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REFUGEE CAMPS

Teletalk SIMs for Rohingya families likely

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rohingya refugees would soon be able to purchase Teletalk SIM cards as part of the government’s efforts to bridle the ‘growing criminal tendencies’ among the displaced Myanmar citizens and bring them under Bangladeshi network coverage.

At present, the displaced Myanmar citizens use SIMs of two or three operators from Myanmar and Bangladesh, which are obtained by registering illegally under local people.

Crime is increasing every day among the Rohingya community and they use mobile phones for various activities including drug trade, kidnapping and human trafficking, said the representative of police in the meeting.

As the refugees use SIMs of foreign mobile operators, it makes tracking their movements difficult for law enforcement agencies.

So, it is necessary to bring the refugees under local network coverage and stop using Myanmar SIM, as per the decision of the first meeting of the committee to formulate recommendations about the sale of SIM cards to displaced Myanmar citizens in the Rohingya camp.

Every Rohingya family would get a SIM each, according to the minutes of the meeting, which was presided by Abu Hena Mostofa Zaman, joint secretary of the public security division. The meeting took place last month.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



KINGS OF THE SKY ... With talons neatly tucked in, a black kite soars above the cricketing grounds in the capital's Mirpur. Black kites, known as “cheel” in Bangla, are one of the most commonly sighted birds in the country. The medium-sized diurnal birds of prey can be found on almost every continent, with the current global population estimated at six million individuals. Opportunistic hunters and scavengers, they are known to be attracted to fires and smoke, where they can find escaping prey such as other birds, rodents, bats, etc. It is believed that kites sometimes even help spread fire by dropping burning twigs to flush out potential prey! With large numbers across South Asia, these birds have evolved and become accustomed to living in bustling cities. With wingspans ranging from 120-155cm, watching black kites glide across the sky for hours is quite the visual treat.

PHOTO: **FIROZ AHMED**

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

AC SYSTEM FAILURE

Cardiac surgeries halted for days at NICVD

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Cardiac surgeries have been halted for at least 10 days at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) for failure of the air conditioning system at the intensive care units.

As a result, many patients, mostly from the low-income groups and in dire need of intervention, have been suffering.

A lack of coordination between the hospital authorities and the Public Works Department (PWD), which is responsible for the maintenance of the AC system, is prolonging the situation, according to multiple high officials.

They said that on average, around five cardiac surgeries are done every day at NICVD, the country's premier hospital for cardiovascular diseases.

The hospital accommodates 1,200 indoor patients at a time against its 800-bed capacity and has two ICUs with a total of 48 beds.

Patients often require intensive care for 3-7 days following a surgery.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Prof Dr Monzurul Alam, head of the hospital's cardiac surgery department, said, “The AC system failure has been causing a temperature imbalance at the ICU, which is resulting in hospital acquired infections among patients. So, we had to stop surgeries from April 18.”

ICU workers said they had noticed issues with the AC system at the beginning of the

month and informed the hospital director, who then asked the PWD to take necessary steps.

“In response, the PWD asked us to evacuate the ICUs. We completed evacuation targeting the Eid holidays. However, even after the holidays ended, PWD could not yet start working to fix the AC system,” Alam said.

“We usually use the 3-4 days of Eid holidays for disinfection purposes at the ICUs. This involves both evacuation and halting of surgeries. We wanted to use the same amount of time for the repair work, but it is now being prolonged,”

Dr Mir Jamal Uddin, director of NICVD, highlighted three reasons behind the suspension of surgeries – AC system failure; routine disinfection work during Eid holidays; and the time sought by the PWD.

Somiron Mistry, executive engineer of PWD, yesterday told The Daily Star, “Our team will start repairing the system on Saturday and it will be done within 3-4 days.”

Asked about the delay, he said, “The procurement of the necessary equipment was not possible amid Eid holidays.”

A visit to the surgery unit of the NICVD showed most beds were empty. Meanwhile, several patients said they had been waiting for their surgeries.

“I need a valve implant and I don't know when it will be done,” Asadul Islam, a 35-year-old cardiac patient said.

“The reasons behind suspension of surgeries are AC system failure; disinfection during Eid holidays; and time sought by the PWD.”

