

# FOREIGN TV CHANNELS HC wants to know about legality

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday asked the attorney general to inform it whether local cable television channel distributors have permission to distribute foreign television channels in Bangladesh.

The court also asked the AG to convey the court on August 26, the date of next hearing of a writ petition, about financial transaction of the foreign television channel distributors.

The HC passed the order during hearing of the writ petition that sought its directives on the government to ban three Indian TV channels—Star Jalsha, Star Plus and Zee Bangla—in Bangladesh.

During yesterday's hearing, petitioner's counsel Akkas Uddin Bhuiyan told the court that the foreign TV channels are running in the country without any permission. So, the government can ban any TV channel for the sake of the people as per the law, he said.

Cable channel distributors' lawyer Abdul Matin Khasru opposed the petition saying that his clients had legal permission for distributing the foreign TV channels in Bangladesh.

AG Mahbubey Alam told The Daily Star that he would place the required information before the HC on August 26.

Syeda Shahin Ara Laily, a Supreme Court lawyer, filed the writ petition with the HC on August 7.

In the petition, she said programmes broadcast by the Indian channels left adverse impact on social and cultural life of Bangladeshi people. Being influenced by drama serial "Bojhena Se Bojhena" aired by Star Jalsha, three Bangladeshis girls have reportedly committed suicide for not getting "Pakhi" dress used in the serial, she added.

## Govt trying to

FROM PAGE 3

anyone [BNP leaders and activists] betrays the country as well as the movement, the people will try them."

The programme was organised by Barrister Salam Talukder Smriti Sangsad on the death anniversary of the former BNP secretary general.

Fakhru also dismissed Awami League general secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam's recent comments that the two leaders talked regularly over the country's political issues. "We talked only thrice, and all these conversations took place before the January 5 polls."

Pointing to the recent activities of the government, the BNP leader said formulating new policies and laws showed the government was heading towards a one-party rule. If the country is to be saved, there is no alternative to staging a movement to oust the government, he said.

## Logical, open

FROM PAGE 5

The championship is the 22nd edition of inter-school debate, 12th edition of inter-college debate and 11th edition of inter-university debate that Drishty Chittagong has been organising in Chittagong city over the past 22 years.

Wahed Malek, managing editor of the daily Azadi; Nazmul Karim, area manager of Robi Axiata Ltd, Chittagong; and Masud Bakul, president of Drishty Chittagong, also addressed the programme.

## Qulkhwani

CITY DESK

Qulkhwani of Mohammad Mosharruf Hossain, former BNP MP and an adviser to the party chief, will be held today in the capital's Gulshan Azad Mosque after Asr prayers, said a press release.

Former president of BGMEA and the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies, he died on August 18 at the city's United Hospital.

His family members have requested all to attend the qulkhwani.

## Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 26th death anniversary of freedom fighter Dr Syed Anwar Ali.

Recitation from the Holy Quran and doa mahfils have been organised at his Banani graveyard and at the houses of his children.

## 13 Ctg Jamaat

FROM PAGE 5

hartal violence and resignation of the then Awami League-led government and restoration of the caretaker government system.

During the time, Antu, the then class-IX student of Apamacharan City Corporation Girls' High School, was injured in the right eye in a cocktail blast while going to her coaching class accompanied by her mother.

On March 29, 2013, police filed the three cases against 38 Jamaat-Shibir men under the explosive act, special power act and the penal code. Of the accused, two are on the run while the other 11 are in jail.

## Illegal university

FROM PAGE 5

"I will check our documents again. I do not understand why it was closed even though we had approval," he said.

There was no directive for the university's other campus in Sagorpara area, added the magistrate.

## N'GANJ-7 MURDER

# Probe body quizzes two Rab officials

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

The probe committee dealing with the gruesome seven-murder case in Narayanganj quizzed two Rab-11 officials yesterday.

The seven-member body, headed by Shahjahan Ali Mollah, quizzed Maj Suruj Mia and Lance Nayeek Abdur Razzak at the Narayanganj Circuit House in the afternoon.

After the grilling, Shahjahan Ali Mollah, additional secretary to the Ministry of Public Administration, told journalists that they asked the Rab officials about the abductions, killings and other witnesses.

Meanwhile, the two Rab officials also gave judicial statements as witnesses before a Narayanganj court yesterday.

Seven people including the city panel mayor Nazrul Islam and lawyer Chandan Sarkar were kidnapped in two separate incidents on April 27 and found dead in the Shitalakkhya river days later.

Three Rab officials—Lt Col Tarek Syed Mahmud, Maj Arif Hossain and Lt Commander MM Rana—were fired over their alleged involvement in the incident.

They were later arrested and placed on remand.

## HC refuses to hear

FROM PAGE 3

judges' impeachment.

The bench advised the petitioner, Eunus Ali Akond, an SC lawyer, to move the petitions before another HC bench after the court's 37-day vacation ends on August 31.

