

## BB asks of banks

#### FROM PAGE 1

The remaining two business houses on the suspect-list are NHB Corporation and Rainbow International. NHB Corporation is based at 28/G/1 Toynbee Circular Road, Motijheel, Dhaka, and Rainbow International at Al Baraka Tower, 252 New Elephant Road, Dhaka.

Though UK customs brought allega tions against five companies, during the process of investigation the CID found enough ground to suspect involvement of some other organisations too. A 4-member team comprising

representatives of the CID, BB and National Board of Revenue (NBR) is coordinating the investigations.

Apart from smuggling and illegal money transactions, the coordination team is also trying to detect collusion between any bank official and the racketeers.

The Central Intelligence Cell of NBR has also launched a separate investigation on its own into the international drug smuggling.

Sources said by synthesising the findings of all the investigations undertaken by the BB, NBR and CID, the investigators will try to arrive at a clear picture of how the smuggling was carried out, by whom, and how and to what extent the suspect companies are involved in it.

According to sources, the British government is closely monitoring the progress of probes by Bangladesh authorities

The UK customs in May 2005 accused five Bangladeshi business firms of smuggling heroin to the United Kingdom in the guise of food, toiletries, cosmetics and floor tiles.

An NBR investigation confirmed the validity of the UK customs' allegations and involvement of the following five

companies in the dirty racket. They are BD Foods Limited, Emdad Traders, Jamil International, MM Enterprise, and Green Heaven Enterprise, who sent apparently legitimate consignments containing heroin to Ocean Line Foods and Bengal Bay and Coastal Spices in the UK several times

### Dhaka concerned FROM PAGE 1

both the governments. Bangladesh raised the issue of fuel uggling but the Indian team said the issue should be resolved through discus-

sions between Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and the Border Security Force (BSF) of India The Indian team requested Bangladesh to open all the land ports for

importing yarn from India but the Bangladesh side sought time for examining the issue. The joint meeting decided that the

stoms of the two countries will hold regular field-level meetings apart from deputy commissioner-level meeting every month and a commissioner-leve meeting in every six months. Nasir Uddin, commissioner (valua

tion) of customs at Benapole land port, lead the seven-member Bangladesh delegation while Suvram Niyam, joint secretary Ministry of Finance, led the Indian team. Bangladesh on the first day of the

meeting requested India to make specific provisions for submitting bankendorsed documents for customs clearance to check fraudulent activities by unscrupulous businessmen.

### FROM PAGE 1 deal and an accord on preventing

smuggling, were signed between the two countries. Besides, different issues, including

Militants

demarcation of land boundary exchange of enclaves, handing over the ownership of occupied lands, security issues, peaceful coexistence on the borders, reducing trade gap, water sharing of common rivers, pushin and road-rail communications between the two countries were

discussed during her India visit. Replying to a supplementary

question of Ranga, she said the discussion with the Indian government over water sharing of 54 common rivers was very fruitful. The Indian government gave assurance that they would not construct any embankment at Tipaimukh. But they informed that they would build a dam there to gener-

ate power. Answering to a supplementary question of BNP lawmaker Shamsul Alam Pramanik, she said many terrorists took shelter in neighbouring India due to the firm anti-terrorism stance of the government.

She also said her government had sent the list of the terrorists to the Indian authorities. The Indian government assured that it would take actions against them. But the issue of bringing back the terrorists remained undecided, as no extradition treaty exists between the two countries, the prime minister said.

While replying to another supplementary of Jamaat lawmaker Abu Saved Md Sadat Hossain, the prime minister said Bangladesh government sought help of India in reducing trade gap between the two nations. Indian government assured Bangladesh of providing necessary assistance in creating market for Bangladeshi

products in its southeastern states, she

### Cellphones FROM PAGE 16

added.

Following information received by Customs Preventive Superintenden Ashoke Barua, a team of customs officials led by Additional Commissioner Lutfar Rahman seized the luggage around 9:40am.

