



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaking from the Gono Bhaban to State Minister for Posts and Telecommunications Tarana Halim at Dahagram in Lalmonirhat via videoconference after the northern area came under 3G network coverage yesterday.

PHOTO: PMO

3G goes to Dahagram

PM inaugurates the service through videoconference

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

People of Dahagram in Patgram upazila of Lalmonirhat are now connected to 3G network service launched in the area by Grameenphone yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the 3G network through a video conference from the Gono Bhaban with Tarana Halim, state minister for post and telecommunications at Dahagram.

After the launching of the network, villagers were seen browsing web pages on their mobile phones.

"It [3G network] will help us get connected to the cyber world," said Harun Shaikh, 20, a college student.

Rasel Islam, a computer operator in the area, said that due to the absence of 3G network he had faced difficulty running his business.

"A large number of people, especially students, were frustrated when the area did not get coverage of 3G network," he added.

"We will go ahead with 3G network. We will get all kinds of information, especially about agriculture using the connection," said Habibur Rahman, chairman of Dahagram

union parishad.

Some 20,000 people of the village will benefit from 3G connection.

Hasina has been taking steps one after another for the development of the rural area, said Rezanul Islam Reza, general secretary of Dahagram Sangram Committee.

While inaugurating the network, the PM said the government wanted to ensure a decent and upgraded lifestyle for all, reports UNB.

"Each and every child will have to be well-educated and the government is working to that end."

Hasina underscored the need for increasing the speed of internet across the country for sustaining the pace of social development with the use of technology.

She expressed the hope that the internet speed would increase significantly with the introduction of the country's first satellite, "Bangabandhu Satellite" by 2017.

Grameenphone CEO Rajeev Sethi and Post and Telecommunications Secretary Faizur Rahman Chowdhury were, among others, present at the Gono Bhaban and former state minister for primary and mass education Motahar Hossain at Dahagram.

7 cheers!

FROM PAGE 1

Wasfia reached the top at 10:19am local time on November 18. She was accompanied by Indonesian adventurer Joshua Noya, according to the Bangladesh on Seven Summit Foundation. She and her friends had formed the foundation four years ago.

Sharing her experience with the BBC Bangla service last night, Wasfia, who is now in Indonesia, said, "Believe it or not, Carstensz Pyramid was the toughest and remotest mountain I have ever climbed in my life. It was tougher than Everest and Denali. Because it's a technical mountain."

She said she cried like a child on the night of her summit. "I just wanted to be alive," Wasfia said.

Since not so many people had climbed the granite mountain, she said, she had to do everything on her own and even make her own way to climb. "I was terrified in every moment."

Wasfia said when she reached the summit, she was emotional. "At least I have kept the promise I made to my country four years ago when Bangladesh turned 40," she told BBC Bangla.

The Seven Summits present different challenges that have to be overcome with

extreme and testing fortitude. Summitting all of them is regarded as one of the world's biggest mountaineering challenges.

The Seven Summits is a dream for many climbers, but only a few have succeeded. Wasfia now proudly belongs to the group.

Carstensz, locally known as Puncak Jaya in Indonesia's Papua province, entails the "most consistently steep and technical climbing of all the seven summits", according to a Facebook post of Korvi Rakshand, spokesperson for the foundation. It is 4,884-metre high.

This is also the first time any Bangladeshi climbed this mountain, Korvi Rakshand told The Daily Star yesterday.

Wasfia dedicated the completion of the four-year-long journey to the "Spirit of '71 and all those who are fighting to protect it", he said.

"We started the campaign to celebrate Bangladesh's 40th anniversary of independence. It's an effort to fulfil the spirit of '71," Korvi said, quoting Wasfia. She thanked everyone who supported her during the campaign.

He said Wasfia informed them of her feat through satellite phone.

Flawed or harsh?

FROM PAGE 1

then. No political party used their banners or directly contested the elections. Party chiefs or central leaders did not need to work formally for candidates. All they did was extend support to aspirants of their choice.

