

Facebook 'newspaper' spells trouble for media

Facebook's move to fulfill its ambition to be the personal "newspaper" for its billion-plus members is likely to mean more woes for the ailing news media. The huge social network has become a key source of news for many users, as part of a dramatic shift in how people get information in the digital age. Company founder Mark Zuckerberg told a forum in early November that his goal is to make Facebook's newsfeed "the perfect personalized newspaper for every person in the world."

Zuckerberg said that while a newspaper provides the same information to every reader, Facebook can tailor its feed to the interests of the individual, delivering a mix of world news, community events and updates about friends or family. "It's a different approach to newspapering," said Ken Paulson, a former editor of USA Today who is now dean of communications at Middle Tennessee State University. "It's neither good nor bad, but it's something a traditional newspaper can't do." With Facebook, editorial decisions about what members see are made not by a journalist, but an algorithm that determines which items are likely to be

of greatest interest to each person. This may concern the traditional journalism community, but even some media experts acknowledged that Facebook appears to be able to deliver more of what people want to see, in an efficient way. "It's intimate, it's relevant, it's extraordinarily timely and it's about you. That's more than any newspaper can do," said Alan Mutter, a former Chicago daily newspaper editor who is now a consultant for digital media ventures.

Latif traceless on return

FROM PAGE 1 A senior journalist of Bangladesh, who travelled in the same flight, said he saw Latif in the business class. Once the news of Latif's arrival in Dhaka was confirmed, The Daily Star contacted State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal to know whether Latif would be arrested. Interestingly, like the airport police, the home affairs boss too said he didn't have any instruction in this regard. "Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was surprised to hear about Latif's return. She also expressed her anger at this," he said over the phone at 11:00pm. "The prime minister knows nothing about why and how he [Latif] returned," Khan added. According to sources, the premier came to know about Latif's return through one of her personal staff after she returned to Gono Bhaban from the parliament.

A total of 22 cases were filed against him in 18 districts for offending the religious sentiments of the Muslims. Several arrest warrants have been issued in those cases. From the USA, Latif went to India October 12 and had been staying in Kolkata since then. HEFAJAT'S THREAT Hefajat-e-Islam demanded Latif Siddique's arrest and death penalty. Otherwise, it would go for tough programmes like Dhaka siege and nonstop hartals. The Islamist organisation, which went on the rampage in the capital in May last year, announced this in a statement by its chief Shah Ahmed Shafi and secretary general Junayed Babunagori last night. 'LATIF ON HIS OWN' Neither the ruling party nor the government would take the responsibility for what Latif did, said AL Joint General Secretary Mahbul Alam Hanif.

of Bangladesh. In 1980, president Ziaur Rahman removed Moudud Ahmed, now a BNP standing committee member, from the cabinet. WHAT LATIF ACTUALLY SAID At the September 28 programme in the USA, Latif said, "During Hajj, so much manpower is wasted. More than 20 lakh people have gone to Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj. They have no work, no production and are offering only deduction." He added some 20 lakh Tablighi Jamaat people get together annually. They do not do any work, except for halting traffic movement in the whole country. He also reportedly made critical comments about Sajeb Wazed Joy, the prime minister's son. When the AL served a show-cause notice asking Latif to explain why he wouldn't be expelled from the party permanently for acting against the party charter, Latif, in reply, defended himself saying the AL dropped the word "Muslim" from its name in 1955 to give the party a secular character. Moreover, the party ensured freedom of speech and expression through its constitution. And so, he can express his feelings about any issue. Latif, however, regretted that AL leaders got into "an embarrassing situation" for what he had said. But the ruling party found his reply unsatisfactory and expelled him.

Who are culprits?

FROM PAGE 1 Bogra, said two of the detainees claimed responsibilities for the murder on social media. "They claimed their responsibility for Shafiu's murder on a Facebook page of militant outfit Ansar Al Islam Bangladesh-2," said M Shamsuddin, commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police. The RMP commissioner, however, did not say anything about how they ascertained the arrestees' link to the militant outfit. On the contrary, Rab arrested six people from Rajshahi and Gazipur and claimed that a former RU Chhatra Dal leader masterminded the killing following a row centring his wife who is an employee at the university. "We did not find any militant connection with the killing," Rab Media Wing Director Commander Mufti Mahmud Khan told reporters yesterday at a press briefing at Rab headquarters. Mufti said at least 11 people were directly involved in the killing mission. Three of them had been arrested by police earlier while two others including the convener of Rajshahi district unit Jubo Dal were on the run. The six Rab arrestees are Abdus Samad alias Pintu, 34, the alleged mastermind; Ariful Islam alias Manik, 33; Sabuj Sheikh, 18; Sirajul Islam alias Kalu, 22; Al Mamun, 31; and Ibrahim Khalil alias "Tokai" Babu, 21.

