

# Uphold press freedom, save bloggers

German envoy urges Bangladesh govt; Deutsche Welle's new window focusing on Southeast Asia launched

UNB, Dhaka

Newly appointed German Ambassador in Dhaka Dr Thomas Prinz yesterday said Bangladesh needs to uphold freedom of the press and protect bloggers as blogging has become a new form of journalism. "You know there's new form of journalism which is coming up like blogs. It's important for the government of Bangladesh to uphold the freedom of press and protect the new media scene, especially the bloggers," he said.

The German diplomat made the remark at the launching ceremony of Deutsche Welle's (DW) new presence at a hotel in the capital.

BTV Director General Abdul Mannan and Head of Distribution, Asia, DW Dorothee Ulrichs, among others, spoke on the occasion.

Dr Prinz said they had seen a number of attacks on bloggers in recent times in Bangladesh and mentioned that it is important for the government to protect these people.

He said Bangladesh has a very 'lively' media scene and hoped that the government will play the due role to have a better scenario in terms of media freedom in the coming days.

The German envoy stressed the need for "check and balance" in a democratic society and highlighted media's role. The diplomat, however, did not want to make any comment on whether this check and balance is now prevailing in the country, as he thinks he is still new in Bangladesh.

Responding to a question on RMG sector, Dr Prinz said Bangladesh has



Students under the banner of "General students of Sust" march through the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology campus in Sylhet yesterday, demanding removal of Vice Chancellor Aminul Haque Bhuiyan. Some teachers, inset, observe a three-hour token hunger strike in front of the VC's office to press home the same demand.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

# DEMAND FOR REMOVAL OF SUST VC Students now join hands with teachers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ongoing movement of the teachers demanding removal of the vice chancellor of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology in Sylhet took a new turn as a group of students yesterday expressed solidarity with them.

As the teachers observed a three-hour token hunger strike, the students staged a sit-in on the campus, seeking removal of VC Prof Aminul Haque Bhuiyan for his alleged misbehaviour with some teachers and irregularities.

Under the banner of "General students of Sust", around 300 students of different departments also marched across the campus and chanted, "We have one demand, we want VC's removal".

Holding placards and festoons, they gathered at the administrative building-2, which housed the VC's office and staged the sit-in.

They threatened to go for tougher movement on Sunday if the VC does not step down by tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the teachers under the banner of "Mahan Muktiyuddher Chetonay Udbuddho Shikkhak Parishad" started the hunger strike before the VC's office around 9:00am.

They announced to observe a daylong work stoppage on Sunday if the VC is not removed by that time.

"We have only one demand, which is the removal of the VC, and we will not leave the field until our demand is met," said Prof Syed Shamsul Alam.

Yesterday's agitation was last of the three-day programme

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# Uniform family law must to end discrimination

Mahila Parishad's CEDAW Day discussion told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday suggested enacting a uniform family law in the country instead of religion and custom-based laws, which often discriminate against women.

"If religion is used as an excuse in the case of reservations about Article 16.1(c) of CEDAW then why should it also not be used in case of other laws in the country?" questioned Shahdeen Malik, referring to provisions of the Penal Code and Contract Law which conflict with the Quran and Sunnah.

The country still has reservations on Article 2 and 16.1(c) of CEDAW which require states to pursue policy of eliminating discrimination against women, and provide both men and women the same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad organised the discussion titled "Full Ratification and Implementation of 'CEDAW' treaty for

Sustainable Development" held at the capital's Cirdap in observance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Day.

In 1984, Bangladesh with reservations in four articles became a party to the international treaty adopted in December 1979 and ratified by 20 countries in September 3, 1981.

Rakhi Saha, secretary of central committee of BMP, reading out a concept note highlighted the eighth periodic report the government submitted stating the progress in implementation of the treaty.

On the reservations of Article 16.1 (c), the periodic report, available on the women and children affairs ministry, states, "The personal laws are governed by religious provision. It will take some more time to make the society agree on a uniform family code."

At present, marriage and divorce of Muslims are governed by Shariah law,

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# Pro-AL lawyers now officially win Bar Council elections

Pro-BNP lawyers reject results, contemplate legal action for re-election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pro-Awami League lawyers' panel is back on the driving seat of the Bangladesh Bar Council after three years, according to the council's official election results announced yesterday.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam, chairman of the Bar Council, which is the licensing and regulatory body of lawyers, announced the results in the council's auditorium at 8:00am yesterday, a week after the election was held throughout the country on August 26. Meanwhile, pro-BNP lawyers' panel rejected the results and

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# GOVT PROPOSED FARE HIKE OF AUTO-RICKSHAWS Owners, drivers want larger increase

PANKAG KARMAKAR

Although a committee of the government has already proposed raising fare of CNG-run auto-rickshaws by 37 percent, owners and drivers of the three-wheelers keep pressuring the authorities concerned for more increase.

A meeting convened by the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) to fix the increased fare concluded yesterday without a decision due to the rigid stance of the owners and drivers regarding their demand.

According to the committee's proposal made on August 18, passengers will pay Tk 40 for travelling the first two kilometres, instead of the existing fare of Tk 25. Moreover, for every kilometre travelled after the first two,

passengers will pay Tk 12 and not Tk 7.64. Waiting charge per minute will be increased to Tk 2 from the current Tk 1.40.

The drivers will have to pay Tk 850, increased from Tk 600, daily to the owners as deposit money for operating the vehicle, as per the proposal sent to the road transport and bridge ministry by the committee headed by the BRTA chairman.

The initiative to increase the fare was taken following government's move to hike gas price. On September 1, CNG price was increased to Tk 35 from Tk 30 per cubic metre.

However, unhappy with the proposal, auto-rickshaw workers demanded Tk 13 for each kilometre travelled after the first two, and owners pressed for deposit money to be increased to Tk 900. "As commodity price is

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# 3 DU BCL men suspended for assaulting female student

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University authorities yesterday suspended three of its students, who are also Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists, for an indefinite period for assaulting a female student early Wednesday.

They are Ratul Hasan Naem, 20, a student of the applied mathematics department, Amirul Islam, 20, a zoology student, and Nazmus Sakib, 19, a statistics student.


Meanwhile, a two-member investigation committee was formed and

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**আজ আবুল মনসুর আহমদের ১১৭তম জন্মদিন উপলক্ষে স্মৃতি সম্মেলন**

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