Now, the election will be held on partisan lines. A political party can now contest the battle of ballots by fielding candidates for mayoral posts. The electoral laws also allow it to spend Tk one lakh for each of its mayoral aspirants in addition to the candidates' own election expenditure.

A political party is even entitled to take donation for its election fund. On completion of the polls, it will have to submit an election expenditure report to the Election Commission (EC). Otherwise, its registration may be cancelled. The same provision applies for parties contesting the parliamentary election.

But the restriction to be applied to individuals enjoying the government facilities remains unchanged in the new electoral code of conduct made on Monday for municipal polls. This may appear very harsh for the political parties -- whether in power or having representation in parliament.

For example, the ruling AL will contest the battle of ballots by nominating mayoral aspirants. But its chief Sheikh Hasina and almost all of her party's central leaders may face legal difficulties in working for the party-nominated candidates as they are enjoying government facilities. Hasina

is the prime minister and many of her party central leaders are either ministers or MPs.

The same is applicable to the main opposition Jatiya Party as its chief and secretary general are MPs.

In this situation, some crucial questions could be raised.

Are the top brass of the AL and the JP are allowed by the code of conduct to participate in electoral activities for their parties? How will their central leaders sit at meetings to pick candidates for mayoral posts and discuss party's strategy for victory of their candidates? How will presidents and general secretaries write to returning officers in support of party-nominated candidates? Will all this not be considered electoral activities?

"Nominating a mayoral candidate is, of course, a part of electoral activities," said a senior EC Secretariat official.

Another official echoed his view and said proper enforcement of the code of conduct will not allow anybody enjoying government facilities to work for the party in the polls.

The EC, he said, had earlier proposed allowing ministers and MPs to participate in electoral activities and electioneering without using government facilities. It was consistent with the code of conduct for the candidates and parties contesting parliamentary election.

"But the law ministry has not agreed to our proposal. The ministry has kept the restriction unchanged and the commission has not pursued its original proposal," the official added. "In my view

Wasfia is the second Bangladeshi woman to conquer the Mount Everest. She set foot atop the world's highest peak on May 26, 2012.

In 2011, Wasfia, also a writer, took up the challenge to climb the highest mountain in each of the seven continents in celebration of Bangladesh's 40 years of independence and women empowerment.

She climbed Mount Elbrus in Europe, Mount Aconcagua in South America, Mount Denali in North America, Mount Vinson Massif in Antarctica, Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa, and Mount Everest in Asia.

She was named an Adventurer of the Year 2014-15 by the National Geographic.

The Washington-based magazine, also known as Nat Geo, nominated her as one of the recipients of the honour in the activist category for her commitment to empowering women and girls in Bangladesh. Every year it nominates 10 achievers from different fields for the annual award.

On her Facebook page, Wasfia said she was eager to set foot on her homeland Bangladesh -- after four years of pursuing the Seven Summits.

the code of conduct is flawed."

Election Commissioner Abdul Mobarak, however, sees it differently. In his views, party chiefs, ministers and MPs will not face any legal bar to nominating candidates and working for their parties though they will not be able to campaign for their candidates.

His views were however different a few months ago in April during the elections to Dhaka and Chittagong city corporations. Some ministers at an indoor meeting with leaders of the AL Dhaka city unit discussed strategies to clinch the victory for the AL-backed mayoral candidates.

The code of conduct for city corporation election has the same restrictions on VIPs including ministers and MPs.

"If any minister holds a meeting for a candidate, it is a violation of the electoral code of conduct," said Mobarak.

Former CEC ATM Shamsul Huda has also said the EC must take action if any minister conducts electoral campaigns or joins electoral activities for any candidate.

In the face of criticism of ministers' meeting, CEC Kazi Rakiuddin Ahmad directed the returning officers to take necessary actions whenever they get complaints of violation of the electoral code of conduct.

Now, how can the same restriction be relaxed for ministers and MPs allowing them to work for their parties in the partisan municipality polls?

