

# Grameenphone

FROM PAGE 16  
(share market) listing plan. DTAC is being observed.

As pointed out that the biggest Bangladeshi Initial Public Offering was only \$15 million. "We don't know how much we would offload but it would certainly be over 15 million dollars," he said.

"DTAC shows that Telenor is interested in the local capital market. This is not Vodafone (or other European companies that had failed to establish themselves in the Asian market), Telenor is different and this is a great example," Aas added.

Brekke said, "We are not a greedy capitalistic company."

Both the CEOs said Telenor is the lone European-American company operating in Asia and growing because it had been very sensitive to local sentiments. Big names like Orange, Verizon, AT&T, Swiss Telecom etc had come to different Asian countries from the late nineties using business and operation strategies of their home countries, and failed.

Telenor on the other hand has tailored itself to the society where it works. Both Grameenphone and DTAC have only around five posts in Bangladesh and Thailand which are held by foreigners, while the rest are local manpower.

DTAC has a subscriber base of 15 million and GP 13 million.

Floating of DTAC's shares is being viewed by GP as a learning process, which is planning to offload some shares in Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) in the near future.

As GP is the largest ever company to plan such floating of shares, it is also trying to fathom the capacity of Bangladesh market buyers and failed.

and operators, and other issues. Though it has not yet been officially estimated, GP's unofficial capitalisation would be not less than \$3 billions. Listing of shares of a fragment of the company of this size could have both negative and positive impacts, sources say.

Operating from '93, DTAC had been a low profile phone company till 2001, a year after Telenor bought a part of its shares and started leading it. The company's IPOs were three times oversubscribed as there had been overwhelming response from all over Thailand despite political uncertainty created by the military takeover.

"We could have waited for a year. But we looked at the fundamentals and went ahead," said Brekke. "The government is very happy. And I have seen people (subscribing the shares) who had never invested before. But they trusted us."

Karen L Hilsen, head of Investor Relations, said that in addition to subscribing through share brokers, people could do the same through two major banks having country-wide network. Consequently, half of the IPOs were subscribed by individuals while the rest by institutions. Typically, the institutions claim most subscriptions.

The Stock Exchange of Thailand has 463 listed companies with a total market capitalisation of \$170 billion. DTAC represents 2 percent of the total market capital and ranks among the top 15 companies.

## Some RU teachers protest UGC move to probe irregularities

RU CORRESPONDENT

Progressive Teachers Society (PTS) of Rajshahi University (RU) yesterday denounced the University Grants Commission (UGC) probe body that reached the campus to investigate all kinds of alleged irregularities, corruption and nepotism by the RU authorities during last five years. They even urged teachers, students, officials and employees not to cooperate with the probe committee.

In a statement, PTS teachers said the committee members were controversial, have been accused of many corruption charges and they were controversially appointed during the BNP-Jamaat alliance government's tenure.

The UGC probe committee includes Prof Sultan Hossain, Prof Ehsanul Haque, Prof Muhammad Abdur Rahman and Prof Mijanur Rahman.

They said following the movement of PTS teachers the UGC formed the probe body on March 20, 2007 headed by Prof Mahabub Ullah. The PTS had protested then saying most of the committee members were BNP-Jamaat sympathisers and were accused of corruption.

The teachers had urged the caretaker government and the UGC chairman to form a neutral investigation committee headed by a High Court (HC) judge. Yesterday's PTS statement, signed by its 21 steering committee members, demanded immediate withdrawal of this committee.

Sources on the campus said the committee would start their investigation from today and probe the allegations of irregularities, corruption and nepotism in the appointment of more than 500 teachers, officials and employees during the BNP-Jamaat tenure.

The pro-Awami League (AL) teachers had brought the allegations against previous and present administrators of RU.

To ensure proper investigation, the probe committee is authorised to examine any documents, including classified documents of the syndicate, and question decisions of faculties and other departments concerned, sources said. The committee is also authorised to interrogate anyone and a memo in this regard was sent to the RU Registrar's office yesterday.

