

'Govt taking steps to give autonomy to Radio, TV'

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"Private Ekushey TV is to go on air by March next year. Alongside it, practical steps are being taken to implement our commitment for giving autonomy to the radio and television," State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed said.

"We'll give autonomy to fulfill our election pledge, not under any opposition pressure," he made it clear talking about the state of media in present Bangladesh in this information age when the world is going through rapid changes due to 'revolution in Information Technology'.

The Information Minister gave a broad view of the media sector in an interview with UNB, marking completion of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina government's three years in office.

He said within a few months of assuming power the Awami League government set up a commission to prepare recommendations for autonomy. But the commission's report could not provide a clear-cut recommendation on legal and administrative aspects, uniform job criteria etc that stood in the way of giving effective autonomy.

Sayeed dispelled the notion that the Awami League government was delaying the autonomy as a political strategy.

The freedom of the BTV screen has to be ensured on the basis of certain policy guidelines as it happened in other countries, he observed.

As such, the State Minister observed, there was no problem with BTV's various programmes covering socio-cultural issues, drama and music, other than news bulletins.

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20 minutes out of the total telecast times. When the autonomy will be given, time allocation for the government and opposition parties will also be fixed.

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Sayeed, however, said the government had taken up massive development plans to modernise BTV to cope with the challenges of private TV channel which will go on the air in next one year.

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The government has plans to replace the age-old transmitters of different TV relay stations to enable people across the country to watch good picture.

He admitted that BTV does not have adequate skilled and talented manpower. In this context, he cited a decision of the Ershad government that allowed a low-grade employee to become a producer through promotions. This may be one of the reasons for low quality programmes on the state media.

Asked whether the private channel would be able to independently produce news bulletin, Prof Sayeed said the private TV would operate on set guidelines. "Yes, it can telecast news bulletin independently with its own script, but they will have to abide by the policy guidelines."

Asked about more private TV channels, he said under the present VHF system, the government could give permission to only one and that had been given to Ekushey TV.

But under the UHF system more than one channel can go into operation. He said the question of giving permission

to others would be considered on the basis of performance of the Ekushey TV channel.

Asked for his comment on people's inclination for listening to BBC news instead of BTV's Sayeed said, "As national media we have certain responsibilities towards the nation, which BBC or others may not have."

Even BBC programmes for domestic viewers are quite different from those telecast for foreigners.

In reply to a question, the State Minister said BTV's independent reporting cell would function from this year which he hoped would improve the standard of news.

He said with setting up of two more relay stations at Ukha and Rangamati, the entire country would come under the BTV network. Work on the two stations is likely to be completed by next year.

Asked about allegations of nepotism and corruption in selecting artists for BTV programmes and news, Prof Sayeed did not disagree with corrupt practice in the past. To avert nepotism and scandal, he said, some practical procedures are being followed in selection.

About permission of radio in the private sector, Prof Sayeed said slot had been given to a private company named Metro Wave.

He informed that the Information Ministry had sent a proposal to the Home Ministry for considering opening a FM channel to control traffic jams in the capital.

He dismissed the allegations that government ads were being distributed to newspapers on political grounds. Advertisements are distributed on certain guidelines that include publication of news on the spirit of Liberation War, developmental activities and circulation, said the minister.



BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleida Zia addressing the installation ceremony of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Dhaka Metropolitan (north south) at the auditorium of the Institute of Engineers in the city yesterday.

Minister tells JS Plan to build Sonargaon Hotel chain taken up

By Staff Correspondent
Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Engineer Mosharruf Hossain yesterday told the parliament that the government had taken up a plan to build Sonargaon Hotel chain in six important tourism sites in the country.

Replying to question in parliament, he said the chain hotels will be constructed at Cox's Bazar, Sundarban, Kuakata, Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban with the objective to attract tourists from home and abroad.

"I am hopeful that this plan would be implemented within next one or one and a half years," he added.

Misceants cut off hand, leg of a fisherman

By Staff Correspondent
Miscereants cut off a hand and leg of a fisherman at Gopibagh in the city yesterday noon.

The victim was identified as Alamgir Hossain Bullet, a resident of a city slum near Segunbagicha water tank.

Hospital sources said the incident took place when Bullet went to Jonaki cinema hall to enjoy the movie at about 12:30 p.m. When he went to get the ticket at the counter a gang of five young men tied and took him away to Gopibagh by auto-rickshaw.