The luggage contained 330 cellphones of Nokia brand worth around Tk 25 lakh, customs sources said. The owner of the luggage however managed to flee from ZIA.

petrol pump owners, he said the

government has resorted to a policy of

Rather than demanding any raise in

commission, the petrol pump owners

and distributors demanded fulfilment

of government promise to pay the

transportation charges and meeting

other demands aiming at bringing

demand

netrol

does not exist" as the government The goods are kept at ZIA warebanned all forms of religious expreshouse and a departmental case was sion except its own interpretation of filed in this connection. Sunni Islam and continued to finance "extreme religious intolerance and Govt to go tough

hatred" around the world. The commission criticized the Bush administration for failing to punish Saudi Arabia for violations listed in last year's report and urged it to take action this year.

China, a major US trade partner conducted "severe and pervasive violations of religious freedom and related religious rights," according to the report.

Iran's record deteriorated in the transparency in the sector. Urging making public the real past year, the report said, citing Iran's treatment of members of the Bahai supply, he said, "Against the per day faith and Jews. capacity of 27,000 litres, we are getting The performance of Pakistan, an only 11,000 to 13,000 litres. Besides, the ally in the "war on terror," improved its efforts to protect minorities but still fell short, the report said. In Egypt, "discrimination, intolerance and other human rights viola tions affect a broad spectrum of religious groups," including Coptic

# Submarine cable delayed

#### FROM PAGE 1

companies to lay high-speed cable in the cities. "The private companies now have the capacity. But the BTTB is not even thinking of the upcoming situation," noted an official.

Then again, the government is at oggerheads with the Internet Service Providers (ISPs). It says licence for VoIP will be given after creating a common platform in four areas of Bangladesh under the BTTB through which the nternet phone calls will be channelised. The four areas are Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet and Bogra. Such a common platform will not start operation before July-August even if the authorities try their best.

The ISPs want point-to-point operation and argue that such a provision will practically restrict the ISPs, while it will not restrict point-to-point connection of private companies to the information superhighway. In other words, illegal operators in the guise of private companies will continue to enjoy unhindered VoIP operation while legal and genuine ISPs will have limited access.

Built by a consortium of 16 members of different countries, the cable is already bringing cash for most of the partners from October last year when its installation was complete. For Bangladesh, however, the cash could not start flowing due to lack of Cox's Bazar-Chittagong optical fibre line. The BTTB messed up the tender for this line once, causing the delay.

"We are already using the submarine cable for BTTB's international calls from December," said a BTTB official. "But we have not started using Cox's Bazar-Chittagong optical fibre line, therefore the benefit is limited to only smooth connections." The BTTB did not however reduce its call charge, which was expected as a benefit of using this cable

A high official of the BTTB said that not all consortium members are reaping the benefits of the cable. "We know Egypt and Pakistan have not started using the cable," he said. He pointed out that while there

were huge business opportunities The BTTB generally takes a couple of awaiting the BTTB, it is not yet clear

#### how fast the state-owned telecom company will get the return from its \$35 million investment on the submarine cable alone.

"We have given 50,000 Minimum Investment Unit (MIU) kilometres to the consortium for sale to the interna tional telecom market. Plus we estimate that we will need maximum 20 percent of the capacity of the cable. We can lease out or sell the rest ourselves,' he added. The BTTB has been allocated

7,49,925 MIU kilometres on the submarine cable system. The MIU km is calculated on the basis of cost and return from investment per kilometre of the cable. The MIU km is being sold at \$50 to 60 each at the international telecommarket.

The BTTB recently lost the rare opportunity of nearly doubling the MIU allocation for a nominal \$4 million investment to upgrade the submarine cable. Industry operators term this a foolish act. The industry operators are more

concerned at the BTTB's snail pace in developing any business plan to transform this very first terrestrial highspeed international telecom facility into a national economic growth engine.

