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Submarine cable project missing deadline

ABU SAEED KHAN

Bangladesh will not be able to link itself to the information superhighway from next September when the international submarine cable project is scheduled to be complete, thanks to the neglect of the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB).

The cable called SEA-ME-WE4 will be installed in the Bay of Bengal up to the point of Cox's Bazar by that time. But the land-based infrastructure that will connect this cable to the telecoms network will not be

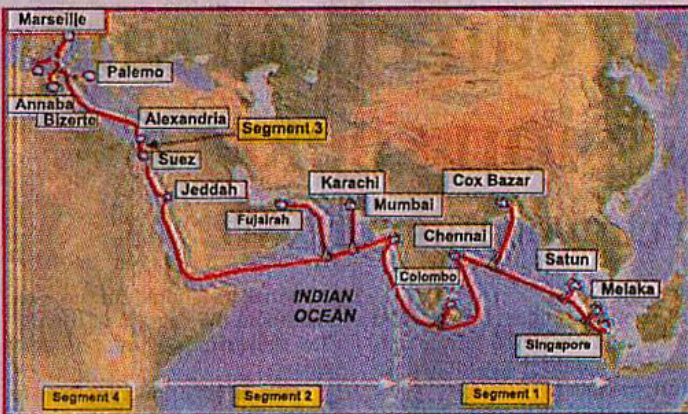
ready because the BTB has not started working on it, sources said.

The BTB, according to its schedule, was to complete this task no later than this month.

And even if the state-run telecoms monopoly starts installing the land infrastructure now, it will not be able to catch up with the deadline for commissioning of the cable, holding back the nation's access to the information superhighway.

All the remaining 13 countries that jointly launched this submarine

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Minister still hopeful

STAR REPORT

Post and Telecommunications Minister Aminul Haque yesterday said Bangladesh will be connected to the information super highway through a undersea cable network "by the target time".

The minister's comment came amid widespread speculation about the country's lack of preparations to join in the SEA-ME-WE4 project, launched by 13 countries in 2002 and scheduled to be completed by September 2005, sources in the industry said.

"Bangladesh cannot afford to lose it this time," the minister said while inaugurating a workshop on Nationwide Fibre Optic Network and Its Application organised by GrameenPhone Limited at a city hotel.

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Another arms cache seized in Bandarban

Mortars, LMGs, ammunition found

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) seized more firearms and ammunition including mortars and light machineguns (LMG) from bordering Naikkhongchhari yesterday, a day after the seizure of a huge cache of arms and ammunition from the same upazila.

Tipped off, BDR jawans of 40 Rifles Battalion dug out the sophisticated weapons from the bank of a pond at hilly Jarullachhari near Myanmar border, three kilometres off the upazila headquarters, in their

continued searching operations at noon.

The seized weapons include two 60mm and two 2-inch mortars, three British-made LMGs and its 49 magazines, 32 magazines of self-loading rifle (SLR), 11 magazines of AK47 assault rifle, and 2,000 bullets of British-made LMG.

On Tuesday, the BDR seized seven AK47 and two M16 rifles, one rocket launcher, one point 22 bore rifle, two 12-bore shotguns, two air rifles, 1,671 bullets, 1,275 of which are of AK47 and 90 of M16, from deep forest at village Techhari of the

same upazila.

The BDR team led by Naikkhongchhari zone commander Lt Col Hsinur Rahman, who also led Tuesday's operations, started searching the Jarullachhari area in the morning and found the weapons beneath the ground.

The law-enforcers however remained tight-lipped about the source of the firearms despite repeated seizures of huge sophisticated firearms, explosives and ammunition in Naikkhongchhari in the recent months.

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Officials of New Bangabazar Hawkers' Market Committee yesterday receive documents from the shop-owners affected by Sunday's devastating fire at the market. The committee has started assessment of the shop-owners' losses.

New Bangabazar Fraud in listing fire victims alleged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

New Bangabazar Hawkers' Market Committee yesterday started listing traders who lost some Tk 200 crore in merchandise to Sunday's blaze amid allegations that the committee leaders are making fake enlistment and inflated damage estimates in exchange for money.

The list will be sent to the Dhaka City mayor for rehabilitation and compensation of the affected traders.

The committee leaders yesterday said they are making the list following a directive by Mayor Sadeque

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Staff asked to submit wealth statements

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The newly formed Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has asked all the 930 officers and employees of the Commission to submit their wealth statements in 30 days.

