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Beware prank callers

T&T plans to introduce callers' ID system in telephone

NURUL ALAM

A move is underway to introduce callers' ID (identity) system in telephone service under T&T department in Chittagong, sources said.

The T&T authorities already introduced callers' ID system with the installation of a new digital exchange at Agrabad on April 30.

With the introduction of such a system, the subscribers can easily identify the callers' number in the display of the receiver set. And it will provide relief to the subscribers from any unwanted calls, sources said.

This new exchange at Agrabad has capacity 7000 connections with ID facility, they added.

Meanwhile, T&T authorities converted 1200 analogue phones at Agrabad into digital system under the new exchange. The telephones under 50 group were converted into 81 group.

Over 2,000 applicants at Agrabad area who deposited money for demand notes are expected to get connections

under this new exchange, T&T sources said. Their applications were pending for long.

Saleh Ahmed Hakim, General Manager of T&T, Chittagong, told the Daily Star that the subscribers under all new digital exchanges would enjoy the callers' ID facility. Another new exchange is likely to be installed at Chittagong Export Processing Zone shortly to cope with the growing demand for telephones, he added.

But no final decision has yet been taken to ensure callers' ID facility in other existing exchanges in Chittagong, Hakim said.

He said the existing eight exchanges had provided 65,000 connections in the port city to cater to the need of the people.

Of the eight exchanges, one is at Nandankon, two at Agrabad, one at Muradpur, one at Baizid area, one at Sagarika, one at Kalurghat and another at Chittagong EPZ, T&T sources said.

Efforts were on to bring all the exchanges in Chittagong under callers' ID system by installing

additional software into them. The T&T reportedly collected cost estimates from a foreign company in this regard, sources said. Decision would be taken to this effect after complete evaluation of the estimate.

However, the exchange at Nandankon, the oldest one in the city, was replaced with a new technology about eight years ago when it became worn out, sources said.

The people have to go from pillar to post to get a telephone connection due to poor capacity of other exchanges, sources said. Thousands of applications were pending for years together at that time. Even some of them are with ministers' recommendations. It is like a 'golden deer' to manage a new connection, sources said.

The brokers in collusion with a section of T&T employees reportedly managed to earn a lot giving telephone connections in Chittagong.

Such a scenario prevailed due to growing demand for telephones in the city. The mobile phone companies took advantage of the situation later and cashed in huge, sources said.

Chawk Bazar still draws middle class

MOHIT UL ALAM

Chawk Bazar used to be Chittagong's easternmost downtown before Bahaddarhat assumed its supremacy. It was the gateway to the city's eastern entrance.

The Arakan Road from Cox's Bazaar used to reach it via Bahddarhat, and the road from Kaptai meets with the Arakan Road at a point near Kalurghat, while the road from Rangamati had to be taken also from Chawk Bazar through Muradpur.

Now both Muradpur and Bahaddarhat have increased their sizes and activities. Chawk Bazar has fallen into disuse and much of its previous charm gone. It is now a kind of hinterland for the city, still feebly connecting with more inauspicious areas like Katalgunj, Sholak Bahar, Bakalia, D.C. Road, Dhanyar Pool places which remain submerged during the rainy season.

In fact, Chawk Bazar does not command a big area either. Its physical area remains confined to the bazar, which is all a four-storied building, and some adjacent roads, and the roads beyond have whatsoever no link with Chawk Bazar.

So, the landmark of Chawk Bazar has to be the old Wali Khan Masjid to the west of it. The mosque is standing dangerously on the road that links Chawk Bazar with Muradpur. The boundary wall of the mosque has bulged outside into the road threatening a near collapse of the edifice anytime.

From here, that is, from the Wali Khan Mosque intersection, another road goes east and branches off at a nearby point, one road going straight to Bahaddarhat via Badur Tala and another turning right to Chawk Bazaar itself.

The Chawk Bazar building, as we said, is a four-storied house, the ground floor being given to the fish, meat and vegetable vendors.