"Two issues make BTTB's undersea connectivity vulnerable to disruption. SEA-ME-WE4 is the only submarine cable the country has acquired. If it gets snapped due to careless anchoring or fishing in Cox's Bazar coast, the entire country becomes isolated until the cable gets repaired, which takes a couple of weeks or so. Neither the BTTB nor the government has taken any measure to prohibit anchoring or

fishing along the cable's route in the Bay of Bengal," said an industry operator The BTTB's Cox's Bazar to Dhaka via Chittagong optical fibre transmission link is more susceptible to prolonged and frequent shutdown due to the damages being caused by periodic repair of the highway. Such occurrences will also repeatedly snap the country's access to submarine cable.

Case against Babar

#### FROM PAGE 16

dismissed the case saying that the victim was murdered at Savar but the case was filed showing the place of occurrence (PO) as Kotwali in Dhaka. Iman Ali, 40, was killed during a

Anwarul Iqbal, Additional IG (Special

days to repair such damage. Inspector (SI) Mortuza, 16 unidentified members of Rab-4, six unidenti-

fied constables and 16 other people. In his complaint, Nazrul said Babar's cousin Mirza Hafizur Rahman forcefully took possession of 11 acres of land at Miton village of Savar on February 16, but thousands of local people led by Dhaka district unit Jubo League leader Iman Ali managed to recover the land from the grabbers.

On March 8, Rab personnel arrested Iman Ali at a Dhaka court when he appeared before it in a criminal case filed against him. The next day, the complainant came to know that his brother was killed in "crossfire" and his body was lying at

Such erratic shutdown of the BTTB's access to SEA-ME-WE4 submarine cable will be the major obstacle for the call centre business. Business process outsource (BPO) will be equally discouraged by the unreliable state of the BTTB's lifeline to SEA-ME-WE4 submarine cable network.

The BTTB is the only government body, instead of a corporate entity, in the 16-country SEA-ME-WE4 consortium. It has significantly weakened the position of Bangladesh within the consortium as well as in the regional and international bandwidth market.

The government has been sitting or the BTTB's submarine cable bandwidth prices for more than a month. Therefore, the state-owned telecom monopoly has been unable to initiate any bandwidth sales without the government's approval.

Sources fear this bottleneck has been hindering the SEA-ME-WE4 submarine cable offers (a) international private leased circuit (IPLC) and (b) Internet connectivity to Bangladesh. The BTTB used to provide few IPLC until the private VSAT providers emerged in 2000. It also has no wholesale client for internet access as the private sector has been solely serving this market. Therefore, the BTTB lacks institutional readiness to sell and market its services using the SEA-ME-WE4 submarine cable network. As a result, the country's ICT sector will not be able to reap the submarine cable's benefit. The government will also be unable to attract the existing VSAT users toward SEA-ME-WE4.

The BTTB, unlike the other members SEA-ME-WE4 consortium, is unable to establish its permanent pool of experts to run the submarine cable business. Because its human resource is composed of government officers and employees, they get transferred from one department to another on a regular basis. It has been hindering establishment of in-house expertise in various disciplines of telecom operations and now the submarine cable will be the latest victim of such bureaucratic musical chair.

The BTTB is unable to independently determine the tariff of any of its services. It has to seek the finance ministry's approval, through the telecoms ministry, followed by getting final nod from the BTRC. This process takes months to get completed. On the contrary, the prices of IPLC and internet bandwidth vary time-to-time. Therefore, BTTB will not be able to respond with revised pricing in the highly dynamic international telecom connectivity market.

Price of any connectivity depends on the availability of the link. The VSAT providers offer more than 98 percent availability of their links, BTTB, on the contrary, does not even recognise such a fundamental parameter of service provisioning.

"Considering these odds, splitting the submarine cable business, like Teletalk, is the best option for the government. But unlike Teletalk, the submarine cable's management should be contracted to a competent operator," said a telecom expert.

