

Police seize Somoy TV's equipment

The portable device was being brought out of BNP chief's office

Police yesterday seized a portable video transmission backpack of Somoy Television in front of the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office.

A reporter of the private TV channel was bringing out the equipment from Khaleda Zia's office.

A unit of Somoy TV comprising a cameraman was inside the office for most of the time since January 6 for live coverage in case of any development there, Ehsan Jewel, a senior reporter of the TV channel, told The Daily Star.

"Our office decided to withdraw the unit as there was little possibility of any important development," he added.

Contacted, Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Gulshan Police Station, said they were examining the device if there was any sensitive element in it.

"The members of the Special Branch of police took it away when a security person at Khaleda Zia's office passed it to me from inside around 5:30pm," said Shathila Shermin, a reporter of the channel.

"They asked me when and how the device was taken to the office, as police have no records in its registry book in this regard," she said.

Insiders at the BNP chief's Gulshan office told The Daily Star that during the last three months the television covered three to four events such as foreign delegates calling on Khaleda. The channel changed cameraperson three to four times during the time.

A unit of NTV too has been inside the office since January 6, they added.

Birthday party

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The family, in presence of Zahir, cut the cake to celebrate the birthday.

Sitangshu and Zahir were discussing business. All of a sudden, Zahir hit Sitangshu with the hammer he was carrying in a bag, Pintu Biswas, uncle of Kaberi, quoted Smruti as saying.

As Sitangshu's wife and daughters came to his rescue, Zahir pounced on the three. He set the house on fire with gunpowder, the relatives said. Police, however, said they did not find trace of any chemical or gunpowder.

Hearing screams for help, neighbours and the caretaker of the six-storey building rushed to the apartment on the first floor around 10:15pm.

Before going there, the caretaker had cut the power and gas supplies to the building and switched off the generator.

Kaberi's next-door neighbour Nazma and tenants from three other apartments on the same floor found Sitangshu and his two daughters standing outside their flat. The three were bleeding from their wounds and the apartment was partly on fire.

Kaberi was on fire when she was rescued by the neighbours. She died around 2:00am yesterday at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Over 15 percent of her body was burnt, said morgue sources.

The news of Kaberi's death was not yet communicated to her husband and daughters.

Biplob Kumar Sarkar, deputy commissioner (Tejgaon) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said Zahir is an employee of a brokerage house.

The body of the deceased was kept at the mortuary of Dhaka Medical College.

Anne Frank died earlier than thought, new study says

AFP, The Hague

Jewish teenager Anne Frank died in a Nazi concentration camp at least a month earlier than her official date of death, a new study said yesterday.

"New research... has shed fresh light on the last days of Anne Frank and her sister Margot," the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam said yesterday, until now her official death date.

"Their deaths must have occurred in February 1945," the foundation said in a statement.

The deaths of Anne Frank and her younger sister Margot in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in northern Germany were noted as between 1-31 March by the Red Cross at the time. Dutch authorities later set the official date as March 31.

Frank and her family went into hiding in 1942 from the Nazis in a secret annex at the back of a building owned by her father Otto Frank's company in Amsterdam, two years after German troops occupied the Netherlands.



The Election Commission is there. The electoral law is also in force. But a "well-wisher" of Sayeed Khokon and Annisul Huq, Awami League-backed mayor hopefuls in Dhaka south and north city corporations, has put up a huge banner on a billboard in the capital's Shahbagh in violation of electoral code of conduct. The banner greets Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for picking the two as party favourites. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

HSC exams begin today

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hartal may upset the exam schedule.

Even though the BNP-led 20-party alliance is not enforcing any shutdown today, it yesterday called a fresh 24-hour hartal from tomorrow morning, putting 10.73 lakh examinees in deep anxiety.

The alliance, which has been enforcing a countrywide blockade since January 6, extended its strikes on numerous occasions before.

It enforced shutdowns during this year's Secondary School Certificate and equivalent examinations, forcing the education ministry to reschedule all the subject tests.

The fresh hartal was announced to press home various demands including return of BNP leader Salahuddin Ahmed, said a press statement issued by Barkat Ullah Bulu, a joint secretary general of the party.

However, Dhaka and Chittagong city corporations will remain outside the purview of the shutdown due to the upcoming elections there.

The combine would hold demonstrations across the country today, added the statement.

Meanwhile, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday said the law enforcement agencies will remain alert at the exam centres and take measures to ensure students' security on the streets.

"Take the exams without any anxiety," he told the students in a statement and wished them good luck.

Nahid said it would take four to five months if they held the tests only on Fridays and Saturdays.

