Tab on tele-talk

FROM PAGE 1 weekly and other national holidays, and also from 10pm to 8am on workdays

The government press release claimed that the new system is aimed at reducing misuse of phones and providing improved facilities to subscribers.

Such rates would definitely affect people's telephone habits. But more importantly, it would have a severely negative impact on Internet use and the growth of the Information Technology (IT) sector in the country, which is already beleaguered by sudden imposition of various charges by authorities in recent weeks. Ironically, the IT sector has been recognised by the government as a thrust sector.

More interestingly, the two ministries -- the Finance Ministry or the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MOPT) -- that have come up with this new rate structure, are no longer supposed to deal with the fixation of tariff and other regulatory issues

The government on January 30 formed Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), the country's first telecom watchdog, to deal with the issue with Information Secretary Syed Marghub Murshed as the commission's chairman. The BTRC was formed under the Bangladesh Telecommunication Act 2001 passed by the Jatiya Sangsad.

Earlier, the government took a series of steps that has already affected the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and IT organisations. Monthly charge of telephones for ISPs has been raised to a stag-

offices, involving a huge amount of

money, were not mentioned in the

cases of graft and wastage of gov-

ernment resources, which have

and auditor-general, Syed Yusuf Hossain, said the wastage and

misuse in the government offices

were the main cause of dependence

on foreign aid. Referring to the audit reports, he

said they did not give the complete

picture of wastage and misuse of

are some more areas, which were

not covered by auditors. "Only 15 to

20 per cent transactions of the

This is a test case because there

the government resources.

current audit system, he said.

22,500 units of the government."

The audit report revealed only

The immediate past comptroller

report, he said.

documents, he noted

gering Tk 1000 from Tk 150

The ministry also recently asked the ISPs to pay a new range of yearly fee' according to the usage of satellite bandwidth -- Tk 50,000 for using 64 kilobits per second (kbps) of bandwidth, Tk 100,000 for 128 kbps, Tk 200,000 for 256 kbps and Tk 300,000 for 512 kbps. ISPs

using one megabit per second or higher bandwidth would pay Tk 400,000 annually. ISPs term this fee as punishment. These fees are in addition to the existing fees they already pay to

run their business. These payments are in addition to the annual licensing fee of US\$3,500 and the recurring costs of satellite connectivity. The MOPT also mandates each ISP to pay

locating the business. The new license provision also takes a heavy toll on the business users of the Internet. ISPs will have to make an annual payment of \$2,000 as 'sub lease fee' for each corporate customer. The MOPT also prohibited Internet connection for any commercial organisation

engaged in the business of public phone or fax service. With only 6 lakh land telephones for 13 crore people, Bangladesh offer the lowest telephone access to its people. However, the telecom connection fees are world's highest while telephone charges are much higher than most countries of the world. The T&T however remains a

\$1,000 as 'shifting charge' for

major contributor to the government exchequer. Last year it contributed Tk 1400 crore

ETV case HC asks former information secy

to appear with tender papers BSS, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday directed former information secretary Akmal Hossain to be present before the court on March 4 with tender documents submitted by ETV and copy of evaluation report in this regard. Akmal Hossain is now on LPR.

The court passed the order during hearing of the writ petition challenging the validity of licensing agreement between ETV and the government

A Division Bench of the HC comprising Justice Mohammad Hamidul Haque and Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana is hearing the matter.

Attorney General A F Hasan Arif submitted before the court that an advocate gave him threats over telephone but he did not mention the name of the advocate.

He said that as the chief law officer of the country, his moral duty is to protect the interest of the state and for this if some one is affected.

front of the embassy.

