

GP offers free Facebook as it gets 5cr customers

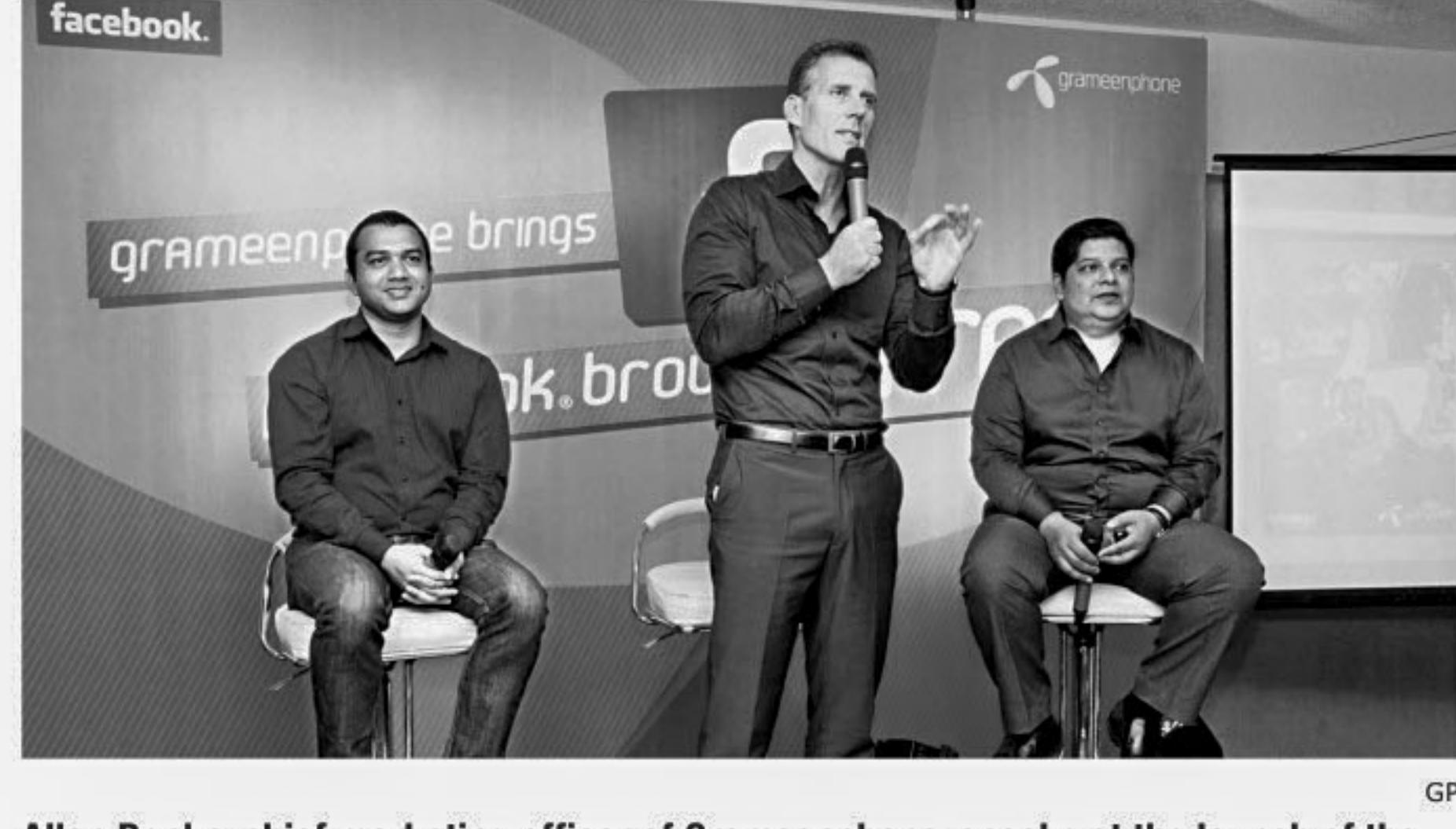
STAR BUSINESS DESK

Grameenphone users will be able to browse Facebook for free from today, as part of the operator's run-up to celebrate reaching the milestone of getting five crore customers.