Eunus told The Daily Star that he would move the petition on the broadcast policy to a regular bench after the court's reopening, and file a fresh petition after the constitutional bill regarding the judges' impeachment was passed in parliament.

He filed the petition on the broadcast policy on August 24, about three weeks after it took effect. He submitted the other petition on July 20, after media reported that a constitutional amendment giving parliament the authority to remove judges was proposed.

Meanwhile, the vacation bench of Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif and Justice Abu Taher Md Saifur Rahman said the petition on Pinak-6 should be heard by a regular bench after HC's reopening since the petition was related to public interest.

Pinak-6 sank in the Padma river near Mawa of Munshiganj on August 4, with over 200 passengers. About 46 bodies were recovered, 50 survived, and the rest went missing.

Ashish Kumar Dey, convener of Nou, Sarak and Railpath Jatiya Rakkha Committee (national committee to protect waterways, roads, and railways), and Tushar Rehman, secretary general of Citizens Rights Movement, jointly filed the petition on August 19.

They prayed for a rule upon the government to explain why it should not be directed to remove the eight officials for their failure to take measures to prevent the accident.

The eight are shipping department's director general, its engineer, ship surveyor and inspector on duty at Mawa on August 4, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) director (river safety and traffic department), BIWTA director (port department), Mawa river-port official, and traffic inspector.

## To usher in autocracy

FROM PAGE 3

towards the women, raped or tortured. Where will these victims go if media don't publicise such negligence of police?"

The professor said amid the absence of an active opposition in parliament, there were a few civil society groups and media critical of government's wrongdoings. But, without a free media, civil society cannot talk, she said.

"The loss of press freedom means suppression and repression. Its result is nothing but violence," said Dilara, also trustee of Brac University.

The observations came at a roundtable on the policy, which took effect on August 7. Sushashoner Janney Nagorik (SHUJAN) organised it at the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

SHUJAN Secretary Badiul Alam Majumder said the coverage of the January 5 one-sided vote and law enforcers' involvement in the seven murders in Narayanganj had created the pretext for passing the broadcast policy.

"The policy and the way power is being used in Bangladesh suggest that the country is heading towards authoritarianism," said Prof Abu Sayeed, former information

minister from the Awami League.

"Businessmen and politicians have gripped the state today, and media must publicise their irregularities. Sixty to seventy per cent of MPs are businessmen now," he said.

The politician believes the broadcast policy and the move to empower parliament to impeach Supreme Court judges is tied.

Columnist Syed Abul Maksud said the policy would gradually strengthen the government's grip on media.

Media and democracy will be threatened if it is enforced, said SHUJAN President M Hafizuddin Khan.

In his keynote paper, media personality Muhammad Jahangir proposed formation of a committee of media and legal experts that will rectify the broadcast policy and make recommendations for drafting a law. He also suggested formation of a media council, with Bangladesh Press Council merged into it, to bring all print and electronic media under one umbrella.

Dr Golam Rahman, a journalism professor at Dhaka University, and Nayeemul Islam Khan, editor of the Amader Orthony, also spoke.

## Harbinger of one-party

FROM PAGE 3

organised by pro-BNP Nationalist Teachers Forum of RU.

The policy imposes restrictions on some contents of television and radio broadcasts involving the armed forces and law enforcement agencies.

Ruhul Amin said the government was going to stifle media since it wanted to establish like a dictatorial rule.

Prof Pias Karim of Brac University said the policy was conflicting with Article 29 of the constitution, which gave the people freedom of speech.

Referring to the government's move to empower parliament to impeach Supreme Court judges, the speakers said it would hamper the independence of the judiciary.

The forum President Prof KBM Mahbubur Rahman also spoke among others.

## Govt to punish errant

FROM PAGE 5

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates are currently not hiring workers from Bangladesh mainly due to visa trading.

Expatriates' welfare secretary Khondaker

Showkat Hossain, director general of the Bureau of Manpower Employment Begum Shamsun Nahar, Baira President Mohammad Abul Bashar and its Secretary Monsur Ahmed Kalam, among others, spoke.

## EC cancels hearing

FROM PAGE 5

Election Commissioner Shah Nawaz said, "We are now busy with electoral roll updating. We will hold the experience sharing programmes later."

Earlier this week, The EC decided to arrange workshops on "Sharing experiences regarding the 10th parliamentary poll" at seven divisional cities of the country. Even the date for the first workshop was finalised.

## Services reach less

FROM PAGE 5

Moreover, due to financial constraints and a lack of accessibility in rural areas, the services are not equally provided to all mothers. The main reason behind this is that midwifery is not considered an "autonomous profession" in Bangladesh.

The observations came in a study report

titled "State of the World's Midwifery 2014", launched yesterday at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel in the capital.

The United Nations Population Fund, World Health Organization, and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare together prepared it.

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