



TELETALK'S 4G READINESS
The state-run operator is not prepared to roll out services for fund dearth

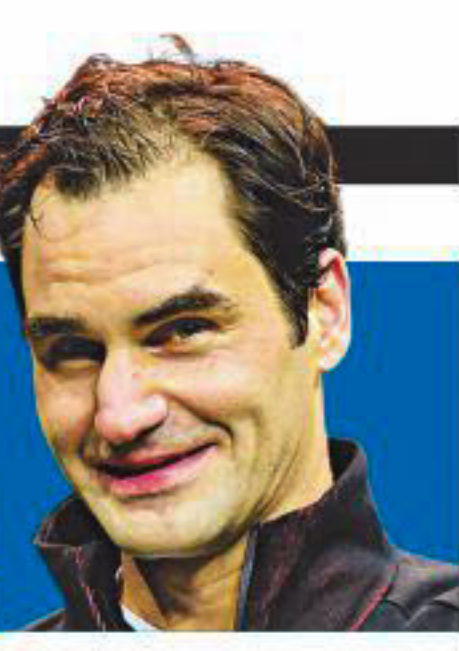
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FBI FAILED TO ACT
The agency admits mishandling warning about Florida shooter

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NO 1 AT 36
Federer surpasses Agassi to become the oldest World No 1

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STATE BANKS

Plundering made easy

Govt recapitalising banks without any reform plan; chairmen, board members not held accountable

INAM AHMED and SHAKHAWAT LITON

Seven months after the government announced a Tk 2 crore "recapitalisation" of state-owned banks, the financial institutions have started asking for fresh money from the government. This time their demand is much higher -- a little over Tk 20,000 crore -- than what they were given in the budget for this year.

Only in June this fiscal year, the government had announced the "recapitalisation". Before that, Tk 14,505 crore had already been given to them since the Awami League government came to power in 2009. Sadly, as predicted, all the money has gone down the drain, or to be exact in the pockets of corrupt and politically connected people, and the banks are once again asking for another bail-out.

Dr Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of independent think-tank Policy Research Initiative, has aptly put down their plea, comparing their behaviour to that of a spoiled brat who throws money in the air every time and then asks his father for more.

Only, in this case the father -- the government -- will take the money from the tax payers' pockets and hand it out liberally as it has done over and over again in the past.

There has been no effort to chastise the banks whose money has been politically plundered in thousands of crores with no action taken.

Many would like to point out the recent massive \$14 billion Indian bank recapitalisation plan under the Indrodhanush Recapitalisation Scheme, arguing that our demand for recapitalisation is really trivial in comparison.

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A jaywalking student was run over by a bus right under a footbridge in the capital's Farmgate yesterday afternoon. On the same spot less than two hours later, people started running across the busy street ignoring the risk.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

UN hopes for free, fair polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

United Nations secretary general's office has expressed its hope that "a climate could be created where free and fair elections could take place" in Bangladesh.

Talking to reporters, Stéphane Dujarric, a UNSG spokesperson, yesterday said, "We've expressed our concern... This is our principal position."

He said these when asked whether the UNSG had taken any action to release BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia from jail.

Khaleda was convicted in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case by a special court in Dhaka on February 8. She was sentenced to five years' in prison.

The BNP has been demonstrating for her release.

Asked about Rohingya repatriation to Myanmar, the UN chief's spokesperson said, "Any return needs to be voluntary and should not be forced."

"They should not go back to camps. They need to go back to their homes, the homes that they were forced to leave. So, there are all sorts of conditions that the High Commissioner for Refugees feel have not been met," he was quoted in the

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QUESTION LEAK

Unstoppable?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Like people have breakfast before going to work, a number of examinees are now getting question papers before they enter exam halls.

Question papers of all the SSC tests held so far have been leaked. So was yesterday's.

The multiple choice questions (MCQs) of Bangladesh and Global Studies were found on several Facebook and Whatsapp groups around an hour before the exam began.

This correspondent saw images of "Kha" set of the MCQs along with the answers in a Facebook group around 9:00am. They were found to be identical to those distributed among students at exam halls.

With all the government steps to stop the leak spree turning out to be futile, the High Court on Thursday formed two committees -- one judicial and another administrative -- to find out those responsible and make recommendations for preventing the menace.

The committees with five members each have to start work within a week

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BNP continues quiet protest

Collects mass signature for Khaleda's release

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP has started collecting signatures from people as part of its ongoing protest programme demanding the release of party Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, secretary general of BNP, launched the mass signature campaign at the party's Nayapaltan central office at 11:30pm yesterday, with BNP standing committee members putting their signatures on a form.

Speaking at the programme, BNP leaders called upon the party men not to react to any provocation from the government to go for a violent movement.

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BNP's mass signature collection campaign demanding the release of Khaleda Zia at the party's Nayapaltan office in the capital yesterday morning.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Tigers playing for pride

AL-AMIN from Sylhet

When Sylhet hosts the second and final T20I today, the home side will look to salvage their pride from what will be their first game on this ground. The Tigers are already 1-0 down after losing the opening game against Sri Lanka despite scoring their highest T20I total.

Although it is unclear if the ground, which produced a lot of runs while hosting the first leg of the Bangladesh Premier League last year, will be true to its usual self, the all-guns-blazing approach by both teams during training yesterday provided ample evidence that it would be another high-scoring affair after the first game in Dhaka.

The Sri Lankans will look to complete a very

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