

Zee TV network scraps richest game show

BOMBAY, Dec 11 : India's largest private television channel Zee Telefilms Ltd. said today it was scrapping the country's richest game show, blaming its two anchors for the way it bombed despite a top prize of 2.5 million dollars, reports AFP.

"We have decided to discontinue with the programme 'Sawal Dus Crore Ka' (The Hundred Million Rupee Question) in its present format from December 21," Zee spokesman Sainath Iyer said.

The Zee game show was launched on October 23 to counter Star TV's phenomenal success with 'Kaun Banega Crorepati?' (Who Want to be a Millionaire?) which offered a top prize of 10 million rupees (220,000 rupees).

The Star show boasted as anchor Indian film legend Amitabh Bachchan, once hailed as a 'one-man industry' by French director Francois Truffaut.

Hindi film actor Anupam Kher and actress Manisha Koirala hosted the Zee show but they lacked Bachchan's sizzle and sparkle as well as his ready wit

and repartee.

Zee admitted its show had flopped badly.

"After huge investments, both towards hiring the two top celebrities as well as the huge production costs, the show failed to cut ice with the market and the audience," it said in a statement.

Zee said "a lack of rapport" between its two celebrity anchors was basically responsible for show's failure.

"The intended environment of camaraderie somehow gave way to (an) uneasy truce, hurting the show as well as the company," the statement said, highlighting the anchors' lack of affability, congeniality, personal glow and warmth, social graces, cultural etiquette and bonding ability with the viewers."

Zee said the game show, in its present format, was "beyond revival."

The channel said it had sacked both the stars and would relaunch the show next year with a new format, a new anchor, a new theme and new salient features."



Sarbadalio Chhatra Oikya (All-Party Students' Unity) brought out a procession from city's Mukhtangon yesterday demanding release of JP chief HM Ershad and protesting the conspiracy against The Daily Inquilab.

'Anti-liberation forces conspiring to turn country into a Pak colony'

Chairman of Sammilita Muktojuddha Front Dr. S A Malek yesterday called upon freedom fighters and people to resist unitedly the nefarious plots and acts of the anti-liberation forces who are trying to turn the country into a colony of Pakistan, reports BSS.

In an interview with the news agency yesterday he said these forces are making calculated, audacious remarks as part of their machinations to bring back the country to the old days of Pakistani subjugation.

They are dreaming to create a situation in the country to oust the democratically elected government and install in its place a pro-Pakistani government, Dr. Malek, who is also the Political Adviser to the Prime Minister, said.

He said raising of Pakistani flag, making parody of the national anthem, audacious remarks by Pakistani diplomat Irfan Raja on the War of Liberation and Dhaka University teacher Dr. Aftab Ahmed's comment to change national anthem are very much linked with their

act to implement the evil design.

He said the recent outburst of national anger at the audacious remarks of Irfan Raja and Aftab is a convincing indicator of how much the people of Bangladesh loathe the anti-liberation attitude. The outburst acted as a dividing line between the servants of Pakistan and pro-liberation forces, he added.

Condemning the remarks of Irfan Raja and Dr. Aftab, Dr. Malek said their ill temper, misdeed and uncivil tongue clearly disqualify them for diplomatic service and teaching profession respectively.

Those who have killed our innocent people and violated thousands of Bangalee women during the War of Liberation and now doing politics capitalising on religion are the worst enemies of Islam, said Local Government Minister Zillur Rahman yesterday.

"The nation today is united to try those identified enemies of humanity and war criminals who have now gathered under a single banner against democracy, independence and sovereignty," he said while addressing a function organised by Lions Club, District 315-B at Dhanmondi, District Governor Lt M Shamsul Haq chaired the function.

Zillur Rahman described the next general election as a very important event and urged the people to elect the pro-liberation forces to power against the anti-liberation forces.

Meanwhile, president of Bangladesh Mohila Awami League and Jatiya Mohila Sangstha Iy Rahman yesterday strongly condemned the audacious remark of so-called BNP intellectual Aftab Ahmed for changing the country's national anthem.

"The anti-liberation clique of 1971 is raising against their head to foil the country's sovereignty and independence," Iy Rahman said, adding that this is the high time to resist the vested quarters.

Mohila Parishad and Uddichi Shilpi Gosthi also blasted the remarks of Aftab Uddin Ahmed and demanded exemplary punishment.

No last word

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Talking to newsmen shortly after the meet, Rawshan said earlier Khaleda Zia had agreed on the alliance's joint movement for unconditional release of Ershad.

However, Najtur Rahman hastened to add that the case that three Ershad behind bars was lodged not by BNP but by the then caretaker government.

"We discussed how to activate the movement after Eid-ul-Fitr," said the JP Secretary General about what they conferred at the Iftar meeting.

Replying to a question, Manjur said the background of 1995 movement and of 2000 is different. The anti-government movement at any stage has not cooled down as of now, the month of fasting.

About the verdict against Ershad he said it was unprecedented in judicial history of Bangladesh. "The subject of the case was the matter of justice. We pleaded for bail. Either it would be granted or rejected. But we

have got the verdict."

Asked why they were raising funds for Ershad's release paying the fines, the JP Secretary General confidently said they would get back the money as Ershad would be acquitted as they plan filing review petition on the judgement.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and his colleagues Barrister Moudud Ahmed, Khondoker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, Anwar Zahid and Abdus Salam, Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Muzahid, Muhammad Quammaruzaman and Abdul Kader Mollah and ARM Abdul Matin and Moulana Abdur Rab Yusif of IOJ, Shaiful Alam Prodhan of JAGPA and Supreme Court Bar Association President Barrister Mainul Hossain, among others, attended the Iftar party.

JP leaders Kazi Firaz Rashid, Ruhul Amin Hawlader, Zafar Imam, Mostafa Zamal Haider, Saifur Rahman and Maidul Islam were also present.

Foreign secys to meet

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concern of the government and the private sector when he said, "India did not provide Bangladesh with preferential market access although it had agreed to provide duty free access to market for 25 categories of items. He urged quick action from the Indian government in strengthening bilateral cooperation and pointed out that "Bangladesh is getting quota facility from the US market, GSP for the markets of EU and Canada."

The Commerce Minister also pointed out that trade is continuously in India's favour. In 1993-94 Bangladesh reduced the highest import tariff from 350 per cent to 60 per cent and withdrew quantitative restrictions and non-tariff barriers. As a result, imports from India increased manifold.

"This was not reciprocated by India," Tofail noted.

Delhi is likely to call for 'productive discussions' on modalities for transshipment of Indian cargo through Bangladesh, particularly to its north-eastern states.

On the issue of transit, it may be pointed out, Tofail Ahmed said at the same seminar that the proposed transit agreement with India has been delayed due to certain complexities and controversies. He said, "We want to link Nepal and Bhutan with the proposed transit agreement. We are still waiting for Indian response."

However, it is learnt that the Delhi talks may take up the issue of a second bus route connecting Dhaka and Agartala shortly. At present, there is Dhaka-Calcutta bus service.

It also learnt that opening of Akhaura-Agartala rail link and Shillong-Sylhet road communication will be discussed.

Preparations are almost complete for opening up train communication between the western part of Bangladesh and India's eastern part through Benapole and Petrapole.

The issues of cross-border smuggling, border trade, enhanced border security, mili-

ting BDR-BSF clashes and insurgency will also come up at the talks.

The last foreign secretary level talks were held in June 1998 in Dhaka.

The talks, the first of this kind in many years, led to revival of the moribund Joint Rivers Commission (JRC), Joint Working Group (JWG) and the JEC (Joint Economic Commission). It was then decided that such talks would be an annual feature.

Revival of foreign secretary level talks in 1998 was intended to create an institutionalised platform for policy action to initiate forward movement in bilateral ties. Observers attributed this to joint initiative of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the then Indian premier I K Gujral following conclusion of the water treaty in December, 1996. At their behest, two meetings were held at the foreign secretary level in 1996 although those were not in the present institutionalised format. No meeting was held in 1997.

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and cooperation to the mutual benefit of the two nations. Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee visited Dhaka in June last in connection with the Calcutta-Dhaka bus service.

India has agreed in principle to give duty-free access of some Bangladeshi commodities to Indian market on a non-reciprocal basis.

UNB from Calcutta adds: Bangladesh and West Bengal agreed to ease customs and immigration procedures on the land routes for smooth movement of travelers and goods between the two countries.

West Bengal government has already started work on broadening the approach road to Bangaon-Haridaspur frontier on Indian side and constructing truck terminals and passengers' rest-house at the border.

West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya apprised Abdus Samad Azad of their steps at Mahakaran here today.

Strengthening economic cooperation and encouraging joint ventures also came up during the talks when the visiting Bangladesh foreign minister made a courtesy call on the Chief Minister at his chamber.

A bridge is being constructed on priority basis to facilitate movement of heavy trucks carrying goods to and from the Bangaon-Haridaspur checkpost, Bhattacharya said.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister Azad invited more joint-venture Indian investment in power, gas and other sectors to help reduce trade imbalance between the two countries.

Samad, Jaswant

From page 1

published this newspaper.

Sources concerned said that an official of the MOEF telephoned the Deputy Commissioner on Sunday and asked him to suspend all activities at the brick kiln.

The Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) of Nawabganj yesterday went to the kiln and stopped all activities there. But local people demanded immediate cancellation of the licence issued by the DC on the basis of a 'dubious' Environmental Clearance.

The MOEF now plans to constitute a probe body to investigate the matter and submit a report. The committee would comprise officials of the ministry and the Department of Environment, one source said.

Irfan Raja's statement unfortunate, says PPP

Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has castigated Pakistani diplomat Irfan Raja for his recent remarks in Dhaka, terming him as a 'hawkish diplomat', reports BSS.

A spokesman of the PPP Foreign Liaison Committee in a statement in Lahore on Saturday described Raja's remarks in Bangladesh capital as "unfortunate", according to a message received here yesterday.

"If the controversial statement was made by the diplomat concerned with the approval of his headquarters he has proved the ignorance of his superiors about the elementary principles of diplomacy. If, on the other hand, the said official was acting on his own instincts he was committed a grave blunder," the spokesman said.

He said, "The Dhaka fiasco has happened in the wake of the Chief Executive's uncalculated refusal to meet the Prime Minister of Bangladesh twice in the recent past."

The hawkish diplomat in Dhaka may have been encouraged by the example set by his own head of government to use

undiplomatic language," he added.

The PPP statement mentioned that the latest lesson from Dhaka is that the Pakistani government badly needs to train its diplomats in the fine art of diplomacy. On the other hand, it should take the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy, a combine of 18 political parties in Pakistan, into the confidence on foreign policy issues, it added.

Foreign policy is a political phenomenon which can not be left exclusively in the hands of civil and military bureaucracy, it stated.

The Pakistani newspapers further quoting the PPP statement said that an unavoidable indiscretion which strains relations with a foreign country can not be dismissed lightly.

Irfan Raja on return to Islamabad should be required to explain the circumstances that prompted him to cross the limits of his decorum without the slightest regards to the sensibilities of his hosts, the statement mentioned.

BKB and BSRS

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Bangladesh Krishi Bank (BKB) has a shortfall of Tk 67.58 crore, BSB has Tk 266.84 crore while Rajshahi Krishi Unayan Bank (RKUB) has an excess of Tk 124 crore, BSRS has an excess of Tk 1.13 crore and Bangladesh Small Industries and Commerce Ltd (BSIC) has an excess of Tk 1.16 crore, it mentioned.

Total deposit of the five banks stood at Tk 3988.14 crore on September 28 this year. BSB has a deposit of Tk 104.98 crore, BKB 2915.41 crore, RKUB 382.33 crore, BSRS 9.85 crore and BSIC has Tk 575.57 crore.

Advances of the five banks totalled Tk 10,148.83 crore on June 30 this year. BKB's advances stood at Tk 4740.81 crore and that of BSB Tk 2075.51 crore, RKUB Tk 1212.94 crore, BSRS 1741.76 crore and BSIC Tk 377.81 crore.

The five banks filed 12,742 cases with the Money Loan Court till September 30 this year for realising Tk 851.04 crore in classified amount. The number of cases were 10,738 a year before, involving Tk 990.84 crore.

A total of 5415 cases were disposed of till September this year as against 3227 one year ago.

Port chairman

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Chakmatiya and General Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce Al-Amin Patwari.

Police said they registered a general diary and would take necessary measures after proper investigation.

Earlier on December 3, eleven leading workers were sued under the Public Safety Act. As one of them was arrested on December 5, the workers staged a violent protest causing police firing that left four people dead.

And while the clash raging that day, Mongla thana OC M Badrul Alam filed another case in connection with the troubles.

Discord over SEMP issue

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ance by Finance Minister SAMS Kibria when his resident representative Jorgen Lissner met him on December 4.

Against this backdrop, a number of non-government organisations (NGOs) working as Sub-Implementing Agencies (SIAs) had a meeting with Lissner on Thursday, expressing their reservation about accepting resumption of SEMP with modifications in the original structure and the agreement regarding its implementation.

There are 11 NGOs and the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the World Bank among the 21 SIAs implementing the SEMP.

SIA source said unless MOEF

Liton murder: N'ganj Jubo League secy on 5 days' remand

NARAYANGANJ, Dec 11: Golam Sarwar, general secretary Narayanangj City Awami Jubo League, Iran, and Chanchal, who were arrested by police last night, were given five days' police remand when they were produced before the Sadar Upazila Magistrate's Court today, reports BSS.

According to police sources, the accused were involved in an armed clash in which Tofazzal Hossen Liton, 30, a Jatiya Party activist was killed yesterday at BIWTA Jetty, Khanpur.

Victim's elder brother Monir Hossen Babul filed a case with Narayanangj police accusing nine people for killing his younger brother Liton.

Hitler

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of PBPC was slaughtered and shot dead as a sequel to intra-party rivalry.

He also confessed his direct involvement in the killing of Awami League leader Hasan Tarafdar and Bikash Borhot of Chhatra League committed last year at Daulatpur. Police said Hitler was also involved in several other murders including the killing of AL Mayoral candidate SMA Rob.

A professional killer of PBPC, Hitler told police that the conspiracy to murder Mir Elias Hossain Dilip was hatched at Phultala. We are five to implement the plan. We started from Phultala and went into hiding after finishing Dilip, Hitler said.

Dilip was killed as he was on the hit list of PBPC as class enemy. Hitler said during interrogation. He will be grilled for further information about other murders.

On the other hand, Mithu has denied to police his involvement in the murder of JCD central Vice President Wahiduzzaman Chanchal. CID dropped his name from the chargesheet although he is accused in the murder case.

Brick kiln

From page 1

published this newspaper.

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The MOEF now plans to constitute a probe body to investigate the matter and submit a report. The committee would comprise officials of the ministry and the Department of Environment, one source said.

Gournadi BNP leader's house ransacked

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Dec 11: Six people were injured, two of them seriously, when some armed cadres of Chhatra League (BCL) ransacked and looted the residence of a local BNP leader in Torky Bandar area in Gournadi here today.

Witnesses said the BCL activists attacked the 4-storied building of Abul Hossain Peada, general secretary of the Gournadi thana BNP at about 11-30 am today.

They damaged TV, fridge and furniture and allegedly looted about Tk 2 lakh in cash and 40 tolas of gold ornaments.

Hossain's son Nader, 2, fell unconscious while his wife Maqsooda, 38, and sister Nilufar, 23, were assaulted during the attack.

Hossain was, however, not at home during the incident.

Motaleb, a local Poura Commissioner was also manhandled, sources said.

Police did not come to the spot even after an hour of the incident, locals said.

Meanwhile, Gournadi thana BCL in a statement said the incident took place due to intra-party conflict in the BNP there.

They also condemned the incident and demanded immediate punishment to the culprits responsible for it.

EC verdict

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He said Article 70 of the Constitution never bars him from joining parliament proceedings whether he abides by the party decision or not.

In his 14-page written deposition he quoted from different Articles of the Constitution and placed 20 arguments for not vacating his seat.

He emphasized holding of a referendum in his constituency before vacating his seat. "As people of the constituency voted me to parliament to protect their interest, it is my constitutional responsibility to attend parliament sittings," he said.

Barrister Aminul Haq submitting that BNP decided not to attend parliament session. But Akhteruzzaman "willfully and deliberately" attended the 19th session of the parliament for his personal interest, which is tantamount to violating party discipline, he added.

People of the constituency elected Akhteruzzaman on the basis of the ideology, programme and manifesto of BNP and he obtained mandate of the people as a nominee of BNP.

"So as soon as he joined the parliament sitting, he betrayed the mandate. By such conduct, he shall be deemed to have resigned from BNP as per Article 70 of country's Constitution," he said.

Haq said Akhteruzzaman was formally expelled from the party and his primary membership was cancelled. Operation of Section 5(Ga)(2) of BNP's Constitution amounts to resignation of Akhteruzzaman from the party, Haq argued.

"This provision was incorporated in BNP's Constitution to maintain the sanctity and spirit of Article 70 of country's Constitution," Haq argued.

এখন বাজারে

সাপ্তাহিক

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১০টি উপন্যাস

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আনন্দধারা ঈদ সংখ্যা বের হচ্ছে ১৪ ডিসেম্বর

২০০০ সর্ভীর সচল বাংলাদেশের স্থির প্রতিকৃতি

৯৯৩৭ সিরি ইন্ডিয়ান, ঢাকা-১০০০ ফোন : পিএবিএস : ৯২০২০১-৩ সার্বস্বতন : ৯৯৯৯৪৫৯

BNP disowns

From page 1

By making such remarks Gias Kamal Chowdhury distorted the history of War of Liberation, Language Movement and the role of Ziaur Rahman and Khaleda Zia.