Jurist Shahdeen Malik said the code of conduct has not been thoroughly considered, leaving room for confusion.

NIZAMI'S APPEAL

SC likely to end hearing by Dec 8

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court is likely to finish by December 8 the hearing on the appeal of war criminal Motiur Rahman Nizami that challenged his death penalty.

The Appellate Division of the SC said it will hear arguments from Nizami's counsel from November 30 to December 2, while from the attorney general on December 7.

The apex court will hear the reply from the defence on December 8.

A four-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha set the dates after concluding the sixth day's hearing on the appeal by Nizami, the chief of Jamaat-e-Islami.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam told The Daily Star that the SC on December 8 may fix a date for delivering a verdict on the appeal as it has given the counsels a timeframe for concluding placing arguments on that day.

Nizami's counsel SM Shahjahan has already concluded presenting the charges against Nizami, statements of 22 prosecution witnesses, including the investigation officer, and four defence witnesses, their cross examinations and other relevant issues before the apex court, he added.

On October 29 last year, the International Crimes Tribunal-1 handed death penalty to Nizami on four charges of war crimes, including murder of intellectuals. The 71-year-old was also awarded life imprisonment on four other charges.

Later on November 23, he filed the appeal with the SC challenging the verdict.

4 held with arms in Ctg

Arrestees include ex-BCL leader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Rapid Action Battalion last night arrested four people, including a former Bangladesh Chhatra League central leader, and recovered arms and bullets from their possession at Lalkhan Bazaar in the port city.

Saiful Islam Limon is also an accused in a double murder committed in the city's CRB area in 2013 over submission of a railway tender. He was out on bail.

Rab-7 Commanding Officer Lt Col Miftah Uddin Ahmad said one of their teams raided the first floor of a six-storey building in Highway Society area around 6:00pm, and arrested Limon and three others. They had information that some criminals were hiding there.

A pistol, three other firearms and 6 bullets were found inside the house during the three-and-a-half-hour raid, said a Rab source.

According to the elite force, they raided two flats rented by Limon on that floor. Limon and his family members used to live in one and the other was being used as the den of Limon and his cohorts.

The identity of the other arrestees could not be known immediately.

On June 25, 2013, supporters of Limon and former Jubo League central leader Helal Akbar Chowdhury Babar were engaged in a gunfight in CRB area over submission of a railway tender.

Two people, including a minor boy, were killed in the incident. They are Amran Hossain, 8, a slum dweller, and Jubo League activist Sajju Palit, 25, of Nandankanan.

On this Monday, police pressed charges against 62 people, including Limon and Babar, in the case.

Poster girl

FROM PAGE 16

friends of the two women saying Kesinovic had been sickened by the killings she witnessed and wanted to come home.

According to local Austrian media Kesinovic was murdered by the group as she tried to flee the Isis stronghold of Raqqa.

One report quotes an "insider", an unnamed Tunisian woman who reportedly also travelled to Syria to join Isis lived with the two girls while in Raqqa, but later returned home.

The Austrian foreign and interior ministries declined to confirm the reports.

A report last year by David Scharia, a UN counter-terrorism expert, that a 15-year-old girl of Bosnian origin from Austria who had joined Isis had "disappeared" is now thought to refer to Kesinovic.

Scharia said: "We received information just recently about two 15-year-old girls, of Bosnian origin, who left Austria, where they had been living in recent years...one was killed in the fighting in Syria, the other has disappeared."

Both Kesinovic and Selimovic were children of Bosnian refugees who fled to Austria in the nineties to escape the war in their country.

Threat-caller

FROM PAGE 1

three SIM cards cloned from the phones of three people he had personal enmity with.

Meanwhile, detectives picked up AHM Khairul Asad, an employee of a telecom operator, from his Uttara home on Tuesday night and seized his laptop and tablet PC, Asad's family alleged. It could not be confirmed whether the "detention", which the detectives deny, has any link to the threats.

