

BTRC may allow mobile virtual network operator

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The telecom regulator considers allowing mobile virtual network operators (MVNO) with a view to injecting more competition into the cellular communication market.

An MVNO is a wireless communications services provider that does not own the wireless network infrastructure over which it provides services to its customers.

It enters into a business agreement with a mobile operator to obtain bulk access to network services at wholesale rates and then sets its own retail

prices independently.

The MVNO may use its own customer service, billing support systems, marketing and sales personnel.

The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission is now conducting a feasibility study on MVNOs in the country, said its Chairman Shahjahan Mahmood.

The move comes after the Prime Minister's ICT Affairs Adviser, Sajeeb Wazed Joy, directed the telecom regulator to take preparations for the introduction of MVNOs in Bangladesh.

Subsequently, the telecom regulator formed a committee to draft a guide-

line on it, said a senior BTRC official.

"After the study if we find that the MVNO would bring benefits to people, we must go for it," Mahmood said, adding that such players are in operation across the globe.

MVNO agreements with network operators date back to the 1990s, when the European telecom market saw market liberalisation, new regulatory frameworks, better 2G network technology and a subsequent jump in wireless subscriber numbers. The global MVNO market is expected to reach a valuation of \$75.2 billion by 2023, according to a market study.

Samsung seeks to bury fiery past with Galaxy Note 8 launch

REUTERS, Seoul/New York

Samsung Electronics Co Ltd set out to wipe the slate clean in New York on Wednesday with its new Galaxy Note 8 "phablet," hoping features like dual rear cameras and its biggest-ever screen will extinguish memories of the device's fire-prone predecessor.

The world's largest smartphone maker by market share debuted the phone-cum-tablet as it gears up to compete for pre-holiday season sales

with a widely expected 10th anniversary iPhone from U.S. rival Apple Inc, set to be unveiled next month.

Priced at \$930 to \$960 from network carriers, including a dialling and data plan, the Note 8 kicks off a new era of premium-priced handsets, which analysts expect to be joined by \$1,000-plus iPhones next month.

The unveiling came five months after the release of the Galaxy S8 smartphone. Analysts said brisk sales of that device indicate recovery in Samsung's standing

after battery fires prompted the October withdrawal of the Galaxy Note 7 just two months into sales, which cost the company billions of dollars.

The recall and related safety concerns briefly cost Samsung its number one spot in the global smartphone rankings, according to researcher Counterpoint. It has since regained ground, with Strategy Analytics putting its second-quarter market share at 22 percent, more than Apple and China's Huawei Technologies Co Ltd combined.



MONEYGRAM

Officials of MoneyGram and Madonna Communication, the communication partner of MoneyGram, pose along with the winners of MoneyGram Ramadan Campaign 2017, at an event at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.

BIBM organises workshop on sustainable finance

FROM PAGE B1

The Sustainable Finance Department of Bangladesh Bank and BIBM jointly organised the research workshop titled "Exploring barriers of sustainable finance in financial sector and policy propositions to remove the barriers". The BIBM research found that 27 percent of the fund spent for sustainable development was handed over against false documents.

There are various problems in sustainable financing and Bangladesh Bank is working to remove the barriers and loopholes in the policies, said SK Sur Chowdhury, deputy governor of the central bank.

The banking regulator can create a fund for sustainable development, said Khondkar Ibrahim Khaled, a former deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank.

It will be difficult for the government to implement the crop insurance it introduced, as the new insurance will increase harvesting cost, said Khaled.

BIBM Supernumerary Professor Helal Ahmed Chowdhury emphasised skills development for sustainable financing. He suggested banks should allocate funds for training on sustainable financing.

WB gives \$59m hard credit for power sector

FROM PAGE B1

The rate of interest on OCR loans is up to 3 percent and the highest average repayment period is 20 years.

Among the bilateral donors, Bangladesh is set to take a big amount of loan from China in the near future.

The interest rate on the Chinese loan is 2 percent. In addition, 0.4 percent other charges are applicable and the repayment period is 20 years including five years' grace period.

