

**Nasaka abducts 13 loggers from Bandarban**  
BDR proposes flag meeting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Myanmar's border force Nasaka abducted 13 Bangladeshi citizens from Naikhangchari on Bandarban borders and took them to that country on Thursday, local residents and BDR sources said.

In a letter to Nasaka, BDR accused its Myanmar counterpart of abducting the Bangladeshi loggers who went to Fulchari forests to harvest wood, but Nasaka said they were held for entering Myanmar illegally.

The paramilitary BDR has

## Trader, his son feared killed in capital

Their driver's body found in Dhamrai

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A missing old Dhaka business leader and his son were feared killed yesterday after police found the body of their driver in Dhamrai yesterday.

The recovery of the driver's body and retrieval of another body in 19 pieces that matched the complexion of cloth trader Shamsul Haq fuelled family and businesspeople's fears, but police could not resolve the case until last night.

Haq and his son Russell went missing after they left their Sutrapur house by their private car on Friday, 11 hours before driver Moazzem's body was found in the rear seat of the car in Dautia village near Dhamrai Police Station at 11:30pm.

The 35-year-old driver's body bore multiple stab wounds in the chest, back, hands and stomach.

The recovery of the body parts and another beheaded young man's body by Dhanmondi police yesterday

stoked the fears of Haq and Russell's death.

STREWN BODY PARTS

Dhanmondi police said an unknown man called them at 7:00am yesterday to inform the finding of body parts strewn to the south of Abahani ground.

Police found 13 body parts of a man with his head, hands and legs missing.

Another caller told the police half

## Independence Day celebrated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation celebrated the 33rd anniversary of its independence on Friday recalling the supreme sacrifice of millions who laid down their lives to free the motherland from Pakistani occupation and making a fresh vow to materialise their dreams for a truly democratic and prosperous Bangladesh.

A 31-gun salute heralded the day. President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia laid wreaths at the National Memorial at Savar Friday morning to pay homage to the martyrs of the Liberation War.

A contingent of the armed forces presented a guard of honour during the ceremony.

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## Dhaka signs submarine cable agreement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh signed a much-awaited agreement with 15 other international telecommunications companies in Dubai yesterday for a high speed submarine cable that will herald ultra-fast internet and low cost tele-talk in 2005.

The SMW4 (Southeast Asia, Middle East and Western Europe) submarine cable network, which is fourth of its kind since 1982, will be about 20,000 kilometres (12,400 miles) long, including the main trunk line and branches, and cost about \$500 million to build.

France's Alcatel Submarine Networks and Japan's Fujitsu Ltd. have been chosen as lead contractors in the project.

Chairman of Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB) Nurul Islam signed the construction and maintenance agreement for Bangladesh.

Bangladesh will get 10-gigabyte bandwidth, which is enough for its projected internet and telephony demand for the next 10 years. Presently, it consumes only about 150-megabyte bandwidth.

Once connected to the cable, costs of all internet and long-

distance telephone calls will come down significantly while surfing the internet will become unbelievably fast.

The landing station in Bangladesh will be at Cox's Bazar. Telecoms Minister Aminul Haq told reporters yesterday the government has already set up a high-speed cable link between Dhaka and Chittagong. "We will set up similar links between Dhaka, Bogra and Rajshahi. Other divisional headquarters will be connected to the system in the process."

The link, said to be the most

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## 50 hurt in attacks on pro-AL rallies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 50 people were injured across the country in attacks allegedly by activists of the ruling coalition on Awami League (AL)-sponsored rallies and cultural programmes to mark the Independence Day on Friday, AL sources said.

An armed gang vandalised the ward commissioner's office in ward no. 13 in Chittagong's Pahartali area where an independence day programme was being held. The attackers also looted Tk 30,000 and valuables including a microphone and a cassette player.

Locals alleged that 14 men accused in a related case filed with Khulshi Police Station were not being arrested due to their affiliation

with the ruling coalition.

In Mymensingh's Purbo Dhala upazila, members of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its affiliates -- the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and the Jubodal -- allegedly attacked an AL cultural programme and rally near Purbo Dhala Bazaar. The attackers also ransacked AL offices and wrecked the stage prepared for the rally.

Ten shops belonging to AL sympathisers were also damaged in the attack. Some 35 AL men including local AL leader Abdul Gafur Chan Mian, were injured, sources said.

Local BNP leaders denied responsibility for the attack.

On the Bangladesh Agriculture

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Prime Minister Khaleda Zia along with her cabinet colleagues, left, and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina flanked by her Awami League colleagues, right, place wreaths at the National Memorial in Savar marking Independence Day on Friday.



PHOTO: STAR

জেসমিনের মনকাড়া তাজা গৌরভে নতুন

**Meril FLORAL TALC**

হুমি আমার সারাবেলা...

## Businesses sceptical of Altaf's skills, rue Khosru's exit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The business community yesterday expressed surprise at the induction of Altaf Hossain Chowdhury as new commerce minister and were sceptical of the ability of the former air force chief to negotiate critical WTO and free trade issues.

They also lamented the exit of his predecessor Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury and said the government should not have placed Altaf in the vital ministry as he hardly has any business background.

The business leaders also were of the opinion that the government should not have removed Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury from commerce ministry in the first place as Bangladesh is poised to start negotiations on a free trade agree-

ment (FTA) with some neighbouring countries.

Khosru has the knack and capacity to negotiate critical multilateral trade issues under the World Trade Organisation (WTO), they added. They also viewed that Khosru was made a scapegoat for the essentials price spiral which, according to them, should not be blamed on a single ministry.

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) President Annisul Huq viewed Khosru's departure as the loss of a knowledgeable and pro-business leader.

"He (Khosru) has played an effective role in WTO and FTA negotiations. He was very concerned about the post-MFA (Multi-Fibre Arrangement) chal-

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## Sourav to miss first Test

AFP, Multan

India's captain Sourav Ganguly will miss his country's first Test in Pakistan in almost 15 years from Sunday after failing to recover from a back injury.

Vice-captain Rahul Dravid will take over from Ganguly for the opening Test of the three-match series, an occasion made even more special as it is Pakistan's 300th match.

Ganguly, who injured his lower back during the final one-dayer at

Lahore last Sunday, is expected to be fit for the remaining two Tests at Lahore and Rawalpindi.

"It's a horrible feeling to sit out of what will be India's first Test match in Pakistan since 1989," Ganguly said.

"But it can't be helped. The MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scans did not indicate any serious damage, but the back pain has not reduced."

It will be the second time this season that Dravid will be leading

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Chairman of PHP Group  
Business Person of the Year 2003

Mirza Ali Behrouze Ispahani  
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