"...We have decided to take the exams as per the schedule. There will not be any deviation from it," he added.

Despite such assurance from the minister, the guardians are worried about the safety of the examinees on hartal days.

"Though the government seems adamant, I don't know what they will do if violence increases on hartal days," said Hafizur Rahman, father of an HSC examinee.

"You never know what will happen next. None can say when the political situation will deteriorate," he added.

The HSC examinees will take Bangla First Paper while the madrasa students will sit for Quran Mazid test at 10:00am today.

This year, a total of 5,70,993 boys and 5,02,891 girls registered for the HSC and its equivalent exams at 2,419 centres under 10 education boards.

The theoretical exams would end on June 11 with the practical exams beginning on June 13.

The education minister is expected to visit Viqarunnisa Noon School and College centre today.

Cops need no permission

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conduct that law enforcers have to take our consent to arrest anyone," he told reporters at the EC secretariat in the capital.

The commissioner made the comment when he was asked whether law enforcers need EC's permission to arrest any candidate for mayor or councillor in the forthcoming Dhaka and Chittagong city corporation polls.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Joint Commissioner Monirul Islam yesterday said the mayoral and councillor aspirants in the city corporation polls, who are accused in cases, would be arrested by police.

He was briefing reporters at the DMP media centre.

In response to a query, the DMP spokesperson said it was the routine work of police to arrest any accused in criminal cases and those facing arrest warrants.

Some of the mayor and councillor hopefuls in the city corporation elections stand accused in even 30 to 40 criminal cases, he said.

"We're compiling the case documents and hope to send the information [to the EC] by tonight [Tuesday night]," he added.

The EC has recently sent a letter to the police authorities, asking them to provide information whether the mayoral and councillor aspirants are facing any cases.

Meanwhile, some councillor candidates, who failed to file their nomination papers within the deadline which ended on Sunday, gathered at the EC yesterday so that the commission accepted their nomination papers.

Election Commissioner Shah Nawaz refused to grant their appeal.

KHALEDA
After meeting BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia in her Gulshan office last night, Prof Emajuddin Ahmed said she thinks there remains no question whether the BNP-backed candidates will boycott the upcoming city corporation polls.

He led a delegation of pro-BNP citizens' platform "Shoto Nagorik". Khaleda also thinks the EC has to

"create" a level-playing field for all in the elections, Emajuddin said.

The BNP chief also expressed her concern whether the EC would be able to play a neutral role and ensure a congenial atmosphere during the polls.

BNP APPLICATION
Advocate Khandker Mahub Hossain, also an adviser to the BNP chief, said they would start filing applications with the High Court as well as the lower courts, seeking bail for several party-backed candidates for the mayor and councillor posts.

He said those candidates were arrested on "political grounds."

"We hope the government will show a liberal attitude by granting bail to our leaders for creating a congenial atmosphere and level-playing field in the elections," he added.

Mahub, also the president of Supreme Court Bar Association, said the BNP hoped that police would not arrest opposition men afresh once they came out in public for election campaign.

Election to the Dhaka and Chittagong city corporations will be held on April 28, as per the schedule.

Pacific islands brace for possible super typhoon

AFP, Hagana

Meteorologists warned yesterday that a storm reported to have left several casualties and severe damage in Micronesia was building into a super-typhoon as it swept across the central Pacific towards the Yap group of islands.

The island of Chuuk, part of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), received a direct hit late on Sunday from Typhoon Maysak and the Yap group was next in its path.

"Chuuk was devastated," lawyer Kembo Mida said in an email to the Ayuda Foundation relief organisation which is based in Guam about 1,000 kilometres (600 miles) away.

Ants grapple

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Their "collective search" was hampered but still took place, biologists said.

The insects also showed an impressive knack for regaining their footing after taking a zero-gravity tumble.

Researchers want to learn from the ants' cooperative methods and develop search algorithms for groups of robots.

The ants were sent aloft in a supply rocket in January 2014, and results from the experiments are published in the journal Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution.

Speaking to the BBC's Science in Action, senior author Deborah Gordon said that ants have demonstrated their remarkable collective abilities in myriad environments on Earth, but the results from the microgravity conditions of the ISS were something new.

"We had no idea what the ants would do. We didn't know if they would be able to search at all," said Prof Gordon, a biologist at Stanford University.

As it turned out, although they had a little difficulty maintaining contact as they crawled, once adrift the ants showed a "remarkable ability" to get their six feet back on solid ground.

The team sent up eight colonies of 80 common pavement ants, housed in small, transparent plastic boxes. Each container had a "nest" area where the animals lived.

