

11 more TV channels ready to go on air

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At least 11 more TV channels are ready to go on air after they get frequencies from the telecom regulator.

A Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission official said the 11 channels received licences in 2013 and 2014.

Frequencies would be allocated after intelligence agencies clear the channels for going on air, said Sarwar Alam, secretary and spokesperson of the regulator.

According to the annual report of the information ministry, it issued 16 new private satellite channel licences in the fiscal year of 2013-14 alone. Some of the 16 are yet to apply for spectrum, said its official.

The new channels are: Bangla TV, Channel 21, Utshav TV, Renaissance TV, Dhaka Bangla TV, News 24, Amar Gan TV, Cambrian TV, New Vision TV, Rangdhonu TV, Green TV, ATV, Jadu TV, Titash TV, and East-West Media, according to the website of the information ministry.

Currently, 25 channels are airing and the broadcast of Channel 16, Diganta TV, Islamic TV, CSB news and Channel 1 has been suspended, said a BTRC official.

Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul, a veteran journalist and editor-in-chief of Baishakhi TV, said competition is fierce among TV stations in Bangladesh. If the new channels could introduce innovative content, use the latest technology effectively and diversify their presentation, they would survive.

Khaleda unhappy

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to protest her confinement to the Gulshan office and the government's refusal to allow the opposition to hold a rally in the capital.

Meanwhile, Detective Branch of Police last night picked up BNP Vice-Chairman Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury from his Banani DOHS home. They searched his home before picking him up, Shairul Kabir Khan, an official of the BNP chairperson's press wing told The Daily Star. It could not be known where Mobin was taken.

"At her recent meetings with standing committee members, vice chairmen, advisers and joint secretaries of the party, madam [Khaleda] sought their word that they would take to the streets once she announces fresh agitations from January," said a BNP leader close to Khaleda.

But except for a few, they didn't take any initiatives to stage a show-down at Nayapalton after Khaleda was kept confined to her Gulshan office from January 3, said another BNP leader wishing anonymity. Police yesterday unlocked the main gate of Khaleda's Gulshan office only to lock it again late at night. A number of police officers claimed that they had never locked the gate.

The BNP chief is now observing the situation, hoping that the party's senior leaders would pull them together and launch strong agitations against the government, the BNP leader said.

The party now has 16 vice chairmen, 31 advisers and eight joint secretaries general. And its standing committee comprises 18 members. "The BNP chief now wants to capitalise on common people's anti-government sentiment over different issues and their sympathy for the opposition following the government's hard line against the opposition," said a senior BNP leader.

The BNP is now pushing Jamaat, a key component of the 20-party alliance, to throw its weight behind the ongoing agitations.

Sources said the BNP is likely to seek permission from Dhaka Metropolitan Police once again to hold a rally in the capital next week. "If the party gets permission, it may relax the ongoing blockade for several hours. In that case, Khaleda might take part in Akheri Munajat at Tongi on Sunday," said a BNP leader.

Khaleda, who was confined to her Gulshan office for the sixth consecutive day yesterday, urged people to continue the non-stop blockade without any pause.

She accused the government of spreading false news that the BNP-led combine would postpone its blockade programme.

Cultural personalities Gazi Mazharul Anwar, Amzad Hossain and Shafin Ahmed, and journalist Shawkat Mahmud, among others, called on Khaleda yesterday.

Emerging from Khaleda's office, Mazharul told reporters that the BNP chief called upon people to support her in the ongoing movement for restoring democracy.

Police, however, didn't allow Bikolpodhara Bangladesh Chief and ex-president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury to meet Khaleda last night.

Groaning in pain

Condition of Feni schoolboy Anik, hurt by crude bomb, still critical

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Days of Minhazul Islam Anik had been filled with frenzied preparation for the upcoming SSC exams until a crude bomb exploded on his way home injuring him severely on Monday.

"Everything has been ruined.... He is now writhing in pain," said his mother Jasmine Rahman at Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Wednesday.

Anik and his classmate Ridoy were returning home by a rickshaw from their private tutor's house around 4:30pm on the fateful day. As they reached Khejur Chatter in Feni town, a crude bomb darted towards them amid violent protests by BNP activists at the confinement of party chief Khaleda Zia in her Gulshan office in the capital.

Anik suffered injuries to his right eye and face in the explosion. He was first admitted to Feni Sadar Hospital and shifted to DMCH on Monday night as his condition deteriorated.

The 15-year old of Feni



A burnt, bloody, dazed Anik right after a crude bomb went off in front of him in Feni on Monday.

