amount was USD 92.50 million in the previous year.

The government has declared the leather industry as a thrust sector, with considerable growth, investment and export-earning potential. New entrepreneur and investor are attracted by this sector for its huge potentialities.

Smart Leather Products (SLP) – a valued borrower of our Ring Road Branch engaged in Leather Goods Manufacturing. It is a Small and Medium Enterprise. The Company is owned by Masuda Yeasmin Urumy, a National Award winning Leather Manufacturer. In 2008, Smart Leather Products came into existence. They started banking relationship with MBL since 2013. MBL has been facilitating their strides to growth and partnering with them since then. SLP was awarded “National SME Entrepreneur Award – 2016” as best Micro entrepreneur of the year in Women Category. MBL is proud to be the part of this journey.

Masuda Yeasmin Urumy

Many women entrepreneur are also interested to do business in leather industry. There are some good signs that women are now stepping out of their comfort zone, and making gutsy moves by entering into sectors that put their talents to the test. Some women have courageously chased their dreams and achieved them.

Masuda Yeasmin Urumy is such a woman entrepreneur who loves challenges. She understands the potentiality of leather products in Bangladesh. After completing post graduation, she decided to put her skills and knowledge to the business world. At the outset, she started working with raw hide supplying from Apex Tannery to Bay Tannery with only 3.00 lac BDT capitals from 2004 and now the Company has a capital of 5.00 Million in BDT and an average turnover of around 20.00 Million in BDT.

Smart Leather Products is a Labor Compliant Factory and is associated with National Association of Small and Cottage Industries of Bangladesh (NASCIB) and Human Rights Foundation. The company workforces
Smart Leather Products has a Self-owned factory which is 2000 square feet size with 5000 pieces monthly production capabilities and Retail Center at Tokyo Square, Mohammadpur, Dhaka. Moreover, it has an online presence and delivered its products countrywide from her online platform. Some of their valued customers are Bay Emporium Limited, Munmuns Leather Limited, CSD Cantonment, Willowy Footwear Limited, President Point-Basundhara City, DCC-Gulshan, DHL, LG Company, Agrani Bank, Akij Group, M&H Telecom etc.

But, her journey in this business was not so smooth. Like many other women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh, she has to face many challenges in her little-explored business. The major problem she faced during running her business is the absence of required loan facilities to meet the need of working capital. When she started her company Smart Leather Product in 2008, her initial capital was only BDT 70,000-80,000. It was very hard to run business activities with such a small amount. But she did not stop there. Despite the struggles, her company has tasted success over time.

Mercantile Bank Limited came forward to support her tenacious effort by providing loan of the amount BDT 3.00 Lac in 2013. With expansion of business, she is now availing total of Tk. 40.00 lac credit facilities from Mercantile Bank Limited. In 2015, Smart Leather Products set up their own show room with their product at Tokyo Square, Mohammadpur. Various types of leather product of export quality like office bag, ladies bag, credit card wallet, passport holder, backpack etc are sold there. They work with passion, dedication and in a timely manner. Their products are of the best quality possible, having been worked on with care and precision. No detail is overlooked and no stitch is missed.
She has participated in various fair and exhibition including Bangladesh Bank Fair, Dhaka International Trade Fair, SME Fair, 136th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly etc. within the country for exhibiting her products as their primary marketing strategy. To popularize her product internationally, she also participated in International Fair in China and Japan and received order from those fairs.

Entrepreneurship among women, no doubt improves the wealth of the nation in general and of the family in particular. In order to do justice to the talents of potential women entrepreneurs and to jumpstart the country’s hindered economic development, appreciation and support are required in every form. She received recognitions and awards from numerous reputable organizations. As recognition of her great success in business, she received “National SME Entrepreneur Award – 2016” from SME Foundation. She is also going to receive “President Award of Industrial Development-2016” which is already declared in the Bangladesh gazette for playing significant role to the national economy.

Masuda Yeasmin Urmy is receiving cheque, Award of “National SME Entrepreneur Award – 2016” and certificate from the Industry Minister Amir Hossain Amu at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre for contributing leather product production.

