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TELCOS' INVESTMENT FALLS

Investment by mobile operators hit a six-year low in fiscal 2017

PAGE B1

NEW BANKING LAW

This is how to take banks further away from the public

PAGE 6

'CAN'T SERVE TRUMP'

US ambassador to Panama resigns in a fresh blow to the US president

PAGE 8

40,000 'orphans'

Reveals study on Rohingya camps; project undertaken for their welfare

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Thousands of children saw horror unfolding in their homes in Myanmar and they fled to safety in Bangladesh after walking through jungles and hills for days.

However, around 40,000 of the little souls lost contact with either or both of their parents, according to a survey by the social welfare ministry.

Of the children, 8,882 have lost track of both of their parents. They are now staying with their relatives, said Md Ali Noor, additional secretary of the ministry, quoting findings of the two-month survey carried out on the Rohingya slums in Cox's Bazar from September 23 last year.

All these Rohingya children do not know what exactly happened to their parents. Many of them fear their parents are dead.

As many as 655,000 Rohingyas have taken shelter in Bangladesh since violence erupted in Rakhine State in August last year.

According to estimates, the refugees include around three lakh children. Save the Children says another 48,000 are likely to be born in the squalid camps in Teknaf and Ukhiya this year.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5



Vessels move amid thick fog on the Paturia-Daulatdia route in the Padma around 11:30am yesterday. Ferry service on the route was suspended for eight hours since 2:00am due to poor visibility, leaving thousands of bus passengers stranded on both sides of the river.

PHOTO: MOKAMMEL SHUVU

Fog disrupts ferry services

Thousands suffer

STAR REPORT

Several thousand passengers on Paturia-Daulatdia and Shimulia-Kathalbari ferry routes were stuck for several hours on both sides of the Padma due to dense fog yesterday.

People, especially women and children, have been suffering badly as ferry services were disrupted for three consecutive days resulting in huge traffic jams on both routes, report our correspondents there.

Apart from the river routes, passengers travelling by air also had to suffer as at least 12 flights were delayed due to dense fog at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, officials told The Daily Star.

Ferry services on Paturia-Daulatdia route remained suspended for eight hours from early yesterday causing severe gridlocks on both sides of the river, especially at Paturia, reports our Manikganj correspondent.

Shafiqul Islam, manager of Bangladesh Inland Water

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

First phase of Biswa Ijtema ends today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The three-day first phase of the Biswa Ijtema, the second largest Muslim congregation after the Hajj, will end today with the Akheri Munajat (concluding prayer) in which devotees will seeking welfare of the Muslim Ummah and their spiritual well-being.

A large number of devotees from the capital, Gazipur and nearby areas is expected to converge on the Ijtema venue where over an estimated one million devotees from home and abroad have gathered to take part in the Akheri Munajat on the Turag in Tongi.

Thousands will also participate in the prayer from far and wide as it will be aired live on several

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Grim year for economy

Cautions CPD over scam-riddled banking sector, soaring import, dwindling export

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The economy has come under pressure due to the banking sector crisis, inflation and soaring imports amid inadequate export earnings and insufficient remittance inflows, the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) said yesterday.

The banking sector is suffering from cronyism, the think-tank said, adding that various irregularities and embezzlement of public funds are taking place with influential people involved in it.

"We do not see any prospect of a turnaround in this sector in the next couple of months as the appetite for reforms remains low during the year ahead of elections," CPD Executive Director Fahmida Khatun told a press briefing at the Cirdap auditorium in Dhaka.

The CPD said the stealing of public money by a handful of corrupt people and the rise in financial crimes in the country indicate that the banking sector is in dire straits.

Fahmida said economies of countries such as Indonesia and Argentina also suffered due to problems in financial sector.

CPD OBSERVATIONS

- Higher income and wealth inequality
- Falling pace of poverty reduction, employment
- Crisis in the banking sector
- Sluggish reform
- Weakness in economic management
- Lack of reform initiatives by govt

"It needs to be seen if we are going in that direction," she added.

The CPD's views come at a time when non-performing loans rose to Tk 80,307 crore between January and September last year, up from Tk 62,172 crore in December 2016, mainly due to irregularities in lending, political influence in loan sanctioning and weak corporate governance.

As a result, the financial health of some banks, namely Farmers Bank, NRB Commercial Bank and AB Bank, has recently deteriorated, creating a

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

NOMINATION FOR DNCC POLLS

8 buy AL forms, no party leader among them

Tabith's BNP ticket 'awaits formalities'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight people -- four businessmen, three teachers and a poet -- yesterday collected forms from the Awami League seeking party ticket for Dhaka North City Corporation mayor race.

