

The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



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"There are no new SIMs in the company."
 GRAMEENPHONE CEO YASIR AZMAN WARNS OF A CRISIS IF BTRC DOESN'T ALLOW IT TO SELL NEW SIM CARDS



"We want to set ourselves a goal of trying to win a Test series outside Bangladesh."
 HEAD COACH RUSSELL DOMINGO BEFORE THE UPCOMING TEST SERIES IN PAKISTAN (PAGE 12)



"I see no need to bind ourselves to an agreement with the EU."
 UK PM BORIS JOHNSON SETS OUT BRITAIN'S POSITION FOR POST-BREXIT TALKS (PAGE 10)



BB RESERVE HEIST

Int'l payment system now slower, costlier

No tangible progress in four years

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON, MD FAZLUR RAHMAN and RAFIUL ISLAM

It has been four years since a band of hackers broke into the Bangladesh Bank's account with the New York Fed with the intent to pull off what would have been the biggest cyber heist in history.

Thanks to stroke of good fortune, the hackers made way with less than one-tenth the sum -- and Bangladesh is no closer to seeing that money back four years on as there has been little tangible progress in the legal battle at home and abroad.

Not just that, there has not been any lasting solution to prevent a repeat of the incident that left the central bank \$81 million short -- and would have left it with a \$951 million-size hole in its books.

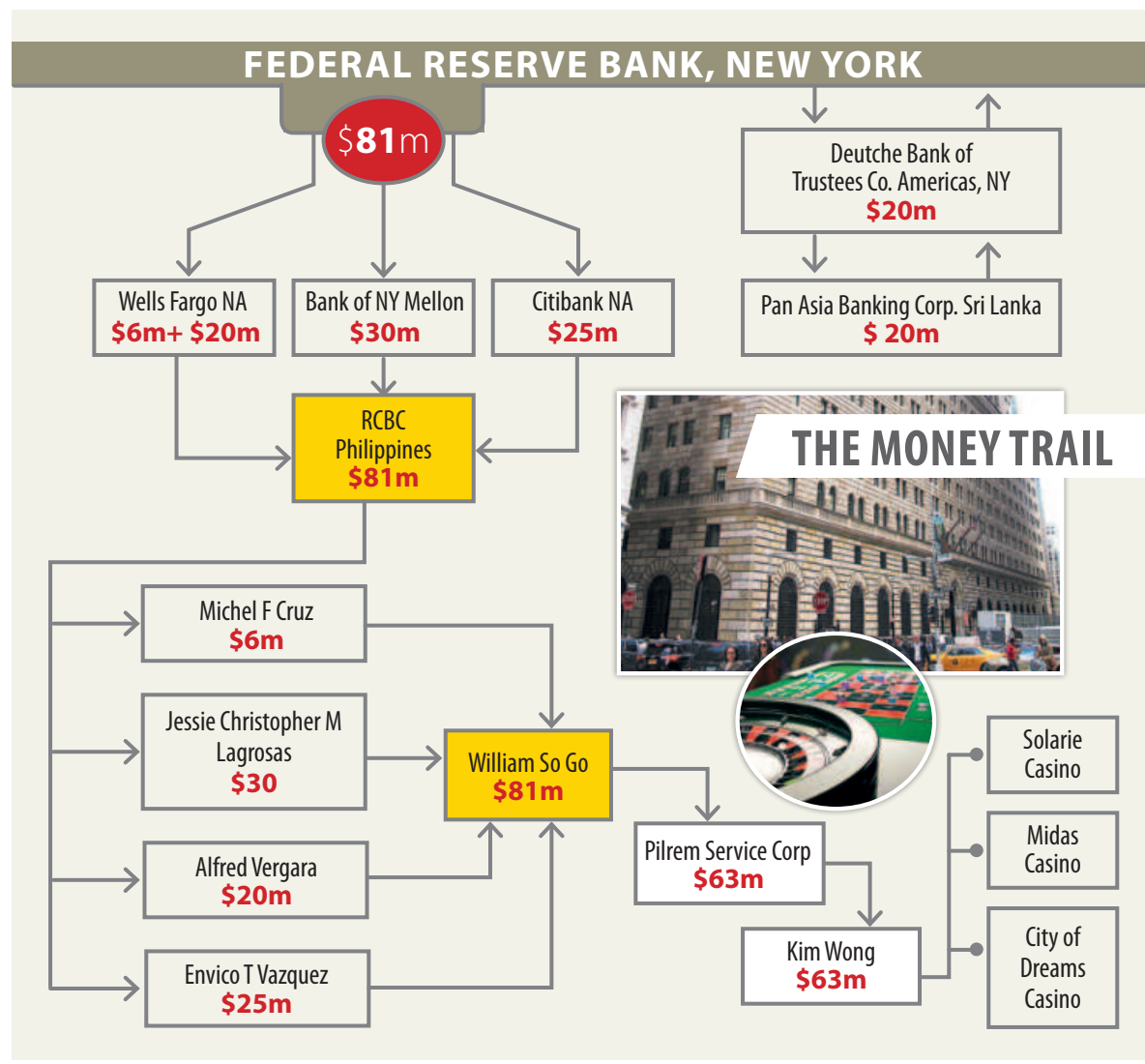
The central bank is working under a temporary arrangement for four years that is costing additional time and money.