In another development, the Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested Nahid Hasan, allegedly a Shibir activist, from Badda area.

He was accused of propagating in Bangladesh activities of the Middle East-based IS, and circulating messages on the social media that the IS had claimed responsibilities for the recent attacks and killings including the murders of two foreigners.

At a press conference yesterday, Joint Commissioner (DB) Monirul Islam of Dhaka Metropolitan Police said after a long investigation, they arrested Abdul Haq at the capital's Tejgaon Tuesday night. Two laptops and the smartphone used for SIM cloning were seized from him.

He cloned the SIM cards -- originally owned by Leading University student Faizur Rahman, Kushtia Islamic University student Salah Ahmed Fuad, and Vice-Principal of Jakiganj Madrasa Maulana Saad Ullah -- using spoofing software.

Abdul cloned the SIM cards to dodge arrest and frame the three, DMP official said.

Those who were threatened by Abdul include eminent personalities like Prof Anisuzzaman, Prof Muhammed Zafar Iqbal, historian Prof Muntassir Mamoon, Finance Minister AMA Muhith and former law minister Shafique Ahmed.

Detectives tracked the trio down but learnt that they had no links with the threats.

They told police about their personal feud with Abdul. Based on their information, he was hunted down.

Joint Commissioner Monirul said Abdul had lost his job at the madrasa for bad character. But he is tech-savvy and can speak four languages -- Bangla, English, Urdu and Arabic.

Asked about the threats issued to renowned personalities through letters, Monirul said those might be the work of others like Abdul.

The former madrasa teacher developed a fascination for IS and the outlawed Ansarullah Bangla Team by reading articles on them, the DMP official said. "We will interrogate him to check if he is involved in any militant organisation."

The SIM cloning menace has been worrying law enforcers for quite a while.

A few months ago, a DMP deputy commissioner reportedly saw a call from the inspector general of police (IGP) on his mobile phone but when he picked up, he realised that the caller's voice was not of the IGP. Hanging up, the police officer called to the staff officer of the IGP and was told that the police chief had not called him at all.

The Daily Star yesterday contacted an expert to know how SIM cards are cloned.

Suman Ahmed Sabir, chief strategy officer of IIG Fibre@Home, said it could be done in three ways:

One: Someone could copy all the information of a SIM card when they get their hands on the phone. They can later use the information to create a clone of the original SIM card.

Two: Corrupt employees of mobile carriers could provide the culprits with SIM information or even with a copy of a specific SIM card.

Three: When two people are on the phone, a third person can track their network signals and clone the SIM cards. This, Suman says, is a very complicated and rarely used technique.

"We find a lot of incidents of SIM cloning and many people suffer every week. A few days ago, I found a case in which culprits extracted banking information of a man and stole all his money, using this technology," he added.

The other arrestee -- Nahid Hasan -- was accused of spreading IS propaganda with his Facebook page "Islamic State Dawla Al Islamia".

Detectives said Nahid was the administrator of the page that circulated unverified reports of the IS claiming responsibilities for different subversive attacks, including the recent murders of two foreigners, bomb attacks on Hossaini Dalan, and attack on a police checkpoint in Ashulia.

Nahid, a student of political science at Rahmatullah University College in Tongi, is an Islami Chhatra Shibir adherent. He runs the Facebook page using fake IDs -- Khalid Bin Walid and Jihadi John -- and introduces himself as "army captain of the Caliphate".

In some cases, he uploaded the so-called claims in Bangla on the page even before the SITE Intelligence Group, which widely publicises the alleged IS claims, could post it on Twitter or its website, they law enforcers claimed.

The detectives said they were yet to find any link between Nahid's Facebook page and IS.

Behind bars for life

FROM PAGE 1

The rape incident sparked huge protests among guardians and students of the school, which intensified with rights organisations expressing solidarity with them.

In many cases, families do not speak up due to the social stigma attached to incidents of rape. Against this backdrop, the determination and courage of the victim's family played a crucial role in getting justice with the court itself finding negligence in investigating the crime.

