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প্রথম বছরে ৯৯,০৯৮ ডায়ালাইসিস সম্পন্ন।

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Star BUSINESS

DHAKA TUESDAY APRIL 18, 2017, BAISHAKH 5, 1424 BS

Operators oppose proposal to hike spectrum prices

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

Mobile operators have opposed the telecom regulator's proposal to hike the spectrum prices and revenue sharing percentage for 4G services on grounds that the move would make the technology commercially unviable.

In the proposed guideline for 4G services, the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission called for 15 percent revenue sharing with operators.

At present, the operators share 5.5 percent of their gross revenue from 2G and 3G services with the BTRC. They also forward 1 percent of their proceeds as contribution towards the social obligation fund.

In a letter sent to Tarana Halim, state minister for telecom, the operators said the high spectrum charges, overall high taxation, low data rate, low average revenue per user, low penetration of 4G-enabled handsets do not justify any increase of revenue sharing.

"In the current context, any increase in revenue sharing will make the business

case for 4G totally unviable," said the letter signed by TIM Nurul Kabir, secretary general of the Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh.

It is also pertinent to highlight that technology-based revenue sharing is impractical and unworkable, it said. On its proposed guideline, the BTRC suggested Tk 15 crore as licence fees for 15 years and another Tk 7.5 crore as annual fees.

"Telecom is a capital-intensive industry and the question now is whether the industry can bear any more fees or taxes," the letter said. The telecom division yesterday forwarded the guideline to the finance ministry for final approval, said Shyam Sunder Sikder, secretary of the division.

The telecom regulator is also drafting another guideline, where it proposed \$25 million for each MHz of spectrum and another \$7-\$8 million for per MHz of technology neutrality.

"Spectrum price in Bangladesh is unusually high compared to benchmark countries," the operators said in the letter.

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Recovery of bad loans improves

JEBUN NESA ALO

Banks have made progress in recovery of their default loans in the last quarter of 2016, thanks to pressure from the central bank.

The loan recovery rate improved to 5.15 percent of total default loans in the October-December quarter of last year from 2.57 percent a quarter ago, according to Bangladesh Bank data.

Bankers attributed the progress to their intense efforts to show good profits and provide dividends to their shareholders as well.

Yet, the central bank was not happy as the recovery was insignificant compared to total default loans in the economy.

The central bank yesterday held a meeting with the top executives of 20 banks which were the worst performers in case of loan recovery in the July-September quarter. Deputy Governor SK Sur Chowdhury chaired the meeting.

"The poor loan recovery may cause capital loss for banks, hindering the implementation of the Basel-III," he said, referring to the globally accepted standards on capital and liquidity.

Banks were also suggested to set recovery targets for field level officials and provide them incentive if the target is achieved, said Chowdhury. Banks were also asked to place their loan recovery and classification statement to their board every three months.

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Muhith firm on 15pc uniform VAT

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Finance Minister AMA Muhith will not budge on his plans to introduce a 15 percent uniform VAT rate from July, but he might soften his stance on turnover tax, according to officials.

Muhith yesterday sat with two other ministers and a number of top business leaders to discuss the new VAT and Supplementary Duty Act 2012 at the secretariat.

After the meeting, Muhith said, "I told them two things: the new VAT law will come into force from July 1 and the rate will be uniform [15 percent]."

"But more discussion will take place. I admit there is apprehension about the new law."

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed termed the meeting fruitful.

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Reduce corporate tax: businesses

Trade bodies place budget proposals for 2017-18

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A leading trade body yesterday urged the government to reduce the corporate tax rate.

The existing tax rate that hovers between 25 percent and 45 percent should be cut by 10 percentage points in phases over the next five years, Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Ficci) said.

The government should adopt a holistic approach while framing budgetary measures in spite of giving preference to any industry, Ficci President Rupali Chowdhury said.

She spoke while placing budget proposals for 2017-18 at the National Board of Revenue.

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Robi fined Tk 4.1 lakh for three false offers

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A government agency yesterday fined Robi Tk 4.10 lakh for duping three customers through different offers -- the second time that the mobile operator was penalised.

The Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection (DNCRP) slapped the penalty on the operator after the hearing on customers' complaints, said Shaheen Ara Momtaz, the deputy director of the agency. On February 11, a customer named Shohag recharged Tk 98 to take an offer of the operator that promised him 1.5 GB of data. However, he received only 1 GB.

After getting the evidence the DNCRP fined Robi Tk 2.50 lakh, Momtaz said. "The customers also placed complaints through the operator's call centre but they got no response. That's why they are facing this fine."

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