Leather is a unique commodity that links grassroots villages with high societies and traditional practices with emerging technologies. For many developing countries, leather and leather manufacturers constitute a dependable source for export trade and foreign exchange earnings.
Global economic activity continues to firm up. Global output is estimated to have grown by 3.7 percent in 2017, which is 0.1 percentage points faster than projected in the fall and ½ percentage points higher than in 2016. The pickup in growth has been broad based, with notable upside surprises in Europe and Asia. Global growth forecasts for 2018 and 2019 have been revised upward by 0.2 percentage point to 3.9 percent.

(Ref: World Economic Outlook Update (January, 2018), International Monetary Fund)

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) has said there will be no winners from a trade war but open markets are - and remain - the key driver of economic growth, prosperity and job creation across the world, reports UNB. In view of growing global trade tensions - following the U.S. administration’s announcement of plans to impose new duties on imports of steel and aluminium, the ICC made the observation in a statement. In a globalized world, it said, trade is not a zero-sum game - and policy decisions must reflect this reality.

(Ref: www.observerbd.com)

The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) has left interest rates at record lows, as expected, and sounded less confident that the country’s economy would grow at 3.0 percent or more this year. The central bank expects the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) to “grow faster in 2018 than it did in 2017,” reports Reuters.

(Ref: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Panama grew 4.9 percent in the fourth quarter (Q4), compared to the same period of 2016. The Central American country’s annual growth rate stood at 5.4 percent in 2017, picked up from the 5.0 percent annual rate seen in 2016, reports Reuters. Operations at the country’s famous canal grew 16.1 percent, the government said. The Panama government has forecast the economy will grow 5.6 percent in 2018.

(Ref: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

Canada’s economy grew at a rate of 1.7 percent in the fourth quarter, failing to meet analysts’ expectations as consumer spending waned, the government said. After starting 2017 with a bang that pushed Canada ahead of other Group of Seven (G7) industrialized countries, its economy slowed in the second half of the year. Analysts had predicted 2.1 percent GDP growth in the last three months of the year, following a 1.7 percent uptick in the third quarter.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)
US consumer confidence leapt to a 17-year record in February, driven higher by strong expectations that jobs will remain plentiful in the near-term, according to a survey. The consumer confidence index jumped more than six points to 130.8, its highest level since November of 2000, well beyond analyst expectations, which called for only a 2.2 percentage point gain.

(DataRef: observerbd.com)

Digital transformation will help Asia Pacific add an estimated $1.16 trillion to its gross domestic product (GDP) by 2021, a study finds. It will also help in increasing the growth rate by 0.8 percent annually, according to the research Unlocking the economic impact of digital transformation in Asia Pacific produced by Microsoft in partnership with IDC Asia/Pacific. In 2017, about 6 percent of the region’s GDP was derived from digital products and services created directly through the use of digital technologies, such as mobility, cloud, Internet of Things (IoT) and artificial intelligence (AI), it said.

(DataRef: thedailystar.net)

Nigerian economy returned to growth in 2017 after suffering its first recession in a generation the previous year, data released from the country’s statistics office. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the West African country grew by 0.83 percent in 2017 after shrinking by 1.58 percent in 2016, which was its first annual contraction in 25 years, data showed.

(DataRef: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

The United States will surpass the world’s biggest oil producer Russia in the next year as the country’s shale oil boom continues to upend global markets. The International Energy Agency (IEA) made the prediction at an event in Tokyo of Japan, reports Reuters. The US Energy Information Administration said that US output would exceed 11 million barrels daily by late 2018. That would take it past top producer Russia.

(DataRef: observerbd.com)

The export volume growth of South Korea hits four months high in January on the strong demand for semiconductors. According to the Bank of Korea (BOK), the East Asian country’s export volume index stood at 147.23 in January, up 14.7 percent from a year earlier. The income terms-of-trade index, which means the amount of products capable of being imported with the export proceeds, advanced 13.6 percent in January.

(DataRef: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

Indonesia’s economic growth picked up slightly last year as the central bank repeatedly slashed interest rates. Southeast Asia’s biggest economy expanded by 5.1 percent on-year in 2017, up from 5.0 percent growth in 2016, while fourth-quarter growth came in at 5.2 percent, beating market expectations of 5.1 percent, government figures showed.

(DataRef: thedailystar.net)

Saudi Arabia’s annual consumer price inflation rate jumped to 3 percent in January after the government introduced a 5 percent value-added tax. The statistics agency changed the base year for the consumer price index to 2013 from 2007 in January. But the new tax and higher gasoline prices clearly pushed up inflation sharply. Annual inflation was just 0.4 percent in December, according to previously released data using the old basket.