DMP's traffic department officials

said yesterday's severe traffic jam

on several city roads was due to

change of routes of vehicles

But other sources said return of

old vehicles and those without

proper documents on city roads also

contributed to the traffic jam in the

last few days. The government

banned movement of such vehicles

roads taking advantage of a luke-

warm supervision by the traffic

department and the Bangladesh

Road Transport Authority (BRTA),

the sources said. But the traffic

department and the BRTA now

attribute the traffic jam on to cattle

of the temporary cattle markets in

the city are on roads or at places that

adjacent roads. This year DMP

authorities had reservation about

allowing cattle markets at

Nayabazar, Chankharpool and

"Despite our repeated request,

DCC has leased the three spots as

emporary cattle markets", DC

Traffic (south) of DMP, Abu Musa

Mohammad Fakrul Islam, told The

Karwan Bazar, the officials said.

According to DMP officials, most

Those vehicles are back on city

in the city from January 1.

markets, they added.

because of 'some cattle markets'.

today.

he has nothing to do. At that time, counsel of ETV Barrister Rafiq UI Haque stood before the court and mentioned that he talked with the Attorney General over telephone but the allegation of threat is not correct.

The court termed the matter very unfortunate and said if the chief law officer of the country faces such a situation, then what would be fate of

others. The writ petition was filed jointly by Dr Chowdhury Mahmud Hasan and Dr Abdur Rab, teachers at Dhaka University and President of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists Gias Kamal Chowdhury.

He suggested that the government take other positive measures like increase in export earning and flow of remittance to reduce dependence on foreign aid.

government offices come under the Debapriya observed that all the With the existing manpower and report were not related to wastage. logistic support we cannot audit all

he

He underscored strenathening solution. of internal audit and control system in government offices to put a lid on wastage and misuse of resources.

Had the misuse been stopped the mobilisation of internal resources by the government would have been even stronger, he pointed out.

It would not only reduce the government's expenditure, but help the government take up development projects with the saved

Audit objections The flow of foreign aid to the country has ranged between \$1.5 billion to \$1.7 billion over the years. "If the leaking points are plugged, it will definitely increase

availability of domestic resources, said Executive Director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya. But that would not help much in

vercoming the foreign exchange rigidity as the savings would be in local currency.

The average annual gap etween export and import stands at around \$2 billion with \$8 billion in port and \$6 billion in exports.

nounts presented in the audit 'There are also some adiust ment problems needing immediate

And it reflects lack of good governance, accountability and transpar-ency, he added.

Shipu murder FROM PAGE 12

hearing till March 12 following a time petition by the prosecution lawyers. Earlier, Istiague Ahmed, victims brother and complainant of the case

3 muggers jailed under PSA BSS, Dhaka

The judge of the Special Tribunal on Pubic Safety Act (PSA) yesterday awarded eight years rigorous mprisonment (RI) to three muggers.

The muggers were arrested from n front a house at Savar last year. The convicted persons are Abdul affect movement of vehicles on Aziz, Ayub Ali and Rafiqul.

Contempt petition FROM PAGE 12

and former prime minister whether she would be proceeded for contempt of court for her remarks published in a New York-based . weekly, the "Thikana", and repro-

duced by some Dhaka dailies. Earlier, the court had felt embarrassed in dealing with the charge and sent the case to the Chief Justice, but the CJ returned it to the same court.

As Barrister Amirul Islam sought adjournment for one week after the court's vacation, petitioner's lawyers -- Habibul Islam Bhuiyan and Joynul Abedin -- gave consent to the

A South Korean protester resists arrest by police during a demonstration against the upcoming visit of US President Gorge W. Bush outside the US embassy in Seoul yesterday. Angry anti-US protests erupted in Seoul ahead of the arrival of Bush tomorrow during which 14 demonstrators were hauled away as they scuffled with security forces in DCC leases cattle markets FROM PAGE 12 This year DCC leased out 22 city Daily Star vesterday According to him nearly 200 mini spots for their use as temporary buses had to change their routes cattle markets for four days from

NEWS

yesterday due to the cattle market at Chankharpool. "Instead of the Chankharpool-Azimpur route, those mini buses moved through the Matsha Bahban crossing, resulting in serious pressure on nearby roads", he said.

The DC Traffic denied that the authorities are not serious about enforcing the restriction on movement of old vehicles and those without proper documents. He however admitted that some old vehicles are back on city roads with new registration numbers.

