

10 TV channels

FROM PAGE 1
arrested former BNP MPs Salauddin Ahmed and Nasiruiddin Ahmed Pintu..

In comparison to the speedy issuing of licences and frequencies, other applicants have had to undergo detailed examinations of their proposals which in some cases have taken years and are still not completed.

Channel i and Ekushey Television (ETV), had to wait for over an year to receive their licences from the information ministry before the BNP came to power. Channel i Director, Shykh Shiraj told The Daily Star, "It took us over a year to get the licence. We had to go through several different stages of the application process."

"We were asked to go to a number of interviews and provide several detailed documents for months," he said, adding, "It took us two years more to get our frequency from BTRC to telecast our live news from Dhaka."

Sources said, the licences of at least three of the BNP linked channels, Channel 1, Rtv and ntv received their licences without being discussed in an inter-ministerial meeting, normally a precondition for receiving a private television licence under the government rules of business.

A large number of the applicants already working in the industry have had their applications languishing at the ministry for years, sources add.

Some of these applications, which were already being processed up till 2001, have not moved in the ministry since the BNP-led coalition came to power.

Information Secretary Didarul Anwar told The Daily Star, "A private satellite television channel licence application would have to sent to the concerned ministries and authorities, such as the Law Ministry or the BTRC."

He refused to comment on decisions taken by past governments saying he was only transferred to the post a month ago. However he said legal steps were now being taken to establish a firmer framework for the awarding of licences.

During its time in office the BNP-led government made no attempt to change the Operational Guidelines for Establishing Private Television Channels established in 1998.

These vague guidelines were used to withdraw the licence approval of three channels that were not owned or backed by BNP leaders. The channels were Jamuna TV, Inqlab TV, and UTV.

The government gave Jamuna TV both terrestrial and satellite broadcasting rights, but suddenly revoked them without explanation in 2005. When the High Court ordered that Jamuna TV be allowed to broadcast, the government appealed. Even though the Supreme Court put a two-week time limit on the hearing, the hearing is yet to take place.

NTV:
The jewel in the crown of BNP linked TV empire, Falu's ntv showed the way for others on how to exert political influence to acquire TV licences and then flex his political muscles to gain advertising.

Eighteen days is all it took for Falu to push through ntv's licence at the information ministry, without any necessary meetings, inquiries or interviews by the ministry to check whether ntv met the criteria outlined in the government's private television channel guidelines.

The channel was also allocated a frequency within a week by BTRC.

As International Television Channel Ltd, ntv's parent company, was languishing at the information ministry since 1999, Falu bought the company in 2004 and pushed through its licence approval in break-neck speed.

Although the Managing Director of Ntv, Enayetur Rahman (now arrested) and his wife Sabina Rahman are the next biggest shareholders after Falu in International Television Channel Ltd, Falu's wife, brother-in-law and other relatives all hold shares.

Salman Karim, the son of the disgraced Orion Group Chairman Obaidul Karim, also owns 40 thousand shares of the company, purchased on April 1, 2004. Obaidul also invested in the daily newspaper Amar Desh, also owned by Falu.

With an authorised capital of Tk 100 crore and paid up capital of 20 crore, experts believe the company to be worth around Tk 200 crore. The channel has international offices in the United States.

Falu further pushed up ntv's profits by pushing through permission required for importing equipment tax free.

Ntv's director-shareholders are: Falu, his wife Mahbuba Sultana, former Chairman and currently under Anti-Corruption Commission investigation Md Abu Taher, Anjan Chowdhury of Mediacom, Salman Karim, Mahboob Morshed Hassan, Md Yunus, Mostafa Sharuar, Shahidul Haque and Md Abu Sufian.

Ntv's offices were badly damaged in the February 26 fire at BSEC building.

CHANNEL ONE:
The majority shareholder and the public face of Channel 1 is Tarique's closest aide and trusted friend, Giasuddin Al Mamun. He owns 2500 out of the 10 thousand shares, while others including his close associate and friend, the now arrested former

MP MAH Salim owned 1200 shares of the company.

He was also the chairman of Channel 1's parent company One Entertainment Ltd, with a monthly turnover of just over Tk 3 crore.

They were given the licence within 26 days when they applied for it January 5, 2005 and the information ministry granted their licence on January 31, 2005. BTRC then allocated their frequency within four days of application. No tariff was paid on any of the equipment.

RTV:
The smaller and youngest of Falu's two television channels, Rtv, received the information ministry's permission within five and a half months. Falu became the chairman of RTV's parent company National Television Ltd, although he did not hold the majority shares in company, which were held by Jubo Karmashangsthan Society-Jubok.

According to documents obtained from the office of the registrar of Joint Stock of Companies, National Television Ltd, Falu's wife and Falu's business partner Enayetur Rahman and his wife Sabina, were all directors.

Estimated by market experts to be worth around Tk 80 crore, its authorised capital was 100 crore and paid up capital was 30 crore.

Sources say Jubok, with only two directors on the board, was trying to sell its shares but changed its mind after Falu was arrested. Rtv's offices were also badly damaged from the February 26 fire.

BANGLA VISION:
One of the two smaller is one of the two smaller satellite channels that did not have any BNP leaders holding shares. But Bangla Vision insiders say Dhaka Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka was the power behind the channel's operation and several other BNP leaders have stakes in the channel.

The channel's parent company, Shamol Bangla Media Ltd, is estimated to be worth around Tk 70-80 crore, with a monthly turnover of around Tk 2-3 crore, sources say. The initial investment into the channel was Tk 56 crore, while the authorised capital was Tk 20 crore and paid up capital was Tk 9.9 crore.

Although Bangla Vision is one of the three licences to be granted on January 31, the information ministry held back the channel's licence the longest out of all the other channels connected to BNP ownership.

Khoka was reportedly involved throughout the application process for the TV station's licence, from lodging its application on May 30, 2004 to its approval on January 31, 2005. They were also provided with the international telecasting frequency by the BTRC within five days.

Several Bangla Vision sources say, Khoka had an office on the twelfth floor of Noor Tower on Bangla Vision premises, where he held meetings with Bangla Vision staff at least once or twice a week. He negotiated and decided all major business deals for the channel, and also decided on personnel.

Sources add, Bangla Vision's managing director and majority shareholder Abdul Haque was a close associate of Khoka and a business partner who negotiated several business deals on Khoka's behalf. Abdul Haque owns 40, 110 shares of Bangla Vision parent company Shamol Bangla Media Ltd's 99 thousand shares.

A number of other BNP leaders are alleged to be involved with the channel, but their links with the channel could not be substantiated.

BAISHAKHI TV:
Baishakhi TV is the smallest out of the big five channels and the second channel with no BNP leaders with any direct shares.

However, several sources in the information ministry and within the channel itself said, that the now arrested former Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas was the power behind the scenes at the TV channel. Market analysts say the channel is currently estimated to be worth around Tk 70-80 crore.

According to documents accessed through the Joint Stock of Companies, the Managing Director of the company, and a large shareholder of Baishakhi Media Ltd. is AYM Kamal, who is a well known BNP leader and a very close associate of Abbas.

Sources say, AYM Kamal was recently taken in for questioning by the intelligence agencies to inquire about Abbas' wealth. Kamal allegedly was also a business partner of Abbas.

The others with major shares in the company are Abbas' brother-in-law AMB Habibur Rahman, who has 1 lakh shares.

Further evidence of Abbas' involvement with Baishakhi was revealed on May 29 last year, when MNH Bulu, a former director of the tv channel filed a lawsuit against Mirza Abbas, where he alleged that Abbas and his associates AYM Kamal and Shahidullah set up Baishakhi television.

He also mentioned that Abbas was involved in running the channel.

Information ministry sources say, Abbas played a significant role in pushing through Baishakhi's licence approval within four months and ten days of application. Baishakhi's application was submitted on September 9, 2004 and approved on

January 31, 2005, the same day as Channel 1.

It was allocated its frequency by BTRC on the same day as two of the other BNP-linked channels Channel 1 and Bangla Vision.

OTHER BNP-RELATED TV CHANNELS:

Former Information Secretary Abdul Quayum gave permission to two television channels Focus TV and Diganta TV. Focus TV, which is set to come out with a news channel named CSB, is set to be broadcast from overseas.

Ministry sources say, Salauddin's political influence weighed in on the approval of Focus TV within two months. The channel applied for a licence in July, 2006 and was approved in October, 2006 in the last week of the BNP-led coalition government.

Rejoinder

FROM PAGE 1
The damage caused to crops in Tazpur area was due to water logging and stagnation of water, not by the waste with toxicity.

The GNFL said while discharging waste water, the dyeing factory in Savar strictly maintains the environmental standard set by the government.

They stated the Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) of their discharge water maintained at 30ppm at all times, where the legal limits for discharge in the river is 50ppm and for irrigation water 100ppm. "The lesser the BOD, the better is the water for the environment," the clarification said.

They also mentioned that they maintain ph levels in their treated water within an acceptable range of six to nine.

They said the effluent water discharged from their factory should not affect crops, rather the water should be in high demand for irrigation during the lean period.

In the statement the GNFL authorities also stated that their company believes in corporate and ethical environment practices. "The GNFL would relentlessly work to further improve the efficiency of its effluent plant for all of us to enjoy the clean environment," the clarification added.

Our reply
However, the report carried by The Daily Star did not mention that GNFL was not maintaining the government standard regarding effluent. It highlighted that the factory's water discharged into public lands was damaging crops of farmers, despite the fact that the factory was maintaining an environmental standard.

Essential goods

FROM PAGE 1
of products for stocking at all the three levels, it backtracked following pressure from the business-men.

The latest proposals also did not specify any punitive actions for violating the new rules.

The meeting reviewed the Special Powers Act 1974, East Bengal Food Stuffs, Price Control and Anti-hoarding Order 1953 and the Essential Commodities Control Order 1982 before defining hoarding in view of the 'present context'.

"The definition and implementation of hoarding will bring discipline in the supply and demand situation of essential commodities," Mostakim told the reporters after the meeting.

Unless the rule is violated, the government will not seize any essentials, he said adding that it is the responsibility of the businessmen to implement the new rule.

The proposal will be submitted shortly to the Finance and Commerce Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam by the commerce secretary.

BDR

FROM PAGE 1
competitive prices.

BDR Dhaka Sector Commander Colonel Mohammad Mojibul Haque accompanied the BDR director general.

He said the BDR on the first day of the operation started with limited number of commodities "but within three or four days rice and vegetables will also be available at these open markets".

The BDR chief said they took the initiatives to check the trend of price spiral and the open markets would be operated until the prices of essentials came down.

In the BDR-run markets, each kilogram (kg) of potato is selling at Tk 14, onion at Tk 21, garlic at Tk 40, ginger at Tk 22, local mushuri lentils at Tk 63 and imported ones at Tk 46.

Shakil said three more such markets would be opened in the next few days and the BDR has a target to set up 25 such markets in the capital.

"We are collecting the commodities from outside the capital to keep the prices at a tolerable level in Dhaka," the BDR chief said.

The markets will remain open everyday from 9:00am to 6:00pm except Friday, Colonel Mohammad Mojibul told BSS.

Tarique's bail

FROM PAGE 1
Wednesday as per direction of the home ministry to prevent him from indulging in corruption and other activities, sources said.

Judge Momin Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court fixed April 4 for hearing on the issue with lower court record.

The bail petition was filed with the higher court against rejection order of the lower court on March 8.

In the GD police mentioned that during the alliance rule Tarique himself, his party friends and business partners earned a huge amount of money through unbridled corruption in local and foreign tenders.

There is no legality of the source of his earnings. Besides, he amassed a huge amount of money taking commission from those who earned illegal money by appointing people to different posts in the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism.

Moreover, he siphoned off crores of taka which he earned through manipulating tenders using his, other family members' and business partners' influences in purchasing CNG-run auto-rickshaws, setting up power plants and manufacturing electric poles which caused huge loss to the government, reads the GD.

Police said Tarique needs to be confined to jail to refrain him from such activities.

JUDICIAL PROBE OF DEFACTION CASES

The judicial probe into three defa-mation cases filed by detained BNP leader Tarique Rahman against Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina, its General Secretary Abdul Jalil and Joint General Secretary Obaidul Quader was postponed yesterday.

Three metropolitan magistrates - ABM Abdul Fattah, Abdur Rouf Khan and Mizanur Rahman - fixed May 6 following three separate petitions seeking adjournment of the inquiry.

In yesterday's petitions, defence lawyers mentioned that Tarique could not appear before the court as

he was earlier arrested in connection with an extortion case and given a one-month detention order. So, they prayed for adjournment of the inquiry.

Tarique filed the cases with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court on November 19 for conducting 'malicious campaign' against him.

After hearing the petitioner, Metropolitan Magistrate AJM Abdullahel Baqui ordered judicial inquiry into all the three cases without taking the matter into direct cognisance.

In the complaint against Sheikh Hasina, Tarique mentioned that she (Hasina) told a public meeting at Paltan Maidan on November 3, "The son of 4-party alliance chief drives a Tk 2 crore car, wears suit worth one lakh taka and squanders thousands of crore taka in gambling abroad."

In the charge against Obaidul Quader, the complainant said he (Quader) at a press briefing on November 4 said, "The New York Stock Exchange has awarded Tarique Rahman with a medal. People want to know how much taka is needed to get it and what the source of this money is."

Quader also said, "People want to know what Tarique Rahman carried in 435 suitcases and bags on his trip to Saudi Arabia for performing the Umrah? Why and how the Malaysian government has confiscated the money of Tarique?"

Complainant Tarique quoted AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil as telling the newsmen on November 16, "Apu, APS of Tarique Rahman, met the inspector general of police and pressurised him for the posting of 15 BNP party men as officers-in-charge to the police stations of Gopalganj, Faridpur, Shariatpur and Madaripur districts."

The petitioner said all these widely published and telecast statements of the AL leaders are false and baseless and they aimed to undermine his political image.

Bangabandhu killer

FROM PAGE 1
US," said Brian DeMore, deputy field director of the immigration enforcement agency, reports AP.

"Authorities will begin proceedings to return him to Bangladesh," AP quoted DeMore as saying.

Law Adviser Mainul Hossain yesterday said steps have to be taken to have him back to the country as per the law.

Mohiuddin has been sought by the Bangladesh government since a trial court on November 8, 1998, handed down capital punishment to him and 14 other retired and sacked army personnel.

The verdict came 23 years after Bangabandhu was brutally murdered along with 26 others, including his wife, three sons, two daughters-in-law, brother, close relatives, political associates and security men in a pre-dawn attack on August 15, 1975.

The High Court on April 30, 2001 upheld the punishment of 12. Of them, only four-Lt Col Syed Farooq Rehman, Lt Col Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Maj Mohiuddin and Maj Bazlul Huda—are behind bars. The rest are believed to be holed up in various countries including the US, Canada, and Libya.

The four in jail filed a leave to appeal petition with the Supreme Court on July 16, 2001 that has been pending since then.

Bazlul Huda was extradited from Thailand on the day the verdict was delivered.

Bangabandhu's killers were granted amnesty and successive governments allowed AKM Mohiuddin to represent Bangladesh in a variety of diplomatic posts for two decades.

They were brought to trial after Sheikh Hasina became prime minister in 1996.

The law adviser told reporters yesterday that he did not hear the

Hindu

FROM PAGE 20
A Jogy is a Hindu ritual whereby one seeks blessings of the Hindu lord Krishna, usually for success.

The organization entitled "Astittie Bangladesh" will hold the religious program at the "Sri Sri Natun Kalibari" of the Moulibazar district town at noon today and have invited all the well-wishers of the Tigers to join them in their prayer.

Mosharraf

FROM PAGE 20
capital on March 4. He was later sent to jail on a 30-day detention under the Special Powers Act.

Meanwhile, the same bench also declared illegal the detention of Awami Swachchhasebok League General Secretary Pankaj Debnath in its judgment upon a habeas corpus petition.

The court also ordered the government to release him if he is not wanted in any other criminal case.

The joint forces arrested Pankaj on February 4. He was later sent to jail on a 30-day detention.

Barrister Moudud Ahmed appeared for Mosharraf while Advocate Jahangir Hossain Selim for Pankaj.

Finance adviser

FROM PAGE 20
grant of 7.5 million pounds (Tk 89.1 crore).

"I would like to state this firstly that the objective of the present government is to punish the corrupt and not to harass the innocent. This is a clear message to you and you should pass it on to your officials," Mirza Aziz said at the ceremony where many senior bank officials and migration experts were present.

The adviser said the chief adviser and he himself on several occasions had sent this clear message to everyone that the government's anti-crime drive is against the corrupt only. "Therefore, there should not be any sense of doubt. Please pass this message on to your clients."

He asked the bankers to improve the quality of service to their clients so that no one feels mistreated. Better service will encourage our wage earners to increasingly remit through financial institutions thus helping the sector to develop, Mirza Aziz said.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, acting country representative of DFID Bangladesh Elizabeth Carriere, Bangladesh Bank Executive Director and project director Khandakar Muzharul Haque and RPP Project Manager Dr David Whitehead also spoke.

BOU VC

FROM PAGE 20
remove Dr Bari from the university, UGC sources said.

In the meantime, Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has already started an investigation into Bari's alleged corruption, abuse of power and misconduct, ACC sources said.

A taskforce is scrutinising the allegations against Dr Bari, the sources said adding that the ACC could not take stern action against Dr Bari even after allegations against him were proven due to his close ties with the BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

Jt forces

FROM PAGE 20
inhabited by the indigenous people and where cases are pending with the court, will be recovered.

The army officials yesterday exchanged views with 88 local representatives of 44 business organisations at the conference room of Tangail deputy commissioner's (DC) office to keep the prices of essentials stable, our Tangail correspondent reports.

Among others, Lt Col Sazzad Hossain, Lt Col Salek, Tangail DC Akhtar Ali Sarkar, President of Tangail district traders' association Khandokar Ashrafuzzaman Smriti and its General Secretary Abul Kalam Mostofa Labu addressed the meeting with Brig Gen Mujahid in the chair.

The business leaders vowed to keep the prices of essentials at the markets stable.

Our Netrakona correspondent adds: Brigade Commander of 77 Infantry Division in Mymensingh Cantonment Brig Gen Anawarul Azim Bir Pratik yesterday exchanged views with some 25 newsmen of Netrakona and Mymensingh, both from print and electronics media, at Mymensingh Cantonment hall room.

Mobile courts

FROM PAGE 20
condition, date expired vinegar and a type of banned sauce/ ketchup in its kitchen.

Another mobile court led by Metropolitan Magistrate Noni Gopal Biswas fined Tk 30,000 to River Side Hospital at Kamrangirchar in the city for storing date expired medicine.

The same court fined Fatema Bakery Tk 20,000 and Ridoy Bakery Tk 50,000 in the same area for preparing poor quality bakery items. Meanwhile, a mobile court led by Metropolitan Magistrate Rokon Ud-Doula fined VIP Traders at Karwan Bazar kitchen market Tk 50,000 for selling fake Tang brand drink powder.

Earlier, the same court fined Janata Trader, a retail kerosene seller, Tk 15,000 for not having BSTI licence and fire licence, for not renewing its trade licence and for failing to maintain any sales register.

2 Rab killing

FROM PAGE 20
his body while Baset received six. Rab recovered a pistol and two bullets from the spot. The accomplices of Adnan and Baset managed to escape capture.

Both the dead were captured by Rab-4 a few days ago in Sherpur on suspicion of having links with the murder of two Rab officials at Amin Bazar on March 3. Adnan, who used to live at Kaundia in Savar, and Baset were allegedly hiding in Sherpur to avert arrest. They were accused in a number of criminal cases including murder cases at different police stations in the capital, police sources claimed.

The autopsies of the dead were conducted at Dhaka Medical College morgue yesterday.

53 Indian cops die

FROM PAGE 1
assessment," said Gill, who is credited with tackling India's Sikh rebellion in Punjab state in the early 1990s. "Obviously, the lessons we draw from this attack will have to be incorporated into any strategy we draw up for the future."

Analyst PV Ramana said the attack "once again shows the meticulous planning and fine execution skills" of the Maoist rebels.

"The strategies employed by the police were inadequate," said Ramana of the Observer Research Foundation think-tank in New Delhi.

Officials have said the Maoist insurgency threatens huge swathes of India's centre, east and south.

"Such attacks would not succeed in weakening the resolve of the government to deal with the Naxal (Maoist) problem," Home Minister Shivraj Patil said in a statement.

New Delhi will continue "all possible assistance to the Chhattisgarh government to deal with the menace," the statement said, adding additional paramilitary forces had been deployed.

Nihar Nayak, security analyst with the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, said federal and state governments needed to "strengthen the capabilities of the local police in intelligence collection."

Last year, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh described the Maoists as the single biggest threat to the nation's internal security.

On March 4, rebels shot dead high-profile federal member of parliament Sunil Mahto in neighbouring Jharkhand state in their first assassination of a national-level politician.

Some 669 people died in 2005 in violence linked to more than 9,000 armed rebels who have spread over

15 states, according to government estimates.

At least 372 people, including 154 civilians and 75 security force personnel were killed in Maoist-related violence in 2006, according to a security portal run by security advisor Gill.

Faizee

FROM PAGE 1
"tampering" with his examination results and subsequent gazette notification in this regard.

The CU Syndicate at its special meeting on March 3 decided to scrap a large number of certificates on its enquiry committee's reports.

On March 11, the CU controller of examinations published a gazette notification cancelling 50 LLB certificates, including that of Faizee, for tampering with results after the syndicate had approved the inquiry reports.

In 1989, Faizee sat for the LLB examination from Chittagong Law College affiliated to the Chittagong University.

Following the CU Syndicate decision, Justice Faizee abstained from judicial function and went on leave.

Faizee in his writ petition prayed for issuing a rule upon the CU authorities to explain why the syndicate resolution and gazette notification cancelling his LLB certificate, "should not be declared illegal".

He also sought stay order on the operation of the CU punitive actions against him until disposal of the rule.

World powers agree

FROM PAGE 20
those governments and the sixth nation involved in the negotiations, Germany.

"Our hope is now that we've overcome a particular hurdle ... and the council will have the text before it by tomorrow morning," said Britain's UN Ambassador Emyr Jones-Parry.

Iran insists its enrichment programme is peaceful and aimed solely at producing nuclear energy, but the US, European nations and the UN nuclear watchdog are concerned that Iran's goal is to produce nuclear weapons.

The modest package includes an embargo on Iranian arms exports and an asset freeze on more individuals and companies associated with Tehran's nuclear and missile programmes, council diplomats said.

The United States and the Europeans would certainly favor tougher sanctions, but knew they had to settle for less to ensure that Russia and China, which have close commercial ties with Iran, will not use their veto power to block a resolution.

Russia's UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said while there was agreement on the proposals "by and large," some of the council members still want to consult with their governments on the details.

"I assume as they double-check, they will get a positive response from the capitals, and they expect that this is going to be the case, too," he said.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Wednesday warned the West that it would deepen the rift with his country by imposing more UN sanctions.

"You are wrong if you think you can sit and draft ... something in order to isolate the Iranian nation," Ahmadinejad said in a speech to several thousand people in the Iranian city of Yazd.

"Not only are you unable to hurt Iran, but you would further isolate yourselves and make yourselves more hated," he added.

In December, the Security Council voted unanimously to impose limited sanctions against Iran for its refusal to freeze uranium enrichment. It ordered all countries to stop supplying Iran with materials and technology that could contribute to its nuclear and missile programmes and to freeze assets of 10 key Iranian companies and 12 individuals related to those programmes.

The council said it would consider further nonmilitary sanctions if Iran refused to suspend enrichment. Iran's response was to accelerate its enrichment programme.

The new resolution also would call on all UN member states to exercise

Lankans

FROM PAGE 20
Utseya, reaching 98-5 after 23 overs.

In the first over, William Porterfield edged to keeper Brendan Taylor, who parried the chance, but slip fielder Yusi Sibanda dived across to pouch low.

Jeremy Bray remained defiant, and fired two sixes en route to a battling 56.

Eoin Morgan was dropped on 11 before another edge was taken, Niall O