RU Registrar Prof Abdus Salam said the committee is supposed to submit their report within one month.

Last year, RU teachers' and students' organisations staged demonstrations against the RU administration for its alleged mass recruitment, corruption, irregularities and violations of the University Act and Training (BMET).

"We have in principle decided that workers must make payments to recruiting agencies through bank pay orders. The agencies also must select workers from the database of BMET for sending them abroad," a senior official said.

The government is also considering if manpower brokers could be brought under a legal framework to prevent them from cheating overseas job seekers.

## Nato air strike

FROM PAGE 16  
the engagement, said spokesman Major John Thomas.

The insurgent Taliban confirmed fighters from the group had ambushed troops in the area. "Taliban left the area before the air strike," spokesman Yousef Ahmadi said.

But Isaf's British military deployment, based in Helmand, said soldiers had "positively identified from the ground and the air, Taliban in the compound and more running into it."

Civilian casualties from military action in Afghanistan is a sensitive issue after several incidents that have killed scores of people, although insurgents kill by far the most civilians.

On Sunday last week seven children were killed in an air strike targeted on a suspected al-Qaeda compound and carried out by the US-led coalition, which operates alongside Isaf and the Afghan security forces.

The Agency Coordinating Body For Afghan Relief of nearly 100 foreign and Afghan non-governmental organisations said Tuesday that its figures showed Afghan and foreign troops had killed nearly 250 civilians this year.

Human Rights Watch says around 1,000 civilians were killed in insurgency-linked violence in Afghanistan last year, about 230 of them in military action.

In other violence reported Friday, Taliban militants killed seven Afghan policemen and wounded a soldier from the coalition in separate ambushes around the country, Afghan officials said.

But despite a series of high-profile insurgent attacks in recent weeks, Afghanistan's second Vice President Karim Khalili said during a visit to Tokyo that the Taliban were on the wane.

"The Taliban's activity is weakening if you compare the number of terrorist attacks attempted by them this year and last year," he said.

"We have also inflicted great damage to the Taliban in a joint military campaign with Nato through the death of a famous Taliban leader," he said.

Mullah Dadullah, considered the Taliban's top military strategist, was killed in May.

Earlier Taliban militants killed seven Afghan policemen and wounded a soldier from the US-led coalition in separate ambushes around the country, Afghan officials said yesterday.

Rebels attacked a joint patrol by Afghan police and coalition forces overnight in the eastern province of Nangarhar, said Noor Agha, a spokesman for the provincial government.

"One border policeman was killed while a coalition soldier and one Afghan policeman were wounded in the attack in Pachir Wa Agam district," Agha said.

"No one was consulted when Awami League struck an alliance with a communal political entity," said Amu adding, "Similarly, the April 30 deadline was declared without getting an approval from the party's executive council. Reforms are necessary as we do not want such misfits to recur."

# Hawkers go berserk

FROM PAGE 1  
[unidentified youths] might have been taken away by their relatives.

However, police confirmed the number is two. The dead—Riaz, 38, and Sujan, 18—used to hawk readymade garments. Injured Jahangir was admitted to Pangu Hospital with fractured legs.

Witnesses said a pick-up of a poultry farm coming from the direction of Sergeant Ahad Police Box rammed into a throng of hawkers at around 2:25pm. The crowd was jostling to secure place on the stretch between Baitul Mukarram Mosque to the police box for the weekend holiday market.

Police reached the scene soon after the incident and sped three severely injured hawkers to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH). Riaz died on the way while Sujan minutes after his arrival to the hospital.

Police brought the situation under control and put up four barricades in the area to avert untoward incidents. But they could not seize the killer vehicle or arrest its driver as of filing this report at 9:00pm.

In protest at the accident, Bangladesh Sammilito Footpath Hawkers Parishad (BSFHP) suspended yesterday's holiday market. They also declared that they would not run the makeshift markets in Gulistan anymore until they are rehabilitated.