The traffic department has requested the BRTA authorities to provide police with lists so that they can detect and seize those vehicles, he said.

Movement of traffic through Buriganga Bridge No 2 and its link roads got stuck up yesterday due to the cattle market at Nayabazar in the old part of the city.

Though the cattle market is scheduled to begin today, cattle traders have already started bringing cattle at Nayabazar and Chankharpool markets

When contacted, DCC's Estate Department officials expressed their ignorance about operation of cattle markers yesterday.

DMP Police commissioner MA Kaium told The Daily Star that DCC has leased the Navabazar cattle

market despite DMP's reminder that it would create obstacle to move-

PHOTO: AFF

nent of vehicles in the area. Sources in DCC said the cattle market at Nava Bazar was leased this year on instruction from Mayor Mohammad Hanif. But the mayor denied this.

The mayor also said he did not receive any request from DMP not to leasing the Nayabazar cattle market.

These markets are leased during Eid every year. We also think about the traffic. For this we have changed locations of a number of cattle market this year", the mayor

Freedom fighters

FROM PAGE 12 Members of the cabinet and state ministers concerned attended the meeting.

Cabinet secretary, principal Bachchu Mia. secretary to the prime minister, and secretaries concerned were also but drivers managed to flee. present, said an official handout.

Power charge FROM PAGE 1

Shipping Minister Lt Col (retd) Akbar Hossain, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Reaz Rahman and State Minister for Finance and Planning Shah Mohammad Abul Hossain took part in the meeting.

accident, told UNB in Piroipur sadar Commerce Secretary Suhel hospital that the helper of the bus Ahmed and Vice Chairman of EPB was driving recklessly when the Abu Saleh were present. accident took place.

have initiated a move to realise Tk 40 crore outstanding revenue from ship breakers after winning a legal battle against them, sources at the Customs House said.

pay the amount against the 'additional goods' including fuel, lubricant and bunker carried by around 300 vessels imported for scrapping and their association filed a writ challenging the customs assessments.

The Ship Breakers Association lost the legal battle after four years. The court ordered the ship breakers to pay duties as per earlier assessments on the 'additional goods'. The goods were sold at the time of scrapping the ships.

"We have issued demand letters to ship breakers for immediately paying the outstanding revenues. Otherwise, we will go for tough action against the violators. They must pay those duties as per rule"

Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Three people were killed and 11 Khagrachhari

Police and hospital sources said the accident took place in Chungerpole area on Feni-Maijdi road at about 5:30 pm when a Chittagong-bound passenger bus from Ramgoti ran over a rickshaw

along with Dayal Bánik, another The dead were identified as

and asked him to return with Tk 1.50 akh as ransom for Kazol release.

United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF), are allegedly involved in the incidents of kidnapping in the areas. Ten other traders were kidnapped from the same area on

Rubel murder Bail petition of Mukuli Begum rejected

COURT CORRESPONDENT

the defence lawvers.

Eebruary 13.

Deputy Commissioner Azmal Hossain and senior officials visited The Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's court, Dhaka, esterday rejected the bail petition of Mukuli Begum, an accused in the Shamim Reza Rubel murder case.

Dhaka-Delhi FROM PAGE 12

passed the order following a petition Bangladesh-India Joint Economic

ship breakers NURUL ALAM, Chittagong Humayun Kabir, Deputy Commissioner (preventive) of Chittagong customs authorities Customs told this correspondent. "The ship breakers paid revenues on the basis of LDT (light deadwight) against ships brought for scrapping. They refused to pay duties against the additional goods The ship breakers had refused to and bunkers carried by the ships"

DHAKA TUESDAY FEBRUARY 19, 2002

Customs move to

realise tax from

Kabir said Sources in the Association said duty on the additional goods was 'double taxation' after payment of revenues on LDT basis.