Taking the SUF credit would be a sound move on the part of the government considering the interest rate and the terms and condition, Sadiq Ahmed, vice-chairman of the Policy Research Institute, earlier told The Daily Star.

"It would be a good opportunity for Bangladesh," he added.

The agreement to take SUF credit was signed yesterday by Kazi Shofiqul Azam, secretary of the Economic Relations Division, and Qimiao Fan, country director of the WB.

In the last five years, Bangladesh has doubled its electricity generation capacity to meet the growing demand. Today, about 78 percent of the population have access to electricity.

With rapid increase in the size of the power system, Bangladesh now faces challenges of ensuring quality and reliability of the electricity supply, Fan said.

Subsequently, the SUF credit will go towards improving the reliability and efficiency of the country's power system such that low-cost power can be provided.

"Reliable and low-cost power supply will make doing business easier and benefit households," Fan said.

Besides, the project will benefit the government with fiscal savings, as a modern power generation system will cut down fuel use.

It will also lower greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the use of carbon-intensive fuel in electricity generation.

Furthermore, the project will construct and rehabilitate a 40-km transmission line.

"The government is committed to provide electricity to all," Azam said.

The financing will help remove bottlenecks and optimise the national power system to ensure affordable and round-the-clock electricity, he added.

Local card transactions must go thru' national payment switch: BB

FROM PAGE B1

Of the 57 banks operating in the country, 52 are connected with the NPS, according to the BB.

Only a few banks have made their cards chip-based, with the majority still running with magnetic stripped-cards, which are highly vulnerable to fraud.

Of all the banks, only two are PCI-DSS certified and four are awaiting the certification, which is a proprietary information security standard for organisations that handle branded cards from major card schemes like Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, and JCB.

The BB has also asked all banks to make their ATM EMV-equipped and install anti-skimming devices by the end of the year.

Tiger IT digitising number plates in Nepal

FROM PAGE B1

The RFID stickers will also help the government expand tax and toll collections, as they facilitate automated monitoring of vehicles on the road.

Incorporation of the vehicle owner's data with that of the registration plates will take place in a high security facility.

New enrolment stations will be installed in transport management offices throughout the country, which will communicate online with the centralised Kathmandu-based central system.

At the core of the system is a central database of vehicles and their owners. This database may also be made available to law enforcement agencies if required.

Overall this system will boost transparency and accountability of the transport management department. Citizens will have easier access to related services and the government will benefit with increased revenue in taxes and tolls.

Poor should be included in value chain: experts

FROM PAGE B1

But with modern technological advances such as real-time consumer data, the whole value chain can be monitored to provide competitive advantage for the business, it said.

According to the report, the BoP customers are undoubtedly cost-sensitive. However, time and time again they have demonstrated that the value created by the product comes first instead of price in their purchase decisions.

"Communication of the value is equally important to educate the consumer segment about the long-term benefits of the products." Bijon Islam, chief executive officer of LightCastle Partners, and Imran Chowdhury, a senior business consultant of the firm, also spoke.



AMRAN HOSSAIN

Second from right, Rebecca Foster, head of compliance and quality at Marks and Spencer, listens to an employee of Viyellatex Group during an event—Marks & Start Experience Sharing Session—at Eco Couture in Gazipur on Wednesday. Foster visited Viyellatex Group's flagship factories, Eco Fab and Eco Couture.

MA Mannan, state minister for finance and planning, attends a roundtable on venture capital, jointly organised by the Economic Reporters' Forum and the Venture Capital and Private Equity Association of Bangladesh, at Janata Tower in Dhaka yesterday.



ERF



SOUTHEAST BANK

M Kamal Hossain, managing director of Southeast Bank, hands over Tk 6 lakh as donation to Monjila-Tul-Ferdousi, wife of late police officer Shaikh Sirajul Hoque, at a programme on Wednesday. Md Asduzzaman Mia, commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, was also present.



PID

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina receives funds as donation for the flood-hit people across the country, from the chairmen and directors of different banks at a programme at the Prime Minister's Office in Dhaka. Thirty nine banks gave Tk 85 crore as part of their corporate social responsibility activities, at the event organised by Bangladesh Association of Banks.