The Chawk Bazaar market is very popular with the middle class people. They have firm belief that the vegetable and the fish brought here are fresh and cheap, and so they all rush to this bazar in the morning. But the building is too small, so the market has spread outside into the side streets, and herein you must come to get the freshest supply of the Bombay ducks at Tk 50 per kilo, I mean the biggest size, those fish which look like elephants. Fish, as the market mainly caters to the small-



Wali Khan Mosque (locally known as Oli Khan Masjid) constructed by Nawab Wali Beg Khan stands as a landmark of Chawk Bazar.

spenders, never goes beyond three kilos, though occasionally the big ones do come, but do find it difficult to find buyers.

In the bird's section, you of course get a lot of chickens, both farm- and home-raised, but then you also get ducks and pigeons. The pigeons, however,

are so small that you might at first take them for chicks. The business people are capable of shattering your dreams so much!

Nearby the market, the Chawk Bazar post office is located in one of the most dilapidated houses of the city. It is a

red brick building of the colonial time and has obviously decided to go without any renovation, and therein you find the people of the postal department working arduously without the slightest awareness of the unhygienic conditions they are working in. May God help them.



Fishermen sort out fish leaving the trash on the sea beach to rot and spread stench causing serious air pollution. The photo was taken from Patenga Seashore.

Tobacco threat to environment in Bandarban

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD

Massive tobacco cultivation poses a threat to forest resources as well as environment at Lama and Ali Kadam upazilas of the Bandarbandistrict.

It also hampers production of vegetables and other crops in the two upazilas.

Ten thousand acres of cultivable land have been brought under tobacco cultivation this year. Besides, tobacco is being cultivated on almost every available open space of government offices or schools, sources said.

Cultivation of tobacco on the huge land that comprises around 80 per cent of cultivable land has already resulted in a crisis of vegetables and other crops. It is

an obstacle to attaining target of Boro cultivation this year, they said.

The British-American Tobacco Company (BATB) initiated tobacco cultivation at Lama upazila in 1986-87 financial year. Since then the leading tobacco manufacturing companies, having both the volume of harvest and quality of tobacco produced in Lama and Ali Kadam better than other places of the country, started flocking there for inspiring tobacco cultivation.

Over 2,500 registered and non-registered farmers are now engaged in tobacco cultivation in the two upazilas.

The cultivation is going on under the support and supervision of over a dozen leading companies including British-

American Tobacco Company, Dhaka Tobacco, Ajj Uddin Tobacco and Akij Tobacco.

The tobacco companies are providing all facilities. They supply seeds, fertilisers, insecticides and power pumps and give financial supports for cultivation.

On the other hand, negligence of duty and non-cooperation of the block supervisors of the agricultural department and marketing problems discouraged the farmers to grow other crops or vegetables in the upazilas.

With tobacco cultivation getting an increasing trend, at present there is an acute crisis of vegetables there and the price is beyond the reach of common people.

Repeated cultivation of tobacco defying the "rotation of crops" and excessive use of fertiliser is sure to reduce the natural fertility of the land, agricultural researchers said.

For the sake of fertility of land extent of tobacco cultivation should be brought down at Lama and Ali Kadam.

Besides, around 50 mounds of fuel wood are needed for processing tobacco of one acre of land. Around five lakh mounds of fuel wood are collected from the nearby forests a year for tobacco cultivation causing deforestation there, local people said. Moreover, the poisonous gas and touch of tobacco create various skin diseases and respiratory problems among the local people, they added.

the week that was

International Photographic Exhibition

Chittagong Photographic Society (CPS) organised a six-day international photographic exhibition at Chittagong Government Art College gallery in the city on Friday.

As many as 434 photographers of 30 countries including Bangladesh participated in the exhibition the second venture of CPS after 1990.

Noted photographer Dr. Nawajesh Ahmed inaugurated the exhibition as the chief guest. Abul Momen, resident editor of the Bengali daily the Prothom Alo, Chittagong Bureau, and Managing Editor of the daily Azadi were special guests at the ceremony with CPS president Moududul Alam in the chair. Bangladesh Photographic Society representative SM Yusuf Tusher, CPS General Secretary Shueb Faruque, Organising Secretary Mahin Hasan also addressed the function while the exhibition committee convenor Amuj Kumar Barua made the address of Welcome.

Fake notes recovered

One thousand and seventy-two fake

Solo painting exhibition

A five-day solo painting exhibition of Nimni Dewan was held at Alliance Francaise auditorium here on Saturday.