Another Rab team in Dhaka arrested Mamun and "Tokai" Babu around 6:30am yesterday from Tongi of Gazipur district. "We have learned from the arrestees that Arif, Jinnat and Sagar were also involved in the killing mission. They've already been arrested by police following the killing," said Mufti. Rab also recovered two machetes, two knives, an axe and ten cell phones from the arrestees. Prof Shafiu, 48, known as a progressive-minded teacher at RU, was hacked to death by assailants near his house in Rajshahi's Choddopai area on November 15. Two hours after the murder, a so-called militant outfit Ansar Al Islam Bangladesh-2 reportedly claimed responsibility for the murder on its Facebook page. The plan Quoting arrestees, Mufti Mahmud Khan, Rab media wing director, said a few weeks earlier Shafiu had "harassed" the wife of Pintu who now works as a contractor. When Pintu met Shafiu to protest the incident, he was rebuked. Later, Pintu sought help from district Jubo Dal leader Anwar Hossain Uzzal to look into the matter. Uzzal met Shafiu but the teacher rebuked him as well. Angered by such behaviour, Pintu, Uzzal and Manik hatched a plan to teach him a "good lesson". Manik was assigned to arrange more men for carrying out the mission. The killing As part of the plan, 10 persons took position at seven different places in Choddopai area, said Manik, one of the arrestees, who was placed before the media at the press briefing. "Mamun and I stood on the road leading to Shafiu's home while Pintu

followed him on a motorbike from the RU campus. As 'sir' [Prof Shafiu] neared his home, Pintu confirmed us about his identity," said Manik, adding that they did not intend to kill him, they just wanted to give him a good lesson. "But Sabuj all of a sudden hacked on his head with a machete and he fell down. Later, some of us also hacked him indiscriminately. We left the scene separately in groups," said Manik, a brother of M Abbas Ali, vice president of Rajshahi city unit Jubo League. Contacted, Abbas said he was not in contact with his brother after he had come to know that he was a drug addict. Police claim The three police arrestees are Raihanul Islam, Shariful Islam and Shadhon Karmaker. They were arrested from Bogra in the early hours of yesterday, reports our Rajshahi correspondent. The RMP boss said Raihanul and Shariful were activists of Jamaat-e-Islami. Police detained Shadhon, a blacksmith, after they found his name on a machete seized from the crime scene, added the RMP boss. Police so far nabbed 37 people in connection with the killing. Eleven of them were placed on a two-day remand. Son's response Talking to The Daily Star yesterday at the Rab headquarters, Prof Shafiu's son Soumin Shahrud Javin said his father was a good man who was popular among the RU teachers and students. "It is hard to imagine that he's been killed over a row centring a woman. Whoever the killers are, I want justice," he said.

JP lawmakers walk out of Sangsad

FROM PAGE 2 engaged in different irregularities in leasing aircraft for Biman, route planning and appointing 160 cabin crew. JP MP Kazi Feroz Rashid said a parliamentary sub-committee had called the Biman boss a thief, for which the national airline was on the verge of a collapse, but the government still did not take any action against him. Speaking of Polish, who used to identify himself as the "godson" of Biman chairman and led the gold smuggling ring, Feroz said, "Polash's wife was a cabin crew but she travelled in business class in Biman aircraft.

and later walked out of the House. Another independent MP Hazi Selim demanded that the civil aviation minister give a statement in parliament explaining all the issues under the rules of procedure of parliament. Deputy Speaker Fazle Rabbi Mia, who presided over the session, said the minister could not give a statement in response to point of orders. He advised MPs to submit their complaints in parliament following the due procedure and expressed the hope that the minister would take action in line with the lawmakers' point of order to revamp Biman.

He wanted to know from Civil Aviation Minister Rashed Khan Menon, who was present in parliament at the time, whether his ministry would remove Jamal Uddin from the Biman board. "We will have no other alternative to walking out of parliament if the minister does not promise right now to remove the Biman chairman." As Menon maintained silence, JP lawmakers led by Feroz walked out of the House. Independent MP Tahjib Alam Siddique also criticised Jamal Uddin

Criminals kill AL leader in Jessore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole, Jessore Unidentified criminals shot an Awami League leader dead in Abhaynagar upazila of Jessore yesterday morning. The dead, Oliar Rahman, 53, was joint general secretary of the upazila unit AL and also a councillor of Noapara municipality. He hailed from Guakhola village. Chhayer Uddin, officer-in-charge of Abhaynagar Police Station, said around 6:00am, a group of assailants sprayed bullets on Oliar when he was returning home after performing Fazr prayers at his village mosque near his house. Critically injured Oliar died on the way to Khulna Medical College Hospital. The body was sent to the hospital morgue for an autopsy, he said. The motive behind the killing could not be known immediately.