## Draft voter list shows

Chandpur, 13.04 in Jessore, 12.74 in Moulvibazar, 20.98 in Barisal, 17.20 in

Ihalakathi, 11.67 in Piroipur, 19.95 in

Barguna, 15.33 in Bhola, 16.49 in

The draft voter list was not posted

and collecting relevant data and

documents all day long, reported our

April 27 to finalise the draft list within

May 3 and then make it public. But

how can it be possible to do such a

an EC official told The Daily Star

EC sources said they will start

sending the draft lists to the offices of

different ward commissioners,

upazilas, pourasavas and other

reported that leaders of the 14-party

opposition alliance have rejected the

fresh voter list terming the new voters

Our Jessore correspondent

selected places from today.

huge task in just three or four days?'

"The EC Secretariat ordered us on

correspondent in the district.

vesterday evening.

FROM PAGE 1

lists to the EC and it is up to them where to post those lists," the officer said on condition of anonymity. The Chittagong election office also

Patuakhali and 20 per cent in said they will not display the draft Kishoreganj. voter lists and will rather preserve them at its office so that anyone can at public places in Chittagong and the check if needed. EC office here was found busy sorting out the total number of fresh voters

Meanwhile, sources said the officials concerned hurriedly completed the lists without often maintaining appropriate procedures: filling in all information on the forms still remains incomplete, said officials at different district election offices.

Some district election officers said they have failed to complete the draft lists for want of fund and it will take more time to complete them. Some of these officials said they did not receive any money from the EC for copying the forms

### LIŜŤS ŇOT POSTED

not give any explanation.

until vesterdav noon.

preparing the draft voter list and the

number of voters in his area is 29.125.

Our correspondents reported that

EVERYWHERE Some ward commissioners of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) said they did not receive the draft lists from the local election offices and were not even informed about posting them. "I have read about it in the news-

No list was posted in Moulvibazar naper but no one has vet contacted until 5:00pm vesterday. me or given me any list." Haji Rafigul MANY REJECT THE DRAFT LIST Islam, a ward commissioner in Many opposition leaders, VIPs, Mirpur, told reporters.

eaders of minority communities, Commissioner of DCC Ward No. 1 candidates of last parliamentary Hafizul Islam told The Daily Star at election said no one contacted them 5:00pm yesterday that he did not for including their names on the list receive any list as of then. until now. No list was found posted at the

The EC officials had said the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Boys' High names will be accommodate in the School, a polling centre. The headfresh list from the existing one. mistress of the school expressed her "We have received some such gnorance about the matter.

on it "fake".

allegations and tried to resolve, ARO Aminul Huq Bhuiyan, Zakoria told reporters yesterday. responsible for that centre, also did The EC began collecting primary information of voters on January 1 and declared to complete it by Abdul Majid, ARO of Agargaon-Taltola Government Colony High January 31. It, however, extended the School centre, said he has completed date thrice amid controversy that fake

of the genuine ones. On April 28, the EC announced He, however, did not display the list that it would publish the draft voter list on May 3 while its appeal against the High Court directives on voterthe number of voters in the draft list saw an increase of over 15 per cent in listing remains pending with the Khulna and Satkhira, 21 per cent in Supreme Court.

Sunni Arabs fear the constitution

Iraq's oil reserves are concentrated

Any revised charter would have to

Parliament also discussed alleged

demanding a report from the defence

and foreign affairs ministries on the

in the north and south.

voters were being registered instead

## Dozens killed in Iraq

FROM PAGE 16 more than four months after elections will lead to the break-up of Iraq and for the first full-term post-Saddam also rob the former elite community of Hussein assembly the nation's vast oil wealth.

Prime minister-designate Nuri al-Maliki has said he expects to form the cabinet by May 10.

Deputy parliament speaker Sheikh be approved by parliament and by a Khalid al-Attiya told reporters after fresh nationwide referendum. the end of the parliamentary session that MPs had "discussed the setting Iranian military incursions in the up of a committee to look into the northern Kurdistan region, with the issue of amending the constitution." speaker Mahmud Mashhadani

Iraq's once-dominant Sunni Arabs have demanded sweeping changes, including scrapping of federalism, in the charter approved in a national referendum on October 15.