(DataRef: thedailystar.net)

The manufacturing output of Singapore grew 17.9 percent year on year in January, compared to a 3.9 percent decline last December, the Economic Development Board. The output grew 21.6 percent year on year in January, excluding biomedical manufacturing. On a seasonally adjusted month-on-month basis, the country’s manufacturing output increased 6.7 percent in January 2018.

(DataRef: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

IMF chief Christine Lagarde warned that economic stimulus from US tax cuts may lead to a rapid rise in interest rates which would weigh on countries with high debt levels. The International Monetary Fund was going to be “attentive” to the consequences of the reform, which notably includes a sharply lower corporate tax rate.

(DataRef: thedailystar.net)
The Bank of France agreed to lend an additional $3 billion to the International Monetary Fund’s anti-poverty fund, the IMF announced. The new loan, the sixth by France, makes the country among the largest contributors to the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust, which provides very low-cost funds to the IMF’s poorest members. Most of the recipients are African nations, AFP reports.

(Ref: observerbd.com)

The world’s third-largest economy, Japan registered a trade balance deficit of 943.4 billion yen ($887 million) in January. The market had expected a deficit of 1.02 trillion yen. Exports rose 12.2 percent to 6.086 trillion yen but imports also rose 7.9 percent to 7.029 trillion yen. The yen was on average 3.4 percent higher against the dollar compared to the same month a year earlier.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

India’s City Union Bank Ltd loses nearly $2m in fraud on SWIFT system. The Indian lender said it had been able to block a remittance of $500,000, A second transfer of 300,000 euros ($372,150.00) was routed through a Standard Chartered Bank account in Frankfurt to a Turkish account, while a third totalling $1 million was sent through a Bank of America account in New York to a China-based bank.

(Ref: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

US home building surged in the first month of 2018, with a sharp rise in construction of apartments and as rebuilding continued in the storm-damaged South, according to government data released. Total housing starts rose 9.7 percent in January to an annual rate of 1.3 million units, the highest level since October 2016 and the largest increase in 13 months, the report said.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

Britain’s annual inflation rate remained at 3.0 percent in January, holding near to a six-year peak, official data showed. The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) 12-month rate was 3.0 percent in January 2018, unchanged from December 2017. The rate had hit 3.1 percent in November, which was the highest level in almost six years.

(Ref: thedailystar.net)

The Japanese economy advanced 0.4 percent quarter-on-quarter in the December quarter of 2017, much stronger than the preliminary estimate of a 0.1 percent expansion and after a 0.6 percent growth in the prior quarter. It was the eighth straight quarter of expansion, due to strong private consumption and an upward revision of business spending and inventories. On an annualised basis, the economy grew by 1.6 percent, much faster than the preliminary estimate of a 0.5 percent expansion and beating expectations of a 0.9 percent growth.

(Ref: tradingeconomics.com)

Australia’s banks, which are among the most profitable in the world, have been accused of customer exploitation and corporate fraud among other scandals, reports BBC. Australia’s the royal commission has begun investigation into the alleged and established misconduct in the country’s banks and financial services.

(Ref: observerbd.com)

The British economy grew by 0.5 percent over the three months up to the end of January, according to the NIESR (National Institute of Economic and Social Research). They also said that British GDP growth would come very close to 2 percent this year.

(Ref: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)
China lifted 68.53 million people out of poverty over the past five years, according to the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development. It was equivalent to an annual reduction of at least 13 million. The country’s poverty rate dropped from 10.2 percent in 2012 to 3.1 percent in 2017. China aims to eliminate absolute poverty by 2020 as part of the creation of a moderately prosperous society, Xinhua reports. (Ref: observerbd.com)

In China, the consumer price index (CPI) rose 1.5 percent from a year earlier, in line with expectations and slowing from December’s gain of 1.8 percent. On a month-on-month basis, CPI rose 0.6 percent in January as expected, reports Reuters. China’s government will maintain a 3.0 percent consumer inflation target for 2018, sources have told Reuters. (Ref: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