The gang then cut off his right hand and leg with a sharp weapon. The gang left the spot soon after by auto-rickshaw.

The victim was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in a pool of blood.

'Govt to back research on hybrid rice'

By Staff Correspondent
Food and Agriculture Minister Motia Chowdhury yesterday said the government has given importance on research for inventing variety of hybrid rice which suits the climate of the country.

He said agreements have already been signed with four firms for the marketing of new hybrid seeds. The four firms will import 2000 MT of rice from China and India this year.

Replying to questions in parliament, Motia said China first invented hybrid rice and gave it to India and Bangladesh for research in 1993. "India carried out research and made progress but the previous BNP government declined to go for research for unknown reason and now Bangladesh is lagging behind in producing more rice," she observed.

She, however, thanked the then Agriculture Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, who had given permission to import 800 kg of high yield variety in 1995 which finally resulted a bumper production this year.

"We might have made a lot progress if we could start research in 1993. I don't know the logic why BNP government did not go for research in 1993. May be the motive behind this was to create a market for others," the Agriculture Minister said.

She said currently the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) is carrying out research on hybrid variety, which is expected to be completed within next two years. She also hoped that Bangladesh would be able to invent its own variety of hybrid rice in near future.

On exceeding the target of rice production, Motia Chowdhury said the country yielded a bumper rice production in the current season with the blessing of Almighty Allah, tireless efforts of the farmers, smooth supply of fertiliser and good management of the government.

Osmani Medical College 1st year classes from June 14

The first year MBBS classes (1998-99 session) of Sylhet Osmani Medical College will begin on June 14, reports UNB.

The students and their guardians have been advised to attend an orientation class to be held at the college auditorium at 10 am on the day.

Call to launch vigorous movement against govt

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has called upon the people to launch vigorous movement against the government and remain alert against its fascist activities, reports UNB.

"The fascist government is unleashing oppression on the opposition leaders and activists apprehending people's movement," Mannan said in a statement yesterday.

He condemned bomb attack on the residence of a central Chhatra Dal leader and arrest of some leaders of BNP and its front organisations in different parts of the country including Laxmipur, Bhola and Barisal districts.

"They have been harassing the leaders and workers of the opposition parties including BNP. They are killing the opposition workers and leaders, filing false cases against them, arresting and unleashing oppression after assuming power through fraud and conspiracy," Bhuiyan said.

He said 70 false cases have so far been filed against Chhatra Dal general secretary Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu. The JCD leader was arrested three times during the last three years and was jailed for 14

months, he said. Bhuiyan said that attack on him was not stopped even after he was set free by High Court order.

USAID to train PDB officials, employees

By Staff Correspondent

The Power Development Board (PDB) and the USAID have formed a committee to train the officials and employees of PDB to improve their efficiency.

Director, Dhaka Mission of USAID David Sprague yesterday met PDB Chairman Kamrul Islam Siddique and assured that the USAID would provide all types of assistance in this regard as soon as possible.

Under this project, PDB officials and employees would be given training on better communication, technical and managerial aspects and human resource development.

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Work stoppage paralyses Bangabandhu Hospital

By Staff Correspondent

Medical services at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMUH) virtually came to a standstill yesterday due to work abstention by nearly 900 nurses, cleaners, security guards, ays, and ward boys and other support staff.

Services at the university, particularly treatment facilities deteriorated further yesterday as striking workers under the banner of Sarkari Karma-chari Samanyar parishad extended their work stoppage for the second consecutive day and enforced a fresh work abstention programme. Earlier the work stoppage was due to end yesterday morning but was extended till 8 am this morning in pursuance of the staffs five-point demand.

Reception to cricket heroes in Ctg tomorrow

CHITTAGONG, June 7: The stage is set to accord a grand citizens' reception to the national cricket heroes at the M A Aziz Stadium on June 9, reports BSS.

Chittagong City Corporation has organised the reception to the cricket heroes who beat mighty Pakistan in a World Cup match in England.

A 551-member strong reception committee has been formed with the City Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury as its Chairman.

Fuel dealers call off strike in Rajshahi

From A Correspondent
BOGRA, June 7: The Rajshahi Divisional Fuel Dealers and Tank Lorry Owners Association (RFDL/OA) yesterday called off its indefinite strike. RFDL/OA and the district administration at a meeting at the conference room of Deputy Commissioner, Bogra today decided to defer strike for one month.

