

Follow print media rules

Says DFP; asks newspaper editors, publishers not to broadcast online shows

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Films and Publications (DFP) has sent a letter to newspaper editors and publishers, with directives for online editions. Issued by DFP Director General SM Golam Kibria on Tuesday, the letter said it has been noticed that some newspapers, approved as print media, have been broadcasting news or news bulletins, talk-shows and various live programmes in their online editions as visual media.

“The broadcast of such news is not consistent with the characteristics of print media and the conditions of being approved as a newspaper,” reads the letter issued yesterday, adding that as a media, it is desirable for the newspapers to follow their own essence and characteristics in providing news to the people.

“Broadcasting such news or news bulletins, talk-shows and live broadcast of various programmes in the online version of the print media is against the prevailing laws and regulations of the country.

“In such circumstances, you [editors or publishers] are requested to follow the Printing Presses and Publications [Declaration and Registration] Act, 1973, and other relevant regulations in the operation of your newspaper and broadcasting of news,” the DG said in the letter.

Bangladesh regains ownership of 1 acre land in Naogaon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

After a dispute with India that lasted four decades, Bangladesh yesterday gained ownership of one acre of land at Agradigun area of Dhamuirhat upazila of Naogaon.

The dispute was settled during a battalion commander-level flag meeting between BGB and BSF near border pillar no 257/20-R, said Lieutenant Colonel Md Hamid Uddin, commanding officer of BGB battalion 14.

The dispute began in 1977 when Indian farmers stopped Bangladeshi farmers from cultivating on the land, a BGB press release said.

The land is situated 100 yards inside Bangladesh from the border pillar mentioned above, the release said.

“We have been requesting our Indian counterparts to sit together for resolving the issue since the beginning of the dispute,” Hamid said.

Responding to a latest call from BGB, a 12-member BSF delegation sat in the flag meeting with an eight-member BGB team.



PHOTO: MONG SING HAI MARMA

Members of the indigenous communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts began their three-day long New Year festival, termed differently in their respective languages, yesterday. The festival features time-honoured cultural rituals. Story on Page 12.

POW BEHEADING VIDEO

Ukraine compares Russia to IS

Kremlin says US leaks of highly sensitive documents online may be intended to ‘deceive’ Moscow

AGENCIES

Ukraine compared Russia to Islamic State yesterday, after a video emerged online showing apparent Russian soldiers filming themselves beheading a Ukrainian prisoner of war (POW) with a knife.

Reuters could not immediately verify the authenticity or provenance of the video shared on social media, which showed a man in uniform beheading a man who wears the yellow arm band used by Ukrainian soldiers.

There was no immediate comment on the video from Moscow, which has denied in the past that its troops carry out atrocities during the full-scale invasion Russia launched last year.

“There is something that no one in the world can ignore: how easily these beasts kill,” Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in a video message. “There will be legal responsibility for everything. The defeat of terror is necessary.”

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmitro Kuleba said on Twitter: “A horrific video of Russian troops decapitating a Ukrainian prisoner of war is circulating online.

“It’s absurd that Russia, which is worse than ISIS, is presiding over the UNSC,” he said, referring to the UN Security

Council where Russia took up the rotating presidency this month. “Russian terrorists must be kicked out of Ukraine and the UN and be held accountable for their crimes.”

Militants from Islamic State (IS) in Iraq and Syria are notorious for releasing videos of beheadings of captives when they controlled swathes of those countries from 2014-2017.

Kremlin says outlook for Black Sea grain deal is ‘not so great’.

Ukraine’s domestic security agency said it had launched an investigation into a suspected war crime over the video.

Meanwhile, Russian deputy foreign minister said yesterday the leak of a trove of highly sensitive documents online could be a move by the United States to “deceive” Russia, reports AFP.

“It’s probably interesting for someone to look at these documents, if they really are documents or they could be a fake or it could be an intentional leak,” Sergei Ryabkov told Russian news agencies.

The Kremlin said the outlook for the

landmark UN-brokered Black Sea grain deal was “not so great” as promises to remove obstacles to Russian agricultural and fertiliser exports had not been fulfilled.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the current agreement was not working for Russia, despite some efforts by the United Nations to get the parts of the deal relating to Moscow’s interests implemented.

“No deal can stand on one leg: it must stand on two legs,” Peskov told reporters.

On paper, the deal allows for the export of food and fertiliser, including ammonia, from three Ukrainian Black Sea ports. But Moscow says that shipments are compromised by obstacles – such as insurance and payment hindrances – that it says must be removed.

Russia’s deputy foreign minister Ryabkov yesterday acknowledged that detained US reporter Evan Gershkovich had not been granted consular access, two weeks after his arrest.

