

Terrestrial facilities for few channels during CG stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

What will be the strategy - should all the TV channels, including BTV, be brought under an uniform policy or should they enjoy total freedom in broadcasting news during the caretaker government?

While some of them called for providing terrestrial broadcasting facilities for a few channels along side the state-run BTV during the three-month period, others are against the broadcasting of channels that obtained permission through 'controversial ways'.

Writer Anisul Haque said some

channels, though owned by the political figures, have made all-out efforts to retain impartiality.

The Sammilita Sangskritik Jote organised the meeting on 'Fair election under the caretaker government: Role of the electronic media' at the National Press Club.

Presenting a paper, cultural personality Ramendu Majumder said all the governments have used the BTV and Bangladesh Betar for the interest of the ruling parties.

Besides, he said, there was no initiative to grant autonomy to the BTV and Betar.

He said the government has closed the Ekushey TV on the ground of faulty licence but allowed five more private TV channels financed by the ruling party men and black money

holders. As the electronic media has easier access to households, question about the role of the private channels in the run-up to the election might be raised, he added.

Some speakers recommended that the channels should not sell any time slot to any political parties in the run-up to the election.

Other speakers said the channels are accountable to the viewers. If any channels broadcast something false or unauthentic, it would surely lose its credibility, they argued.

They also said TV channels are not able to play any role in the process of election engineering.

The participants also observed that there should be a transparent process to get permission for a

private TV channel. Artist Mustafa Monwar, actor Ataur Rahman, Shykh Siraj, director (news) of Channel i, Mostofa Firoze, senior staff reporter of ntv, and Ahmad Musa, a director of Bangla Vision, and Mozammel Babu, a political analyst, took part in the discussion.

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Awami League President Sheikh Hasina consoles the wife and children of slain Swachhchasebak League leader Golam Mostafa Milon at her Sudha Sadan residence in the city yesterday.

US embassy advice to DV-2008 applicants

BSS, Dhaka

The United States Embassy here yesterday advised DV-2008 applicants to avoid becoming DV-2008 fraud victims, as the annual Diversity Visa (DV) Lottery registration is taking place from October 4 to December 3, 2006.

The embassy in a special release said it is aware of fraudulent activities having occurred involving DV lottery applicants in recent years. The activities of so-called 'visa agents' who 'guarantee' DV visa are of particular concern.

It said incidents of 'visa agents' stealing customer identities and giving them to other customers have occurred. 'Visa agents' have also consistently extorted money from their clients before giving them information about their case.

The US embassy recommended that those interested in participating in the DV-2008 Lottery follow the following guidelines when completing the on-line DV registration process:

Candidates should carefully read all instructions on how to submit an entry properly. Failure to follow all instructions exactly may result in automatic disqualification.

Candidates should provide the address where they normally receive their mail and should not give the address of a 'visa agent.'

Candidates should provide completely accurate biographical information concerning themselves and their spouses and children, as biographic discrepancies may eventually result in visa refusal for lottery winners.

If candidates use the services of a third party to complete the on-line application, the services to be provided and the fees to be paid should be agreed in writing in advance. If third party services are used, the applicant is completely responsible for the accuracy of the information.

The US embassy said it is aware of many cases in which third party preparers, both 'visa agents' and 'internet shop preparers,' submitted wrong information which led to the disqualification of the candidate. The embassy stated that there is no cost for the DV programme until the day of the interview. Applicants should not pay money to anyone for DV information until the day of their interview, at which time they will pay the Embassy directly.

It said candidates should never give personal information or their school documents to a 'broker' or other third party. The US embassy in Dhaka will advise lottery winners of documentation requirements.

Candidates should not surrender their original documents when having them translated to English. Candidates should have certified translation copies made from the original documents and should keep the original documents to present at their interview.

Justice Ibrahim's anniversary of death tomorrow

The 40th death anniversary of Justice Mohammad Ibrahim will be observed tomorrow, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held in the morning, foods will be distributed among the destitute and wreaths will be placed at his grave at the Azimpur Graveyard.

Woman tops rich list in China

AFP, Shanghai

A female scrap paper merchant worth 3.4 billion dollars was yesterday named China's richest person, the first time a woman has topped the annual rich list.

Zhang Yin, 49, leapt to the number one spot the Hurun rich list after her company, Nine Dragons Paper, was listed in Hong Kong in March. Last year, she was ranked 36th.

Zhang made her fortune recycling scrap paper bought in from the United States and processed in China for the retail sector.

Described as a self-made woman, she is now richer than US TV presenter Oprah Winfrey and Britain's JK Rowling, author of the Harry Potter books.

She overtook Huang Guangyu, the founder of electronics retailer Gome, whose fortune is estimated at 2.5 billion dollars and who now ranks second.

The list was compiled by Shanghai-based accountant Rupert Hoogewerf, who found women were becoming increasingly visible among China's rich set.

There were 35 women in the top-500 list, which Hoogewerf said was a 'dramatic' change.

Other top women include metal trader Chen Ningning in 20th place with a fortune estimated at 800 million dollars, and Beijing property developer Chen Lihua, whose 750 million dollars put her in 25th place.

Hajj flight from Nov 26

BSS, Dhaka

The Hajj flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines will start on November 26, subject to the sighting of the Zilhaj moon, and continue until December 25.

This was stated yesterday at an inter-ministerial meeting of Hajj management affairs with State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharraf Hossain Shahjahan in the chair.

The meeting was informed that all necessary measures, including customs formalities at the Hajj camp, airport immigration, establishment of offices at Hajj camp, health and banking facilities and special bus services for the pilgrims, have been completed.

The state minister hoped that this year the pilgrims will enjoy more facilities than those of last year.

He also asked the officials concerned to work sincerely to make the mission a total success.

Govt harbours godfathers, criminals across country

Says Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday blamed the BNP-Jamaat alliance government for resorting to criminal activities by patronising criminals and their

godfathers in different districts and upazilas.

Hasina, also Leader of the Opposition, said BNP-Jamaat leaders are harbouring a number of criminals and their godfathers across the country. She said this when family members of slain Swachhchasebak League leader Golam Mostafa Milon came to meet her at Sudha Sadan.

Milon was shot dead by police during road-rail and waterway blockade programmes called by the AL-led 14-party opposition combine on July 2.

Hasina said the alliance government has killed thousands of opposition leaders and activists during its five-year rule. The 'politicised' police battalion resorted to torture on the opposition leaders and workers at the instruction of prime minister, she added.

Hasina urged the people to build up resistance against the torture and repression of the alliance government.

The former prime minister said the police indiscriminately charged baton on thousands of her party leaders and activists on the streets aiming to kill the popular leaders, including Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Mohammad Nasim, Asaduzzaman Nur and AFM Bahauddin Nasim in recent times.

She said Milon's family members were not allowed to see the body after his death. What kind of brutality is it? Hasina asked.

Later, Hasina handed over a cheque for Tk 2 lakh to Milon's wife

RU controversial staffs stage sit-in

RU CORRESPONDENT

Controversially recruited 546 employees of Rajshahi University yesterday staged a sit-in for two hours in front of Administrative Building to press their demand of regularisation of jobs.

They also held a rally locking the main collapsible gate of the administrative building forcing the administrative operation suspended.

The rally was addressed by 546 Unity Council Convener Rafiqul Islam Sardar, Joint Conveners Zahurul Haque and Farman Ali.

The leaders threatened the authorities to paralyse the university if their jobs are not regularised within the current tenure of the government.

'Until our jobs are regularised, we will resist the process of other recruitments in the university', council convener warned.

They also announced that they would block Rajshahi-Dhaka highway today for one hour to press their demand.

Meanwhile, the university authorities in a news release said they were not responsible for delay in the regularisation of the jobs, rather it was held up for legal tangles.

BNP joint meet tomorrow

BSS, Dhaka

A joint meeting of BNP will be held at the official residence of LGRD and Cooperatives Minister and Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan tomorrow.

Joint secretary generals, organising secretary of Dhaka division, president and secretary of Dhaka city BNP, BNP MPs from the city, and central presidents and secretaries of all front organisations of BNP have been requested to attend the meeting.

Three killed in road accidents

STAR Report

At least three people were killed in separate road accidents in Narayanganj and Khagrachhari yesterday.

UNB from Narayanganj adds: Two people, including a woman, were run over by a truck at Masdair in the district town yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Shamsul Huq, 45, and his relative Aleya Begum, 42, of Rajarbagh area in Fatullah.

Police said Shamsul and Aleya fell on the road as the truck hit their rickshaw near the Police Line at about 11:00am. The truck then ran over them.

Police could neither arrest the driver nor seize the vehicle.

Our Correspondent from Khagrachhari reports: One person was killed and others 35 were injured, 10 of them critically, in a road accident at Alutilla under Khagrachhari Sadar.

Police said the accident occurred at around 9:00am when a Khagrachhari-bound bus hit a jeep carrying the people who were going to attend the prime minister's meeting in Khagrachhari.

The seriously injured were rushed to the Khagrachhari Adhunik Sadar Hospital and Matrianga Upazila Health Complex.

Of them, Mashainucree Marma 21, son of Momochi Marma from Fakirinala under Manikchhari upazila succumbed to his injuries at the hospital.

