City



UNIFORM MINIMUM CALL RATE

Benefit goes to operators, not to users

Volume of mobile calls falls by 15pc; operators' earnings rise by 5pc

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

Mobile call volume dropped by 15 percent since the introduction of the minimum uniform call rate, as users attempted to minimise costs, industry insiders said yesterday.

However, earnings of mobile phone operators rose by five percent since the new rate of Tk 0.45 a minute came into force two weeks ago, they added. The rate, which came into effect on August 14, affected

many customers, as all the regular packages of the top mobile operators are now charging more than Tk 1.20 per minute. Additionally, operators have also introduced a number

of offers that are close to the minimum rate. Shamrat Mandal, a mobile user, was charged Tk 2 yester-

day for a 56-second call.

"This is robbery," said Mandal, a student of a private iniversity. Another customer, Masum Murtuza, voiced similar

complaints when he was charged Tk 3.18 by his operator for a call that lasted 1:28 minutes. "My call charge has almost doubled," he said in frustration.

Meanwhile, social media platforms have also been flooded with complaints made by subscribers.

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An easy bike runs against traffic on Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Narayanganj's Mouchak area yesterday. Although the government imposed a ban on movement of three-wheelers and other low-speed vehicles on national highways over three years ago, such vehicles continue to operate on highways causing frequent road accidents.

PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

Dr Kamal, B Chy forge new alliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a latest development in politics, a new platform has been floated under the joint leadership of Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury and Dr Kamal Hossain to take part in the next general elections.

The two senior political leaders of the country came up with the declaration after a two-hour meeting at the house of Dr Kamal, president of Gonoforum, last night.

"We -- former president and Juktofront Chairman AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury and constitution architect Dr Kamal Hossain -- have agreed to work unitedly at the present moment of crisis of the nation," B Chowdhury said after the meeting.

He also said a subcommittee had been formed for preparing the next course of action of the platform, which would be announced soon.

Leaders of the components of Juktofront --Bikolpodhara Bangladesh,

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Girl set on fire in Pabna dies at DMCH

Father's political rivals blamed; 24 arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

The college girl, who was set on fire allegedly by her father's rivals in Santhia upazila on August 19, lost her battle for life at Dhaka Medical College Hospital early yesterday.

Mukti Khatun, 22, daughter of freedom fighter Mozammel Haque of Nagdemra village in the upazila, was a second-year student of Philosophy department at Government Edward College in Pabna.

Mukti, who suffered 60 percent burns, died from her injuries at the DMCH's ICU around 1:30am, said Abdul Mazid, officerin-charge of Santhia Police Station.

On August 19, some criminals, allegedly led by Abdus Salam, president of ward-1 unit Awami League of Nagdemra union, attacked Mozammel's house and set fire on Mukti after pouring petrol on her.

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Mukti Khatun

Abducted by men posing as detectives'

A small trader's family alleges he was picked up two and half months back

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Identifying themselves as law enforcers, a group of plainclothes men abducted a small trader from near his home in the capital's Mirpur-2 on June 10.

Over the last two and a half months, the family members of the man, Mohan Miah, 38, tried everything possible to find him. They went to police, Rab and even paid an alleged source of the law enforcers Tk 2 lakh, all in vain.

The family members made the allegations at a press conference at the city's Crime Reporters Association of Bangladesh (Crab) yesterday.

Reading out a written statement, Mohan's father Jamsher Ali demanded the immediate release of son, father of two. He said he watched helplessly as seven to eight people picked up Mohan,

38. Asked, the men introduced themselves as members of Detective Branch (DB) of police and said Mohan was an accused in a case, he said. Jamsher immediately went to Mirpur Police Station and then to the DB

office on Minto Road, but the law enforcers said Mohan was not with them. Later, Mohan's family members went to the office of Rab-4 in Mirpur. The Rab unit also denied picking him up. Around a week later, a man called Jamsher over his mobile phone, intro-

duced himself as one Hafizur Rahman and asked Jamsher to meet him near a dairy farm in Mirpur-2. As they met, Hafizur showed Jamsher a photo of Mohan on his cell phone. Hafizur then claimed that he was a member of Rab-4 and told Jamsher

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2 'drug dealers, robber' killed in 'shootouts'

STAR REPORT

Two alleged drug traders and a suspected robber were killed in separate "shootouts" in Natore, Gazipur and Barguna districts early yesterday. In Natore, Meher Ali,

accused in 14 cases for drugs, robbery and murder, was killed in a "gunfight" with Rapid Action Battalion in Lalpur upazila.