The defence ministry on Monday "We want to change the constitusaid Iranian forces entered Iraqi territory on Sunday and shelled the Front, a major parliamentary bloc. ent constituti

Kurdistan Workers' Party.

positions of a rebel group, the In a rare piece of good news in the

'shootout" between Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and his accomplices at Khagan under Savar Police Station sometime between 12:15pm of March 8 and 6:30 am of March 9.

The accused in the case are State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar, his cousins Mirza Hafizur Rahman and Mirza Nurul Islam, Home Secretary Sarfarrai Hossain, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Abdul Quavyum. Additional IG (Headquarters)

Bangladesh on US Iraq driven by religious intolerance,

The commission, an independent

However, last year the United

action to be taken against another

country as a result of its designation

by the commission as a "country of

concluded that "freedom of religion

On Saudi Arabia, the commission

ticular concern."

FROM PAGE 16 concern" because of extreme religious the report said. persecution: Burma, North Korea, Eritrea, Iran, Pakistan, China, Saudi body appointed by the White House Arabia, Sudan, Turkmenistan, and Congress, cannot mandate any Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

specific action and its past calls for Another seven states were placed steps to punish violators have been on a watch list because of serious ignored violations: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Cuba, Egypt, Indonesia and States denied the export of some defence items to Eritrea, the first

Nigeria. Created by Congress in 1998 to ensure that religious freedom became a central goal of US foreign policy, the commission raised the alarm about the situation in Iran and Afghanistan.

"The situations in Afghanistan and Iraq serve to underscore the precarious state of this fundamental freedom," commission chairman Michael Cromartie wrote to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in a letter accompanying the report.

In sending troops to Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, Bush stated that one of his goals was to overthrow tyrannical governments and restore basic human rights. In Afghanistan, the report said,

conditions for freedom of religion of

non-Muslims had become particu-

larly problematic in the past year,

compounded by flaws in the new

Afghan constitution, which does not

contain clear protections for religious

extremism even in official circles, is an increasing threat to democratic consolidation in Afghanistan," the report said.

In Iraq, the commission was deeply concerned by sectarian violence between Sunni and Shia Muslims and targeted attacks on secular Muslims, religious minorities and women

"There has been an ongoing of minority Muslim communities. stream of violence and extremism in

### Govt planning

#### FROM PAGE 16

of the High Court over the controversial list. Abul Hossain, Ismail Hossain Babu

The AL chief also urged the countrymen to keep close watch on the process of making voter lists so that the real voters can vote the 14-party opposition combine to power.

The government is plundering crores of taka in the name of making voter lists, she further alleged

Describing the AL's win in the just concluded Tongi municipal election as a red signal to the government, Hasina said, "Tongi election reflects the desire of the countrymen. People hate the coalition government as it has caused Bangladesh to be branded as a country of militancy, terrorism, women oppression and human rights violations."

The rulers are designing to rig the next polls as they have realised that people do not want them in power anymore, she added.

Terming the ruling BNP as "father of militancy" in the country, the AL chief said. "The pro-BNP terrorists are behind all militant attacks. Not only during this regime, BNP-Jamaat's terrorists were also behind the militant attacks

launched during the last AL regime." Hasina alleged that the government has turned people's lives into hell with the price hike of all daily necessities. "A well-organised syndicate led by Tarique Rahman, Harris Chowdhury and (Mosaddeg Ali) Falu is behind the price hike of essentials. They are plundering public wealth," she alleged adding that the BNP and Jamaat leaders are sharing the plundered public money.

The AL chief said a Jamaat MP, who was once a cap-seller at his local launch port, is now so rich that he threw party at posh Hotel Sonargaon on his daughter's wedding.