On Tuesday, US President Joe Biden declared the imprisonment “illegal” after the State Department classified the reporter as “wrongfully detained”. Ryabkov said “for us, the status assigned in Washington does not matter.”

Secondary schools, colleges asked to celebrate Pahela Baishakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education directed secondary schools and colleges to celebrate Pahela Baishakh with due importance.

Prof Shahedul Kabir, director at DSHE, said an order was sent to the schools and colleges on Tuesday.

The DSHE ordered that the national anthem and the Rabindranath Tagore song “Esho He Boishakh” be performed on the day.

Additionally, the DSHE asked the authorities to publicise the Mongol Shobhajatra, which was declared an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2016.

It also asked schools and colleges to organise processions.

A recent legal notice sent to the government by a Supreme Court lawyer has called for an end to the Mongol Shobhajatra, a procession organised by the Fine Arts Institute of Dhaka University on Pahela Baishakh.

In response, cultural activists have said that Pahela Baishakh is not a celebration of a specific religion, but rather a long Bangali tradition.

Man killed in hit-and-run

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A man was killed and another injured by a hit-and-run driver in Bhanga upazila of Faridpur early yesterday.

Akhtar Mollah, 35, was travelling on a rickshaw-van on Dhaka-Barishal highway around 3:00am when he fell on the road and got run over and killed, said Toumur Islam, officer-in-charge of Bhanga Highway Police Station.

The rickshaw-van puller was hit by the vehicle and sustained injuries.

Police are trying to identify the vehicle, added the OC.

Woman jailed for 5 years for filing false rape case

UNB, Cox’s Bazar

A Cox’s Bazar court yesterday sentenced a woman to five years in prison for filing a false rape case.

The court also fined Runa Akhter Tk 20,000.

Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-1 Judge Md Muslem Uddin handed down the verdict.

According to the complaint, Runa filed the case claiming that she was picked up from Cox’s Bazar court premises in March 2022 and was gang-raped. After the case was proved false, the court acquitted the accused.

One of the acquitted men, Rasel Uddin, later filed a case against Runa.

The court announced the verdict after completing the judicial proceedings within a short time, officials said.

Poverty drops but inequality higher than ever

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When asked about the decrease in poverty amid a period of great economic hardship around the world, he said: “The government imposed limited lockdown and left the highways open. There were a host of stimulus packages to cushion the economy from the brunt of the shutdown. As a result, the poverty rate dropped.”

However, the pace of poverty reduction has slowed. Between 2010 to 2016, poverty declined by 1.2 percentage points. Between 2016 and 2022, it was 0.93 percentage points.

But extreme poverty reduction picked up pace: from 0.78 percentage points between 2010-2016 to 1.2 percentage points between 2016-2022.

“Extreme poverty is down to 5.6 percent, suggesting Bangladesh is well on track to reducing it more than half relative to 2015 by 2030 as targeted under the Sustainable Development Goals,” Hussain said, adding that the extent of poverty reduction has been palpably larger in rural areas.

The number of ultra-poor decreased because the government has been providing assistance through different food programmes, said Shamsul Alam, the state minister for planning.

The expansion of non-farming activities also played a role, he said.

“Given the high inflation, erosion of purchasing power and the hit to income amid the pandemic, it is surprising that extreme poverty has come down so much,” Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, told The Daily Star.

Hussain, however, said the poverty data from the 2016 survey is not comparable with the 2022 numbers as different methodologies were used.

The upper and lower poverty lines used to determine the number of poor and ultra-poor in the country were reconstituted for the 2022 survey. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics has not disclosed the new poverty lines.

“It is therefore impossible to

compare the 2022 headcount ratios and poverty gap measures with their counterparts based on previous surveys. This is a crucial caveat that analysts and policymakers must not overlook. We hope BBS will finish this very important unfinished work sooner than later,” Hussain said.

The spike in income inequality sours the good news provided by the poverty reduction data.

Of the 17 HIES conducted by the BBS, the rise in income inequality was the highest this time.

The Gini coefficient, which is the economic measure of equality, stood at 0.499 in 2022. It is measured on a scale of 0 to 1; the closer it is to 1 the higher the inequality is in society.

“The distributive justice of growth is deteriorating and we can’t arrest it. If wealth concentration was looked into, then it would look even worse,” Rahman said.

What is worse is the government is failing to arrest the rising inequality by increasing spending on social safety net due to the narrow fiscal space, he added.

When there is a growing economy, in the initial stages, the benefits of development will not spill over to all segments, said Dipankar Roy, joint secretary of the statistics and informatics division.

“There will be a concentration of income,” he said.