It is the fourth solo painting exhibition of Nimni, a post graduate of the Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka University.

Forty-two paintings have been put on display in the exhibition. Most of the paintings were made this year.

The paintings depicting the life-style and cultural diversity of tribal people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts drew a good number of visitors and brought huge appreciation for Nimni.



Visitors crowd the solo painting exhibition of Nimni Dewan in the

pieces of 500-taka notes of Tk. 5.36 lakh were recovered here on Sunday. On information Pahartoli police recovered the fake notes from abandoned condition at Sagorika Road near CDA cattle market at around 7am.

Two persons -- Md. Jahangir and Md. Musa -- were arrested on charge of keeping 20 fake 500-taka notes from the area on April 27.

Several racketeers are active in making forged notes of Tk. 100 and Tk.

500 in Pahartoli area for long.

Muggers in guise of passengers held

Six members of a gang active in mugging at mini-bus and coasters in the guise of passengers were arrested from different areas of the city here on Saturday.

Kotwali police arrested one Zahir Ahmed, allegedly a member of the gang, from Satkania Colony. Police arrested five others including the gang leader Md. Alamgir from different places according to Zahir's confessional statement. Other arrested were identified as Md. Ali alias Nazu, Abdul Hannan, Nurul Alam and Hatkata Siddik.

Birth anniversary of Shakespeare observed

Department of English Language and Literature (DELL) of Premier University, Chittagong took elaborate programmes on Wednesday to observe the 439th birth anniversary of the English poet and dramatist William Shakespeare.

The programmes included presentation of paper and a mini-exhibition on Shakespeare's life and works.

The DELL of Premier University, Chittagong organised the programme at the conference hall of the university. Chairman of the department, Prof Mohit Ul Alam presented the paper on the poet while and students took part in the recitation and reproduced some scenes from Shakespeare's play.

New bridge on Ctg-Kaptai Road to be constructed

Roads and Highway (R&H) Department has taken an initiative for construction of a new bridge on the river Halda on Chittagong-Kaptai road. R&H authorities have already floated a tender of Tk. 14 crore in this regard. The 216-metre RCC bridge with footpaths on both sides would be constructed beside the old one.

Mirza Abbas for low cost housing

The government as a part of its programmes would develop low cost housing for lower and middle-class people at Pahartoli, Halishahar and Bayezid Bostami areas in the port city. Minister for Housing and Public Works

Mirza Abbas this here on Saturday. He was addressing as the chief guest at the handing-over ceremony of 489 nucleus houses of Sher Shah Colony, Feroz Shah Colony and Halishahar areas.

Commerce Minister Amir Khoru Mahmud Chowdhury, also in-charge of the district and State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Md Nasiruddin addressed the function as special guests. Engineer Hafiz Rashid presided.

Amir Khoru in his speech said more 190 such nucleus houses would be handed over to low-income people here soon.

The government would earn revenue of Tk 11 crore from the nucleus houses.

Lions District 315-B 4 meets

International Lions District 315-B 4 organised a function in honour of the past governors Lions Multiple district 315, Bangladesh here on Friday. District governor Lion PR Sinha M.J.F. presided over the meeting at Lion Taher Uddin Memorial Hall at Zakir Hossain Road.

The past governors put up their experiences as presidents and expressed satisfaction over the present activities of the organisation.



Froebel play school for children of two and three was launched here recently. Classes began on May 4.

Rehabilitation Centre for Disabled Children launched

A new organisation for rehabilitating and rendering newer treatments to the disabled and stroke-hit children of the city and adjoining suburbs was launched here in the city on Friday.

The Rehabilitation Centre for the Disabled (RCDB), a subsidiary organisation of CDC, aims at undertaking long-

term plans for medicare for the children who suffered stroke, paralysis or polio cerebral pulse. Woman organiser and social worker Monowara Hakim Ali inaugurated treatment service of RCDB at Dampara MM Ali road as the chief guest.

BSEHR, Chittagong city unit president Advocate Zia Habib Ahsan, Jatiya Shahitya Parishad, Chittagong Secretary Taslima Khan Rozi, development organiser Badal Talukder and CDC Executive Director Salim Nazrul were also present at the inaugural function.