Tongi Pourasava chairman Azmatullah Khan was accompanied by

Christians, Bahais, Jews and members

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation has also stopped supply of fuel on Fridays as part of the rationing. So the government should inform the people about the shortfall of fuel supply.

FROM PAGE 1

repression.

### Passengers suffer FROM PAGE 1

reported that bus strike was partially observed in the district yesterday. Dhaka-bound passenger buses left the city's Nathullad Bus Terminal in the morning without any obstructions. However, bus and minibus ser-

his commissioners Abdul Alim, Salim vices on Barisal-Khulna andBarisal-Miah, Nasiuddin Mullah, Nazrul Islam Jessore routes remained suspended.

inside the terminal.

about 2:00pm.

division

10:00am.

strike.

nended vesterday.

The transport workers cordoned off the Rupatali Bus Terminal in the morning and stopped 11 BRTC buses plying different south-western, and inter-district routes. They also blocked Barisal-Khulna-

the situation under control, the agitat-

ing transport workers confined them

endent of Bagerhat and other district

officials rushed to the spot and

released the law enforcers after nego-

tiation with the transports workers at

Road Transport Owners

Association Leader Ziauddin Sikder,

also a word commissioner of Barisal

City Corporation, said they will con-

tinue the strike until their demand is

Barisal divisional commissioner

said the law enforcers and local

administration have been asked to

ensure smooth service of the state-

owned BRTC bus on all routes of the

In Barguna, the agitated bus work-

ers ransacked and damaged 13 three-

wheeler tempos plying different local

and short distance routes at about

Our Patuakhali correspondent

adds: Transport strike was observed in

the district yesterday. No untoward

incident was occurred during the

Khulna said the bus service on the

inter-district routes remained sus-

Our Staff Correspondent from

He striking transport workers did

not allow BRTC buses to ply any of the

routes in the district on the first day of

the strike. No untoward incident was

reported from any place of the district.

On information, police superin-

AL leaders Zohra Tajuddin, Obaidul lessore highway near Bagerhut bus Oader and Akhtaruzzaman were presterminal at 12:30pm. ent among others. As the law enforcers tried to bring



Asadur Rahman Khan, Sadek Ali, Nurul

Islam, Kazi Abu Bakkar, Mujibar

Rahman, Ferdous Zaman and Nilima

#### FROM PAGE 1

Akhter Lili.

The statement of the witnesses were taken in the court in presence of JMB chief Abdur Rahman, second-incommand Siddiqul Islam alias Bangla Bhai, Ataur Rahman Sunny, Abdul Awal, Iftekhar Hasan Al Mamun, Sultan Hossain Khan and JMB Majlish-e-Shura ember Khaled Saifullah alias Amjad. On April 23, the court framed charges against Abdur Rahman

Siddigul Islam Bangla Bhai, Ataur Rahman Sunny, Abdul Awal, Iftekhar Hasan Al Mamun, Khaled Saifullah alias Amjad, Asadul Islam Arif and Sultan Hossain Khan in the judges killing case. Of them. Asadul Islam Arif is still at large Senior Assistant Judges Sohel Ahmed and Jagannath Pandey were

killed when Iftekhar Hasan Al Mamun, a

member of JMB suicide squad, set off a powerful bomb on their vehicle on vember 14 last year. Our Kushtia correspondent adds: A

court in Chuadanga yesterday ordered the government to produce Abdur Rahman, Ataur Rahman Sunny and Hafez Mohammad in the court on May 15 in connection with the August 17 serial bomb blasts case in Chuadanga.

The court issued the order upon a petition filed by investigation officer (IO) of the case Sub-Inspector (SI Kamruzzaman of the Detective Branch (DB), Chuadanga, seeking interrogation of the JMB leaders.

Branch) Fakrul Ahmed and Additional IG (Criminal Investigation Department) Khoda Baksh.

The other accused are Director General (DG) of Rab Abdul Aziz Sarker, its commanding officer, second-in-command, DIG of Dhaka Range Dr Sadikur Rahman, Superintendent of Police (SP) of Dhaka Baktiar Alam, Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Savar Police Station

Khagan in Savar. Iman was killed as he protested

including the state minister.