A notification to this effect was

issued yesterday signed by MA Matin, former director general (DG) of the Bureau of Anti Corruption (Bac), now serving as DG of the ACC.

The ACC through a notification on Monday absorbed all of the officials and employees of the Bac,

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Charmonai Pir men chase lens man after fatwa

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The followers of Charmonai Pir Maulana Fazlul Karim chased a photojournalist of a national daily after the Pir gave fatwa declaring ban on taking picture in a crowded waz mahfil.

Kazi Miraj, photojournalist of the daily Jugantor and regional daily Ajker Barta went to Charmonai to cover the three-day long yearly waz mahfil and isale sawab mahfil starting from November 23.

The Charmonai Pir in his sermon before the Asar prayer on Tuesday announced the fatwa.

He also blasted the photojournalists who often took pictures of his

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Blanket prices shot up for fire loss

BISHAWJIT DAS

The price of blankets has shot up following Sunday's blaze in New Bangabazar Hawkers' Market which supplied more than fifty percent of blankets in the capital.

The retail blanket traders at various markets and places in the city said the supply of blankets is short and they were compelled to hike the price.

"The price of blankets has risen to at least Tk 50 each," said Salam, a roadside seller at Bangabandhu Avenue.

"I could not purchase any blankets in the last two days as fire burned down the main storage of blankets in the capital," said Amir Hossain Patwary, a roadside seller near Baitul Mokarram market.

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GROSS IRAQ MISCONDUCT MPs file motion to impeach Blair

AFP, London

Twenty-three members of parliament filed a motion yesterday to impeach British Prime Minister Tony Blair on charges of "gross misconduct" over the US-led invasion of Iraq.

However, the first such bid to impeach a prime minister in 198 years has no chance of passing as it lacks the official backing of the two main opposition parties, the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats.

Analysts said the motion, filed in

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Tony Blair

Norway envoy, 3 staff of Australian mission mugged in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Norwegian ambassador and three staff of the Australian High Commission in Dhaka were mugged in separate incidents yesterday, with police suspecting that the crimes were perpetrated by the same group.

The top brass of the government and the home ministry blasted police officials for not ensuring security of the diplomats barely a month before the Saarc (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Summit takes place in the capital in January.

Norwegian Ambassador Aud Lise Norheim told The Daily Star by telephone last night that a group of young men mugged her while she

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AL top brass to meet grassroots on human wall today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) top brass today meets with the AL leaders of the 18 districts and 49 upazilas the December 11 human wall will touch to make the programme a success.

The AL top brass will instruct the local leaders and ask them to mobilise people to take part in the human wall at 10:00am at the party's Dhanmondi office. The AL and other mainstream opposition parties will organise the 900km human wall to show no-confidence to the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition.

The AL high-ups will hold another meeting with the top leaders of all front organisations on

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THEFT CASE Arrest of staff at ZIA leads to wildcat strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An official of cargo section at Zia International Airport (ZIA) was released six hours after his arrest yesterday in a mobile phone theft case in the face of wildcat abstention from work by his colleagues.

Airport police said they picked up Kazi Hasan Tareq, junior commercial officer of Airfreight Section of Biman Bangladesh Airlines that manages cargo section, for interrogation and released him later.

Police arrested Hasan at about 9:00am from his office in a case filed on November 4 for theft of 482 sets of imported Nokia mobile phone from the airfreight section. Rakibul Kabir, managing director of Cellular

Mobile Private Limited, filed the case.

Hasan's colleagues immediately went on an abstention from work protesting his arrest.

Biman officials then took up the matter with police.

The agitating officials and employees resumed work after police released Hasan at about 3:00pm.

Duty officer at Airport Police Station Sub-inspector Shahida Khatun said, "We brought Hasan here for interrogation as it was not possible to talk with him at his office. We released him later."

Officer-in-Charge of the police Station Mohammad Hanif said, "We

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Next hearing of contempt case against two dailies Dec 11

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday fixed December 11 for the next hearing of a contempt case against two leading Bangla dailies for running reports on an additional HC judge's alleged tampering with the results of his LLB examinations.

All the seven respondents of the case yesterday appeared at the HC bench of justices MA Matin and AFM Abdur Rahman on the first day of hearing of the contempt petition.

Publisher of the Daily Prothom Alo Mahfuz Anam, its Editor Matir Rahman and reporters Ekramul Haque Bulbul and Masud Milad, Publisher of daily Bhorer Kagoj

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Biggest Software & ITES Exposition

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