Germany’s trade surplus fell in 2017 for the first time in eight years. The seasonally unadjusted trade surplus went down to 244.9 billion euros (£216.4 billion) from the record-high of 248.9 billion euros in the previous year. In December alone, seasonally adjusted exports rose by 0.3 percent on the month while imports rose by 1.4 percent. (Ref: thefinancialexpress.com.bd)

State-run Union Bank of India Ltd posted a net loss of 12.5 billion rupees ($194.95 million) for the third quarter, weighed down by provisions made for borrowers undergoing bankruptcy proceedings. The net loss for the period ending Dec. 31 compared with a profit of 1.04 billion rupees in the year-ago quarter. Gross bad loans as a percentage of total loans stood at 13.03 percent at end-December, versus 12.35 percent at end-September and 11.70 percent a year earlier, the bank said in a statement. (Ref: thedailystar.net)

India-Asean trade relations have been growing steadily, with Asean being India’s fourth largest trading partner. Both sides have set a target of at least US$200 Billion in two way trade by 2022 compared to US$71 billion in 2016-17. India and Asean are in the process of negotiating agreements on trade and services and to improve cooperation. India is keen to strengthen its ties with Asean countries. (Ref: thedailystar.net)

India-Asean Trade on the Rise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRIES</th>
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<th>Cambodia</th>
<th>Indonesia</th>
<th>Laos</th>
<th>Malaysia</th>
<th>Myanmar</th>
<th>Philippines</th>
<th>Singapore</th>
<th>Thailand</th>
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<td>2016-17 TOTAL EXPORT</td>
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<td>23.72</td>
<td>5,244.86</td>
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<td>1,402.52</td>
<td>956.48</td>
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<td>8933.59</td>
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<td>2017-18(App-Oct) TOTAL IMPORT</td>
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<td>29.68</td>
<td>9402.05</td>
<td>125.27</td>
<td>5211.17</td>
<td>540.28</td>
<td>465.15</td>
<td>4038.78</td>
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Compiled by: ANN/dataLEADS
Source: Indian Finance Ministry, 2017

Brazil registered a current account deficit of $9.8 billion in 2017, it’s lowest in a decade and down from $23.5 billion the year before, the country’s central bank said. The 2017 figure is equivalent to 0.48 percent of gross domestic product of Latin America’s largest economy. In 2016, it was the equivalent of 1.31 percent of GDP. In December, the deficit was $4.327 billion, higher than the $3.8 billion the central bank had predicted. The last time Brazil had a current account surplus was in 2004 ($408 billion). (Ref: thedailystar.net)

Singapore’s economy grew 3.5 percent in 2017 on the back of improved productivity as well as a pick-up in the global economy. Singapore’s trade-reliant economy has enjoyed a boost this year from an improvement in global demand, particularly for electronics products and components such as semiconductors. (Ref: thedailystar.net)

State-run Bank of India, the country’s sixth biggest lender by assets, said it received 22.57 billion rupees ($353.6 million) from the government, joining other lenders in which the government is injecting funds to shore up their capital base. Bank of India was placed under the central bank’s prompt corrective action (PCA) framework due to high non-performing loans and insufficient core capital. (Ref: thedailystar.net)
The Strategic Business Conference - 2018 of Mercantile Bank Limited held at FARS Hotel & Resorts on 13 January, 2018 on Saturday. Total 129 Branch Managers and all Divisional Heads participated in the conference. A.K.M. Shaheed Reza, Chairman of the Bank inaugurated the Conference as the Chief Guest. Kazi Masihur Rahman, Managing Director & CEO of the bank presided over the meeting. Md. Anwarul Haque, Chairman, Executive Committee; M. Amanullah, Chairman, Risk Management Committee; Shahidul Ahsan, Chairman, Mercantile Bank Foundation and Al-Haj Akram Hossain (Humayun), Chairman, Mercantile Bank Securities Ltd. spoke on the occasion as Special Guests. Mohd. Selim & Dr. Md. Rahmat Ullah, Directors of the Bank also spoke on the conference as Guests of Honor.
“Main Branch” of Mercantile Bank Limited has been shifted to new premises on Sunday, 4 March 2018. New address of Main Branch is 63 Dilkusha C/A, Motijheel, Dhaka-1000. A.K.M. Shaheed Reza, Chairman of the Bank inaugurated the branch by cutting ribbon as Chief Guest. Md. Abdul Hannan & A. S. M. Feroz Alam, Vice Chairmen of the Bank; Md. Anwarul Haque, Chairman, Executive Committee; Shahidul Ahsan, Chairman, Mercantile Bank Foundation; Al-Haj Akram Hossain (Humayun), Chairman, Mercantile Bank Securities Limited; Mohd. Selim & Alhaj Mosharref Hossain, Directors of the Bank and Kazi Masihur Rahman, Managing Director & CEO of the Bank were present. Bank’s AMDs, DMDs, Executives, elites & Businessmen were also present on the occasion.
Mercantile Bank Limited signed PFI agreement with BB under JICA scheme