Mohammad Haider Ali, Sub-Hassan stood for the accused.

## Long queue makes

#### FROM PAGE 16

for the shipping agents, as they have to wait for more than a week before getting berthing permission. As a result more than a dozen ships remain standing at the outer anchorage every day due to lack of adequate berthing space at the port.

Shipping agents told the Daily Star that if the situation does not improve immediately ship owners might impose additional surcharge on Chittagong bound vessels.

According to them the ship owners are closely observing the situation and might take the decision any time.

They said instead of delaying to unload the ships, the port authority could take steps to keep the containers outside the port yard and arrange to guard them with security personnel. As the export-import volume is

increasing day by day, the port will have to take special measures to cope with it they pointed out. Otherwise, the port will get a bad reputation abroad.

Use of containers is also increasing worldwide as many items that were carried in bulks earlier are now being carried in containers, giving rise to pressure of containers at all the ports worldwide.

Earlier, feeder vessel owners used to impose a surcharge on Chittagong bound ships mainly due to container congestion at the port. Now additional expenditure has been added due to delay in getting berthing space.

The government, however, feels that the pressure at the port will be reduced substantially once the newly built new mooring container terminal starts operation.

The terminal is likely to start operation from September this year, the

and the mayor of Chittagong City Corporation are locked in a debate over whether the new terminal should be operated by the government or private sector

> lease it out to private sector while the city mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury is opposing the idea.

### Export

fruits and betel leaf exported from Bangladesh at higher prices to compensate for the increased cargo

Biman officials concerned meanwhile argued that it is no longer possible for the financially strapped airline to incur further loss in ferrying perishable goods at a price that is not cost-effective. "We get \$2.58 for carrying each kilogram of dry cargo. Why should we then deprive ourselves of revenue by carrying perishable cargo at a much lesser charge?"

Biman claimed that its own aeroplanes carry 70 per cent exported vegetables from Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet while other airlines carry the rest 30 per cent. Exporters, however, refused to accept the claim, saying they completely depend on the national flag carrier for exporting as other airlines generally do not entertain perishable cargo.

The SEA-ME-WE 4 project is the fourth project in the SEA-ME-WE series. On March 27 in 2004, a consortium of 16 international telecommunications companies signed construction and maintenance agreements for the "issues really concern the Sunnis new optical fibre submarine cable more than any other ethnic group. system linking South East Asia to "The main issue is federalism ... It Europe via the Indian Sub-continent and Middle East with Terminal Stations in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, the south," he said. Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan Kurds who see it offering enough

United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Italy, Tunisia, Algeria and France. The contract is being awarded jointly to Alcatel Submarine Networks, France and Fujitsu Ltd, Japan and the estimated project cost is about \$ 500

million Besides, the submarine cable's Bangladesh segment's owner, the BTTB, also an Internet Service Provider, will enjoy free access to the submarine cable while the private sector ISPs are feared to be marginalised by payment provisions for the same facility.

### Kibria Murder FROM PAGE 1

Court the same day after an appeal was filed praying for further investigation.

Earlier, the trial court had fixed May 3 and 4 for recording of depositions of the 66 prosecution witnesses in the case.

The accused in the case are vice president of the Habiganj district BNP and chief of Zia Smriti O Gobeshona Parishad AKM Abdul Quaiyum Jovnal Abedin Jalal, Zamir Ali, Jovnal Abedin Momin, Tajul islam, Shahed Ali, Selim Ahmed and Ayat Ali.

Two other accused --Muhibur Rahman and Kajol Miah -- are at large.

Five people including Kibria and his nephew Shah Monjurul Huda were killed in a grenade attack on January 27 last year after a public meeting at Baidyerbazar in Habiganj. The other killed are Md Siddique Ali, Abdur Rahim and Abdul Hossain.