The offer, which is first of its kind in Bangladesh, is part of its "internet for all" initiative, the telecom operator said in a statement yesterday.

Under the offer, GP users will be able to access Facebook from all devices without any data charge from 12am to 6pm every day, according to the statement. "No specific registration or opt-in is required to enjoy the service."

Grameenphone is approaching the significant milestone of five crore



Allan Bonke, chief marketing officer of Grameenphone, speaks at the launch of the company's offer of providing GP users with free Facebook from 12am to 6pm every day, at a programme in Dhaka yesterday.

customers in Bangladesh. In the run-up to this occasion we want our customers to enjoy free browsing of the most popular social media platform in the

world," said Allan Bonke, chief marketing officer of GP.

Facebook is the best platform to exercise social connectivity and also an

important tool to fulfill the mobile operator's ambition of ensuring internet for all, he said.

Facebook connects hundreds of millions of

people across all communities worldwide, GP said in the statement.

"A similar trend is picking up in Bangladesh and a large number of internet users see Facebook as the primary online service."

The country now has over 11 crore mobile users and more people are availing data services by the day, GP said.

Despite the steady growth in usage, large parts of the population are still unaware of the benefits that internet can bring, the operator said.

"We believe there is no reason why anyone who has a voice connection cannot also be connected to the internet. With this campaign, we're taking another step to make it simple and relevant for everyone to go online," Bonke said.



Atiur Rahman, governor of Bangladesh Bank, presents the financial branding award on behalf of the Centre for NRBs, to Mohammad Abdul Mannan, managing director of Islami Bank Bangladesh, at a programme in the capital on Saturday. Md Shahriar Alam, state minister for foreign affairs, was also present.

BASIC managers take pay cuts

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In July, the government recast the bank's board to be helmed by former Krishi Bank Chairman Alauddin A Majid.

The steps taken against the irregularities that occurred at the bank were also mentioned. The Anti-Corruption Commission is conducting an investigation and BASIC will take actions against the persons found responsible in the probe.

Furthermore, an audit firm will go through approved loans of Tk 1 crore and above to detect irregularities, if any.

The process of appointing the accountancy firm is underway, and actions will be taken against those against whom allegations are found correct in the audit report.

Labour force workshop starts for BBS juniors

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A three-day workshop started yesterday on how to project the labour market for the junior officers of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

The workshop will mainly analyse the labour force surveys of 2005 and 2010 to understand the changing nature of the labour force.

"Besides analysing previous surveys, the workshop will train participants to be able to project future trends in the labour market," said Sayema Haque Bidisha, an associate professor of economics at Dhaka University, and a trainer of the workshop.

The event is being organised by International Growth Centre and Brac Institute of Governance and Development

at the BBS office in the capital.

"To be able to project the future characteristics of labour market force is crucial while forming economic policies and strategies that can affect the employment opportunities of the masses," Bidisha said.

Increasing the employment rate of the country is key to Bangladesh's poverty reduction, and policymakers should keep in mind that the number of people entering the country's labour force, their gender, age, skills and education are ever changing, she said.

Selim Raihan, professor of economics at DU, will conduct a number of sessions at the workshop.

BBS Director General Golam Mostofa Kamal and BBS Secretary Suraia Begum were also present.

Govt rolls out project to make economic planners pro-poor

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Pauline Tamesis, country director of UNDP, said planning for progress is perhaps now more critical than ever before as "we seek to secure development gains, address persistent remaining challenges and move toward a middle-income country status with equity for Bangladesh".

"As we near the terminal date of the MDGs and look to renew our commitment for our development goals in Bangladesh for the post-2015 period, enhancing the quality of data and skill sets of the civil servants and the calibre of planning will lay the foundation for the coming years."