Modi: The man of the millennium?

CNN ONLINE Let's hear it for "the man of the moment, the man of the millennium." That man is Narendra Modi, and those are the words with which an Australian public servant introduced India's Prime Minister in Brisbane on Sunday. "Modi, Modi, Modi," chanted the crowd. The adulation didn't end there. The next day, Modi was in Sydney, delivering a speech to an audience of 16,000 at the Allphones Arena. "You're a rock star!" shrieked an excited fan as the event beamed across millions of television screens in India and around the world. And so it was that #Rockstar and #ModiInAustralia began trending on Twitter. Tuesday: new city, new audience. Modi pitched up at the Australian Parliament in Canberra. He spoke in English this time, highlighting the linguistic and cultural commonalities between India and Australia -- almost as if to suggest India was a better trading partner than China. "Australia has immense opportunities to participate in India's progress. ... India will be the answer to your search for new economic opportunities," Modi declared. Is India really the one-stop answer? And is Modi really the man of the millennium? The hype seems to be reaching dangerous levels. There's no denying that Modi has generated immense excitement in India and abroad. Rightfully so. Here, finally, is an Indian leader who says the things Indians have been yearning to hear. He talks about faster growth, creating jobs, about a smartphone in every hand, a toilet in every home, clean streets, leaner and more transparent government. And boy, can he talk. In Hindi, in Gujarati, in English, Modi seems to know exactly what his audience wants to hear. In that sense he is indeed a rock star, riffing on his key anthems at every big speech. But can he deliver the runaway platinum sales Indians now seem to expect? We're beginning to see the first signs of questions being asked.

Accountability

FROM PAGE 2 allegations were found to be true, but nothing could be done as the ministry had only one representative -- a secretary -- in the Biman board. The secretary couldn't make any difference, as the board made all decisions by majority, he added.

Day labourer's

FROM PAGE 16 Nayapara village in Teknaf upazila by a CNG-run auto-rickshaw. The class VII student of Gayalmara Dakhil Madrasa is being confined to a "camp" set up by human traffickers in the village, she alleged. The victim's mother also said the two "kidnappers", who are siblings, have long been involved in trafficking people into Malaysia by the sea. Sumon Chakrabarti, sub-inspector of Ukha Police Station, said they were looking into the matter. The SI also said the victim's family through some elderly villagers had been "trying to reach an understanding" with the criminals since the day of the abduction. The family came to police after failing to get any trace of the missing boy, Sumon added. Two more madrasa students, kidnapped in Teknaf on last Friday, were rescued the next day as they were about to be trafficked into Malaysia by the Bay of Bengal. Trafficking by the sea to Thailand and Malaysia has been brought under the spotlight by the international media. People trafficked through the route end up working for Thai fish industry or in Malaysia for a little pay or nothing at all, The Guardian revealed recently.

US northeast braces for floods after record snow

AFP, New York Weather forecasters and emergency officials warned Sunday that melting snow would lead to heavy flooding in parts of the US northeast, with hundreds of thousands of people told to brace for fast-rising waters. A flood watch was in effect until Wednesday in several counties in and around Buffalo in New York state after record-breaking snowfall killed at least 14 people, as Mother Nature struck its first blow of winter in the US, dumping more than six feet (two meters) of snow on Wednesday-Thursday. Below-freezing temperatures had started to give way to warmer weather, a relief for some while posing a new threat for others, including the potential for roof collapses. "While the snow has stopped, and we have made great progress on snow removal efforts, we are not out of the woods yet as the potential for flooding is great," said Erie County executive Mark Poloncarz.

"We are keeping an eye on area creeks, streams and low lying areas for flooding." The New York state national guard was out in force to help residents dig out of their homes in hard-hit Erie and several other counties, while forecasters predicted the potential flooding from melting snow could be exacerbated by showers on Sunday and Monday. "Large amounts of snow melt will produce considerable quantities of water, which may build quickly before receding," Poloncarz said. Authorities urged people to clear storm drains in front of their homes, and to get any valuables out of their basements. Driving bans -- enforced by the National Guard -- and states of emergency were still in effect in several cities or towns, including Buffalo. Many of those who died lost their lives while clearing mounds of heavy snow from their cars and homes.

Signing unlikely

FROM PAGE 16 meet and the issues of integration and connectivity, energy cooperation were given priority. Shahidul said all members were agreed on expediting the implementation of decisions made in the Saarc forum. Bangladesh would focus on 10 core issues for strengthening cooperation at the 18th Saarc Summit, themed "Deeper Integration for Peace and Prosperity". Youth development, poverty alleviation, improvement of connectivity, climate change, science and technology, education, women empowerment, food security and combating terrorism are among them. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina would lead a 37-member Bangladesh delegation to the summit. At the 41st meeting of the Saarc Standing Committee yesterday, the Maldives Foreign Secretary Ali Naseer Mohamed handed over the chair of the committee to Nepal's acting foreign secretary Shanker Das Bairagi. Taking over the chair, Bairagi said, "As terrorism in all its form and manifestation has remained a formidable challenge for our region, coordinated and concerted efforts are required to tackle the situation."