The ship breakers minted huge profits by selling those goods in the local market. Some of the ship breakers were reportedly involved in bringing 'extra goods' including fuel and lubricant, which were sold

n the local market. Sources claimed that a section of

ship breakers reportedly take resort to 'under assessment' in collusion with some customs officials to evade duty, an allegation denied by

the association Another trader abducted in

Road accident

kills 3 in Feni BSS, Feni

take an oil-tanker.

UNB.

spot.

PHOTO: AFF

others injured in a road accident at Dhaganbhuiyan under Feni district vesterday.

and passers-by as it tried to over-

rickshawpuller Omar Faroque,

Jaker Hossen and pedestrian

Police seized both the vehicles

In Pirojpur, at least 40 passen-

gers were injured, 28 of them criti-

cally, when a Nazirpur bound bus

from Patgati skidded off the road

and fell into roadside ditch at about

10:30 am yesterday, according to

The badly injured persons were

Gaus and Hakim, victims of the

admitted to Barisal, Pirojpur,

Nazirpur and Tungipara hospitals.

Another trader was abducted from bordering Naniarchar area in the district yesterday morning. The victim was identified as Kazol Dey, a Jeweller. According to security forces

Kazol Dey was kidnapped while travelling to Mahalchhari from Rangamati district by motorcycle

trader at about 9:00 am. The gang released Dayal Banik

Sources said armed cadres of

amounts, Yusuf said, thereby sav-ing the need for foreign assistance. The government needs foreign

aid mainly to carry out various development projects. More than 50 per cent of ADP comes from foreign

Shahidullah, Ali Ahsan awarded for contributions to **Bangla** literature

UNB, Dhaka

Education Ministry has awarded the country's two eminent educationists, Dr Mohammad Shahidullah (posthumously) and National Professor Syed Ali Ahsan, for their contributions to Bengali literature. The awards, including certifi-

cates and medals, were given at a function at Bangla Academy here vesterday. accused

6 killed in city

However, some other sources said the Jubo Dal leader was killed in a shootout between the two sides. Motijheel police recovered the

body and sent it to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

In another incident, a wife was allegedly strangled by her husband at their rented house at Baganbari in Sabujbagh thana yesterday morn-

Sabujgabh police recovered the body of Hosneara, 32, and sent it to the DMCH morgue. Her husband Mohammad

Shahid is absconding. The victim's younger sister,

Najama, claimed that Shahid strangled his wife. She also said that Shahid often used to quarrel with her sister over family matters. She filed a case in this regard.

Family sources said Shahid married Hosneara with her two children about a year ago.

Neighbours said Hosneara might have been strangled while she was asleep. There were marks of scratch on her throat.

A cattle trader was murdered and robbed of Tk 70,000 in Dhanmondi area.

The victim, Abdul Aziz, 45, who hailed from a village in Munshiganj started for the city on Sunday. He was missing from Gabtali

Dhanmondi police recovered

gave deposition and he was cross examined by the defence lawyers. Accused Kazi Sharif Ahmed

Saikat and Kazi Arif Ahmed Sagar were produced before the court during the hearing. Joy Hasib, now on bail, was also present in the court.

Three other accused -- Zia uddin Ahmed Jewel, son of former Awami League MP Kamal Ahmed Majumder, Naimuzzaman Zobayer and Shafiul Alam -- have been

absconding since the incident. Iftekher Ahmed Shipu, 38, a mobile phone trader at UAE Moitree Market in the city's Banani area, was shot dead on may 24, 2000. Victim's brother Istiague Ahmed

filed a murder case with Gulshan thana accusing six people including Jewel, son of Kamal Majumder, the following day. Advocate Mahbub Ahmed and

Aziz in an unconscious state from a

tin-shed on the south of Dhanmondi

Club at about noon yesterday. They

sent him to the DMCH where doc-

said he might have been 'intoxicated

and later strangled' before he was

Police quoting the inquest report

tors declared him dead

the body.

Shamim Ahsan appeared for the

plea. Polybags FROM PAGE 1

> ment earlier imposed ban on manufacturing, marketing and use of polybags in Chittagong City effective from February 21 in line with the spirit of the auspicious occasion of Ekushey February and International Mother Language Day.