Under the makeshift system since 2016, the BB sends payment instructions to the New York Fed through the SWIFT system and follows it up with an email. After receiving the email, the New York Fed calls the BB to double-check whether it has sent the payment instruction or not.

Until the three-tier security system is ensured, the Fed does not carry out any fund transfer instructions. And this arrangement is for Bangladesh only.

Not just that, the Fed transfers funds for only two days a week now,

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GP faces crisis over SIM sales

The operator running out of its BTRC-approved SIMs; yet to get nod for new sales

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Grameenphone may not be able to sell new SIMs after a week or two as it has come close to exhausting the new connections it was allowed to sell by the regulator, said its CEO yesterday.

The company may face a major crisis unless the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission allows it to sell new SIM cards or resell the ones that have not been used in 15 months, said Chief Executive Officer Yasir Azman, who took charge of GP on Saturday.

"We will be able to sell Grameenphone connections in the next week or two only," the 12th CEO of the largest mobile carrier told a press conference at his office yesterday.

Contacted, BTRC Chairman Jahurul Haque told The Daily Star that GP's crisis would be solved if it gave the money it owed the government.

An audit of GP, ordered by the BTRC in 2015, concluded that the company owed the government Tk 12,579.95 crore. GP has since been refuting the audit claim. The dispute resulted in the regulator imposing

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China virus deaths top SARS toll

Beijing in urgent need for protective equipment

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

360 DEATHS (ALL IN CHINA)
17,200 CONFIRMED CASES

AGENCIES

China said yesterday it urgently needed medical equipment and surgical masks as the death toll from a new coronavirus jumped above 360, making it more deadly than the SARS crisis nearly two decades ago.

The 57 new deaths confirmed yesterday was the single-biggest daily increase since the virus was detected late last year in the central city of Wuhan, where it is believed

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Govt has taken all necessary steps

Nothing to panic about, says health minister; no case reported yet in Bangladesh

PREVENTING CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has taken all necessary measures to prevent coronavirus from entering the country, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said yesterday.

"The situation at present is nothing to panic about. Even if it [the virus] comes, we're fully prepared," he said at a seminar, organised by Bangladesh Medical Association, at the capital's Segunbagicha.

He also said a cabinet meeting earlier in the day decided that the government would not send any more chartered flights to China to bring home Bangladeshi nationals.

"If any Bangladeshi wants to come back, he or she will have to do that themselves. The government would provide necessary support.

But those returning from Wuhan will have to remain quarantined for two weeks."

On Saturday, 312 Bangladeshis, who had been stranded in the Chinese city, landed in Dhaka in a special flight. Three hundred and ten of them remained quarantined at Ashkona Hajj Camp while the other two were at a hospital last night.

The minister said another 171 Bangladeshis had recently sought to return from Wuhan, the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak.

On the temporary ban on on-arrival visa for Chinese nationals, he said all Chinese nationals would need to show health certificates to the Bangladeshi authorities for the visa.

Anyone returning from China will have to be quarantined, he added.

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Transport leaders score another win

Govt relaxes experience requirement for licence to drive heavy vehicles

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Accepting another demand of road transport association leaders, the government has relaxed the experience requirement for getting a heavy vehicle driving licence.

Now a person holding a light vehicle driving licence for three years can apply for a heavy vehicle driving licence. The heavy vehicles include bus and truck.

Earlier, one would have required at least six-year experience to secure such a licence. The road transport and bridges ministry issued a circular in this regard on Sunday. It said the order came into effect immediately.

A top road transport expert said the government's latest move would jeopardise road safety. However, another expert stressed the need for providing proper training and ensuring quality of driving test before issuing a heavy vehicle driving licence.

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Children attend class, wearing protective masks at Mascot Innovative School and College in the capital's Ashkona area. Inset, a notice hung on the school gate requests all to put on masks for protection against coronavirus. More than 300 Bangladeshis, brought back from coronavirus-hit Chinese city of Wuhan, are being kept in quarantine at nearby Ashkona Hajj Camp.

SSC EXAMS

Wrong test papers given at 4 centres

STAR REPORT

Wrong question papers were distributed among students during yesterday's Bangla first part SSC exams at four centres in Barishal, Nilphamari, Jashore, and Feni.

The Secondary School Certificate and equivalent exams began on the day.

In Barishal, 17 students got wrong sets of MCQ question papers, based on the old syllabus, in the city's Halima Khatun Girls' High School centre.

At the centre, more than half of the candidates were expected to appear for the test with question papers from the current syllabus. However, 17 had to answer questions based on the old syllabus, said Shah Alam, headmaster of Jagadish Saraswat Girls' High School in the city.

The Barishal education board authorities were notified of the matter, but it was too late by then. The candidates were affected as they could not answer all the questions, he added.

After visiting the centre, board Chairman Mohammad Yunus said the matter would be considered so that the

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42nd Death Anniversary

(Abul Company) The founder of Abul Khair Group noted industrialist and social worker

Late Janab ABUL KHAIR



Death: 4th February, 1978

In accordance with the will of Almighty Allah the Beneficent, you left this mundane world, leaving us and many of your relations overwhelmed by grief. In our everyday life your bright ideals serve as beacon. You are immortal in your death. We pray to Almighty Allah for the salvation of your departed soul.

May Allah the Beneficent bless you with the eternal bliss of paradise. Ameen.

Your loving Sons, Daughters and Relatives

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN