

Chop on channels

HBO, Star Movies, MTV, Channel V and AXN among satellite channels banned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a surprise move, the government has decided to shut down eight popular satellite pay channels and other "free-to-air" channels to 'resist the adverse impact of alien culture on religious and social values'.

The decision was taken at a joint meeting of the Ministry of Information, different TV channels, cable operators and channel distributors at the conference room of the ministry.

Information Minister Tariqul Islam chaired the meeting.

According to an official handout, the meeting 'unanimously decided' to close down five channels MTV, Channel-V, MGM, Hall Mark, and AXN until further order.

The meeting also decided to close down three more channels Star Movies, Star World and the HBO despite objections by the channel distrib-

utors.

Moreover, the cable operators promised to close down five 'free-to-air' channels — RAI TV, PTP, TVE, MTV and SNTV — to show respect to 'the socio-cultural and religious sentiment' of the people, the handout added.

Besides, the cable operators also promised not to show movies from VCD. The ATN Bangla assured that it would not telecast objectionable foreign films in future.

Speaking on the occasion, the information minister thanked the satellite operators and distributors for expressing their solidarity with the people's sentiment 'spontaneously' by closing down 'harmful' satellite channels.

He told the meeting that if necessary more channels will be closed

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Four soldiers killed in another raid on army camp in Jammu

Border fighting on: Vajpayee summons security cabinet again

AGENCIES, New Delhi/Islamabad

Indian and Pakistani soldiers

pounded each other with heavy mortar fire yesterday, a day after India expelled Pakistan's High Commissioner to protest against a militant raid in Kashmir.

On Saturday, India gave Pak commissioner Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, a week to leave in protest against the raid which killed 35 people in an army camp near Jammu.

The raid last week that New Delhi

blamed on Pakistan-based separatist rebels has reignited tensions between the two neighbours.

The envoy, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, told Star Television News yesterday the raid "which Pakistan has condemned in no uncertain terms cannot realistically be associated with Pakistan".

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee yesterday held talks with the leader of the main opposition party and summoned a second meeting of his security cabinet in two days, as militants targeted

another army camp in Kashmir killing four military personnel.

The four soldiers and a militant were killed when Islamic rebels launched an attack on an Indian army camp in the morning in southern Kashmir, military sources said.

Seven soldiers were injured, three of them critically in the attack, allegedly mounted by Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba militants on the Chasana army camp at Reasi, near Udhampur, northeast of Jammu, they said.

Police said, at least 17 people

including 8 security personnel were killed in fresh rebel attacks across Kashmir yesterday.

Meanwhile on the volatile India-Pakistan border in the disputed Kashmir state, both sides traded heavy fire during the night, injuring at least another four people and sending more civilians fleeing, Indian police said.

An estimated 14,000 people have so far left their homes along the disturbed border districts of Jammu, officials said.

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Argentina reach base

AFP, Naraha

Two-time champions Argentina hope that a win at the World Cup will revitalise their country which has been suffering from economic recession.

"We have responsibility for our national people. I want to galvanize our country by winning the Cup," said Paris Saint Germain defender Mauricio Pochettino after their first practice here on Saturday.

"I've been thinking nothing but

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PHOTO: STAR

Relatives and neighbours of Badal (Inset), who died following alleged torture by DB personnel, demonstrate in Narayanganj demanding justice.

7 DB men sued for killing Badal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A murder case was lodged yesterday with a Narayanganj court by the mother of Badal accusing seven DB (Detective Branch) personnel including the officer-in-charge of Narayanganj DB of torturing her son to death.

Badal, 19, died Friday at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) after he was transferred to the Dhaka Central Jail in a critical condition from Narayanganj Jail on the same day.

A butcher by profession, Badal was allegedly picked up without any arrest warrant by the Narayanganj DB police from his house at Baraipara, Bandari in Narayanganj at 2:00am on May 7 and afterwards severely tortured as his family members failed to pay the ransom demanded for his release.

More than 200 people from the victim's native village Baraipara, Sadar thana of Narayanganj went in procession to the court premises at about 2:00pm yesterday as the victim's mother Sanowara Begum filed the murder case at the court of the first class magistrate Hasna Jahan Banu.

Nineteen-people including the father and mother of the victim signed as witnesses of the case.

Chanting slogans against DB atrocity on Badal and demanding justice, agitated people in Narayanganj also brought out a procession at about 4:30pm yesterday and paraded different parts of Narayanganj town with Badal's dead body.

In the First Information Report (FIR), Sanowara named Fazlul Kabir, officer-in-charge of Narayanganj DB, sub-inspectors Azharul Islam and

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Titas unionists seek govt cover

SHARIER KHAN and ZAYADUL AHSAN

Trade union activists of Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Limited, who tamper with meters to steal gas sale proceeds and illegally use the company vehicles, are now lobbying with the government top brass to escape disciplinary action.

Earlier, leaders of ruling BNP-backed three unions of Titas had pledged to the government that they won't interfere in the affairs of Titas management in the next three months. But, two top union leaders held an hour-long meeting with the acting managing director of Titas yesterday, sources and witnesses said.

A top company official said though Titas succeeded in gaining some political support in its first ever move to improve its performance a lot more is needed to

ward off union pressures.

Petrobangla, Titas' parent organisation, and the energy ministry are going to seek prime ministerial intervention if some cabinet members continue aiding these corrupt trade union activists-cum-meter readers, who are draining out Tk 200 crores worth of gas from Titas a year.

Meanwhile, meter reader and Vice-President of Titas unit of Jatiyatabadi Sramik Karmachari Parishad Mahbubur Rahman continues to lobby with top ruling party leaders, sources said. Actions are yet to be taken against Mahbub since his arrest on April 27 at the Zia International Airport when he was leaving for Singapore with a passport identifying him as a businessman.

A committee to probe his graft filed a report to the acting MD of

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Reshuffle scare in jumbo cabinet

MK Anwar, Kh Mosharraf sounded out for home

NAZMUL ASHRAF

The possibility of a major cabinet reshuffle has scared many in the 60-strong council of ministers, especially those with low performance or public smear, ruling coalition sources said.

This has also sparked off widespread speculations in the BNP-led coalition about the possible changes in the seven-month-old government of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

The recent breakdown in law and order, particularly in the capital, has

prompted the prime minister to plan for a major change in the cabinet, sources close to Khaleda said. Now undergoing medical treatment at a New York hospital, she has meantime asked her senior party colleagues to do the "homework" for the impending reshuffle, they added.

Accordingly, top BNP policymakers have launched a series of consultations at different levels to make the cabinet 'more dynamic' with a special thrust on improving the law and order, sources involved in the process said.

"We're just doing the groundwork for the prime minister, who will finalise everything after returning home early next month," said a BNP policymaker, asking not to be named. "A change in the home ministry is a must, but there will be changes in other ministries, too."

The cabinet may also see a post of deputy prime minister and Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman is so far the first choice for the new office.

According to BNP sources, Industries Minister MK Anwar is still

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Bangladesh to stage war games soon

DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is going to stage a six-nation combined military exercise shortly. Bangladesh Institute of Peace Supports Operations and Training (BIPSOT) based in Rajendrapur will host the exercise, according to sources.

The military exercise, the first of its kind here, will be participated by the countries currently involved in the UN peacekeeping operations.

Apart from three other nations partaking in the programme, soldiers from Nepal and the Maldives will be representing South Asia.

The programme will be organised at platoon level involving light and medium weapons.

Bangladesh is now the premier global peacekeeper with almost 5000 soldiers stationed in several tension-ridden areas.

Murder at Pallabi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An elderly landlord was strangled at his tin-shed house in Section 12 in the city's Pallabi area yesterday.

Abdul Kader, 65, was found strangled on the floor and valuables including a colour television looted when one of his employees went to his house at about 11 am. A steel almira was also seen broken.

On information, Pallabi police

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