"The idea is to ask the ants to search a small space -- and then provide more space and see what will happen when the same number of ants have to use a larger space," Prof Gordon explained.

The ants in space still did their best to search, moving out into the expanded area as expected.

"All ants have to perform collective search and we don't know how they do it. There may be very interesting algorithms for collective search that we haven't discovered," Prof Gordon said.

Algorithms like these could help program robots to search in groups, without the need for a central control centre. And Prof Graham is asking for help to find out more about them.

64 killed in 'crossfire'

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who died in custody between January and March is 18. Ten of them were killed in police and detective firing, according to a statement of the rights watchdog last night.

Contacted, Deputy Director Maj Rumman Mahmud of the Rab's Legal and Media Wing said they were yet to see the report and would comment after going through it.

The ASK statement was prepared on the basis of reports published in the national dailies and its own findings on incidents of human

rights violation.

According to claims by families and others, plainclothes men identifying themselves as law enforcers picked up 25 people during this period. One of them was found dead later, the statement said.

During this period, 122 people died in 556 incidents of political violence. Sixty-nine of them were burnt to death. Besides, 3,051 people were injured in separate incidents of violence, it added.

The ASK report also stated as many as 112 women were raped and 15 of them were killed after rape between January 1 and March 31.

Big boost for IT sector

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Bangladesh will obtain 1300Gbps capacity in its internet service.

An international consortium comprising 17 countries has been implementing the Southeast Asia-Middle East-Western Europe 5 Cable System project as an alternative and supplementary to the existing SEA-ME-WE-4.

According to the proposal, Bangladesh signed a Construction and Maintenance Agreement (C&MA) with the member states of the consortium on March 7 last year for setting up the second submarine cable.

The joint venture company has been selected as per the rules and regulations of the consortium, the proposal said.

The total cost for implementing the project is Tk 660 crore. Of the amount, the government will provide Tk 166 crore while Tk 352 crore will come from project aid. The remaining Tk 142 crore will come from the state-owned Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Ltd (BSCCL).

The government has already signed an agreement with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) on August 27, 2014, to secure the loan for the project.

If the existing undersea cable gets snapped, it takes seven to eight days to restore the cable line which consequently affects the country's international telecommunication system, said the telecom division.

The second cable will serve as a backup for the previous undersea

cable as well. The single backbone fibre optic network will link Southeast Asia, Middle East, East Africa and Europe.

The BSCCL has been running the first submarine cable from 2008, making profit right from the beginning.

While the submarine cable has the capacity to handle 200 gigabyte per second (gbps) data, the BSCCL handles only around 50 gbps. The rest capacity remains unutilised.

But at the same time, six licensed companies use Indian landline cable for international data transfer. According to industry insiders, they use up around 70 to 80 gbps.

"They have been using the Indian service because it is cheaper and more efficient than the price and service offered by the BSCCL," said an expert of an International Gateway operator.

Experts, however, say despite the underutilisation, they have been supporting installation of a second submarine cable for a long time.

"We need redundancy in the system as a backup. The existing submarine cable is already 7 years into operation. It will need replacement within five-six years anyway. So we need this second cable," said the expert.

Besides, the data sector has a tremendous growth of 70 to 80 percent every year. Once the new submarine cable is installed, it will help the BSCCL increase its market share of international data flow business, provided it offers cost effective and improved services.

GRID FAILURE

Power cut hits Bangabhaban, other city parts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A grid failure in Haripur of Narayanganj led to shutdown of a number of power plants in the country yesterday evening, leaving many areas in the capital including the Bangabhaban without power for up to an hour.

Tejgaon, Ramna, Bangshal, Kamalapur and Motijheel in Dhaka and a good part of Narayanganj were affected by the power outage, which started at 7:00pm.

Most of the affected areas in the capital started getting electricity back around 7:30pm, said Kamrun Nahar, a spokesperson of the Dhaka Power Distribution Company Ltd.

The Bangabhaban suffered outage twice: for 39 minutes from 7:01pm and for four minutes from 9:01pm, said an official preferring anonymity.

Power supply was disrupted also in the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban and the Gono Bhaban, but for only a minute.

Top officials of the Power Development Board and DPDC were called at the PM's parliament office to explain the causes.

রহিম টেক্সটাইল মিলস্ লিঃ-এর মহাব্যবস্থাপক



জনাব ইঞ্জি. এ.এস. এম সাইফ উল্লাহ্ - এর মৃত্যুতে আমরা গভীরভাবে শোকাহত।

আমরা তাঁর রহের মাগফেরাত কামনা করছি।

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