Mercantile Bank Limited signed a Participating Financial Institutions (PFI) Agreement with Bangladesh Bank on 14 February 2018 under JICA assisted ‘Foreign Direct Investment Promotion Project. Kazi Mashur Rahman, Managing Director & CEO, Mercantile Bank Limited & Md. Rezaul Islam, GM, Foreign Exchange Investment Department of Bangladesh Bank signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organizations. Fazle Kabir, Governor of Bangladesh Bank was present on the occasion as Chief Guest. Abu Hena Mohd. Razez Hassan, Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank, Takatoshi Nishikata, Chief Representative of JICA Bangladesh; Md. Quamru Islam Chowdhury, AMD & CBO of Mercantile Bank Limited and Shamim Ahmed, SEVP & Head of ID of MBL were present on the occasion among others.

Signing of participating agreement between BB and MBL for SMEDP-2 project fund

Mercantile Bank Limited and Bangladesh Bank signed an agreement under ‘Refinance Scheme for Small and Medium Enterprise development Project’ on 10 January 2018 on Wednesday held at Jahangir Alam Conference Center in Bangladesh Bank. Kazi Mashur Rahman, Managing Director & CEO of Mercantile Bank Limited and Md. Abul Bashar, General Manager of Financial Inclusion Department & Project Manager of SMEDP-2 of Bangladesh Bank have signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organizations at the Conference Room of Bangladesh Bank. Bangladesh Bank with the collaboration of Asian Development Bank (ADB) has raised a 240 million dollar Refinancing Scheme fund under SMEDP-2 project for SME entrepreneurs through Commercial Banks and Mercantile Bank has been nominated to receive this fund for mentioned purpose.

MBL signed an agreement with Opportunity Marketing Limited

Adil Raihan, Deputy Managing Director & CSBO of Mercantile Bank Limited and Mohammad Yousuf, Chairman of Opportunity Marketing (Pvt.) Ltd. recently signed an agreement at the Head Office of the Bank. Merchant Payment collection shall be made from the countrywide merchants of Opportunity Marketing Limited through MYCash, Mobile Banking platform of Mercantile Bank Limited under this agreement. Md. Rafiqul Hoque Bhuian, SEVP & Head of Mobile Banking Division of the Bank and other high officials of both institutions remained present in the ceremony.
MBL donated an ambulance to Feni Diabetes Hospital

Mercantile Bank Limited donated an Ambulance to Feni Diabetes Hospital operating by Feni Diabetic Samity as part of Corporate Social Responsibility of the Bank. A.K.M. Shaheed Reza, Chairman, Mercantile Bank Limited handed over the Key of Ambulance to Sushil Chandra Shil, Secretary of Feni Diabetic Samity at Bank’s Head Office. A. S. M. Feroz Alam, Vice Chairman; Md. Anwarul Haque, Chairman, Executive Committee; A.H. Akram Hossain (Humayun), Chairman, Mercantile Bank Securities Limited; A.H. Mosharref Hossain, Director of the Bank; Kazi Masihur Rahman, Managing Director & CEO and Md. Quamrul Islam Chowdhury, AMD & CBO of the Bank and senior officials of both organizations were also present.

MBTI organized Workshop on ‘Cross Selling of Retail Products’

Mercantile Bank Training Institute organized a day-long workshop on ‘Cross Selling of Retail Products’ at Bank’s Training Institute in the city recently. Sales Executives working at different branches for marketing of Retail Products of the Bank attended the said program. Kazi Masihur Rahman, Managing Director & CEO of the Bank inaugurated the workshop as Chief Guest. Among others, Adil Raihan, Deputy Managing Director & CSBO, Rafiqul Hoque Bhuiyan, SEVP & Head of Mobile Banking Division, Md. Abu Sakin, SVP & Head of Card Division, Md. Ashiqur Rahman, VP & Head of Consumer & Retail Banking Division and Javed Tariq, Principal of the Training Institute were also present in the occasion.