He said poverty alleviation had remained a major issue on the Saarc agenda for decades and despite consistent efforts, a quarter of South Asian people still live in poverty and hunger. On the acute energy deficit in the region, Bairagi observed, "We can make tremendous progress through meaningful cooperation in this sector. So, trade has a huge potential to make the region a vibrant economic zone and strong commitment and decisive actions are required to fully and effectively implement South Asian Free Trade Area [Safat] agreement." The secretaries also reviewed the progress in the implementation of their earlier decisions. At the meeting, Saarc Secretary General Arjun Bahadur Thapa presented periodic analytical reports on progress made by Saarc and its future course of action. Indian Foreign Secretary Sujatha Singh, Pakistani Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Sri Lankan Secretary at the Ministry of External Affairs Ms Kshenuka Senewiratne and Afghanistan's Deputy Director for Regional Cooperation Seddiq Rasul are attending the meeting.

Form safe food authority

FROM PAGE 16 and decisions of the safe food authority and make necessary recommendations. As per the law, a government official having experience in food analysis should be appointed as chairman of the safe food authority, and the food minister should head the advisory council, Kabir said. Deputy Attorney General Al Amin Sarker said the government yesterday submitted a report to the HC, saying that it had already taken steps to form the relevant authority and advisory council to enforce the Safe Food Act 2013. Accepting the report, the HC granted an appeal for three months to implement the law through formation of the authority and advisory council, he added.

Legal Action Bangladesh Foundation, a rights organisation, filed the writ petition on May 21 seeking directives on the government to take necessary steps to ensure safe food for the citizens of the country. The petitioner said parliament passed a bill on the act last year to stop widespread food adulteration by setting up courts to dispose of cases linked with food-related crimes. The government has not yet issued a gazette notification in this regard and so the act is yet to come into effect, the petition says. The law has a provision for five years' jail and a fine of Tk 10 lakh as maximum punishment for committing food-related offences.

Non-implementation

FROM PAGE 3 "Tracts", was organised by International Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission (CHTC) and Bangladesh Indigenous Women's Network (BIWN) in the capital's Chhayanaut Sangskriti Bhaban. The full implementation is crucial in ensuring security of indigenous women and ending impunity currently enjoyed by perpetrators of violence, the speakers noted. Chanchana Chakma, general secretary of BIWN, presented excerpts from a CHTC report which showed how from 1976 onwards militarisation and the state's transmigration programmes to settle Bangalees in the three southeast hill districts created tension and led to the two-decade-long armed struggle of indigenous people against the state. The treaty ended the armed struggle but hill women continued to be targeted in clashes between Bangalees and the indigenous community, the report mentioned. The report presented case studies of violence from 2011-2012, showing how the culture of impunity prevailed in the regions starting with the unsolved case of indigenous leader Kalpana Chakma's enforced disappearance in 1996. KS Mong, member, Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council, stated how women were often abducted, forced to convert and marry Bangalee men to intimidate the indigenous community, who were forced to move away to remote areas for security. Noting that land was the major issue of conflict in CHT, Mong stressed the need for an effective land commission. "If the situation continues to be such, we would either announce and leave the country and take refuge in India or Myanmar or began preparing

ourselves for resistance again," he said. Besides the treaty's implementation, the CHTC report also recommended establishment of a national commission of inquiry and committee to monitor violence against women in the CHT to end the culture of impunity. Employing mixed police force with more women police and sensitising them also came up from open discussions. CHTC Co-Chairperson Sultana Kamal, members Khushi Kabir and Sara Hossain, Adviser Meghna Guhathakurta and Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Ayesha Khanom also spoke. On Saturday rights activists under the banner Nagorik Shomaj formed a human chain before Bangladesh National Museum demanding immediate election to the three CHT district councils. "Undemocratic forces are becoming permanently rooted in the hill tracts as no election of the councils had taken place in 22 years," said Oikya NAP President Pankaj Bhattacharya, adding that CHT people have reasons to feel utterly betrayed. The activists also criticised the government for mulling over increasing the number of zila parishad members from five to 11. "Increasing the size instead of holding an election clearly means that the government is doing this to politicise the CHT zila parishad with its chosen people," said Prof Mesbah Kamal of history at Dhaka University. Khushi Kabir, also coordinator of Nijera Kori; Sanjeeb Drong, secretary of the Bangladesh Forum for Indigenous People; Chanchana Chakma, also president of Hill Women's Federation; and Associate Prof Robaet Feroz of Dhaka University also spoke.