State Minister for Forest and Environment Jafrul Islam Chowdhury while talking to BSS on the issue said directives have been given to all departments concerned including the district administration to launch a joint effort to make the campaign a success. He requested the citizens of the

metropolis to extend their cooperation to such an important initiative of the government.

Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Farid Ahmed Chowdhury, has requested all users and businessmen to stop using polybags and welcome shopping bags made of jute from February 21 He has also urged law enforcing agencies to take punitive action against the law breakers.

robbed of the money. The victim's son, Jahidul Islam, went to the morgue and identified Besides, the body of an unidenti-

fied youth was recovered by police from Beguntila lake in Pallabi area yesterday afternoon. Pallabi police suspect he was

stabbed to death and his body was thrown into the lake. They were yet to ascertain the motive behind the killing.

The body was sent to the DMCH morgue and a case was filed in this connection

UNB adds: Terrorists shot dead one Saiful at Mirerbag in Keraniganj on the outskirts of the city Sunday night.

A group of unidentified terrorists shot him while he was returning ne from his shop.

In another incident, Minu, 35 was gunned down at Barishur in the same upazila over sharing of toll money on Sunday.

Both the bodies were sent to Mitford Hospital for autopsy

Official sources said the govern-

While talking to the news agency,

Bangladesh Jute Mills

Corporation began a sale of jute made shopping bags programme in the city through mobile truck yesterday morning at all key points at prices between Taka 3 and Taka 5 per piece.

> Ganges water FROM PAGE 1

Anwar Khan, member of the Joint Rivers Commission, will attend the joint committee meeting.

Meanwhile, it was learnt that Bangladesh has been receiving its stipulated share of the Ganges water since the beginning of the current dry season from January 1. The country suffered an acute shortage of water in 1997 and also

ast year. The Ganges flow is recorded in 10-day cycles as per the 30-year

ndo-Bangladesh accord. Although the dry season spans from January to May, the critical lean season is from April to May.



An Afghan policeman (C) keeps vigil at one of the main roads of Kabul yesterday. Security has been tightened in the Afghan capital after the killing of its aviation and tourism minister, Abdul Rahman.

Call money chaos

their

FROM PAGE 1

Commerce and Industry President Tapan Chowdhury and Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) President Matiur Rahman met the finance minister and said the abrupt changes in the requirement for CRR has made the playing field uneven for two sets of operators -- public and private banks -- in the financial sector.

They said the BB's CRR requirement change would have a farreaching implication for the economy destabilising development and growth, sources said.

The situation merits a dispassionate review of the adverse knock-on effects of the central bank on the economy and the BB should reconsider its decision to provide some flexibility to the banks to adjust themselves to new requirements, without unsettling the situation, the delegation viewed.

The nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) continued their whopping profit making ride on the liquidity-starved private commercial banks (PCBs), especially those which are yet to cross five years in operation.

Meantime, the taka currency remained strong against the greenback in the inter-bank trading yesterday on a higher foreign currency selling by some private commercial banks (PCBs), which were facing

liquidity shortfall on high cash would not have been any unusual demand before the Eid-ul-Azha. rise in the call money rate after its directive regarding CRR, if different As the call money rate soared many private banks preferred to sell banks had taken the central bank's

Now with their excess liquidity

At the meeting with the minister

conditions in the financial sector.

the 'arbitrary and irresponsible

foreign currency holdings to rediscount facility on time. meet cash reserve requirement, As liquidity worth TK 2,425 crore PCB sources said. came to the market from different Opening at Tk 57.90, the US sources, there would not be any dollar was traded between Tk 58 more problem due to CRR regulaand Tk 58.10 in the interbank trade,

according to dealers of different eve of Eid-ul-Azha, it said. commercial banks. The local currency against the able outlets to invest the surplus greenback was also strong in the liquidity in an investment-starved kerb market and the greenback was

economy the NCBs took the chance traded between Tk 58.40 and Tk to cash in on the problems of private 58.50 per unit, the kerb market brokers said. banks

The worst affected in the burns are the third generation private different business chambers commercial banks (PCBs) that termed that "the NCBs are doing were already hit hard by a governunfair business at a very fabulous ment decision, which put a bar on rate of returns with most PCBs". keeping government deposits in the PCBs less than five-year-old. the businessmen expressed that

And the third generation PCBs were also deprived of borrowing of money from the NCBs.