The judgment came at a time when the whole world observed the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women yesterday.

"We are satisfied with the verdict as the court handed [the accused] the highest punishment [for the crime] as per the existing law," the victim's grandfather told The Daily Star over the phone.

Though satisfied, a guardian of a student at the school said Porimol should have been handed the death penalty.

"He [Porimol] was a teacher, a profession which is regarded highly in our society. But he disgraced the entire teaching community and that's why he deserved more stringent punishment," he said, wishing not to be named.

In Bangladesh life imprisonment means 30 years in jail, but convicts generally serve 20 to 24 years as the authorities usually reduce the sentence considering their good behaviour and other activities, a jailer said, seeking anonymity.

But Porimol will serve even less as the court has ordered deducting the jail term he has already served since his arrest in July 2011 from the life imprisonment, court sources said.

Rights activist Sultana Kamal expressed satisfaction over the verdict. "Women victims will now find an example [of justice]," she said at a programme in the capital yesterday. She also stressed the disposal of hundreds of such cases pending with

different courts.

According to the case statement, Porimol, a Bangla teacher at the Bashundhara branch of Viqarunnisa Noon School, raped the victim twice in May and June 2011. The victim's father filed a case in this connection the next month.

Porimol, who comes from Latenga village under Kotalipara upazila in Gopalganj, used to run a coaching centre at his Badda residence. He first raped the victim at his residence on May 28 and filmed her naked. He then threatened her with posting the video on internet in the case of her refusal to meet him later.

She was thus forced to meet Porimol at his house where he raped her again on June 17, the statement said.

But words got out and father of one of her classmates informed the victim's family of the matter. The school authorities, too, came to know about it.

However, no action was taken against the teacher until students and guardians took to the street, demanding Porimol's arrest and exemplary punishment.

Following widespread criticism, the school authorities sacked Porimol on July 5 and the victim's father filed the case the same day.

Husne Ara Begum, then principal, and Lutfur Rahman, administrative chief of the school's Bashundhara branch, were also implicated in the case for their alleged reluctance to take measure action against Porimol and their bid to cover up the incident.

Arrested within a day after the case was filed, Porimol later confessed to his crime before a court on July 11. His confession triggered further protests leading to Husne Ara's resignation from the institution.

On August 11 that year, police submitted a charge sheet before the court, dropping the names of Husne Ara and Lutfur Rahman. But they were included following further probe.

The court framed charges against Porimol on March 7, 2012, discharg-

ing the other two and the trial formally started on June 6 that year.

During the trial proceedings, the court recorded the testimonies of 28 prosecution witnesses including the victim and her father. On November 10, the court fixed yesterday for delivering the judgment.

YESTERDAY'S PROCEEDINGS

Porimol was produced before the court at 1:55pm. The judge took seat at 2:00pm and took five minutes to read out the summary of the 27-page verdict in a packed courtroom amid tight security.

The judge said the prosecution had been able to prove the rape charge beyond reasonable doubt by submitting oral, documentary and circumstantial evidence.

"So, convicting the accused of the above charge, due punishment can be meted out for the offence," said the judge, before pronouncing the sentence.

Porimol looked normal both during and after the pronouncement of judgment.

"I am respectful to the law as well as the verdict which was given by the judge," Porimol told reporters.

Mahfuz Miah, one of Porimol's counsels, said his client did not get justice. They will challenge the judgement in the High Court.

NEGLIGENCE IN INVESTIGATION

The judge said both the investigators of the case -- police inspectors SM Shahdat Hossain and Mahbubey Khoda, especially Shahdat -- showed extreme inefficiency and negligence while probing the case.

"Such negligence from two inspector-level senior police officials is in no way acceptable," Judge Saleh Uddin said.

"If they had done the investigation properly, it would have been easier to back the victim. However, it cannot be said that the charge was not proved beyond reasonable doubt due to their poor investigation," said the judge adding the government can take action against them.