

# Cost of internet use set to go down

**BTTB announces tariff rate for submarine cable, satellite, internet services; ISPs hail the move**

SHARIER KHAN

Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) yesterday offered an interesting tariff rate for the newly launched submarine cable, satellite and internet services, which will help the internet service providers (ISPs) to slash internet use costs significantly.

The latest BTTB tariff rate is one fourth of that the ISPs now pay to foreign internet exchange providers. But despite such a cost relief, the ISPs will not be able to reduce more than 10 percent of the charges for internet users. This is because the ISPs will continue to maintain the services of foreign internet exchange providers for the next few months, according to the ISPs.

"The customers will enjoy the full benefit of the submarine cable within 3-4 months. The cost of internet use will then go down at least by 50 percent," said Ershad Shafi Chowdhury, secretary general

of the Bangladesh ISP Association. "The BTTB does not have a backup system to complement the submarine cable. That is why the ISPs will have to continue to depend on foreign internet services," he said. "But the BTTB has taken up an initiative to install a backup Vsat (Very small aperture satellite) and, hopefully, this will start operating within 3-4 months."

The country has about 5 lakh internet users at present. With the arrival of the submarine cable, this number is expected to shoot up dramatically. "We really can not predict how fast the consumer base will grow. But this is going to grow in significant pace," observed Ershad.

Meanwhile, many ISPs in Dhaka have already started using the submarine cable even though an appropriate cable infrastructure is yet in place. They are providing speed up to 2 megabyte per second (MBps).

The ISPs are expecting the

BTTB to reduce its tariff structure further, said Ershad. "The BTTB has just launched the operation of submarine cable and it is still not sure about the market response. We believe the market response will be great, which will encourage the BTTB to lower the tariff rate further."

The BTTB tariff rate for internet connection below 2 MBps through the SMW4 submarine cable is as follows: registration fee- Tk 20,000, installation and testing fee- Tk 75,000, modem charge for 128 Kbps- Tk 84,000 (lifetime & optional) and yearly rental charge Tk 21,000 (if modem provided by the BTTB). For 192 Kbps to 1 MBps the lifetime charge is Tk 126,000 and annual rental fee Tk 31,500, and above 1 MBps lifetime charge is Tk 231,000 with annual rental fee of Tk 57,750.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

## Commerce minister also smells conspiracy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Commerce Minister Hafizuddin Ahmed yesterday said it was not the workers of the garment industry but a group of organised miscreants who ransacked garment factories and created anarchy to jeopardise the industry in the country.

"There is a deep rooted conspiracy to destroy the country's garment industry," he said while speaking at the official launching ceremony of Canada Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CBCCI) at Radisson Water Garden Hotel in the capital.

The factories attacked and ransacked by unknown people had no wages due to the workers and are models in the sector and absolutely compliant, claimed Hafizuddin who was chief guest at the occasion.

"I am at a loss of words to express what happened in the garment sector in the last two days," he lamented, adding that the government has taken stern actions against the perpetrators bringing the total situation under control.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



Karmajibi Nari, an NGO, takes out a procession at Mukhtangan in the capital yesterday in support of garment workers' demands to resolve the ongoing unrest in the sector.

## Saifur blames 'outside group' for rampage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday said a motivated outside group, not the workers, was involved in last two days' rampage in the garment industry.

"The government should find out the culprits and take stern action against them," he said replying to reporters' queries after a meeting of the cabinet committee on purchase.

"I don't believe that the workers can destroy the factory from where they earn their bread. There must have been some outside force behind all these," Saifur observed.

Saifur said what has happened is very unfortunate and very bad for the economy. "Garment is not only the backbone of the economy, but also a big source of employment."

"A conspiracy is on to destroy the sector," he said.

The minister said there can be bargaining agents to represent the garment workers, but that should not be like the regular trade union as that will spoil the work environment.

There are both good and bad garment factories. The good ones pay regularly and pay well like

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



BDR personnel, left, stand guard at the entrance to Dhaka Export Processing Zone in Savar yesterday to ward off any untoward incident; a garment factory on Tongi-Ashulia Highway, right, remains closed after it came under attack on Tuesday.



PHOTO: STAR

## CNG SCAM

# More time given to JS probe body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two parliamentary probe bodies tasked with investigating alleged corruption in import of CNG autorickshaws and allocation of land to set up CNG refuelling stations are yet to submit their report more than two years after their formation.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications Ministry that formed the sub-committees on January 7 and February 14 in 2004 yesterday once again extended the time for submitting their reports.

Both the sub-committees were

asked to submit their probe report in a month, but convenors of the probe bodies were provided time extensions on several occasions.

Besides, the parliamentary body that formed the probe bodies to investigate alleged corruption against the communications minister and the state minister for communications does not hold meeting regularly.