The UNDP official termed the project timely and cognisant of the need, adding that it aims to build capacity and pro-poor economic modelling, strengthen inclusive and sustainable development plans and continue to support MDGs and the post-2015 monitoring and formulation.

The project is ready to provide technical assistance in the formulation of the background papers for the Seventh Five Year Plan as well. During a technical session, Tofail Ahmed, a local government specialist, said the national plan cannot directly be linked with the local plan "as the problems are unique".

Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute, who chaired the technical session, said policy planners must actively work together, share knowledge and cooperate for desired effect. "It will not only benefit all of the government agencies involved, but also save a lot of resources." He also said high-level planning commitment is needed to solve problems at local levels.

Suraiya Begum, secretary of the Statistics and Informatics Division, Bhuiyan Shafiqul Islam, secretary of the Planning Division, and Naqib Bin Mahbub, national project director of SSIP, also spoke.



Reaz Wahid, senior assistant general manager of Ceylon Bank, and Shafayet Ahmed, manager of Sylhet branch, attend a programme to distribute rations among the flood-affected poor of Mughal Gaon union in Sylhet recently.



Jahangir Bin Alam, chief executive of India-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry, speaks at the Global Economic Summit organised by All India Association of Industries in collaboration with WTO at the World Trade Centre in Mumbai on Friday.

IBCCI

NBR's online tax system floundering

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"We hoped that there would be transparency and we would not have to visit the tax officials. But we have to go to LTU with hard copies of documents even after filing returns online," said a senior official of a mobile phone operator, seeking anonymity. "It appears that revenue officials are not interested in considering anything but hard copies."

With about 350 companies, including banks and mobile phone operators, LTU was NBR's first field office offering the scope to file returns online.

Some of the shortcomings of the e-filing systems include increasing bandwidth, creating options to send tax clearance certificates online, and expediting the e-payment process.

For Tax Zone-8, taxpayers were required to visit the tax offices to get personal identification numbers, prior to submitting returns online. Taxpayers also do not receive tax clearance certificates online; that is why they have to visit the tax offices, said an official of Tax Zone-8.

"Although the authority claims to have online services, the systems are not fully mechanised. Taxpayers who submit returns do not feel comfortable," said Syed Iqbal Mostafa, a tax lawyer.

"We have seen motivational campaigns by the authority for e-filing initially. We do not see anything like that nowadays."

Mizanur Rahman, chief financial officer of NCC Bank, said the scope to open TINs online is beneficial for taxpayers, saving them from hassles. "As a taxpayer, I do not see any major change for us except for opening TINs and receiving TIN certificates online," said an official of a private bank, seeking to remain unnamed as he is afraid of being harassed by taxmen.

Ashim Kumar Biswas, chief financial officer of Jamuna Bank, said the system should be online in the real sense, so that

one can complete all tax related formalities sitting in the office or at home.

"If you have an IT-based system, why would you be asked to bring hard copies," asked Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of Policy Research Institute.

He termed most of NBR's online ventures as a 'silo type approach' as initiatives were taken in a scattered manner without any central focus.

"Once someone took the initiative but successors later did not show interest in it. Such a situation would not occur if there was a central approach and monitoring."

Zaid Bakht, research director Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), praised NBR's e-TIN initiative but said, "We are yet to see full-fledged e-filing and online tax payment." "Overall automation of revenue administration has so far remained more rhetoric. Progress appears to be slow due to a lack of committed push and drive at the implementation level."

Mustafizur Rahman, executive director of Centre for Policy Dialogue, said: "The use of information technology and strengthening of tax administration is necessary to increase revenue collection. But NBR lags in its own plan." IT can help increase the tax net, curb tax evasion and stop capital flight and trade mispricing, he said.

The revenue administration framed a modernisation plan in 2011 and aspired to complete most its automation schemes by July. None of the targets has been achieved.

