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ROHINGYAS USING MOBILES

2.94 lakh SIMs to be blocked

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

The government is set to block a few lakh mobile connections that are currently being used in Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar as it ramps up its efforts to crack down on criminal activities by a section of the refugee population.

According to the SIM registration process, Rohingyas cannot get mobile connection, for which a national ID card or passport is needed.

The refugees have neither, and yet as many as 2.94 lakh of the total of 11 lakh of them have managed local SIMs, according to tests by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission between November 19 and 21 in the camps in Ukhaia and Teknaf upazilas.

"Our intelligence agencies have noticed that using these mobile connections some Rohingyas are engaging in lots of criminal activities," Telecom Minister Mustafa Jabbar told The Daily Star on Monday evening.

Earlier in September, the telecom watchdog blocked 3G and 4G services in the camp areas with the view to checking the use of mobile communication applications like WhatsApp, Viber and WeChat by the Rohingyas.

Some of the Rohingyas used the apps to contact people in Myanmar and organise crimes on both sides of the border, said a BTRC official. Later, all services, except voice calls, were blocked in the area to tighten the situation.

Those were preceded by a blanket ban on SIM card sales in the area. A mobile court put five Rohingyas behind bars for setting up shops in Cox's Bazar and selling mobile phones and SIM cards to refugees.

And yet, it appears none of the steps were fully effective in checking the Rohingyas from using mobile services.


The tests conducted by the BTRC technical team, which is comprised of representatives of all mobile operators, last month also found 3G and 4G reception of Banglalink and Teletalk.

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Diggers of BIWTA demolish illegal structures on the Turag in Dhour area of Ashulia on the outskirts of the capital yesterday during an eviction drive. Inset, large drainage pipes, which were being built and sold there, being destroyed.

PHOTO:
PALASH KHAN



**On this day
in 1971**

DECEMBER 25
Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad urges the states of the world to acknowledge Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign state. "Bangladesh wants to keep a peaceful diplomatic relation with every state," he says in a press conference at Bangabhaban. He assures of making a constitution for Bangladesh and promises that it would reflect the aspiration of Bangladeshis. He says that the prime duty would be reconstructing the economy of the war-torn country and to rehabilitate the Bangladeshi refugees in India. About the disarmament of MuktiBahini, the premier says that

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Raushan may get special post JP chairperson behind move; HC questions legality of party chief appointment

RASHIDUL HASAN

The Jatiya Party may introduce a special post for Raushan Ershad, its senior co-chairperson and opposition leader, at the upcoming council to pacify a section of party leaders who want to see her as the chairperson, party insiders said.

Raushan is likely to be made "chief patron" of the party at its next council scheduled for December 28, the insiders added.

GM Quader, the party chairman, and top leaders loyal to him are apparently behind the move, said a party source.

The JP will have to amend its charter at the council to create the new post, SM Faysal Chisty, a presidium member, told The Daily Star.

The move comes against the backdrop of a High Court ruling yesterday, which questioned the legality of Quader being appointed the party chairperson without holding any council.

The court issued a rule asking Quader and the Election Commission to explain in four weeks why his appointment should not be declared illegal, Deputy Attorney

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This much we owe to our progeny

SC says; directs govt to cancel land leases in ecologically critical Jhilanja area of Cox's Bazar, compensate leaseholders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Stressing the need for formulating a policy to preserve ecological balance and protect natural resources, the Supreme Court has directed the government to cancel leases of plots in Jhilanja Mouza, an "ecologically critical area (ECA)", in Cox's Bazar and to demolish the structures constructed in the area.

In the full text of a verdict released recently, the apex court also ordered the authorities concerned not to grant any further lease within Jhilanja Mouza or any area which has been classified as an ECA.

The SC, however, asked them to compensate the leaseholders for cancelling their leases and knocking down the structures.

"We, therefore, direct that all leases within Jhilanja Mouza granted after April 19, 1999, be cancelled in the same way as those of the writ petitioners, and any constructions made thereon be demolished. Of course, the leaseholders shall be compensated for their loss due to such cancellation/demolition. We further direct that henceforth no lease shall be granted within Jhilanja Mouza or any area which has been classified as an ecologically critical area," the top court said in the full judgment.

A seven-member bench of the SC's Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain had delivered a short verdict on December 9 last year after dismissing five separate review petitions and a leave to appeal one filed by some leaseholders against its 2015 verdict.

