

Bangladesh Computer Council to provide internet access in 617 remote unions



Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC) of the ICT Division has founded a project called “Connected Bangladesh” to provide internet access to remote areas of the country. The project started in October 2018 and will run till December 2023 with an estimated cost of BDT 50443.31 lacs. Through this project, BCC will ensure internet facilities in 617 remote unions of Bangladesh. Under the project, a high network will be established in the telecommunication-deprived areas.

One of the objectives of this project is to provide network connectivity to

all schools, colleges, madrasas, growth centres, telecom operators etc. in remote areas. Apart from promoting e-commerce, e-services, telemedicine through high-speed internet usage, one of the goals of the project is to increase employment in the IT sector and create new entrepreneurs. T

The Connected Bangladesh project is being implemented with the funding of the ‘Social Obligation Fund (SOF)’ managed by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) under the Posts and Telecommunications Division to

expand telecommunication facilities. Under this project, 8106 km of optical fibre cable is being installed at the union level, backbone router and DC power system are being installed in the union and pop room renovation work are underway.

Bangladesh Cable Shilpa Ltd, Khulna a state-owned company, has procured 8106 km of optical fibre cable and 5,000 km of duct pipes. As of January 2022, according to the internal data of the project, the work of Pop Room Renovation is about 51.28% and the work of laying Optical Fiber Cable is about 40.22%.

Bangladeshis behind global far-right online movements: Here's what we know

ZARIF FAIAZ

Over the past few weeks, growing protests against Covid-19 restrictions have been crippling Canada-US borders and downtown Ottawa. As the protest keeps gaining momentum online through groups and pages that circulate propaganda, an investigation by US news site Grid has unearthed riveting evidence that links a Bangladeshi digital marketing firm behind these online promotions.

Grid found out that JS Digital Guide, a digital marketing firm based in Bangladesh, was running two of the largest Facebook groups in Ottawa that circulated propaganda, conspiracy theories and kept promoting the protests online to reach more people.

The groups, named ‘Freedom Convoy 2022’ and ‘Convoy to Ottawa 2022’ had a combined membership of nearly 1,70,000 members, mostly Canadians, before Meta decided to shut them down following the Grid inquiry.

The groups regularly promoted calls for donations to the protest campaigns and directed its members to the protests related events in Canada, reports Grid.

In the course of the investigation, Grid was able to locate one Jakir Saikot, the founder of JS Digital Guide. Saikot told Grid in an online interview, that he started the groups because he “believed in freedom.” He also said that he did not receive any kind of payment for promoting the protests or running the groups.

But Saikot apparently told a different account of events to Nazmul Ahasan, a reporter at the Investigative Reporting

Program at the University of California-Berkeley, whom Grid contacted to corroborate the events.

To Ahasan, Saikot reportedly admitted that he generally charges an amount equivalent to \$23 per day for his services.

When contacted separately by this correspondent, Saikot initially refused to comment anything



regarding his involvement in the matter. However, he later admitted that he was contacted by a journalist named Steve Reilly from Grid, but claimed it was a ‘misunderstanding’.

“I do not have any agency. I run a small mobile phone store in Dhaka and I have no involvement in whatever’s going on in Canada,” he said.

“Please do not believe what’s being circulated about me. It is fake and fabricated. I do not know how they got my number but someone is clearly trying to smear my name.”

“Grid is a small news site with barely 1000 likes on Facebook. There’s no need to take it seriously,” said Saikot.

When asked about his conversations with Nazmul Ahasan, Saikot insisted that he did not speak with Ahasan and went on to allege that Ahasan may have had other agendas. “He is likely running a paid smear campaign against me, though I do not know why.”

This, however, is not the only incident of Bangladeshis being involved with far-right protest groups. Earlier this month, another investigation by Crikey, an Australia-based news site, revealed that a Bangladeshi Facebook profile under the name of Shamim Khan was behind a similar group called Convoy to Canberra.

Shamim Khan’s account claimed that he was from Rajshahi, Bangladesh and his account mostly contained posts shared in Bengali. But the account was seen repeatedly posting content related to the protest into the Convoy to Canberra group, reported Crickey.

Shamim Khan could not be contacted to corroborate the claims.

The ongoing movements were started first in Canada by truckers who opposed Covid-19 protection mandates but were soon joined by other ‘Anti-vaxxers’ and ‘QAnon groups’ and sparked similar far-right movements around the globe.

The Canadian Government has recently invoked the Emergencies Act for the first time to counter the growing protests, which allows the Government to use military force against the protesters, if and when absolutely necessary.

EDITOR’S NOTE

Learning takes the stage!

This week, we turn our attention to an age-old problem that prevails in our society. We question the archaic methods that institutions implement to teach their pupils, resulting in a lack of competent graduates hounding after jobs. We try to tackle the situation by preparing a rundown of the skills that you can learn to stay ahead of the curve.

Our brain is the most powerful organ in our body. But for it to remain potent, we must utilise it properly. The more you train your brain, the better equipped it will be to focus on things that truly matter to you. Hence, we decided to put the spotlight on some of the most intriguing brain-training apps out there for our readers to look through on Next Step.

For Tech Tips, we listed down some essential productivity apps for you to check out. You can also find a comprehensive beginner’s guide to understanding the specifics of different components that go into building your dream computer. Apart from this, we have a collection of timeless watches for motorheads (and everyone else) to choose from on Shift.

We hope you enjoy this week’s edition of your favourite weekend publication. Have a wonderful weekend!

P.S. Turn to the last page for a major announcement!

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Published by the Editor from Transcraft Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C.A., Dhaka-1000.