PHOTO: STAR FILE

Government Pilot High School has been a committed student, Jasmine said. He achieved the highest grade in Junior School Certificate exams and was confident that he would excel in Secondary School Certificate exams scheduled to begin on February 2.

But his efforts might go down the drain as Brig Gen Mostafizur Rahman, director of DMCH, said, "His condition is still critical... but we will do whatever is needed for his treatment."

Jasmine, whose husband has been staying in Oman since 2005, dreamt of a better future for her two children and that set the goal of Anik who wants to study in chemical engineering. She along with the children moved to Feni from her in-laws' house in Chowddagram, Comilla 10 years ago for the children's better education.

Now all the mother wishes for is that his son recovers soon.

"Please pray for him," she said, adding no mother should see her child in such a situation.

Woman shot dead in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Unidentified criminals shot dead a woman inside the home of a union-level Awami League leader at Satkania upazila early yesterday.

The dead, Anwara Begum, 38, wife of Mohammad Khokon of Brahmanbaria, was the mother-in-law of the leader's son.

Hafez Ahammed, senior vice president of Eochia union AL, alleged that the criminals had come to kill him, but mistakenly opened fire on the woman from outside the room around 2:30am as the lights were switched off.

"Anwara was sleeping in the room where I used to sleep before. The criminals shot her breaking the room's window," he said.

The 38-year-old woman sustained severe bullet injuries in the head. Doctors declared her dead on her arrival at the Satkania Upazila Health Complex around 3:30am.

The AL leader said Anwara had come to his house in Chonkhola village nearly two and a half months ago from Brahmanbaria to see her newly born grandson.

After the incident, locals detained three "outsiders" for their suspicious movement in the area and handed them over to police.

Hafez alleged that another local AL leader, Nazrul Islam Manik, carried out the attack following a dispute between them over establishing supremacy in the area.

Manik has denied the allegation. Khaled Hossain, officer-in-charge of Satkania Police Station, said they were investigating the matter and added that a murder case would be filed.

2 HC judges

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Police Station. One bomb exploded inside the compound of Justice Gobinda Chandra Tagore's residence, which is next to Justice Rahman's residence, while another exploded on a wall inside that compound where two policemen were stationed, he added.

"The cops fired two shotgun pellets but could not detain them as they fled immediately after charging the bombs," the OC said.

Both the justices were not at home during the attack. None was reported injured in the incident, said Bashirul Haque, operation officer of Dhanmondi Police Station.

Meanwhile, unidentified miscreants carried out the arson attack on the village home of Justice Quazi Reza-Ul Hoque, the other judge of the HC division bench.

None was hurt in the fire, reports our Feni correspondent.

The house is located at Mohammadpur village in Dhulia union of Feni Sadar upazila.

Police detained Nizamuddin Patowary, general secretary of Dhulia union unit Jubo Dal, in this connection.

Criminals set ablaze the wall of the tin-shed house of Justice Hoque after pouring kerosene, said police and locals. The fire partially gutted the kitchen at the front of the L-shaped house.

Mehedi Mahmud, cousin of Justice Hoque, said the judge last visited his home on March 26 last year to attend a family programme.

"He [Justice Hoque] usually stays one or two days when he comes here. The house remains locked for the rest of the year," he added.

Saiful Haque, additional superintendent of police in Feni, said appropriate actions will be taken against the perpetrators after investigation.

Meanwhile, Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday strongly condemned the bomb and arson attack on the residence and village home of the High Court judges.

He said, "It [the attack] only shows the terrorist nature of the BNP and Tarique Rahman. Such terrorist acts will not, in any way, shake the confidence or the courage of our independent judiciary."

On Wednesday, Justice Quazi Reza-Ul Hoque and Justice Abu Taher Md Saifur Rahman ordered the government to stop publicising Tarique Rahman's statements in the media following a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Nashreen Siddiqua Lina.

Houses of Supreme Court and High Court judges also came under attack allegedly by the activists of Jamaat at the end of 2013.

Justice SK Sinha's Moulvibazar home, Justice ATM Fazle Kabir's Chapainawabganj home and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim's Noakhali home were attacked in December 2013.

All of the judges dealt with war crimes cases.

BJP chief

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his phone call and said she was getting better, he added.

During a siege of Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office, law enforcers on Monday morning fired pepper spray on agitating BNP activists locked inside the office. Khaleda complained of a breathing problem later in the day.

Trains target again

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Jahangir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kulara Railway Police, said pro-blockade pickets had removed the fishplates.

In Joypurhat, alleged blockaders uprooted about 36-foot of rail lines in Kuri Bridge area, causing a four-hour suspension of train services between Rajshahi and Khulna, and Rajshahi and Dhaka.

Authorities noticed the matter around 6:50am. They halted trains and repaired the lines within four hours, said Nurul Islam, stationmaster of Joypurhat station.

Abu Kalam Siddique, superintendent of Joypurhat police, claimed they had information that blockaders had carried out the act of sabotage.

BNP leaders in both the districts, however, denied involvement in the incidents.

The railway has been put on high alert to prevent subversive activities, said Railway Director General Amzad Hossain yesterday. He said a four-member enquiry committee was formed to probe the incident of Udayan Express, reports UNB.

A senior sub-assistant engineer of the railway was suspended for negligence of duty.

Amzad further said another four-member probe body was formed to investigate the incident in Joypurhat where two people were arrested.

Ahead of the January 5 general election last year, the railway was on the receiving end of a series of acts of sabotage allegedly carried out by the then opposition alliance activists.

They removed fishplates, uprooted tracks and set fire to rail lines to disrupt the services.

Railway Minister Mujibul Haque in

February last year told parliament that nine people were killed and 53 were injured in the hit-and-run attacks by the BNP-Jamaat men.

He said 246 people were arrested in 62 cases filed in connection with attacks on the railway, and the railway incurred a loss of Tk 93.48 crore in 2013.

Besides the attack on rail communications, the third day of the indefinite blockade yesterday witnessed sporadic violence in several districts.

The disruption to road communications continued. Launch services were, however, normal.

Blockaders clashed with police, torched and vandalised vehicles and exploded crude bombs. Dozens of BNP-Jamaat men were arrested. At least 17 vehicles were torched across the country, nine in Dhaka alone.

In Chapainawabganj, at least three people, including a policeman, were injured when blockaders hurled homemade bombs in two separate incidents.

Irtiza Hasan, Shibganj upazila nirbahi officer, said a convoy of 81 trucks loaded with imported goods left for their destinations from Sonamasjid Land Port, guarded by police, Rab and Border Guard Bangladesh personnel.

When the convoy reached Shibhala, blockaders torched a stone-laden truck with a petrol bomb. The driver and helper of the truck were injured.

They also vandalised three more lorries.

Blockade supporters also burnt a truck at a filling station in Mohodipur of Shibganj around 9:00am. When police rushed there, they hurled crude bombs injuring a constable.

Activists of pro-Jamaat student body Islami Chhatra Shibir vandalised over 50 battery-run rickshaws at different

places in the district.

In Dhaka, a bus was set on fire in Banasree residential area around 12:30pm. The blockaders pretending to be passengers managed to flee after pouring petrol inside the bus and setting it alight, said Mustafiz Bhuiyan, officer-in-charge of Khilgaon Police Station.

Criminals torched a bus around 4:30pm at Nilkhet while another bus was burnt in Jagannath University area around 5:15pm, fire service officials said.

A government tow truck was set ablaze in Titipara and a CNG-run three-wheeler was burnt in Matsya Bhaban area in the evening.

In Chittagong, criminals set a parked bus on fire in Garibullah Shah Shrine area around 8:45pm, said Sukanta Chakraborty, inspector (investigation) of Khulshi Police station.

In Bahaddarhat area of the city, rickshaw-puller Sumon, 22, of Bholu was injured when a homemade bomb exploded near him around 8:00pm. Two bombs had exploded there and the police recovered one unexploded.

There were reports of arrests, vandalism, bomb explosions and arson attacks from Narayanganj, Narsingdi, Gaibandha, Chandpur, Bogra, Panchagarh, Satkhira and Pirojpur.

In Noakhali, Begumganj police yesterday filed a case against 3,700 BNP and Jamaat men in connection with assaulting police and the death of two Jubo Dal activists at Chaumohoni on Wednesday.

BUSES WILL RUN

The leaders of transport owners and workers associations yesterday agreed to put buses back on service across the country after the government assured

them of security and compensation for casualties and damage to vehicles due to attacks by blockaders.

"To ensure security, we will deploy BGB, Rab, Police and Ansar men along roads, rail lines and key waterway locations from tonight [last night]," said State Minister for Home Affairs Asaduzzaman Khan.

In addition, law enforcers would escort buses and goods carrying vehicles on the highways.

The decision was made at a meeting held at the home ministry. The meeting was attended by Asaduzzaman Khan, Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan, State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Mashur Rahman Ranga, the chiefs of BGB, Rab, and police, and the leaders of transport owners and workers associations.