Bangladesh has done a tremendous job of bringing down poverty over the last two decades, supported by strong economic growth and accompanying investments, said Ximena V Del Carpio, practice manager of the World Bank’s poverty and equity practice group.

“We have to be mindful as vulnerability and falling back into poverty remains a real and present concern. The same is true about spatial disparities. Some regions are still lagging in their progress, and not only in rural-urban diversity but also between and within regions,” she said.

All of the increase in income and consumption inequalities occurred in

urban locations where the apparent poverty reduction was also lower, Hussain said.

There is a need for further work to know the reason why rural inequality is decreasing while urban inequality is on the rise, said Binayak Sen, director general of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.

“Extreme poverty in households is rare right now, so the extreme poverty rate of 5.6 percent is plausible,” he said.

Shahnaz Arefin, secretary of the statistics and informatics division, said the survey will now be conducted every three years instead of six.

Journos can’t use

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with the EC that the use of motorcycles should not be banned.

The Reporters Forum for Election and Democracy rejected the guideline, saying it was anti-journalist in nature, and demanded a new policy.

After the guideline was issued, journalists went to the room of EC Secretary Jahangir Alam, but he refused to comment on the matter.

According to the guidelines, journalists who receive cards from the EC will be able to film, take photos and gather information at polling centres by informing the presiding officers.

But cameras will not be allowed in the secret chamber where constituents cast their vote.

Taking interviews of polling officers, polling agents, and voters inside the rooms will be prohibited.

Journalists will be allowed to observe vote counting, but they will not be allowed to take photos, broadcast live, or use the live feature of social media.

Journalists will follow all legal instructions of the presiding officer and will not interfere in the work of polling officers. They will also be prohibited from touching election materials.

Amnesty sees

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is the latest in a series of attacks by the government of Bangladesh threatening press freedom in the country. Penalising a media outlet, publisher or journalist solely for being critical of the government or the policies it promotes is a restriction of the right to freedom of expression that can never be justified.”

She added, “The attacks on Prothom Alo which has the largest daily circulation come close on the heels of the closure of Daily Dinkal,

the only newspaper belonging to the main opposition party last month. The use of the draconian Digital Security Act on journalists and attacks on some of the largest news publications in the country together indicate a worrying trend towards repression and a downward spiral of the right to freedom of expression in Bangladesh.”

Citing the data published by rights body Ain O Salish Kendra, Amnesty stated that a total of 56 journalists have been tortured, harassed, sued, intimidated and obstructed from

doing their jobs in the first three months of this year.

Earlier on March 31, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk called on Bangladesh to impose an immediate moratorium on the use of DSA until it is reformed to ensure compliance with international human rights law.

The commissioner expressed concern that the DSA “is being used across Bangladesh to arrest, harass and intimidate journalists and human rights defenders, and to muzzle critical voices online”.

Trade resumes, hope rekindled

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goods of his shop were gutted. “I took some products from the wholesalers on credit.”

Faruk Hossain, owner of Humaira Garments, said, “We have started our business under the open sky. If it rains, our products will get wet.”

Zahirul Islam, general secretary of Bangabazar Shop Owners’ Association, yesterday said everyone would get the space for a shop

irrespective of the number of shops owned by an affected trader. Some 688 traders got the opportunity to run their business at the site, he added.

The number of shoppers was small at least until yesterday afternoon.

Meanwhile, the affected tailors of Bangabazar formed a human chain there yesterday, seeking financial help.

Tailor Kamal Hossain said many goods were burnt in the fire.

Earnings of hundreds of tailors have stopped just before Eid. Now they are struggling to meet the expenses of their families, he added.

He said, “The city corporation prepared a list of the affected traders to provide them financial assistance. People are helping them. But we haven’t got any help yet. We want financial assistance from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, businessmen and the country’s people.”

Live wire around mango tree

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“They attached a live wire to the tree. Is that something a human being can do?” Anny Begum asked.

“Are their fruits more important than the lives of my babies?” asked the mother in tears. “I toiled a lot to raise my babies. I want my babies back.”

The victims’ father, Marfot Mia, said, “They killed my children to protect their mangoes.”

The victims’ family members

and locals alleged that after the incident, the house owners blamed the children for going there. He fled the scene before police reached there, locals said.

Yasin Arafat, a resident of a nearby house, said the house owners had wrapped electric wires around the tree so that no one could take mangoes. They did the same thing last year.

The bodies were sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

Shafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Demra Police Station, said they brought four residents of the house to the police station for questioning.

The owners wrapped the live wire around the tree to prevent people taking the mangoes, he said, adding that one Dipu, a resident of the house, fled before police could reach the area.

“We are investigating the incident,” he said.