In its 2015 verdict, the SC upheld a High Court judgement that on July 22, 2010, had declared valid a government decision to cancel lease of 55 plots in the mouza.

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INDUSTRIAL LOANS BB okays single-digit interest rate

Bangladesh Bank decides to cap the interest rate, a move that would be a boon for manufacturers as their cost of funds would go down. The decision, which aims at making businesses vibrant, comes at a board meeting of the central bank at the Bangladesh Bank headquarters in the capital. Businesspeople welcomed the central bank's initiative, saying the measure will give a shot in the arm of the industrial sector, giving them respite from the burden of higher interest rates. But bankers and experts expressed their concern and said it would have a negative impact on the banking sector as lenders will shy away from disbursing loans to the industrial sector due to the lower interest rate.

STORY ON B1

Putin drives first train across Crimea bridge



AFP, Moscow

President Vladimir Putin on Monday stood in the driver's cabin of a train for the official opening of a railway bridge that links annexed Crimea to southern Russia, with the launch drawing sharp criticism from Ukraine and the EU.

During his ride from Kerch in Crimea in a shortened three-carriage train, Putin also spent time drinking tea with engineers on the 227-billion-ruble (\$3.6-billion) project.

The rail bridge, which Putin praised as "magnificent," is 19 kilometres (12 miles) long. The bridge for car traffic opened in May last year when the president drove a truck across it.

The total rail route from the northwestern city

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Two killed in 'gunfights'


STAR REPORT

Two suspected criminals were killed in "gunfights" with members of Rapid Action Battalion in Cox's Bazar and Pabna early yesterday.

The dead are suspected drug peddler Rubel, 22, of Teknaf upazila in Cox's Bazar, and suspected robber Amin Sheikh, 40, of Pabna Sadar upazila, said Rab.

Mirza Shahed Mahtab, company commander of Rab-15 in Teknaf, and Aminul Kabir Tarafder, commanding officer of Rab-12 in Pabna, talked to journalists after the "gunfights".

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PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 25

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:25 12:45 3:45 5:24 7:00
JAMAAT 6:00 1:15 4:00 5:27 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A man covers a child's nose as they go past large dumpsters with burning trash in the capital's Malibagh Chowdhurypara yesterday. The open dumpsters are not only polluting the environment, but also occupying a lane of the street.

PHOTO:
SK ENAMUL HAQ

India okays funds for NPR

Anti-CAA protests continue

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi


Unfazed by continued protests against citizenship law and NRC, the Indian government yesterday decided to carry out a new census and update the National Population Register (NPR) across the country next year.

The decisions were taken at a meeting of federal cabinet which approved over Rs 8,500 crore fund for updating the NPR, officials said.

"There is no link between NPR and NRC. The NPR has nothing to do with NRC," Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar told a press conference after the meeting.

For NPR, "it will not be

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যত্রতত্র ময়লা-আবর্জনা ফেলা হতে বিরত থাকুন
আপনার শহরকে পরিচ্ছন্ন রাখুন

গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সম্মানিত নগরবাসীর অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে, কিছু ব্যক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠান যেখানে-সেখানে ময়লা-আবর্জনা ফেলে ঢাকা শহরের সৌন্দর্য বিনষ্ট করছে, যা মোটেও কাম্য নয়। ঢাকা শহরের কোনো রাস্তায় অথবা কর্পোরেশন কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত নয় এমন কোনো স্থানে ময়লা-আবর্জনা ফেলা স্থানীয় সরকার (সিটি কর্পোরেশন) আইন, ২০০৯ অনুযায়ী শাস্তিযোগ্য অপরাধ। নগরীর সুন্দর ও পরিচ্ছন্ন পরিবেশ বজায় রাখার জন্য যত্রতত্র ময়লা-আবর্জনা ফেলা বিশেষ করে পরিচ্ছন্নতা কাজ সম্পন্ন হওয়ার পর সকাল বেলা কেউ ময়লা ফেললে তার বিরুদ্ধে কঠোর আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।

এ অবস্থায়, ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশনকে একটি সুন্দর ও পরিচ্ছন্ন শহর হিসেবে গড়ে তোলার জন্য নির্ধারিত স্থান, কন্টেইনার বক্স বা ডাস্টবিনে ময়লা-আবর্জনা ফেলার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

মেয়র
জিডি-২১১৪
ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশন