

Pay channels

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purchase rate from the distributors. We have to pay around Tk 280 to Tk 290 to distributors against each connection," he said.

On the other hand, as per the VAT rules, the end users pay VAT, but farcically the government directed the cable operators to collect Tk 300 including VAT from each client, he said.

"We have our network and office expenses. We have to survive on the business," he added.

Coab repeatedly asked NBR and the finance ministry to allow cable operators to submit VAT by themselves, but none has responded to the appeal, Anowar Parvez said.

"I believe allowing operators to directly submit VAT would increase the amount of government revenue."

Meanwhile, cable operator Syed Habib Ali said operators following the government rules are subject to loss, as they have to subscribe package system to purchase channels from distributors.

"As per the government rules, the cable operators should collect Tk 300 from each client in Dhaka and Chittagong for 30 pay channels, Tk 250 for 25 pay channels in Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet, Barisal, Jessor, Pabna, Kushtia, Rangpur, Bogra, Dinajpur, Rangamati and Tangail," he said.

On the other hand, charge in other district towns for 15 pay channels has been fixed at Tk 200 and in upazilas the rate is Tk 150 for 10 pay channels, he noted.

"This means we do not have our choice to subscribe less number of pay channels than the number fixed by the government from distributors. This has resulted in an increase in our cost."

Another component for dodging the taxes is the use of illegal devices smuggled from India to transmit satellite television signals instead of subscribing to the distributors.

There are at least 11 cable operators who use smuggled devices -- DTH boxes of Tata Sky and DISH TV -- to transmit television signals to households, though the government does not allow the use of such devices,

Prices of eggs

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The poultry traders also showed the same reasons behind the price hike of chicken.

The price of battery chicken rose by Tk 10-15 per kg in the retail market. Battery chickens were sold for Tk 120-135 per kg yesterday while it was sold at Tk 110-120 a kg a few days back.

However, prices of free-range chickens remained stable. Fowls depending on their size were sold between Tk 100 and 250 yesterday.

Prices of rice varieties also remained stable. The price of rice varieties was between Tk 1100 and 1400 per maund in the wholesale market while it was sold for Tk 32-40 per kg in the retail market.

Prices of pulses and edible oil also remained stable in the city markets for the last two weeks.

Pulses of different varieties were sold between Tk 80 and 90 per kg yesterday.

Palm oil was sold at Tk 100-105 a kg while soya bean oil was sold for Tk 110-112 per kg yesterday.

However, the prices of vegetables and sugar came down slightly in the kitchen markets in the last one week.

KU students clash

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the halls as of filing of this report at 4:30pm.

The trouble began at Sonadanga bus terminal at 11:30pm on Thursday as some staff of Hanif Paribahan refused to allow four students of the university to board the Chittagong-bound bus with luggage.

Campus sources said the students earlier bought tickets for Chittagong from a counter of Hanif Paribahan at the terminal.

Being refused, the students became angry and locked in an altercation with the bus staff. At one stage, some transport workers of the terminal came in aid of the bus staff and beat up the students.

When the news reached the campus, over 100 students from Khan Jahan Ali and Ansulnagar halls, carrying sticks in their hands, rushed to the bus terminal and clashed with transport workers, leaving 10 from both sides injured.

The angry students also damaged four buses and seven shops during the clash. The police charged truncheons on the clashing groups and brought the situation under control.

Around 6:30am yesterday, several hundred students of the university came out of their dormitories and put up barricades on the Khulna-Satkhira road to press home their three-point demands including arrest of three leaders of Motor Sramik Union, removal of the officer-in-charge (OC) of Sonadanga Police Station and apology by the leaders of Hanif Paribahan.

The VC asked the probe committee to submit report with recommendations for actions to be taken.

industry insiders say.

These cable operators who transmit 19 satellite television channels of STAR, Sony and Discovery groups, using Tata Sky and DISH TV, also pay fees to businesses in India through illegal channels, they add.

Through this practice a huge amount of money is smuggled out of the country. The government is also deprived of revenue income that it would have got if the operators subscribed to us," observes a pay channel distributor.

Four satellite pay channel distributors do business in Bangladesh -- Total Sports, MGH, Nationwide and Translink -- that distribute 44 pay channels to cable operators.

The Coab president said some cable operators use DISH TV or Tata Sky, as some companies switched off channels in October last year due to payment related problem.

"That problem is now settled. But some operators may randomly use DISH TV or Tata Sky," he observed.

Whether Coab would ask its members to stop using Tata Sky or DISH TV, he said, "I would advise cable operators to discuss the matters with distributors to settle down problems, if there is any."

Admitting that the government does not have a mechanism to detect the number of subscribers of pay channels, Information Ministry Joint Secretary Abu Taher said they will soon buy a technology that determines the exact number of pay channel customers.

The government conducts drives if any complaints are made that operators are using DISH TV or Tata Sky, he added.

Oil price surges to record high above \$ 127

AFP, London

The price of oil rocketed to a record high point of 127.43 dollars per barrel yesterday, as US President George W. Bush prepared to urge Saudi Arabia to pump more crude, analysts said.

New York's main oil futures contract, light sweet crude for June delivery, beat the previous peak of 126.98 that was set on Tuesday owing to worries about tight supplies despite a downgrade to global oil demand growth for 2008.

No electoral

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war criminals," AL acting general secretary.

Syed Ashraf said they would include the pledges in the party's election manifesto.

Khandker told reporters, "We wanted them to pledge that they will try the war criminals if they win the next election. We also requested them to include the pledges in their election manifesto."

He continued, "If any political party forges an alliance with the anti-Liberation War forces, we will work against them in the election."

Major Gen (retd) KM Saifullah, Major (retd) Rafiqul Islam, Lt Gen (retd) M Harun-Ar-Rashid, Major Gen (retd) Jamil D Ahsan, among other SCF leaders, were present at the meeting.

Neglect of duty

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(DIG-Prisons) of Dhaka Maj Shamsul Haider Siddique said, "After the incident, the authorities asked all the jails to be on the alert, intensify security measures and risk the prisoners."

The authorities formed two committees to probe the incident, one headed by DIG (prisons) of Rajshahi Jail and the other by additional district magistrate of Chuadanga.

IG (Prisons) Zakir said, "I rushed to Chuadanga Jail on information of the incident and found that poor construction of the jail building paved the way for the breakout."

The proportion of cement in concrete mixture was much lower than required. It was very easy for them (convicts) to make a hole in the wall," he said.

The building was constructed by the Public Works Department (PWD). We'd request the government to launch investigation into the matter and take punitive measures against the individuals involved in the construction."

Chuadanga Jail, built on a seven-acre land at the cost of Tk 14 crore, was inaugurated last year, with a capacity of 300 prisoners. However, 1070 inmates are crammed into the building.

The IG (prisons) said, "Initially we've decided to suspend six jail staffers of different ranks for their negligence of duty. The number may increase after investigation."

In reply to a question he said the authorities believe the hole in the prison-cell wall was made at night and no outsider was involved in it.

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Nikli disaster

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the master had no training.

Meanwhile, death toll in the launch capsized rose to 46 as locals recovered another body yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Salatul Rahman Ripon of Boregaon village of Tarail upazila in the district.

The engine and the steel-made body of the sunken vessel were too old to cope with any disaster and the launch was carrying over 100 passengers, although its capacity was 50 passengers, according to the probe report.

When the launch was sinking all its window shutters were pulled down, which led to more casualties.

The probe also said, adding that the passengers were trapped under water also because of the huge goods kept on the deck.

The probe body also opined that because of the outdated nature of BIWTA rescue operation the sunken boat for driving the launch without having training. Master Humayun has been absconding since the capsizing.

Locals and relatives of missing persons, meanwhile, resented the sudden decision to call off the rescue operation.

100 killed

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Transport Authority (BIWTA) should ensure that a vessel is operated by expert and trained masters and crew. Fitness certificate, registration and route permit of a vessel should be given after proper inspection of the vessel, the report said.

The district administration gave the families of each of 33 victims Tk 4,000 from the DC's relief fund.

UNO Saiful Islam said the owner of the sunken launch, Shafi Uddin, bought an old engine boat at a BIWTA auction in 1986 and built a wooden body engine boat. In 2006, he built the steel-body launch, violating the existing rules of BIWTA.

The UNO said, "It is a wonder how the vessel got its fitness certificate and other papers from BIWTA."

He said a case was filed with Nikli Police Station yesterday against master Humayun of the sunken boat for driving the launch without having training. Master Humayun has been absconding since the capsizing.

"The fire has drastically reduced. We shall continue work tomorrow (Friday). We will also discuss (how) to improve on our level of preparedness against future occurrence," he said.

Firefighters from the Nigerian Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the fire service, construction firm Julius Berger and the NNPC fought the blaze, he said.

Lagos police spokesman Frank Mba said the rescue work continued and it was too early to provide casualty figures.

Lagos MP Adeola Olalekan, who was at the scene of the disaster, thanked firefighters for their efforts to put out the fire.

Filmmakers

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and literatures, but a lack of promotion by the government and the private sector. "I personally met producers who suggested making films based on their formula. I could not accept that," he said.

They also prepared a draft charter for reunification which stipulated that pro-Saifur leaders will cancel their founding meeting of October 29, 2007 which appointed Saifur and Hafiz as acting chairman and acting secretary general respectively.

Hafiz also expressed his frustration over the remarks Delwar had made on Thursday night.

While addressing leaders of Manikganj Bar Association and of BNP in its Nam flat in the capital on Thursday night, Delwar said there is no need for meetings with their rival faction at this point for reunification, and added that Saifur loyalists may clarify their position to the nation if they want.

He also said, "We are ready to meet, but just a few minutes before the schedule they informed us that the reunification process had been suspended for the time being."

Reunification is to be held on October 29, 2007, he said, adding that the party will be reunited only a matter of time.

He also said, "I don't know exactly what they [pro-Saifur leaders] are saying about reunification, but our position is clear, which is, all except the expelled individuals may work for the reunited party remaining in their posts."

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