The meeting was attended among others by police super Luthifar Rahman Miah, president of RFDL/OA Shahjada Anwarul Kadir and secretary Mizanur Rahman.

staff include disbursement of their salary and other allowances directly through the AGB office, formation of a pension cell in the hospital, granting of two-day weekly holiday and all public holidays, provision for free treatment for the staff and their families and supply of clothing for class four employees on time.

The situation worsened as tension gripped the hospital following a clash between the leaders and activists of the Parishad and police yesterday afternoon.

At least ten employees were injured, two of them seriously when police resorted to baton charge at a procession of the striking employees of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMUH).

Meanwhile, Dr. M.A. Quadri at a press conference yesterday evening blasted the employees for their irresponsible activities.

Dr. Quadri termed the movement as politically motivated and said, "There is some political element in the movement of the Parishad."

Chhatrak

From Page 1
men, commissioners and members) demanded immediate release of Manik to give him a 'chance to join' the budget session of the Jatiya Sangsad.

The Parishad leaders at a press conference at Sylhet Press Club this afternoon alleged that the Foreign Minister was 'involved in ill-practices' that went against the interest of the commonman of Chhatrak and Doarabazar. The arrest of Muhibur Rahman Manik is part of a conspiracy, they added. A number of terrorist groups 'blessed' by the Foreign Minister have turned the area into a den of criminals, they alleged.

The leaders also alleged that elected people were also being implicated in false cases and harassed for unknown reasons before and after the arrest of Manik.

They also extended support to the programmes of Chhatrak and Doarabazar thana Awami League.



PDB Chairman Quamrul Islam Siddique held a meeting with delegates of USAID mission at the board room of the WAPDA building yesterday.

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Bangladesh Non-government Primary Teachers' Association brought out a procession in support of their various demand in the city yesterday.

BTA urges PM to fulfil her commitment

Bangladesh Teachers' Association (BTA) has urged Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to fulfil her commitment given during their movement in 1994, reports UNB.

The association yesterday handed over a memorandum, containing its demands, to the Director (Admin) of the PM office to submit it to the Prime Minister.

Their demands include providing 100 per cent of their basic salaries by the government as a step to nationalise their services, cancelling the manpower structure, giving succeding scale for headmasters and assistant headmasters, increasing house rent and providing festival bonus.

BTA leaders also threatened to launch an agitation programme if their demands were not met by June 30.

One killed in Rangamati

RANGAMATI, June 7: Jebumant Aakama, a 'Karbari' of Kukichhari village in Barkal thana died of bullet injury on Saturday, according to delayed report reaching here today, reports UNB.

The police said village rivalry led to the shooting of Jebumanti at about 8:45 pm. He died on way to Barkal health complex. None was arrested in connection with the murder till Monday night.

Abahani retain title

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shots. But he almost saved the fifth spot kick taken by Dulal. However, that was not to be as the ball rolled into the right-hand side of the post after kissing the outstretched hands of Biplob.

Muktijoddha did dominate the final in front of a 15,000-strong crowd at the big bowl, but all the reds have only themselves to blame for eventually returning with a wooden-spoon.

Wide national right-wing back Hasan al Mamun playing like a spring chicken, Muktijoddha simply tore apart the Abahani defence. But the defending Premier League champions failed to break the evening's duck due to poor marksmanship.

Muktijoddha were denied a golden opportunity to lift the Federation Cup for the second time when their lanky striker Imtiaz Ahmed Nakib failed to tap the ball into an empty net from virtually the goal line in the 89th minute. Surprisingly, he had the ball stuck between his feet.

During the sudden death extra-time, both sides survived a few close calls. But lady-luck seemed to have smiled upon Abahani when Aminul parried out a fierce right-footer point-blank from substitute Mamun Joarder, much to the disbelief of Muktijoddha.

An apparently mediocre Abahani, however, tried to take the attack to their more illustrious opponents. But they could hardly penetrate the water-tight Muktijoddha defence manned by national captain

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The leaders also alleged that elected people were also being implicated in false cases and harassed for unknown reasons before and after the arrest of Manik.

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'BTV politically motivated'

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day," Chowdhury reminded the chair.

