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Bangladesh win U-23 volleyball championship



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RMG exporters eye modest recovery

Is Grameenphone punished for Padma glitch?

SIM ban by telecom regulator shrouded in questions

MAHMUDUL HASAN

For Bangladesh, June 25, 2022 was a momentous day. But for Grameenphone, it is panning out to be a ruinous day.

On June 29, four days after the Padma bridge inauguration, the telecom regulator, on instruction from the posts and telecommunications division the previous day, banned Grameenphone's SIM sales until it improves its quality of service including bringing down call drop rate.

The letter does not specify how Grameenphone failed in terms of quality of service. It does not set any performance improvement criteria either on how to get the ban lifted.

For the country's leading mobile operator, the move was baffling given that its own drive tests were showing it was maintaining all quality-of-service (QoS) key performance indicators as per the threshold set by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission by a good margin.

The QoS metrics include call drop rate, call setup time, call setup success rate, call clarity, service coverage area, and internet download and upload speed.

In May, its call drop rate was 0.55 percent, the lowest among the four operators and well below the BTRC threshold of 2 percent, shows results from the regulator's recent data.

Yet, so severe seems the discontent that the posts and telecommunication division on October 18 fired off a show-cause notice



A worker spraying water to clean Agargaon metro station premises yesterday as part of the last-minute preparation for the inauguration of the metro rail service in the capital. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will open the service tomorrow. She will take the first ride from Uttara to Agargaon.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

"The ban was imposed for the sake of general people as they do not get quality service. Grameenphone's service quality is bad."

Mustafa Jabbar, post and telecommunication minister



"It is totally arbitrary, illegal and mollified. What law did they follow to make this decision?"

KM Tanjib-ul-Alam, corporate and constitutional law practitioner

SUNKEN TANKER IN MEGHNA

Oil spill poses threat to hilsa sanctuary



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

A huge amount of crude oil has leaked onto the Meghna and is spreading fast into the Bay of Bengal, after an unidentified vessel crashed into a tanker in Bhola Sadar's Tultoli area early Sunday.

The government was scrambling to clean up the thick layer of oil from the water yesterday, as the massive oil slick poses a threat to a nearby hilsa sanctuary and the river's aquatic life.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Enayet Hossain, officer-in-charge of Bhola Sadar Police Station, said the tanker, Sagor Nandini-2, was hit by an unidentified vessel around 4:00am.

Marine science experts, zoologist and fisheries

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Don't meddle in internal affairs of Bangladesh

Momen tells foreign countries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government does not want any country involved in Bangladesh's internal affairs, said Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday.

"We are a sovereign country. We are an independent country," he told reporters at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reports UNB.

As his attention was drawn to the recent remarks made by the US and Russian diplomats, he said other countries do not need to give prescriptions to Bangladesh on democracy and human rights because these are deeply rooted in Bangladesh's DNA.

The minister said the government is committed to holding free, fair, transparent, and inclusive

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'Border bars' for Bangladeshis

A Star team finds how easy it is to access liquor, drugs on Indian soil along Cumilla border

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

It was a cloudy afternoon on October 2 at Shahpur border in Cumilla.

Amid a drizzle, a Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) member was patrolling near the zero-line between Bangladesh and India. He took a few steps forward when he saw four people disembark from a three-wheeler just yards away, and asked: "How many of you?"

"Four," came the reply.

The BGB member then waved his right hand towards a civilian sitting inside a battered, tin-roofed shop nearby.

The four were allowed to step into the shop just along the border pillar. The civilian, who looked to be in his 40s, asked for Tk 100 from each. As the four tried to bargain, the man said, "If I give you any discount, even Tk 2, then I would have to pay it from my pocket."

It's the entry fee to one of the "border bars" set up on Indian soil to tend to the needs of Bangladeshis for liquor, yaba, and other synthetic drugs.

On information that some BGB men help customers get drugs from Shahpur and Ashabari -- both close to the border in Cumilla -- a

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DHAKA AIRPORT

4 passengers from China test positive for Covid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four passengers from Kunming tested positive for Covid at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday afternoon after the authorities geared up health screening as they fear the spread of a subvariant of Omicron.

The Chinese nationals had RT-PCR Covid negative certificates with them but the rapid antigen test found them carrying the virus in Bangladesh, according to health officials.

"They had no symptoms like many others in the same flight. We tested them randomly and found Covid-19 positive. But it may be inaccurate. They have been sent to DNCC Covid-19 Hospital for further screening," Shahriar Sajjat, health officer at the HSLA, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The subvariant of

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Election materials being taken to polling centres from Rangpur Police Lines ground yesterday as Rangpur City Corporation goes to polls today. There are 229 polling centres in this city corporation.

PHOTO: KONGKON KARMAKER

RANGPUR CITY HELM

AL, JP battling it out today

KONGKON KARMAKER and S DILIP ROY, from Rangpur

Both the ruling Awami League and opposition Jatiya Party said they would win the Rangpur City Corporation election today.

This is the third election since the city corporation was formed in 2012.

As leaders of both parties warned of building strong resistance against irregularities, some expressed concerns over violence during polls. An election commission official on Sunday said violence was likely in one-third of the 229 polling centres.

The AL nominee for mayor is Hosne Ara Lutfia Dalia while the JP nominee is Mostafizur Rahman, who was also elected mayor in 2017.

Rangpur is known as a JP stronghold and the Rangpur JP General Secretary SM Yasir is one of the key campaigners for Mostafizur.

"We are ahead in the electoral race. Everything is still in favour of our nominee. We have got assurance from different government agencies that they will act impartially on the day of polling," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

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Voters
4,26,470
Polling centres
229
Polling officers
4,276
Mayor candidates
9
Councillor aspirants
251