MBL signed agreement with the Co-operative Credit Union League of Bangladesh

Adil Raihan, DMD & CSBO of Mercantile Bank Limited and Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Chairman (Acting) of The Co-operative Credit Union League of Bangladesh (CCULB) recently signed an agreement at the Head Office of the Bank. Under this agreement, CCULB will work as the National Distributor of ‘MYCash’, Mobile Financial Services of MBL. Md. Zakir Hossain, DMD & DCBO; Md. Rafiqul Hoque Bhuiyan, SEVP & Head of Mobile Banking Division; A.K.M. Atiqur Rahman, SEVP & CTO and Head of IT Division; Md. Abu Sakin, SVP & Head of Card Division and Golam Mohammed Zaidi, VP & Head of Institutional Liability Marketing Department of the Bank and other high officials of both organizations remained present in the program.
MBL distributed loan to Women Entrepreneur

Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, MP, Speaker of the Bangladesh National Parliament handed over a cheque of Tk. 50.00 lac only to Ms. Moushumi Zaman, Proprietor of MC Trade Center on behalf of Mercantile Bank Limited as women entrepreneur recently at ‘Banker Nari Uddokta Somabesh & Ponno Proddorshony Mela 2018’ organized by Bangladesh Bank at Shishu Academy. Fazle Kabir, Governor of Bangladesh Bank & Md. Zakir Hossain, DMD & DCBO of Mercantile Bank was present on the occasion among others.

Mercantile Bank signed an agreement with Paikarimarketbd.com

Adil Raihan, Deputy Managing Director & CSBO of Mercantile Bank Limited and Muhammad Lutfur Rahman, Proprietor, Paikarimarketbd.com & Managing Director of Opportunity Marketing (Pvt.) Ltd. recently signed an agreement at the Head Office of the Bank. Under this agreement, Paikarimarketbd.com will play the role as distributor for facilitating Merchant Payment collection from the countrywide merchants of Opportunity Marketing (Pvt.) Ltd. through MYCash, Mobile Banking platform of MBL. Md. Rafiqul Hoque Bhuiyan, SEVP & Head of Mobile Banking Division of the Bank and other high officials of both institutions remained present in the ceremony.

MBL’s celebration of our country’s graduation to a Developing Country.

People from all walks of life celebrated Bangladesh becoming eligible for graduating to a Developing Country on March 22, 2018 by bringing out colorful processions and joining rallies in festive mood. In the capital, employees of the government, semi-government and private organizations, students of university, colleges and schools brought out processions to celebrate the country’s achievement. With the leadership of Bangladesh Bank, Mercantile Bank Limited also participated in the historic event through bringing out the jubilant processions on that day. The capital as well as other parts of the country was decorated with festoons, posters, banners and flags.
A three-day countrywide fair titled “Development Fair 2018” was held on 11-13 January, 2018. The fair highlights the Government’s Development efforts and achievements made so far in its journey towards making Bangladesh a middle-income country by 2021 and a developed one by 2041. Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the fair through a video conference from Her official residence, Ganabhaban, Dhaka. Similar fairs will also be held abroad so that Bangladeshi nationals, living abroad, can also know about the Government’s Development efforts and its achievements. Bangladesh mission abroad will host such fairs at their convenient time, according to the Ministry of Information. Mercantile Bank Limited also participated in “Development Fair 2018”. Thirty Branches of our Bank at upazila and district levels across the country took part in that fair.
The flamboyant beauty of Nijhum is almost unblemished by the human expedition. Once upon a time, it was called Char Osman. The amazing view will make you feel very refreshed from monotonous and tensed life. If you didn’t visit there yet, you have surely missed something in life; it will be a missing in discovery of beauty of Bangladesh. Life really happens here, no doubt about the arduous and troublesome life style which absolutely depends on the tidal forces of water.

