



The Daily Star

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REGD. No. DA 781 | Vol. XXIX No. 267 | KARTIK 2, 1426 BS | SAFAR 17, 1441 HJRI | 20 PAGES PLUS SHOUT PRICE: Tk 12.00



Administrator for GP, Robi soon

Private entities may get first-ever govt appointees as telecoms regulator initiates process; minister says govt to make it official today

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

The government has started the process of appointing administrators at Grameenphone and Robi to run their business operations, a move unheard of in Bangladesh's private sector.

Multiple sources familiar with the development said the decision to appoint administrators came from the highest authorities of the government in a bid to recover Tk 13,446 crore the companies reportedly owe to the government.

The amount was determined through two separate audits by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission in 2016.

The BTRC on Tuesday sent two separate letters to the telecom ministry for its approval in this regard.

The letters propose appointing at least four administrators in each of the two mobile carriers.

"We have the telecom regulator's recommendation and will go for it as the highest authorities of the government



directed us to take prompt action," Mustafa Jabbar, post and telecommunication minister, told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

Jabbar also said the formal approval will be given today.

"I have verbally directed the BTRC to make preparations and find people suitable for the post of administrators."

Sources at the telecom division also said the telecom regulator and the ministry moved forward with the consent of the top authorities of the government.

On September 5, the BTRC issued two show-cause notices to the carriers asking why their 2G and 3G licences would not be revoked for their failure to pay the dues.

In their replies, the operators this month claimed that the BTRC notices were invalid as the audit-claim was a subjudice matter.

BTRC Chairman Jahirul Haque yesterday said the mobile operators' replies were not satisfactory and the commission had decided to suspend their 2G and 3G licences before appointing administrators

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Buet students taking a vow to make sure no one is tortured or killed on campus again. The programme attended by the vice-chancellor and many hall provosts started with a one-minute silence for Abrar at the Buet Auditorium.

PHOTO: STAR

Be alert to avert road accidents

PM urges drivers, and pedestrians

AGENCIES, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday stressed the need for introducing education on traffic rules and regulations at the school level.

"Students should know which sides of the roads will have to be taken to move," she said while addressing a programme through videoconferencing from the Gono Bhaban.

The event was organised marking the opening of 1.2-km Bhulta Flyover on Dhaka-Sylhet highway, Patia bypass road on Chittagong-Cox's Bazar highway, Satkhira town bypass road, Aldi Bazar Bridge, and Banar Bridge on Mymensingh-Gafargaon-Toak district

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SOCIAL SAFETY NETS

Not many urban poor getting help

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and SOHEL PARVEZ

Poverty is urbanising rapidly, but most of the poor people in the cities remain deprived of the government's social protection benefits.

Only 17.84 percent of the poor people living in towns and cities receive support from social safety schemes, whereas 35.77 percent of the poor people in rural areas get the benefits, according to a World Bank report.

The large gap in allocation in social safety net remains although the pace of poverty reduction has slowed in urban areas since 2010 and the ratio of extreme poverty edged up in urban areas since then, says the assessment report unveiled last week.

The government has allocated Tk 74,367 crore for the safety net programmes for the current fiscal year, up 15 percent from a year ago.

The WB report said that urban poverty rate declined to 19.3 percent in 2016 from 21.3 percent in 2010. Extreme poverty rate rose to 8 percent in 2016 from 7.7 percent in 2010.

On the other hand, the rate of rural poverty fell 8.5 percentage points to 26.7 percent in 2016 from 2010, according to the report.

"Even though poverty is still highly rural, it is urbanising rapidly and that will require new solutions," the WB

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No to terrorism, communalism

Still smarting from brutal murder of Abrar, Buet students vow to resist repeat of such incidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the murder of Abrar Fahad fresh in everyone's minds, protesting students of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology yesterday took an oath to resist terrorism and communal forces on the campus.

"We will collectively prevent the rise of all sorts of terrorist activities and evil communal forces on the campus. Imbued with morality, we will uproot all the discriminatory cultures and abuses of power," the students said in unison.

"Together we will make sure that no innocent life falls apart and the innocent do not fall victim to torture on this university ground."

Several hundred students took the oath in presence of Buet vice-chancellor Prof Saiful Islam, deans of different faculties and provosts of the halls.

The programme was held at the university auditorium after being shifted from the earlier planned venue of the Shaheed Minar due to inclement weather.

As per their earlier announcement, the students

did not take part in academic activities.

The vice chancellor, acting director of the directorate of Student's Welfare (DSW) Prof Mohammed Abdul Basith and provosts of all eight halls took the oath with the students.

Prior to the oath-taking, the teachers and students observed a minute's silence in memory of Abrar Fahad.

The students also took an oath to ensure the welfare and security of all concerned in the university, and perform their moral responsibilities with honesty and sincerity.

The students also swore to remain vocal against wrongdoings, injustices and discrimination on the campus.

Rafia Rizwana, a second-year student of the Mechanical Engineering Department, conducted the oath-taking programme around 1:00pm.

After the programme, Mahmudur Rahman Sayem, a batch-15 student of the electrical and electronic engineering department and a spokesperson for the protesters, thanked the Buet authorities and the prime minister for their

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Abrar wasn't even given water to drink

Says an accused in the case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While Abrar was being brutally beaten before his death, he repeatedly begged for some water to drink but was not provided with even a drop, an accused in the case told journalists yesterday.

"When senior brothers were striking Abrar mercilessly, he begged for some water to drink several times. But they [the seniors] did not allow us to provide him with water even though we requested them," said SM Nasmus Sadat, one of the 19 accused in the Abrar murder case.

Sadat also said that while Abrar was being beaten, he fell seriously ill at one stage. "We wanted to take Abrar to hospital for treatment, but again the seniors did not allow us," he said while replying to journalists' queries inside the room of a Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka.

Abrar, a batch-17 student of electrical and electronic engineering department of Bangladesh University of Engineering and

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A man leaps over a large puddle on Manik Mia Avenue near a gate of the parliament complex yesterday after about an hour of moderate rain that flooded parts of the wide street.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Death of man in custody sparks clash in Rangpur

25 hurt; teargas, rubber bullets fired; five cops closed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

At least 25 people including five cops were injured as villagers clashed with police protesting the death of a man in custody in Rangpur's Pirganj upazila yesterday.

Most of the villagers suffered minor injuries and received treatment at local hospitals, but the condition of one of them, Robin, 22, was critical because of rubber bullet wounds in the head. He was admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

The clash broke out around 12:00noon when a few hundred villagers besieged the Police Investigation Centre at Bhendabari village after the news of the death spread. The villagers threw brickbats at police.

In response, police charged batons and fired 30 rounds of rubber bullets

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Internet Package Details

10 Mbps	12 Mbps	15 Mbps
20 Mbps	25 Mbps	30 Mbps

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- BDIX Connectivity
- Low Latency
- GGC & Facebook Cache Services
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