In another statement Bhuiyan said Prof Aftab's remarks against the national Anthem is "imprudent and unacceptable".

He said some newspapers are trying to identify Dr Aftab as a pro-BNP intellectual and his speech as BNP's views, which are not true.

Aftab's remarks about the National Anthem are his own views, he said and called upon the people not to be misled by those.

Bhuiyan also condemned government's "propaganda" against Ziaur Rahman and Khaleda Zia centring the remarks of the three persons.

BSS adds: The Dhaka University Syndicate will meet tomorrow afternoon to take a decision against a Prof. Aftab Uddin aimed at a faculty member of the Political Science Department for his audacious comment against the National Anthem.

The Syndicate will discuss the issue at a meeting at the official residence of the Vice-Chancellor.

I can't take any decision alone against him. So I will draw the attention of the members of the Syndicate, the highest decision-making body. The Syndicate will take the ultimate decision," Vice-Chancellor Professor AK Azad Chowdhury told BSS last night.

Sailors

From page 12

cent of the payment for the supply.

The sources said the government will lose heavily even if it takes over the ship because it is of 'scrap category' and will not be valued at over Tk five crore while the price of the rice is more than Tk eight crore.

Ctg mayor

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He threatened to launch a movement with the help of the people of Chittagong if any agreement was signed with SSA in this regard.

He also called for protecting the country from destruction.

He said shipping secretary and other officials being overenthusiastic held 65 to 70 meetings in connection with SSA.

He wanted to know on what basis those meetings were organised. He blamed the bureaucrats involved in the meetings for allegedly hatching conspiracy with SSA.

CCM Mayor demanded a probe into the matter by parliamentary standing committee after seizing the files. He also called for relieving those bureaucrats.

Opposition

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release of all political prisoners before the Eid, halt of repression on opposition activists and just price of crops. Central and city unit leaders of the parties will address the rally.

Sources said though the Liaison Committee at its meeting on December 5 demanded release of Jatiya Party Chairman H M Ershad, the BNP policy makers have decided not to demand his release from any rally.

They said the former President was convicted in a corruption case and the highest court of the country proved his corruption. The hardliners at the liaison committee demanded Ershad's release ignoring the advice of the party leadership which already created a strong resentment in the rank and file of BNP and its front organisation.

Netanyahu declares candidacy

JERUSALEM, Dec 11: Hours after Prime Minister Ehud Barak resigned to run for re-election, his predecessor, Benjamin Netanyahu, declared his own candidacy and called on parliament to pass legislation to allow him to run, reports AP.

Barak's resignation Sunday plunged Israel into a sudden election campaign, and the hard-line Netanyahu quickly took up the challenge even though it might not be technically possible for him to run.

I present my candidacy today for prime minister and head of the Likud party," Netanyahu said in a news conference.

In calling special elections to be held in February, Barak, who lags far behind Netanyahu in opinion polls, took advantage of

a law that prevents the former prime minister from running because he is not a member of or candidate for parliament.

Barak's resignation made possible a special election for the prime ministry only. This replaces an earlier plan, which called for general elections that were expected next spring and would have enabled Netanyahu to run concurrently for parliament and prime minister.

Netanyahu denounced Barak for what he called "the most cynical trick in the history of the nation."

He appealed directly to members of parliament, saying, "Allow the people to choose a new leadership to replace those who have run the situation down."

Barak will remain in office until the election and was formally re-nominated as the Labour Party candidate only hours after he resigned. Still, he faces a difficult battle to win re-election. Ongoing violence with the Palestinians, which has claimed more than 300 lives, is pushing the Israeli public toward right-wing parties such as Likud.

It's not clear, however, who that party's candidate will be.

Current Likud leader Ariel Sharon is running even with Barak in the polls, while Netanyahu, the former party chief, holds a double-digit lead over Barak that has expanded as the violence drags on.

Netanyahu criticised Barak's policy of compromise with the

Palestinians, charging that he "broadcast weakness" and brought more than two months of violence on Israel, referring to Palestinian-Israeli clashes that began Sept. 28.

Without giving specifics, Netanyahu said he could achieve "cold peace" with Israel's neighbours, based on mutualty and security. He said that was the best Israel could expect realistically, "not Scandinavia."

Netanyahu's term in office from 1996-99 was marked by constant friction with the Palestinians. But his tough policies now appear to have Israelis, who feel Barak's pe efforts have failed and Israel's security has been jeopardised.

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