It is an offshore island with forest and deep blue water of the Bay of Bengal. The Island Nijhum is exactly situated between Noakhali and Bhola under Hatiya Upazila in Noakhali district. It covers a total area of 16,352 hectares. The island has 20 km long sandy and grassy beach. In the 1950s, the cluster of the islands started to emerge and the surface of the islands began to sustainable near 1972, then the forest department started forestation program here. The most important type of tree planted in the island is Keora, locally known as Kerfa, which has fast-growing roots holding the sandy island. Besides these, there are Geowra, Bain, Kakra and other valuable trees.

**DISCOVER BANGLADESH**

**EXPLORING THE BEAUTY OF NIJHUM DWIP**

**Nijhum Dwip is the island of silence and tranquility, having splendid natural beauty. The eye-catching and very quiet environment of this island really justifies its name. Tourists feel a sense of silence during the exploration of Nijhum Island.**
The forest department of Bangladesh government created mangrove forests in Nijhum Dwip, the main attraction in this forest is the herd of cheetal or spotted deer. In 1978, four pairs of spotted deer were released in the forest and now the number of deer has increased to around 22,000. Wild animals—the spotted deer, monkey, buffalo, snakes and 35 species of birds made the island attractive to the tourists and thousands of guest birds migrate to this island to add more to its beauty especially during the winter season. Heron, Duck Bird, Egret, Cormorant, and Ibis as oysters of various nature and snails can be easily seen on the island.

In 2001, the government of Bangladesh declared the natural Nijhum forest as National Park. The Nijhum Dwip National Park was originally proposed as a Sanctuary for the conservation of a wide variety of waterfowl, including the migratory shore birds, and a large number of mammals. The area includes a cluster of islands, mainly Ballar Char, Kamlar Char, Char Osman and Char Muri.

During the high tide, a significant portion of the island becomes covered in water, apart from the cultivated and inhabited areas. Their main occupations are cultivation, fishing, livestock farming and produce vegetables in large quantities. People live here together amidst natural calamities. Life on the island is hard and risky but people are mentally so strong to survive against the rude calamities.

Traveling to the wonder island Nijhum Dwip is sometimes very hard since it depends totally on tidal forces of water. The tourists in the island can enjoy breathtaking sunrise and awesome sunset from the island. The uniqueness of this very island is the beauty of mangrove Sundarban & St. Martin will be found here in the same place.

Places to visit in Nijhum Island

1. Komolar Dwip
2. Chowdhorir Khal & Kobirajer Chor
3. Choakhali Sea Beach
4. Mangrove Forest
5. Namar Bazar Sea Beach
6. Domar Chor
7. Virgin Sea Beach (South part of Domar Chor)
How to go to Nijhum Dwip
You cannot go to Nijhum Dwip by bus or air as there is no land connection or airport facilities. There are more than three ways to reach Nijhum Dwip.

**Route 1:** You have to take a boat (launch) from Sadarghat, Dhaka. Farhan-2 and Farhan-3 launch daily moving from Sadarghat to Hatiya. The time of the departure is afternoon 5 o’clock. Tamaruddi, Hatiya to Moktaria Ghat by motorbike or auto rickshaw (one and half hour journey). From there Bondor Tila Bazar is 10 minutes way by a troller. Nama bazar is 20 minutes way by motorbike from Bondor Tila. If you want you can go directly from Tamaruddin, Hatiya to Nama Bazar by a troller (boat). It would take two to three hours if the river tides. The rent of a boat would be Tk. 4 thousand if reserved.

**Route 2:** You can start journey from Shamoly, Dhaka to Sonapur, Noakhali by bus service (400tk per head). Sonapur to Chairman Ghat by CNG run vehicles for Tk. 500 and it will take around 1 hour. Chairman Ghat to Nalchira Ghat in Hatia by

- **Sea Truck:** Tk. 90 per head & will take 1 to 1:30 hours to reach at Nalchira Ghat in Hatia.
- **Trawler:** Tk. 150 per head & will take 1:00 hour to reach at Nalchira Ghat in Hatia.
- **Speed Boat:** Tk. 400/500 per head & will take 20-30 minutes to reach at Nalchira Ghat in Hatia.

**Route 3:** Form Chittagong first you will have to go to Hatia Island by Motor boat or Ship and it goes first to Sandwip then to Hatia. It takes around 10 hours to reach Hatia and then Nijhum Island.

