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DHAKA TUESDAY APRIL 24, 2018, BAISHAKH 11, 1425 BS starbusiness@thedailystar.net

MOBILE NUMBER PORTABILITY Service delayed by 3 more months

STOCKS

DSEX

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COMMODITIES

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

.......... Mobile phone subscribers will have to wait around three more months to be able to switch operators every 40 days while retaining their existing numbers as the technical aspects and responsibilities have just been finalised.

Now operators will work on importing some infrastructure and software, said TIM Nurul Kabir, secretary general of the Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh (AMTOB).

Mobile number portability, as it is known, gives mobile phone users choice and boosts competition in the market. Singapore pioneered the service in 1997. Now over 72 countries have it. Neighbouring India and Pakistan introduced it a few years ago.

Discussions opened in 2009 and Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) in June 2013 asked the mobile phone operators to introduce it from 2014.

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Analysts attend a roundtable styled "Five years of Rana Plaza collapse: experience, achievement and what needs to be done" jointly organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka yesterday.

Give accident insurance to workers

Analysts say at roundtable on Rana Plaza building collapse

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Workplace accident insurance should be introduced for workers in all industrial sectors to ensure security, said speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

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They also said the government should hand out exemplary punishment to the people responsible for the collapse of the Rana Plaza and implement building codes properly for a better working condition at factories.

The amended labour law has narrowed the security issue of workers, said Roy Romesh Chandra, a member of the advisory council of the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies.

"The revised law does not cover

of workplace accident. This is a weak-said the labour leader. ness of the law."

Chandra's comments came at a roundtable styled 'Five years of Rana Plaza collapse: experience, achievement and what needs to be done', jointly organised by the BILS and The Daily Star at the newspaper's headquarters in Dhaka.

Chandra said the Rana Plaza collapse occurred because of the absence of the rule of law.

"The concerned government bodies that gave the approval to construct the building are responsible for the tragedy," he added.

The national building code should be followed properly and a specialised body should look into the rehabilitation of workers in case whether it is being implemented,

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Former labour secretary Mikail Shipar suggested amending the existing labour act to cover the complete security issue of workers.

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"We need safety assessment of the plastic and chemical industries along with the garment sector," he said, adding that the workplace security standard in Bangladesh is still weak compared with the global standard.

He went on to express trepidation that security monitoring will collapse once the foreign inspection agencies, the Accord and the Alliance, leave Bangladesh.

"So, we need to give an institutional shape to our experience of the last five years."

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Textile millers decry proposed gas price hike

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The textile millers yesterday expressed concern over the proposed price hike of industrial gas because of which the production cost will increase and they will finally fail to remain competitive in the global market.

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The spinners currently pay Tk 9.62 for every cubic metre of gas and use Tk 8 to Tk 9 worth of gas to produce a kilogramme of yarn, said Shahid Alam, vice chairman of Jalal Ahmed Spinning Mills Ltd.

But the government now plans to increase the price of a cubic metre of industrial gas by 66 percent to Tk 16, which will more than double the production cost of a me an additional of Tk 2.16 crore a year. kg of yarn to Tk 22, he said.

"If the new price is put in place, we will have to increase the selling price of yarn to make profits. But our buyers are not ready for the retrospective price rise."

Alam spoke at a meeting on the existing gas and energy situation in the country's textile sector. Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) organised the event at its office in Dhaka.

The government has so far increased gas price thrice since September 2015 when per cubic metre of gas for industrial use was sold at Tk 4.18, he said.

At the meeting, Khorshed Alam, managing director of Little Star Spinning Mills Ltd,

shed light on the struggles he has been facing because of poor service of the stateowned Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd.

"I took Titas to the court as it has been

supplying gas to my factory at 2PSI [pounds per square inch] although the gas pressure was supposed to be 15 PSI."

Alam said he installed electronic volume corrector (EVC) gas metres to measure the exact bills and later the court ordered Titas to solve the issue immediately.

But the state-run firm did not pay heed to the call also, he said. "I am still paying gas bills at the rate of 15 PSI, which is costing

"I had to let go a big unique work order from Turkey as it was not possible for me to produce the goods in my factory due to low gas pressure," he said.

Tapan Chowdhury, president of BTMA, said he wanted to see a logical gas price hike.

Chowdhury demanded that the government install EVC metres in all gas connections, give quick gas connections to factories which relocated and introduce a long-term industrial gas pricing policy.

"We have to find out the ways on how to survive if the gas price is hiked further," says A Matin Chowdhury, managing director of Malek Spinning Mills Ltd, a leading spinner.

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Stocks fall for second session

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

....... Dhaka stocks fell yesterday for the second consecutive day because of low participation of investors.

The DSEX, the benchmark index of the premier bourse, fell 7.15 points or 0.12 percent before finishing the day at 5,806.13.

"The market started on a positive note and witnessed a choppy session before closing in the red," UCB Capital Management said in its daily market analysis.

The investors chose to liquidate their stocks to post quick gains as earnings declarations did not meet their expectation, EBL Securities said in its analysis.

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Another Jewel in the Crown

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