Secretary General Enayet Ullah of Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity told The Daily Star after the meeting, "We handed over a list of attack-prone places on the highways and requested the government to beef up security there."

Asked about the compensation for victims and damaged vehicles, State Minister Asaduzzaman said leaders of transport owners and workers would determine the extent of the damages while the government would provide the money based on their report.

Enayet, however, said they would not consider passenger casualties as casualties.

Confined to her Gulshan office since Saturday night, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia on Monday called the indefinite blockade after she was barred from attending a rally to observe "Democracy Killing Day" on the first anniversary of January 5 polls that her party had boycotted.

Tarique, ETV chairman sued for sedition

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filing of the case.

According to the case statement, Tarique, Salam and other "conspirators" tried to create anarchy through the speech broadcast live on Ekushey Television on January 5.

Tarique, also the elder son of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, has been in London since 2008.

The case statement said Tarique, in his 50-minute speech at a programme organised by the BNP UK chapter in London, said the chief justice cannot do justice to anyone "after offering

prayers to the grave of a political leader and delivering political speeches."

The plaintiff in the case said the remark on the judiciary was derogatory.

The statement added that Tarique in his speech brought false accusations that Awami League men killed 75 army officials in the 2009 carnage at the then BDR headquarters at Pilkhona.

He also alleged that army officers who had demanded investigation into the incident were sacked.

Meanwhile, Salam, the ETV chairman, was denied bail and sent to jail by

a Dhaka court yesterday in another case filed under the Pornography Control Act 2012.

The court also asked police to quiz him at the jail gate within the next five days.

Salam was held early Tuesday from his Karwan Bazar office and shown arrested that afternoon.

The next day, the High Court ordered the government to immediately take steps to stop publicising Tarique's statements in the print, electronic and social media as long as he was a fugitive.

Meanwhile, Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said the government was planning to bring Tarique back to the country as he was a fugitive accused in different cases.

"I have had a meeting with the British High Commissioner in Bangladesh recently. I have told him that Tarique should not be allowed to misuse the land of the United Kingdom," he told a programme in the capital.

The minister also said he hoped the British government would take necessary steps to bring back Tarique.

France mourns massacre

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pouring rain, holding aloft banners reading "Je Suis Charlie" (I am Charlie).

Television pictures showed children at a Muslim school in the northern city of Lille holding up sheets of paper with "not in my name".

The two brothers -- Cherif Kouachi, 32, and Said, 34, -- were apparently spotted at a petrol station in the northern Aisne region yesterday.

French investigators found a dozen Molotov cocktails and two jihadist flags in the getaway car used in the massacre on Wednesday, a source close to the case told AFP.

"This shows their Islamist radicalisation and that they had possibly planned other acts with the petrol bombs," the source said.

Security forces deployed in a northern town where two brothers -- still armed -- abandoned their car, a police source said.

The suspects are said to have robbed a service station in the north of France. They stole food and petrol, firing shots as

they struck at the roadside stop near Villers-Cotterets in the Aisne region, French media report.

Wednesday's massacre triggered poignant and spontaneous demonstrations of solidarity around the world and more than 100,000 poured onto the streets of France.

As fear spread in France, several other incidents rocked the jittery nation, although it was not clear whether they were linked to Wednesday's attack.

A gunman shot dead a policewoman and wounded a city employee with an automatic rifle just to the south of Paris and there was an explosion at a kebab shop in eastern France, with no casualties immediately reported.

It is unclear if the attack on the policewoman is related to the pursuit of prime suspects Cherif and Said Kouachi, reports BBC.

Two Muslim places of worship were also fired at in the wake of Wednesday's attacks, prosecutors said.

Declaring yesterday a national day of mourning -- only the fifth in the last 50

years -- President Francois Hollande called the bloodbath "an act of exceptional barbarity".

France has observed a minute's silence for the 12 people killed at the office of the satirical magazine.

But more than 24 hours after the brazen assault, the masked, black-clad gunmen -- who shouted "Allahu Akbar" ("God is greatest") while killing some of France's most outspoken journalists as well as two policemen -- were still on the loose.

Police issued arrest warrants for Cherif, a known jihadist convicted in 2008 for involvement in a network sending fighters to Iraq, and Said. Both were born in Paris.

Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said seven people had been detained in the hunt for the brothers, and a judicial source added that the men and women held were close to the suspects.

Prime Minister Manuel Valls, meanwhile, told French radio the two suspects were known to intelligence services and were "no doubt" being followed