The "shootout" took place around 2:15am as Rab members challenged a group of people in Chamtia area and came under fire.

The Rab men retaliated, triggering a gunfight, leaving Meher injured, our local correspondent reports quoting Maj Shiblee Mostofa, a company commander of Rab in Natore.

He was rushed to Lalpur Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared him dead.

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Traffic noise may make birds age faster: study



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Traffic noise may make birds age more quickly than is natural, scientists have found.

A study on zebra finches suggested those exposed to the sounds of road vehicles were less protected from damage linked with ageing.

Previous research has concluded that urban birds have shorter lifespans than their rural counterparts, and academics believe high levels of artificial noise may play a role.

Researchers at the Max Planck Institute for Ornithology in Germany and North Dakota State SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Tulip calls for release of Shahidul

STAR REPORT

British MP Tulip Siddiq, a niece of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has called upon her aunt to release arrested photojournalist Shahidul Alam, according to the British newspaper The Times.

Tulip, the Labour MP for Hampstead and Kilburn, said the detention was "deeply distressing and should end immediately", SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 29 Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha AZAN 4-30 12-45 4-45 6-33 8-00 JAMAAT 5-05 1-15 5-00 6-36 8-30 SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

'SPREADING RUMOUR' Woman coffee shop owner gets bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to Faria Mahjabin, owner of Nerdy Bean Coffee Haus in Dhanmondi, in a case filed under the ICT Act over "spreading rumours and sharing provocative posts" on social media regarding the recent students' protest.

Metropolitan Magistrate Md Aminul Haque passed the order after her lawyer, Jyotirmoy Barua, submitted a petition seeking bail.

Additional Chief

During the hearing, yotirmoy told the court that his client has been languishing in jail since August 17.

Several others arrested on the same charges in other cases were granted bail. So, considering her social status, she too should be granted bail, her lawyer argued.

On the other hand, the prosecution opposed the bail petition saying that on SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



A Sandwip-bound trawler navigates through rough waters of the Bay of Bengal near Mogdhdara Ferry Ghat in Chittagong's Sitakunda upazila yesterday. A boat beside it carries people from a sea truck to the ferry terminal. Due to a depression in the Bay, the Met office has asked the Chittagong port to hoist local cautionary signal no 3.

PHOTO: **RAJIB RAIHAN** WAR CRIMES IN YEMEN

All sides may be responsible: UN

Probe report criticises Saudi-led coalition, govt and rebels for heavy civilian casualties

AFP, Geneva

All sides in Yemen's bloody conflict may have committed war crimes, UN investigators said yesterday, highlighting deadly air strikes, rampant sexual violence, and the recruitment of young children as soldiers.

In their first report, a team of UN-mandated investigators said they had "reasonable grounds to believe that the parties to the armed conflict in Yemen have committed a substantial number of violations of international humanitarian law."

Many of these violations may amount to "war crimes", the report said, pointing to widespread arbitrary detention, rape, torture and the recruitment of children as young as eight to take part in hostilities. Kamel Jendoubi, who heads the UN's so-called Group of

Independent Eminent International and Regional Experts, said the investigators had identified a number of alleged perpetrators. "A confidential list of these individuals will be presented

today to the (UN) High Commissioner" for Human Rights,

he told journalists in Geneva. The devastating conflict in Yemen has left nearly 10,000 people dead since March 2015, when a Saudi-led coalition intervened to fight Huthi rebels closing in on the last bastion of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi's government.

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