The parliamentary body yesterday held meeting after long six months while the rules of procedure of the Jatiya Sangsad says that

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## NEWTON MURDER

# Kala Jahangir, 'Killer' Abbas, 8 others to die

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced 10 to death, including top listed criminals Kala Jahangir and Abbas alias 'killer' Abbas, and six others to 31 years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) for killing Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Ward Commissioner Saidur Rahman Newton in May 2002.

Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 handed down the verdict in presence of 'killer' Abbas and seven others at a packed courtroom.

The other convicts with death are Mohammad Khorshed, Shahadat

Hossain alias Shahadat, Monir Hossain alias Kiran, Ibrahim Khalil, Kazi Mohammad Ismail, Towfiq Alam Khan alias Pial, Sadequul Islam alias Sagor and Zakir Hossain.

The people who got life in jail are Mohammad Ayub, Sheikh Russell alias Baltu Russell, Rubel Hossain Howlader, Shakhawat Hossain, Nazmul Hossain alias 'Benga' Babu and Kamal Hossain. Of them, only Kamal was tried in absentia.

This is for the first time that a court delivered a judgement in one

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

## CUSTODIAL DEATH

# 3 cops held

UNB, Gaibandha

An assistant sub-inspector (ASI) and two constables of Sadar Police Station were yesterday arrested on charges of murder of a young man in custody.

The arrest was made after a medical board reported that physical torture led to the death of Sajidur Rahman Sajid, 26, on Sunday.

The arrestees are ASI Abu Yusuf and constables Dulal Chandra and Mizanur Rahman.

Sajid, a resident of the town, was arrested on May 18 at Katpatti in the town for drug addiction and taken on a seven-day remand the following day. ASI Abu Yusuf interrogated him before his death. Police said Sajid committed suicide by hanging from the window rod in custody.

Refuting the police claim, his family said inhuman physical torture caused the death of Sajid. Residents of the town yesterday took out a procession demanding punishment to the policemen.

## EXORBITANT ESSENTIALS

# Tk 100cr fund not used to curb prices

**JS body blasts commerce ministry, TCB over 'inactivity'**

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

A parliamentary body yesterday blasted the commerce ministry and Trading Corporation of Bangladesh for its (TCB) 'inactivity' in checking the price hike of essentials despite having a Tk 100-crore fund for this.

The parliamentary standing committee on public undertakings at a meeting expressed its surprise at 'ineffectiveness' of the TCB despite having a huge fund.

Committee members from both the ruling and opposition sides expressed concern over the price situation. One member accused the TCB of helping the syndicate 'responsible' for the price spiral.

"TCB was a profitable organisation. In fiscal 2001-02, its profit was about Tk 102 crore but in 2002-03 it incurred losses of about Tk 9 crore. In 2003-04 and 2004-05, it made profits of only Tk 2 crore and Tk 3 crore respectively," the TCB said in a report placed at the meeting.

Talking to journalists after the meeting, Committee Chairman Abdul Alim, said, "TCB is totally

ineffective. It should be activated as a mechanism to control market."

At the meeting, he asked the commerce ministry officials, "Why don't you destroy the syndicate by activating of TCB," sources said.

The officials explained that prices of essentials are not an issue of the commerce ministry alone. Other ministries like home affairs are also linked to it.

"The price situation cannot go on like this. It must be reasonable. TCB did not import anything in the last three years. We cannot accept this," Alim told reporters.

A meeting source said, "When the TCB chairman told the meeting it has Tk 100 crore in its fund, members of the committee asked him why he did not take appropriate steps to activate it."

The House body discussed audit objections concerning the TCB. There are 1,692 such objections about irregularities involving Tk 330 crore.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



## Nazrul's birth anniversary today

BSS, Dhaka

The 107th birth anniversary of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam will be celebrated across the country today with daylong national programme at Trishal in Mymensingh.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is expected to open the programme at Nazrul Academy ground at 4:00pm. The prime minister will also inaugurate Kazi Nazrul University at Namapara under Trishal upazila in the afternoon.

The university will begin its academic session from the current year, a university source said.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## BSF kills 2 cattle traders

UNB, Satkhira

Two Bangladeshi cattle traders were shot dead by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) on Kakkdanga border Tuesday night.

The dead were identified as Kabir Hossain, 35, of Dakkidari village and Ruhul Amin, 18, of Padya Shakhira village under Satkhira Sadar upazila.

The Indian border guards

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



PHOTO: STAR

A pit on Gulshan Link Road remains uncared for, posing risk to moving vehicles. Several accidents occurred at this place during load-shedding at night but the authorities pay no heed to it.

## 2AK47 rifles, ammo seized

UNB, Bandarban

Army personnel recovered two AK47 assault rifles and ammunition from a den of terrorists at Monjoy Para in Sadar upazila of the hill district on Tuesday night.

They also recovered a foreign-made single barrel SBBL gun, 32 bullets of AK47 and 9mm pistol from the den.

Acting on a tip-off, the army men raided the den at about 11:00pm, but could not arrest any of the gang members as they managed to flee sensing the presence of the security personnel.