**Useful Tour Information**
Dhaka to Sonapur, Noakhali by bus service (400tk per head). Sonapur to Chairman Ghat by CNG run vehicles for Tk. 500 and it will take around 1 hour. Chairman Ghat to Nalchira Ghat in Hatia by

- **Sea Truck:** Tk. 90 per head & will take 1 to 1:30 hours to reach at Nalchira Ghat in Hatia.
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- **Speed Boat:** Tk. 400/500 per head & will take 20-30 minutes to reach at Nalchira Ghat in Hatia.

Nalchira Ghat to Moktaria Ghat by baby taxi Tk 600 to Tk. 700. And it is about 40 km via Shadar Upojila and Zahazmara Bazar and will take about 1:30 hours.

Hatia is a long island. It is wide north to south and it is about 50 km long. The island’s width is not more than 15 km. Moktaria Ghat to Bondor Tila Bazar is 10 minutes way by local engine boat or troller and Tk. 10/20 per person. Finally, Bondor Tila Hat to Namar bazar by motorbike will take 20/25 minutes and Tk. 100 per person.

**Lodging Facilities**
There is not enough accommodation facility in this island. The only resort is Nijhum Resort is maintained by Abakash Parjoton, a private tourism company. You may get some more accommodation by the local people. Local Mosque gives some facilities to stay nights there. Forest Department and District Parishad have Guest Houses in the island, for which need prior permission. Both these places provide food. If you want, you may use tents to stay there.

**Foods**
There are available restaurants and traditional foods like fish, meat, chicken, or you can hire a chef from Hotel Abakash, his cooking is good, he’ll charge extra Tk. 200-300 for cooking. Do not miss the taste of buffalo yogurt, which is famous in Nijhum Dwip.
**Exploration of Nijhum Dwip**

You can hire a local boat (Tk.100) for Komolar Dwip (special for Birds), Kobirajer Chor (Natural views), Chowdhori Khal, where deer play in the forest. You must go before evening. To see deer in the forest depends on your luck. You cannot see deer often in the forest. You must keep silence, follow your guide and keep the camera ready for the shutter. Suddenly, you can see a large group of deer nearby you eating leaves and grass. But, they are very clever and their hearing power is so high. Only a small sound of dry leaves can aware them of leaving the place with 100km per hour speed. You will see thousands of buffalo herd on the deep green ground and canal.

You can move to the Choakhali sea beach by motorbike, if you are lucky, deer can be seen there. There is almost 15 minutes walking distance from the Nijhum Resort to Namar Bazar sea beach. It is clay mixed sandy beach but the mind blowing wind can touch your heart deeply. Drinking green coconut water is awesome and it help you to fit physically in the hot day.

You can reserve an engine boat to enjoy the whole of Nijhum Dwip and the new “Virgin Island Sea Beach”. When boat run over the heavy wave, seeing birds, buffalos, mangrove forest, fisherman, and splendid natural beauties. The day may be ended by moving behind the deer at the Chowdhori Khal forest area.

Hiding inside the forest and waiting for deer silently is so incredible. The beauty of sunset is so cool over the green field and sea. The splendid view of buffalo’s moving, birds’ flying and the fishermen doing hurry to set their net for fishing will urge you to come to this place once again.

The B-B-Q facilities are available at Hotel Abakash, and they have a big BBQ burner. They organize the party and all the guests can enjoy the night by playing cards, gossiping, singing songs under the moonlight. The night party is outstanding. BBQ per head cost Tk. 200 including all.

You can also enjoy foggy morning; it is the time to see the perfect beauty of sunrise from of South Para beach. Hire a motorbike and take a short trip to see the beauty of the nice sandy beach.

**Must Follow**

Everyone should avoid anything which can be the cause of destruction for the beauty of Nihjum forest and please do not litter the forest. It is suggested to visit Nihjum Island silently and come back silently. Bring back everything you have taken with you such as water bottle, plastic packet or other things. Keep Nihjum neat and clean so that our next generation does not think it was a story. Give a chance for them to explore it, therefore, we have the responsibility to look after of it.

**Travel Tips**

1. Must keep comfortable clothes and suitable shoes.
2. The entire journey deserves huge mental & physical strength.
4. Keep dry food, high-calorie food, like chocolate, ground nut.
5. Important to keep glucose or saline for the instant energy solution.
6. Keep rope, matches for the fire, chargeable light, water bottle, cap, sunglass and other things that you need.
### MBL KEY INDICATORS

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