"But BTV broadcast Nasim's speech, while it deliberately blacked out opposition versions." He said it was injustice on the opposition. "Besides, airing of the proceedings expunged by the Chair is tantamount to dishonouring the parliament itself."

The Opposition leader also observed that this was not the first time that the government-controlled BTV has discriminated against the opposition, especially in terms of broadcasting parliament proceedings. Demanding an immediate ruling by the Chair on this issue, Chowdhury hoped that the Chair would ensure the BTV authorities and the State Minister for Information for the malpractice.

Earlier, two other BNP lawmakers - Hafizuddin Ahmed and Jainal Abedin Farook - spoke on the same issue. Farook said the BTV behaviour goes against the four-point agreement signed between the Treasury Bench and the opposition that promised neutral coverage of parliament proceedings.

State Minister for Information Abu Sayeed was present at the House. But the Deputy Speaker gave floor to Commerce Minister Toifal Ahmed although none of them wanted to have a say on the matter.

The commerce minister said he did not see any problem with airing of the 'expunged proceedings' as the entire nation heard them live on radio. He, however, found substance in the opposition's contention of selected coverage by the BTV.

"Well, there is scope for the opposition to object to the bias reporting by the BTV," Toifal said. "I hope that the BTV would

be objective in broadcasting parliament proceedings in future."

On insistence of the opposition for ruling by the chair, the Deputy Speaker said, he did not watch BTV on Sunday. "I will give my ruling on the issue after examining the relevant documents."

Sit-in at CMC

From CU Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, June 7: Dental College Student Action Committee staged a sit-in at Chittagong Medical College today as part of its 19-day agitation programme to press home its five-point demand.

Bill soon to save city's water bodies from land-grabbers

Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Engineer Mosharruf Hossain yesterday said that a bill would be introduced in the house for the protection and preservation of canals, beels, and other water bodies in and around the Dhaka City, reports BSS.

Replying to the call attention notice of Awami League MP Hajj Md Selim (Dhaka-8) on the rehabilitation of displaced persons in Dhaka City, the civil aviation minister said the proposed bill aimed at preserving the water bodies and saving them from land-grabbers.

He told the Sangsad that the Prime Minister has given a clear cut direction not to evict the slum dwellers but to rehabilitate them properly by shifting them to suitable places.

The minister informed the house that Rajuk has prepared a master plan for Dhaka city. The plan recommended shifting and rehabilitation of unplanned slums and houses in and

around the capital in phases.

Rajuk, he said, has in the meantime taken up some programmes in the light of the recommendation of the master plan. Under the programmes, the displaced persons of Gulshan, Baridhara, Banani, Ullata, Nikunja and Badda areas would be rehabilitated in the khas land of Gazipur and Narayanganj districts, he added.

Mosharruf said 1,000 families from slums adjacent to Sonargaon Hotel have been shifted to government land at Mirpur recently. Besides, a plan has been taken to shift and rehabilitate 9,000 more families in different thanas under Narayanganj district. The plan would be implemented when land would be available, he said.

He further said about 50 acres of land have been identified at Section 16 of Mirpur for construction of flats for the slum dwellers.

Indo-Pak match

From Page 1
trouble, 'just glorious cricket.' His Pakistani counterpart, Mosharruf Hossain, said: "We don't think of Kashmir, we think of cricket."

But authorities remain watchful. Khan Moghal, Pakistan director of the city council's community relations, went on radio three times last week asking for calm.

Police have already spread the biggest security net yet in the tournament.

Indian captain Mohammed Azharuddin refused to be drawn into the politics. "I am not bothered," said Azharuddin, who'll be playing to keep his captaincy following India's dismal loss to Australia. "We are only bothered about winning the game."

For all his diplomacy, there is no denying that the tension is electric on the field when the two sides clash even though Indian and Pakistani players insist they are good friends outside.

But many fans consider losing to Pakistan or India even more shameful than losing the World Cup.

Azharuddin dismissed a suggestion by a reporter that Indian players suffer from an inferiority complex when facing Pakistan.

"That's what the public thinks all the time. I don't think we have an inferiority complex at all. We have done well against them," he said.

Not exactly. Pakistan has beaten India 46 times, including four times in March and April, while India has won only 26 times in head-to-head games.

India's record is better in the World Cup where it has won the only two games between the

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