The situation has severely strained the activities of some PCBs in the areas of opening of letter of credits (LCs), clearing house transactions and others.

And nine banks have taken rediscount facility worth Tk 505 crore from the central bank.

Meantime, the BB said there practice by the NCBs. Commission in Dhaka soon.

The two foreign secretaries also discussed the progress made by the Joint Boundary Working Groups (JBWG) and agreed that the Group should complete its work on schedule. India agreed to expedite the

arrangements for holding the second meeting of the JBWGs in New Delhi

The two foreign secretaries also exchanged views on regional and international issues. The talks were held in a friendly and cordial atmosphere.

issued on conclusion of the talks.

Chowdhury also paid a courtesy call on Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and discussed matters of mutual interest. Singh acknowledged the need for more contacts at higher political

aring Advocate Mahbub Ahmed Sheikh Baharul Islam and Shamim Ahsan appeared in the court on behalf of the accused.

authorities concerned, as they did

not send documents and papers

despite repeated instructions from

"Something must have gone

wrong as there is an unnecessary

delay in submission of papers

regarding purchase of the frig-

ate ... we are not still getting all the

evidence of serious corruption and

irregularities in purchase of the

frigate, which also did not meet all

Minister repeatedly brought up

allegations of corruption involving

the purchase of the Russian MIGs

and the South Korean Daewoo-

built frigate, but the frigate case

was absent from the first phase of

ment admitted that a section of

BNP leaders tried to suppress the

frigate case following the joining in

BNP of a renowned businessman

who was reportedly involved in the

purchase, hence the delay.

A senior minister of the govern-

the required specifications.

Official sources said there was

While in opposition, the Prime

papers," he added.

white paper.

Akram Hussain and Mukuli Begum,

Another white paper

the cell

FROM PAGE 1

corruption in purchasing the 100million-dollar frigate will be included in the second phase of the white paper likely to be published in one volume this time.

On condition of anonymity, an official at the cell told The Daily Star yesterday that they expected to be able to include all major cases of tion and liquidity pressure on the corruption and irregularities in the single volume. Unable to find adequate profit-

We are not looking for minor corruption and irregularities...we are only searching major incidents that have caused serious damage and loss to the country," he said, adding that the unspecified number of minor corruption and irregularities will be looked after by ministries and departments concerned.

He said investigations so far have revealed a number of major cases of corruption committed by the AL government and that inquiry to that effect was on.

the government has a role in ensur-He however refused to specify ing that the NCBs do not take any the cases to be included in the undue advantage of the situation. white paper except for the much The NCBs should also play a controversial frigate case, which he role in maintenance of steady confirmed would be there. "We have already got some important Otherwise, the business delegadocuments of the frigate purchase tion thinks, the entire economy and more necessary papers are in would have to bear the burden of the pipeline," he added

He however suspected some wrongdoing on the part of some

He said a strong pressure had been created within the cabinet and the party to unveil the facts about the frigate purchase follow-

ng which it has now been decided to publish the frigate case in the second phase of white paper.

the bail petition. After hearing both sides, the court jected the bail petition. The court also adjourned the

Judge Mollah Mostafa Kamal

The prosecution side opposed

hearing of the case till March 10 following a time petition by the prosecution lawyers Earlier. 35 out of 62 prosecution

itnesses were cross-examined. Shamim Reza Rubel, 24, a BBA student of the Independent

niversity, was picked up by a team of DB police from in front of his Siddeswari residence in the city on July 23, 1998 and was tortured to death in the custody the same day. All the accused including AC

A joint press statement will be

a local Awami League leader, were produced before the court during the levels to broaden the bilateral ties