

NEWSPAPER LEADERS SUMMIT

Global media trend reviewed

ARUN DEVNATH, from Bangkok

Global newspaper circulation went slightly down, but newspaper advertising revenues are on the upswing, the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) revealed at a high-profile summit in Bangkok yesterday (Thursday) after an annual survey on world press trends.

Some developing markets showed strong circulation gains, while many mature markets saw sales decline, according to a survey-based presentation at the 2nd Asian Newspaper Leaders Summit at the Dusit Thani Hotel here.

Organised by the Paris-based WAN, the second summit that ends today (Friday) came after the first summit in Seoul last year.

On Bangladesh, WAN in its report "World Press Trends Asia 2004" highlighted that the archaic Official Secrets Act introduced by British colonialists in 1926 makes it a crime to publish 'secrets'. The Bangladesh government has more than 25 laws that could rebuke, fine and punish journalists with jail terms up to several years.

On employment, WAN said only six to eight newspapers and magazines pay salary and wages to their journalists and workers in a country that has 1,566 newspapers and periodicals published in Bangla and English.

The report refers to the shifting media landscape in Bangladesh that banned the sale and distribution of a July edition of international newsmagazine Newsweek, saying the edition published simultaneously from New York, Singapore and Malaysia, contained "misleading and objectionable comments" about the Quran.

The aims of the summit are to form understanding among publishers and related organisations in Asia and make way for dialogues and exchange of ideas that would 'lead to development, innovation and a stronger newspaper industry regionwide', said Thanachai Theerapattavanong, chairman and CEO of Nation Multimedia Group that hosts the Bangkok summit.

Founded in 1948, WAN groups 72 national newspaper associations, individual newspaper executives in 100 nations, 13 news agencies, and nine regional press organisations.

"A newspaper is not only about paper anymore ... It doesn't matter how it is delivered - via the paperboy or a news kiosk, or by computer, mobile phone or any emerging technology," WAN President Seok Hyun Hong told the summit.

FUTURE ROLE OF THE EDITOR
Jim Chisholm, director of Shaping the Future of the Newspaper (SFNP), highlighted two modern themes sweeping the newspaper industry in his presentation paper "Future Perspectives: Key Strategic Issues for Newspapers in Asia".

The role of the editor is moving from the writer to the reader, and news breaks when it is consumed, not when it occurs, he said.

The speaker underscored the editor's efforts to keep himself updated on world affairs with the help of search engines, including Google. In the second theme, he indicated the vital role of technology in the fast growth of newspapers.

He said cellphone-based communications are the force for newspapers to go ahead.

The new media tool provides an opportunity to develop more secure relationships with readers and advertisers, develop new revenue streams in media consumption and communication, and provide operational efficiencies within the newspaper company.

Hop over Mohakhali

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railway system, the prime minister said Mohakhali flyover was part of that plan aiming to free the city from traffic congestion.

After the opening function, the prime minister travelled across the colourfully decorated 1.12 km long and 17.9 metre wide flyover in a motorcade. As soon as the motorcade left the place, a jubilant crowd raced up the overpass, although pedestrians will not be allowed to use it.

In 2001, Khaleda laid the foundation of the flyover, which was constructed by a Chinese firm at a cost of Tk 113 crore with the financial assistance of the World Bank. The flyover with four lanes has 42 shock-transmission units to prevent damage by earthquake.

The prime minister said the construction of Khligon flyover is in progress and there are plans to build some more flyovers in the city's most congested areas including Jatabari.

"We want to build a modern Dhaka City with congestion-free roads and improved, safe transportation system," she told the function at the west ramp of the flyover.

Khaleda however expressed the apprehension that the opening of the Mohakhali flyover would cause traffic congestion in some other nearby locations.

Expressing similar apprehension, Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman, Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka and State Minister for Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment Qamrul Islam suggested construction of a one-kilometre underpass through the Dhaka Cantonment area.

They also suggested removal of railway lines and relocation of stations, including Kamapur Railway Station, out of the capital and construction of a road on the rail line.

"I am ready to mobilise necessary funds to relocate the Kamapur station either at Tongi or Joydevpur," Saifur said and asked the communications ministry to start the process of relocation and construction of underpass from this year.

The prime minister however said

Chisholm highlighted changes and experiments in new formats and designs of newspapers as the media landscape is shifting.

He pointed to The Economist that has a magazine size, yet it is a serious newspaper. He said the trend indicates the switchover to the concept that small is beautiful.

CIRCULATION AND MEDIA LANDSCAPE

Newspaper circulations were up in 35 percent of the countries surveyed year-on-year in 2003, and up in 28 percent of countries between 1999 and 2003.

In terms of daily circulation of all newspapers combined, China tops the list of countries around the world with more than 85 million copies sold, followed by India with more than 72 million copies.

Japan and the United States come next with 70,339,000 copies and 55,185,000 copies sold a day.

North America is the world's largest advertising market for daily newspapers, with 70 percent of the world's advertising share for dailies, followed by Europe with 23 percent, the Asia-Pacific region with 16 percent and the rest of the world with 4 percent.

The report highlighted the role of the Internet as crucial to revenue earnings with consumption of newspapers online growing 350 percent since 1999. It was at 35 percent in 2003.

Internet advertising revenues topped US\$10 billion in 2003 and are forecast to grow to more than US\$13 billion by 2006.

14 abducted

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In response to request from Bangladesh, the West Bengal government had taken initiative to send them back.

The BNWLA and Prajak, a voluntary organisation of Kolkata, helped bring the children to Bangladesh with the assistance of Bangladesh Deputy High Commission there.

The 14 children are Md Shaheb Sheikh, Md Khairul, Md Ziarul Rahman, Md Sirajul Islam, Md Al-Amin, Md Suman and Md Noor Salin of Chapainawabganj, Md Kuddus and Md Saddam Hossain of Satkhira, Md Shahidul Sheikh and Md Mamun Sheikh of Khulna, Md Shamim Shikder of Bagerhat and Md Zakir Hossain and Md Johnny Hossain of Jessore.

"Legal procedure to bring these innocent children was so prolonging that they had to stay at the correction centres for long. They were on the verge of entering criminal world while staying with real offenders there," said Salma Ali, BNWLA executive director.

Lack of coordination between the home and social welfare ministries and Border Security Forces of India and hassle in identifying the children also slowed down the process, she added.

She said many children and women are in detention in several countries, the government of which must cooperate in sending them back home.

To solve the problem, she urged the governments of the Saarc nations to sign a multilateral treaty.

The draft of a bilateral agreement between Bangladesh and India prepared with the consultations of the government and non-government agencies of Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan has already been sent to the Prime Minister's Office, she noted.

The BNWLA is making legal efforts to bring back 35 girls from different shelter homes and correction centres in India.

shifting of railway lines, level crossings and bus terminals, widening of roads and construction of bypass and underpasses should be done in phases.

Outlining the steps taken to reduce the traffic congestion, Khaleda said the city could be freed from congestion by allowing only fast moving vehicles. "But we cannot evict all slow-moving vehicles overnight because it involves livelihood of huge number of families."

"We also need to discourage small vehicles and increase the number of bigger size public transports but such a plan cannot be implemented in a short period of time."

Khaleda said the flyover would reduce long queues at Mohakhali level crossing. "This will save travel time. Travelling to and from Zia International Airport will also be easier."

Khaleda said her government always attaches priority to the improvement of communication system and most of the new roads, bridges and railway lines were constructed in the independent Bangladesh during the BNP periods.

"We have constructed the Jamuna Bridge, which was the century-old dream of the nation. We are continuing the process and have completed construction of important roads and bridges in the last three years. More plans will be implemented in next two years."

Khaleda said her government is not only improving the communication system but also trying its best to streamline and expedite the pace of development in every sector, but this need a conducive atmosphere, peace, stability and security.

"We are working with sincerity to ensure peace and security in public life through pragmatic and tougher steps that have already improved the situation to a great extent," she said.

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda, State Minister for Communications Salahuddin Ahmed, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Communications Syed Manzur Hossain, World Bank Country Director Christine I Wallich, and Communications Secretary Shafiqul Islam also spoke at the function.

President flies to UAE to mourn Al-Nahyan's death

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed left for Abu Dhabi last night to express Bangladesh's deep sorrow at the death of Shaikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, president of the United Arab Emirates.

Foreign Secretary Shamsur Mobin Chowdhury, who accompanies the president, told the UNB that the president would meet new UAE ruler Shaikh Khalifa bin Zayid bin Sultan al-Nahyan, the eldest son of late Shaikh Zayed, today (Friday) and convey Bangladesh's condolences.

Sultan Al-Nahyan died on Tuesday.

This is the first foreign trip by Iajuddin Ahmed after he was sworn in as president on September 6, 2002.

President, PM greet Bush

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday greeted George W Bush on his reelection as president of the United States of America.

The president in his message said: "I sincerely hope that during Bush's coming tenure, like this one, the excellent relations existing between Bangladesh and the United States would continue to flourish in all areas of interaction and cooperation to mutual benefit of our two countries."

The prime minister in her message said the victory of Bush was a manifestation of the American people's appreciation for the strength of his leadership and unwavering conviction at a difficult time for his nation.

"The relations between Bangladesh and the United States are rooted in our shared commitment to democracy, freedom and social justice. Our two countries closely cooperate in many areas, including trade, economy and security, to our mutual benefit," she said.

Civil society

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Hena Das, Barrister Shawkat Ali Khan, Prof Mustafa Nurul Islam, Kalim Shari, Justice KM Sobhan, Prof Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir and Major General CR Dutt were among the signatories to the statement.

Meanwhile, the anti-Ahmadiyya campaigners plan to replace the signboards of Nakhalpara, Narayanganj and Brahmanbaria Ahmadiyya mosques with new ones that would read 'Kadiani's (Ahmadiyya) Place of Worship'. Earlier they did the same in Chittagong, Khulna and Patuakhali to 'caution the Muslims against getting duped into saying prayers there.'

Leaders of the anti-Ahmadiyya organisations yesterday said they are ready even to sacrifice their lives to carry out the capture programme. The IKMB in a press release yesterday asked the government to pass a bill declaring Ahmadiyyas non-Muslims in the ongoing parliament session.

Crucial 2nd

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In the first one-dayer at Chittagong on Tuesday where the Tigers crashed to 86, their fourth lowest total, Habibul Bashar's men need a victory to stay alive in the three-match series after a 2-0 Test whitewash.

The day-night match will commence at 1.30 pm with STAR Sports and Bangladesh Television beaming live coverage from the Big Bowl.

The home side has made one change from the first one-dayer with opener Nafees Iqbal replacing experienced all-rounder Khaled Mahmud.

The young Chittagonian had earlier played four one-dayers with a highest score of 40 in his last game against West Indies in the ICC Champions Trophy in England.

The 20-year-old right hander is likely to open with Javed Omar pushing his Chittagong mate Aftab Ahmed to bat in the middle-order.

"We have decided to include Nafees to bolster the top-order which has been extremely disappointing for the last seven or eight months. I hope the top five overcome their mental barrier and put some runs on the board," said chief selector Paruque Ahmed to the Daily Star Sports last night.

Meanwhile, Daniel Vettori, who is leading the Black Caps in the one-day series after Stephen Fleming flew home following the second and final Test in Chittagong, said that his batsmen are ready to revel on a good batting pitch at Dhaka and clinch the series with a game in hand.

TEAMS

BANGLADESH (from): Habibul Bashar (captain), Javed Omar, Nafees Iqbal, Aftab Ahmed, Mohammad Ashraful, Rajin Saleh, Khaled Mashud (wicketkeeper), Manzoorul Islam, Khaled Mahmud, Mohammad Rafique, Tapash Baisya, Nazmul Hossain, Khaled Mahmud and Mushiqur Rahman.

NEW ZEALAND (from): Daniel Vettori (captain), Nathan Astle, Mathew Sinclair, James Franklin, Hamish Marshall, Craig McMillan, Brendon McCullum (wicketkeeper), Scott Styris, Peter Fulton, Chris Harris, Chris Cairns, Andre Adams, Ian Butler and Kyle Mills.

Khaleda asks

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the constitutional caretaker government system, it has the only option to go to polls under the BNP-led alliance government," the prime minister said, in an oblique reference to Awami League's demand for procedural changes in the system.

She assured her party men that upazila polls would be held, but it would take some time because of a difference of opinion within the party.

Mayor of Rajshahi Mizanur Rahman Minu MP and State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Rahman were present on the dais.

Taking feedback from her grass-roots level party men on overall situation, the prime minister assured them that massive development work would start all over the country after the Eid.

The prime minister listed the development efforts of the government being carried out in various sectors, including education, in creating mass awareness on various issues and the programmes for employment generation.

Mentioning the huge expenditure in different education programmes, she called upon her party workers to make sure that those are properly implemented at the field level. "We will reap the benefits of our programmes later," she said.

Khaleda said the government has also laid importance on agriculture and is supplying agricultural inputs, including seeds and fertilisers, to the small and marginal farmers to recoup the losses caused by the floods.

She also mentioned the waiver of

interest on agricultural loans up to Tk 5,000 and disbursing fresh loans to the farmers without collateral.

The prime minister called upon the field level leaders and workers to stand united and strengthen the organisation to deal with any situation.

Bar Council

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uation results, will have to reply in seven days.

The Bar Council executive committee took the decision at a meeting with its Vice Chairman Rokanuddin Mahmud in the chair.

Sources said the council, in primary investigation, found evidence of discrepancy in information he provided during his membership.

The Bar Council, lawyers' regulatory body that issues enrolment certificate to lawyers for practice, will also investigate similar allegations raised against some other lawyers, they said.

The chief justice withdrew Faizee from the bench in the wake of the allegation and lawyers' threat to boycott his court. He also thrust full responsibility of the bench upon Justice Ali Asgar Khan, Faizee's senior judge in the bench, as Asgar declined to sit with him in the court.

Two major dailies reported that Justice Faizee, one of the 19 additional judges whose appointment on August 23 drew sharp criticism, had tampered with his marks-sheet of LLB degree obtained from Chittagong Law College in 1989. An enquiry committee of Chittagong University unearthed the fraud in 1996.

Bush to 'unite' US

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commitments, to a Palestinian state for example, reflected low expectations that Bush would take any bold new steps to end a conflict that has dominated regional politics for more than 50 years.

With many analysts underlining how divided the America is, the US president made a direct appeal in his victory speech for the support of Americans who had voted for John Kerry.

"I will need your support and I will work to earn it. I will do all I can to deserve your trust," he said. "A new term is a new opportunity to reach out to the whole nation."

Vice-President Dick Cheney, in contrast, has suggested the administration now has a mandate for a range of conservative social and economic policies.

These are likely to include issues ranging from tax reform to abortion and same-sex marriage.

SECOND TERM
Bush's second term in office does not officially begin until January. But Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is among those who are unlikely to last a full second term.

But because of the need for continuity on Iraq policy, the 72-year-old is expected to stay on for another year or so if he wants to.

The fate of Secretary of State Colin Powell is unclear. He is expected to go, but not everyone is convinced that he wants to.

There is speculation he might be replaced by the recently appointed US ambassador to the UN, John Danforth.

National security adviser Condoleezza Rice has said in the past that she wants to return to her university career, but she is close to the president and is thought by some to harbour presidential ambitions herself.

2 killed in 'crossfire'

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killed in a 'crossfire' between the Rab members and the outlaws in Rupsha upazila of Khulna, Rab sources said.

In Bogra, notorious robber Atiqur Rahman Sona, 37, was killed in another 'crossfire' between the police and robbers in Arjunjari area of Dupchanchia upazila, police said.

Alleged criminals Shamim, 30, and Fairullah alias Fairuddin, 26, were beaten to death by a mob at Hindupara slum in Gulshan in the capital when a Rab team raided the slum for seizing arms. The Rab arrested six other criminals during the raid.

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BOGRA SHOOTOUT
Quoting police sources, our Bogra correspondent says notorious robber Sona, who was arrested on

Wednesday, tried to escape from the custody when a band of robbers opened fire on the police who took him to Arjunjari for seizing arms early yesterday.

As the police retaliated, a gunfight occurred between the robbers and the law-enforcers. Sona received bullets in his head and back and died on the spot.

The police said Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Dupchanchia Police Station AFM Jabid Hasan and Sub-Inspector Anisur Rahman were injured as the criminals stabbed them during the encounter at about 2:00 am.

The police seized a revolver, a pipe gun, 23 bullets, and three sharp weapons from the spot. Sona, hailed from Muktagacha village of the upazila, was wanted in several cases including 11 robbery and a murder in Dupchanchia, police said.

GULSHAN MOB LYNCHING
Tipped off, a team of Rab-1 encircled Hindupara slum in Gulshan to arrest some alleged criminals at about 4:00 pm. When the criminals tried to escape, locals nabbed them and manhandled two, Shamim and Fairuddin, who died on the spot.

The Rab members with the help of locals arrested six of their accomplices -- Ripon, Amin, Badal, Nahid, Sohail and Faruq. They seized one pistol with three bullets, a toy pistol and some sharp weapons from the spot.

Rab-1 Commanding Officer Lt Col Chowdhury Fazlul Bari told The Daily Star that when the Rab members raided the slum, the criminals tried to flee and local people caught eight of them with a pistol and lynched the two.

The Rab members however rescued six criminals from the wrath of the mob and arrested them, he said.

City bogs down in tailbacks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The city yesterday experienced a severe traffic congestion that left hundreds of thousands of commuters stranded on the streets for a long time.

Most of the city thoroughfares were jammed full of heavy traffic. The worst hit areas were Purana Paltan, Kakrail, Elephant Road, Green Road, Baily Road, Moghbazar Crossing, Mouchak, roads from Dhanmandi-3 to Science Laboratory, Rampura to Malibagh, Mahakhali to Banani, Asad Gate to crossing on Dhanmandi Road No 27.

Traffic in some places, like the newly opened Bashundhara City Shopping Mall, New Market, Dhaka College, Moghbazar crossing, Bangla Motor crossing and Mouchak, virtually came to a standstill for up to an hour.

Traffic police in many areas were seen standing helplessly as traffic grew chaotic. Speeding vehicles driving on the wrong side of the roads to reach destination faster was a common sight. Such disorderly driving only worsened the situation.

"I just can't control the traffic anymore. It's beyond my capacity now. Two of my colleagues too are struggling to bring the traffic in order," said one of the traffic sergeants, who faced an uphill task to control the traffic at Mouchak yesterday afternoon.

For security of the motorcade carrying Pakistani Prime Minister, many roads yesterday were kept free of vehicles for some time. And it only added to the miseries of the commuters on city streets that are already congested due to heavy rush of Eid shoppers.

People were stuck in traffic for hours on Mahakhali crossing yesterday afternoon as vehicular movement was restricted for the prime minister's visit there to inaugurate country's first flyover.

Markets that mushroomed over the years without ample parking space account for heavy snarl-ups during Ramadan when people in huge number go shopping. Traffic gets even slower before Ifar as everybody make rush for home.

Bride, schoolgirl abducted in Kushtia, Jhenidah

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A bride and a schoolgirl were abducted in Kushtia and Jhenidah Wednesday.

Sources said abductors led by Sakbar Ali, 29, son of Siraj Mistri picked up Kajali Khatun, 20, daughter of Chad Mohammad, in Mahisikundi village in Daulatpur at 8:00 pm. They took her to an unknown place and demanded a ransom of Tk 1 lakh over cell phone.

The sources said Sakbar wanted to marry Kajali and threatened her family with dire consequences after her marriage to another person.

In Jhenidah, Samapti Khatun, 10, daughter of Korban Ali of Kripalpur village in Saikupa, was kidnapped from her house.

Police said Noor Islam alias Munna with his accomplices picked up Samapti, a student of class six, at about 7:30 pm.

Noor demanded Tk 50,000 within 12 hours for her release. Otherwise, she will be trafficked to Pakistan, he threatened.

Meantime, police could not rescue Likhan, 10, student of class six, who was abducted Thursday from the same area one week back. His captors demanded Tk 20,000 as ransom.

Sylhet F-28 salvage operation begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The salvage operation of crashed F-28 aircraft of Biman Bangladesh Airlines near Sylhet MAG Osmani International Airport resumed yesterday after having been suspended for a week.

A seven-member team from Dhaka headed by Engineer Abdur Rahman restarted the operation yesterday morning.

Earlier, Biman's 11-member team led by its chief engineer started the salvage of the F-28 on October 13, but left Sylhet halfway to completion a week back. The aircraft skidded off the runway and fell into a ditch on October 8.

An official of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) said it will take weeks more to complete the salvage work.

However, the salvage operation will again be put off after five days due to Eid vacation, said a Biman official in Sylhet yesterday, adding, the work will resume after the Eid.

Biman sources said after retrieving the engines and other valuable parts, the F-28 will be sold in tender for scrapping.

The salvage team has already recovered some small parts from the wings and cockpit and is on way to separate the engines.

Biman authorities are doubtful of smooth going of salvage work, as Sylhet has cranes not strong enough to lift the aircraft.

FUNDS EMBEZZLEMENT

Pac for bar on foreign travel of accused surgeons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Public Accounts Committee (Pac) of the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday decided to ask authorities to prevent some civil surgeons and government officials accused of embezzlement from going abroad when the cases are pending.

The parliamentary body in a couple of days will ask the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism to impose restriction against the accused, committee Chairman Harun Al Rashid yesterday told reporters after a meeting.

The Pac apprehends the corrupt government officials have embezzled Tk 109 crore in purchasing equipment and medicines for 17 civil surgeon's offices.

Eighteen accused explained their position at yesterday's meeting against the allegations and all claimed they were not involved in any irregularities.

Then joint secretary of the health ministry Azizur Rahman, who has

been identified as the key person behind the graft, did not show up. He also skipped the last meeting of the Pac on October 17.

The committee has decided to make a decision at the next meeting, Rashid said.

A parliamentary sub-committee has investigated irregularities in only nine CS offices and found Tk 4.62 crore to have been embezzled, which it terms the tip of the iceberg.

The committee has identified a network involving CS offices, health ministry, Health Directorate, district account offices, purchase committees and some senior officials of the finance ministry that gobbled up the public money.