‘Don’t know if I’ll be alive till then’

Says Bangladeshi tailor in Sudan awaiting evacuation



MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

It was raining bullets for most of two days near the shop in Khartoum where Monowar Hossain works. He was stuck inside the shop for three days.

Then there was a 10-minute calm before the 72-hour ceasefire was announced around midnight on Monday.

Monowar and along with four others had to take advantage of the lull and get out of the area or else risk getting stuck there again.

They went to a building around two hours away on foot as there were no vehicles around.

Speaking to The Daily Star over phone yesterday, the Bangladeshi expatriate said they have been stuck in the building for three days. The fighting intensified over the previous day and a half.

The 39-year-old went to Sudan in June last year to work in a tailor's shop.

“Soon after the fighting broke out, the country became lawless. Stealing, killing, and extortion are rampant. Even food was snatched away. There are

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

BARISHAL CITY POLLS

Islami Andolon names its candidate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islami Andolon Bangladesh has nominated its senior leader Syed Muhammad Faizul Karim to run for mayor in Barishal.

The party founded by late Fazlul Karim, popularly known as Charmonai Pir, announced the decision during a press conference at Charmonai madrasa in Barishal yesterday afternoon.

“I want to send the government the message that if you try to grab power through some other means in the city polls, this will be the beginning of the end,” said the mayor nominee, also the senior nayebe-amir, the second highest leader, of the party.

Kamrul Ahsan Rupon, son of BNP leader and former mayor Ahsan Habib Kamal, is also running for mayor.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

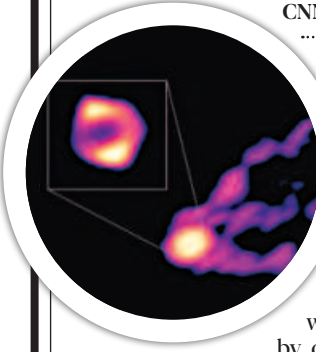


Dumping of waste and sewage into the Ramchandrapur canal goes on unchecked in the capital's Adabor. A makeshift bridge is the only crossing over the water body for the locals. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

Black hole image reveals powerful jet of material

CNN ONLINE



Astronomers have captured for the first time the shadow of a black hole and the powerful jet of material emerging from it in a newly released image.

The supermassive black hole is at the center of the galaxy Messier 87, or M87. The observations were initially made in 2018 by combining the capabilities of multiple telescopes.

The new image and an accompanying research paper were published Wednesday in the journal Nature.

The groundbreaking image can help astronomers gain more insight into how black holes behave and what enables them to launch energetic jets of material across the universe.

The Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array in Chile, the Greenland Telescope and the Global Millimetre VLBI Array of telescopes across Europe and North America worked together to create a virtual Earth-size telescope and peer into the heart of M87, located 55 million light-years away.

The black hole at M87's galactic center is 6.5 billion times more massive than the sun.

“We know that jets are ejected from the region surrounding black holes, but we still do not fully understand how this actually happens. To study this directly we need to observe the origin of the jet as close as possible to the black hole,” said lead study author Ru-Sen Lu, astronomer at the Shanghai Astronomical Observatory in China, in a statement.

US slaps more sanctions on Russia, Iran

AFP, Washington

The United States added new sanctions on Russia's FSB intelligence agency and Iran's Revolutionary Guard yesterday for taking “hostage” Americans like a Wall Street Journal reporter arrested in Russia last month.

The US is “showing that one cannot engage in this sort of awful behavior of using human beings as pawns, as bargaining chips, without paying consequences,” said a senior US official.

Both agencies have already been hit with punitive measures by the US State and Treasury Departments in the past.

But the official said the new sanctions would underscore the US view of what he described as an increasing phenomenon of governments detaining foreign nationals to extract political benefits.

“The use of human beings as political pawns, as bargaining chips, detained by governments but on false pretenses, is a practice that seems to be trending in the wrong direction,” the official said.

Applying sanctions aims “to promote accountability for the culprits, and by doing so, to prevent and deter the next set of cases from arising in the first place,” the official said.

The sanctions came a month after Russia detained Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, charging him with spying.