No AL leader was among them and yesterday was the first day of the sale of AL forms. The last day is tomorrow.

The four businessmen are: Atiqul Islam, former president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, HBM Iqbal, chairman of Premier Bank Ltd, Adam Tamizi Haque, managing director of Haque Group of Industries, and Helal Uddin, a director of the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Iqbal is a former AL lawmaker, but does

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Hold talks on polls-time govt

BNP asks govt in reaction to PM's address; AL says no need for dialogue on this issue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday urged the government to hold talks with all stakeholders on the formation of the election-time government about which Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina spoke in her address to the nation on Friday.

The Awami League, however, said a dialogue could take place, but it will not be on the formation of the polls-time government.

In her speech, Hasina said the next parliamentary election would be held under an election-time government in line with the constitution, meaning she would be holding office as the head of the government during the polls.

Rejecting the idea, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said it would only deepen the current political crisis.

"There is no clear provision in the constitution about the election-time government. The election will not be free and fair if it is held under a partisan government without having

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



A teacher of Chhalia Government Primary School in Sylhet imparting lessons on the school playground due to a shortage of classrooms. The number of classrooms at the school is inadequate in comparison to the number of students there. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASTIR

Learn anywhere, anytime

Start-ups show the digital way of quality education for all

BISHAKHA DEVNATH

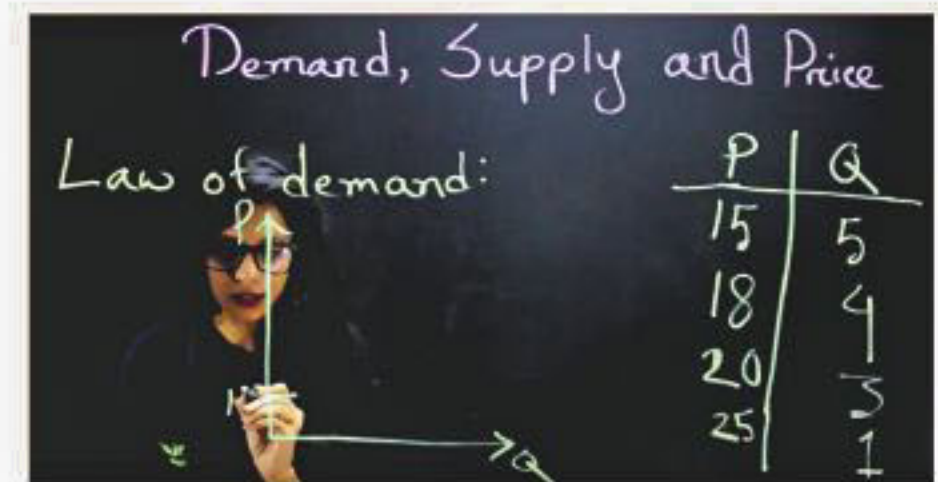
Access to education is now just a click away and diving into it can be fun too.

To make this happen, start-ups founded by young and creative minds have created easily accessible digital content and applications aimed at solving inequality in education. The efforts have made enough of a mark to be noticed, recognised and, in cases, appreciated nationally and internationally.

Students from as early as class five can use their mobile phones or computers to peruse relevant video tutorials. They can also evaluate their understanding of a topic by participating in tests and comparing their scores with their peers, said Mostafizur Rahman, co-founder of Durbin Academy, in an interview with The Daily Star.

Durbin boasts more than 1,500 video tutorials on their website covering up to the national curriculum of higher secondary education. Support is also available for graduates who are planning to take the Bangladesh Civil Service exams and also for those who provide private tuition.

The new start-ups are also using the platforms their target segment is most likely to use. Facebook, that now raises a frown of



concern on parents' faces, has been used successfully as a learning tool by 10 Minute School, another education start-up. The free learning digital platform won the Commonwealth Youth Award 2016.

On 10 Minute's Facebook page, learners and teachers can interact with each other via live sessions. The initiative has already drawn more than six lakh followers.

Students and candidates looking to study abroad can also easily prepare from home by watching videos on 10 Minute School's website. They can also take practice tests in preparation for SAT, GRE, GMAT and IELTS tests.

Watching a 10-minute video is all that students need to learn a topic on the platform. Contents are available for students of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2