

Noab honours 6 newspapers serving for 25, 50 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newspapers played a key role before the Liberation War and they continue to contribute to the building of the nation, Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury said yesterday.

She made the remark at an event where the Newspaper Owners Association of Bangladesh (Noab) honoured six newspapers that have been serving the nation for 25 and 50 years.

The Sangbad, Ittefaq, Azadi, and Purbanchal are in circulation for over 50 years while Manab Zamin and Prothom Alo for over 25 years.

Addressing the event as the chief guest, Shirin said Noab is different from other associations because making profit is not the primary goal of the newspapers.

Newspapers are considered the guardians of democracy, she said.

Mohammad Ali Arafat, state minister for information and broadcasting, said, "We are open to criticisms... We have failures and we

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Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mohammad Ali Arafat and Noab President AK Azad with the editors and representatives of six dailies at a programme in the capital's Gulshan yesterday. The event was organised by Noab to honour the newspapers for serving the nation for 25 and 50 years since their establishment.

PHOTO: STAR

Govt missteps led to economic deterioration

Says Prof Muinul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A series of missteps taken by the government are to blame for the country's deteriorating economy, Muinul Islam, former professor of economics at Chittagong University, said yesterday.

Some quarters, who are now oligarchs by dint of blessings from the ruling class, have played major roles to bring on this crisis, he observed while presenting a keynote paper at a discussion programme.

Bangladesh Workers Party organised the event titled "Economic Reality of Bangladesh: Crisis and Ways of Transition" at the National Press Club in Dhaka.

Some kind of authoritarian rule is going on, and various policies were taken at the behest of some oligarchs, Muinul alleged mentioning some names.

Mentioning the name of one, he

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Benazir withdrew Tk 70-80cr before accounts were frozen

DIPAN NANDY

Former inspector general of police Benazir Ahmed and his family withdrew at least Tk 70-80 crore within a month from their 33 bank accounts before they were frozen.

A source in the Anti-Corruption Commission, involved with the investigation of Benazir's illegally accumulated wealth, confirmed the findings to The Daily Star yesterday.

The ACC launched the inquiry into Benazir's alleged illegal wealth on April 18, when a three-member committee was also formed to probe the allegations.

"We've identified the [bank] accounts linked to Benazir, his wife Jissan Mirza and their two daughters Farheen Rishta Binte Benazir and Tahseen Raisa Binte Benazir. They include savings accounts, fixed deposit accounts and special notice deposits [SND]."

"Some loan accounts were also found. Cash was withdrawn from the deposit accounts before the freezing took effect," the source said.

He further said some of Benazir's accounts were made "zero balance" but did not specify the number. "He might have anticipated that a directive to freeze his accounts may be issued," the source assumed, adding, "We're yet to learn the exact amount withdrawn from the bank accounts, but it could cross several hundred crores."

ACC Commissioner (Investigation) Md Jahurul Haque confirmed this information to The Daily Star, but he didn't specify the amount withdrawn.

"We've already frozen immovable and movable assets. But we discovered that money was withdrawn from their accounts beforehand."

He added that the investigation officers are working in accordance with legal procedures and following the High Court directives. "We've made significant progress in a

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The frequent flyer that is the agri secy!

Violating multiple PMO directives, she took 11 trips in 12 months

BAHARAM KHAN and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The frequency of the foreign trips taken by Agriculture Secretary Wahida Akhter has sparked discussions among fellow civil servants about her last visit and what could be her next destination.

In just the past year, Wahida went on 11 foreign trips, including six between May and December last year, violating a government directive on foreign visits, according to documents.

From May-December 2023, she went abroad six times, while from January-May 2024, she went five times.

On June 19, 2011, the Prime Minister's Office issued a circular titled "Permission to travel abroad and ancillary matters to be followed", which states that a secretary shall limit overseas travel for official work to a maximum of four times a year.

However, there has recently been a growing trend among civil servants of taking such trips abroad to attend conferences and workshops or to participate in knowledge-sharing programmes. Many of the trips yield little result, as most of the officials who go are not even directly linked to the topics for which the trips are organised.



Of Wahida's 11 trips, two were funded by the government and nine by the trip organisers.

All the trips combined, she spent at least 47 days abroad and was engaged in workshops, roundtables, discussions, bilateral meetings, and contract signings.

The secretary's participation in events other than contract signings and bilateral meetings was also a violation of another PMO directive that says junior or field-level officials shall get priority when it comes to events like workshops, roundtables and discussions.

Abdul Awal Majumdar, a former secretary and civil service researcher, said such frequent visits by a secretary was not only a violation of government directives but also sent a wrong message to the junior officials.

"Except for the foreign affairs and ERD [economic relations division] secretaries, I don't think anyone else has work that requires more than three to four foreign trips a year," he told The Daily Star.

Questioning the monitoring in this regard, he asked, "Why is the government giving permission

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Flooding in Sylhet city worsens

MINTU DESHWARA

More areas of Sylhet city are getting flooded.

Parts of the city were flooded Thursday night and the situation was deteriorating. The Surma was flowing above the danger level there.

Sunil Singha of Machimpur neighbourhood in Sylhet city told this paper that he woke up to 2 inches of water in front of his house yesterday morning.

Taltala, Mendibagh, Machimpur, Terorotan, Taltala, Jatarpur, Upashahar and other adjacent areas were yesterday found flooded.

Sylhet city's fire service and civil defence station at Taltala was flooded, and the firemen had to relocate their essential equipment.

Sahadat Hosain, of Taltala area, said water of the Surma was flooding the low-lying areas via the drainage network and canals.

Executive Engineer Deepak Ranjan Dash of Sylhet Water Development Board said Surma was flowing 83cm above the danger level in Kanaighat and the Kushiara was 193cm above at Amalshid, causing the flooding in Sylhet.

According to the district administration, 6,09,733 people in 59 unions of Sadar, Companiganj, Goainghat,

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Man frozen after death hoping to return to life

THE INDEPENDENT

A Sydney man has become the first in Australia to have his body cryogenically frozen after his death in the hope that he could be brought back to life in future.

Australian firm Southern Cryonics announced last month that it had successfully frozen its first client at a reported cost of \$170,000 in the hope of bringing him back to life.

The man, who died earlier last month in his 80s, is dubbed 'Patient One' by the company.

Immediately after his death, the body was transferred from the hospital's cooling room to a funeral home, packed in ice.

Then a team including clinical perfusionists and a doctor "worked tirelessly for 10 hours" following special protocols to stabilise the body.

"The patient was securely wrapped in a special sleeping bag that stays intact in liquid nitrogen. Patient 1 was then cooled to dry ice temperature and transported to our Holbrook facility," the company said.



Workers are drying soggy rice under the sun in Barishal Fariapatti after barns in the area got flooded during Cyclone Remal late last month. Farmers and people of low-income were affected the most by the storm.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Woman dies by suicide after loan sharks gangrape her

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Police yesterday arrested two people on charges of raping a woman, who later died by suicide, in Kurigram's Char Rajibpur upazila.

The arrestees are Md Jaynal Abedin, 48, of Jahir Mandolpara village, and Md Alam Hossain, 40, of Tangaliapara village, said Md Ashiqur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Rajibpur Police Station.

The victim's family told police that she and her husband, residents of Collegepara, had taken a Tk 20,000 loan from Jaynal a few months ago.

As they could not repay the loan, he and three others had allegedly been raping the woman for two months.

On May 22, the victim, who is the mother of a three-year-old child, told some of her relatives and neighbours and even recorded herself saying, "I was blackmailed, I was gang-raped."

Two days later, the couple ingested poison together, police said.

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