His body was sent to his village.

The critically injured are Mohammad Saiful Islam, 25, Abdul Aziz, 34, Hasam, 45, Paiu Marma, 25, Kongjai Marma, 37, Aramong Marma, 28, Manik, 16, Kajai Marma, 17, Shaching Marma, 22, and Jasim, 48.

President, PM greet Spanish King, President

UNB, Dhaka

President Dr Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia felicitated Spanish King Don Juan Carlos I and President Don Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero on the occasion of National Day of the country respectively.

In separate messages, the president and prime minister said they firmly believed that the existing bond of friendship between the two countries would be further strengthened in the years ahead.

Both the president and prime minister wished for the good health, happiness and long life of the King and President and also for continued peace, progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Spain.

WEATHER TODAY logo with sun and cloud icons.

Light to moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over Dhaka, Sylhet, Barisal, and Chittagong divisions and the region of Jessore and Kushtia in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said, predicting that day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Highest temperature 35.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 23.4 degrees at Comilla.

The sun sets in the capital at 5.35pm today and rises at 5:55am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.



Students, teachers, development agency members and government employees take out a procession in Savar yesterday to mark the International Disaster Reduction Day - 2006. Disaster Management Project, Savar ADP, World Vision Bangladesh, organised the procession.

NU exam schedule changed

BSS, Dhaka

All examinations under National University (NU) scheduled for October 15 have been rescheduled due to unavoidable circumstances, said a press release yesterday.

According to new schedule, examinations of Honours Part-2 of 2005 and B.Sc Honours in Computer Science Part-4 (Final)-2004 will be held on October 16.

The examination timings and schedule of other examinations will remain unchanged, a press release added.



Awami League-led 14-party opposition combine stages a demonstration at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday protesting death threat to AL presidium member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim.

Kids work though ban on child labour starts in India

REUTERS, New Delhi

Ten-year-old Sonu sits forlornly on a plastic chair in a ramshackle street food stall in New Delhi, taking a break after serving customers tea.

A ban on child labour in households, restaurants, hotels and resorts came into effect in India on Tuesday but nothing has changed for the tired-looking boy, dressed in scruffy blue jeans and a faded green shirt.

Sonu, whose father also works in a food stall, says he'd rather be in school.

'But what to do? This is necessary,' said the boy, reality teaching him an early and harsh lesson in life.

Sonu comes from a poor family

from a New Delhi slum and is one of the millions of children who work in roadside food stalls or in the homes of India's upper and middle-class.

Officials hope the new ban, which will apply to children under 14, will protect underage workers from psychological and sexual abuse as well as from strenuous working conditions.

On the eve of the ban, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh warned of 'firm action' against violators but appealed to Indians to give up the practice voluntarily.

Under the country's existing Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986, children under 14 are already banned from working in industries deemed

'hazardous' such as fireworks, matchstick-making, auto workshops or carpet weaving.

Activists say they have their doubts about how authorities will implement the new ban, given their past record.

'This ban on child domestic labour is a welcome step, but changes on paper are not enough,' Zama Coursen-Neff of New York-based Human Rights Watch said in a statement.

TOO POOR TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Less than five km (three miles) from India's labour ministry, 10-year-old Shehzad is covered with grime and dust as he uses a foot pump to inflate a tyre tube of a scooter

belonging to a policeman, who watches him impassively.

Shehzad does not know that the children have been banned for a decade from working in workshops but says it does not make a difference.

'I can't go to school as my father can't afford to buy books for me,' the son of a rickshaw-puller said, while picking up a plastic container of spare parts.

The new ban for children in food stalls and working in homes is aimed at providing legal protection to millions more children. Those found violating the law could face up to two years' jail and a maximum fine of 20,000 rupees (234 pounds) or both.

The labour ministry says there are 12 million children under 14 years old working in India - the largest such group in the world - but activists say the number could be five times higher.

'This is a good tool for us to fight child labour. Now we have a legal instrument to take it on,' said Kailash Satyarthi, head of the Bachpan Bachao Andolan (Save the Childhood Movement).

Authorities say results from the new ban will not come overnight as many Indians do not see the age-old practice of employing children from impoverished families as a crime.

Activists say the new ban will expose the problems faced by child servants - whose living and work-

ing conditions are not exposed to public scrutiny - including loss of childhood and sexual exploitation.

'These children are very vulnerable. Their employment is an invisible form of slavery,' Satyarthi said.

Even though local authorities have been asked to prepare to accommodate thousands of children expected to be freed from raids conducted on homes and restaurants by police, activists say there has been little provision for rehabilitating the freed children.