An uneasy calm was prevailing in Gulistan where the fuming hawkers were moving in groups while a huge contingent of police stood guard at different points.

The hawkers brought out processions clamouring for immediate rehabilitation and adequate space for street markets popularly known as holiday markets.

"The government evicted us from footpaths and allowed only a narrow strip for around 10,000 hawkers living around Gulistan. Now we cannot even earn enough to meet our daily expenses," said Jali, a shoe vendor.

The demonstrations became fiercer after police sent bodies of the deceased to their village homes without letting the fellows to hold namaz-e-janaza.

The hawkers called for the government to allow them the way they used to run their businesses before eviction until they are rehabilitated.

"The sites fixed for holiday markets cannot even accommodate 25% of the hawkers coming from around the country," said Waliullah Patwari, president of the Hawkers

Parishad.

The caretaker government on February 23 announced that the vendors could use the footpath in Gulistan to run their business only on Friday.

It also earmarked several other places in the capital as holiday markets. Earlier, it evicted hawkers from different footpaths and important points in the city on January 17.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Awami Hawkers League in a press release claimed that at least four people were killed in the accident. They demanded immediate punishment to the driver responsible for the deaths.

Earlier on May 22, a bomb was found on the Ruet campus. The next day, police recovered a sawed off rifle and a bomb from students' union office of Shaheed Selim Hall.

On May 24, police recovered two more bombs and found an aluminium sheet carrying a message that Jadiul Al Qaeda would plant six bombs on the Ruet campus.

On June 2, the joint forces found a bomb at a Ruet dormitory and on June 14 police recovered a powerful bomb in front of Ruet main gate.

Earlier, the joint force raided Ruet dormitories and arrested six students for alleged involvement in bomb making.

The law enforcers also arrested Sarwar Jamal's chauffeur Md Mamunur Rashid, 35, and seized the Pajero sports utility vehicle that was carrying the former lawmaker.

Three bottles of foreign hard liquor and five cans of foreign beer were also recovered from the vehicle.

The joint forces also searched through Sarwar Jamal's city residence on Zakir Hossain Road under Khulshi police station but they could not recover anything important from there.

During interrogation, Sarwar Jamal denied having any link with or knowledge of fertilizer smuggling, off-loading of ten-trucks of firearms, and the abduction and murder of Maruf Nizam, prompting the court to order submission of a supplementary charge sheet after re-investigation.

Later, CID's Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Hamidul Haq re-investigated the case and submitted the supplementary charge sheet.

But the case had a high court stay order on it that had come on December 12, 2006.

With the period of the six-month stay order expired on June 11 the trial of the case could be started now, the sources said.

Investigating officers (IO) of the case were allegedly transferred frequently contributing to the delay in submission of the charge sheet.

As many as seven IOs had been transferred before the last IO ASP Hamidul Haq was appointed last year.

## Bomb found

FROM PAGE 16

The bomb contained gunpowder, circuits, battery and bicycle balls, SI Alamgir said.

Following the bomb recovery, police were deployed on the Ruet campus. Motihar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Khandoker Ferdous Ahmed said.

The students, teachers and locals have expressed deep concern over recovery of seven powerful bombs from the Ruet campus in a month.

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# Sarwar Jamal arrested

FROM PAGE 1  
official duties of the police forces in his constituency.

Sources said he is also accused of helping the sensational offloading of ten trucks of firearms in the port city as well as of amassing a large amount of properties from unknown sources.

After the arrest, Sarwar Jamal was taken to Rab-7 head quarters at Patenga where members of the joint forces, intelligence agencies, the task force and Rab were interrogating him.

He was later produced before a court shown as arrested under the Emergency Power Act 2007 and in connection with a general diary (GD) filed with Patenga police station last evening.

The court of Metropolitan Magistrate Moksedul Rahman sent him to jail custody.

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