Md Ghulam Hussain, chairman of NBR, said the past initiatives did not become effective because of their limitations. It is also a matter of sincerity among officials, he added.

"It has been proved that the piecemeal initiatives do not become effective. That's why, we have taken steps to facilitate e-filing centrally. We hope taxpayers will be able to submit tax returns online by next year."

Internet literacy a must for future

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People must have internet literacy, because digital systems will run the world in future, he said in his presentation on the role of skills in unlocking the opportunity of mobile internet.

The event was organised by the Commonwealth Telecommunication Organisation (CTO) and hosted by the government and Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, at Radisson Hotel in Dhaka.

The Mozilla Foundation is a non-profit organisation that promotes openness, innovation and participation on the internet.

Surman said any person in the world can have access to the internet with a smartphone, which is becoming cheap by the day.

The company best known for its Firefox browser has already developed low-priced

smartphones run by the Mozilla operating system in partnership with some top mobile handset makers.

Mozilla has recently launched \$25 smartphone, which is equivalent to Tk 2,000, in the Indian market. A Bangladeshi brand mobile handset maker has already tied up with Mozilla to offer the new product.

The Mozilla smartphone will be available in Bangladesh soon, Surman said.

There were only 1.3 crore internet users in the world in 1998, which increased manifold to 240 crore in 2013, and the number is predicted to reach 600 crore in 2025, he said.

"Internet will become a part of everyone's everyday life. It is a very different world, and people can work from anywhere with the blessing of internet."

Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Limited

(A Company of Petrobangla)

Head Office: 137/A, CDA Avenue, Sholashahar, Chittagong

আলানি নিরাপত্তা সর্বোচ্চ অধিবিকার

Invitation for Tender

01.	Ministry/Division	Power, Energy & Mineral Resources/Energy & Mineral Resources Division.
02.	Agency	Bangladesh Oil, Gas and Mineral Resources Corporation (Petrobangla).
03.	Procuring entity name	Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Limited (KGDCL).
04.	Procuring entity district	Chittagong.
05.	Invitation for	Construction/installation work of 200 Nos. (MS/MDE) Riser & Service Line Under Distribution Department (North) in KGDCL Franchise Area (Phase-51).

06. Invitation Ref. No. and date 28.15.0000.126.56.051.14.10343 Date: 04/09/2014

KEY INFORMATION

07.	Procurement method	Open tendering method.
08.	Budget and source of funds	KGDCL's own fund.
09.	Tender selling period	From 15/09/2014 to 29/09/2014 (during office hour).
10.	Last date and time for submission of tenders	30/09/2014 12:00 noon
11.	Tender opening date & time	30/09/2014 12:15pm
12.	Name & address of the office(s)	Address
	Selling tender document	Accounts Section, KGDCL, 137/A, CDA Avenue, Sholashahar, Chittagong.
	Receiving & opening tender document	Purchase Department, Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Limited (KGDCL), 137/A, CDA Avenue, Sholashahar, Chittagong.

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

13.	Eligibility of tenderer	i) Contractor having current enlistment under category 1.3/1.4 with any company of Petrobangla having experience of pipeline construction/riser construction/riser killing/shifting & emergency maintenance work within last 5 (five) years.
		ii) Tenderer should have experience in completing similar type of work for an amount of Tk 16,00,000 (sixteen lac) in a single tender in any company of Petrobangla within last 5 (five) years and work completion certificate of the same issued by the Engineer-in-charge is to be submitted along with the tender.
		iii) Other conditions as specified in tender document.
14.	Brief description of works	Construction/installation work of 2000 Nos. (MS/MDE) Riser & Service Line Under Distribution Department (North) in KGDCL Franchise Area (Phase-51).

15.	Brief description of physical services	Welding, coating & wrapping, pipe cutting & threading, earth work, pipe laying, riser construction/installation of service line, riser killing/shifting removal etc.
16.	Price of tender document	Tk 20,000.00 (twenty thousand).