Advocate Abdul Majid Khan filed two cases with the Habiganj Kotwali Police Station on January 28. CID's Senior ASP Munshi Atiqur Rahman, also the investigation officer (IO). submitted the charge sheet to the court on March 20 the same year.

"The n of sectarianism and we are trying to strife-torn country, two freed German change it so it can be a national constitution representing all Iragis.

hostages headed home. Rene Braeunlich, 32, and Thomas He said the front would demand that a Sunni head the committee, as

affair.

Nitzschke, 28, were freed Tuesday after being held for more than three months by a group called Ansar al-Tawheed wal Sunna (Followers of Unity and Prophetic Tradition).

is a red line for us ... especially in the The two men were working for a south. We are against federalism in German company when they were kidnapped on January 24 as they The present charter is strongly drove to the Baiji oil refinery, 200km backed by the majority Shias and the

north of Baghdad. Several of Wednesday's German autonomy in the northern Kurdistan newspapers reported that a ransom had been paid to secure their release.

deep-sea robot was to be used to try to

deputy general director, Vvacheslav

Yaralov, had been aboard. He said the

crew was experienced and that the bad

in 1995 and had been acquired on

leasing by the airline. The aircraft

Investigators from the airline and

The Airbus A-320 was manufactured

weather was "certainly" the cause.

Agadzhanov said that the airline's

recover the plane's black box.

### Armenian plane

### FROM PAGE 1

emergency

nated regions.

victims' remains. Search and rescue teams had pulled 26 bodies from the water by mid-morning, Kubinov said. None were wearing life jackets, indicating they did not have sufficient warning to prepare for an emergency landing.

region and the southern Shia domi-

Armavia said 26 Russians, one Ukrainian and one Georgian were among the passengers. The rest were Armenian citizens

underwent full-scale servicing a year The plane with 105 passengers and eight crew members disappeared from radar at about 2:15 a.m. local time, Armenian aviation authorities were to Beltsov said. He said the plane went fly to the crash scene later Wednesday down while trying to make a repeat morning attempt at an emergency landing, but the Interfax news agency quoted the HC bans Russian air control agency as saying that the plane's crew had not declared any

flying over the Georgian capital, Tbilisi.

The ground controllers reported stormy

weather but told the crew the plane

Just before the landing, however, the

ground controllers told the plane's

pilots to circle again before approaching

the airport. Then the plane crashed.

at a depth of more than 1,300 feet.

Rough seas, driving rain and low

visibility were hampering the search,

Russian news agencies reported. A

could still land, he said.

FROM PAGE 16 refusing permission for the oil tanker Andrei Agadzhanov, Armavia's to be scrapped. deputy commercial director, said the "The entry of Alfaship is illegal crew had communicated with Sochi because it's a toxic ship," Rizwana Hassan told AFP earlier, without ground controllers while the plane was

elaborating. The Bangladesh government has not given any detailed reasons for refusing permission for the vessel to be scrapped.

Shipbreaking yards in Bangladesh dismantle up to 80 ships, mostly oil tankers, each year. The metal is sold for recycling into iron rods for construction and other purposes.

The plane broke up on impact with Operating on beaches at the water, and wreckage was scattered Sitakundu the yards directly or indiover a wide area, Kubinov said. Salvage rectly employ 300,000 people. workers said the fuselage was recovered

Workers break up the ships manually without safety equipment. The United Nations Development Programme says accidents that kill or maim shipbreakers are "not uncommon"

charge of Biman," said Mansur.

the land grabbing by Babar's cousin, the complainant alleged adding that the planning and killing were exe cuted under the direction of high-ups

Advocates Abu Sayed Sagor and Fazilatunnesa Bappy appeared for the complainant while Metropolitan Public Prosecutor Abdullah Mahmud

government hopes. But the government

The ministry of shipping wants to

The Chittagong chamber and business community are also demand ing private sector involvement for smooth functioning of loading and

unloading goods.

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said a Biman official requesting anonymity.