

## SUBMARINE CABLE BTTB still hopeful of timely connection

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BTTB is still hopeful about connecting Bangladesh with the SEA-ME-WE-4 submarine cable in due time despite the Cabinet Purchase Committee's recent directive to re-tender a contract for installing an optical fibre link between Cox's Bazar and Chittagong.

An international consortium is likely to finish by October this year the installation of the half a billion dollars South East Asia-Middle East-Western Europe-4 (SEA-ME-WE-4) undersea cable, delivering the connection at Cox's Bazar point.

"We hope to link the country with the information superhighway through the SEA-ME-WE-4 submarine cable."

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## Building image with rightwing leaders

### Media cell at PMO planned

REZAUL KARIM

A move to create a media cell at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to restore the image of the alliance government has drawn widespread criticism from the ruling BNP, as an extreme rightwing leader and his followers are engineering the cell.

The proposed media cell styled, "Image Building Cell", is to operate under the Development and Coordination Cell at the PMO. It aims to launch counter propaganda against the opposition through the media.

The media cell will look for websites dishing out anti-

government propaganda and prepare counter materials and reply of the government, highlight the development activities and initiatives taken to establish the rule of law and good governance.

Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, adviser on parliamentary affairs to the prime minister, has masterminded the cell and he recently arranged a meeting of a group of rightwing journalists, columnists and intellectuals with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia. He also persuaded her to form the cell.

Sources said the rightwing writers briefed the PM on main

opposition Awami League's (AL) launching an unspecified number of websites and said the party has long been campaigning against the government and the country.

They told the PM that the government's image at home and abroad has been greatly tainted because of the massive propaganda by the pro-AL writers, journalists and intellectuals.

The pro-Chowdhury writers and intellectuals argued for launching a counter propaganda and sought PM's support to set up the cell.

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PHOTO: STAR

Asma Kibria bursts into tears seeing the photograph of her slain husband Shah AMS Kibria on a banner while collecting banners yesterday for displaying in an exhibition on March 31.

## Asma hails FBI probe, demands finds be made public

UNB, Dhaka

Asma Kibria, wife of slain Awami League leader Shah AMS Kibria, yesterday demanded that the full investigation report of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) be made public for transparency of the findings.

Welcoming the arrival of an FBI agent and two other US intelligence personnel for probing her husband's murder, she said however belated, their presence will strengthen the work of Bangladesh's extremely professional intelligence team.

"We reiterate our position that any investigation by the FBI must

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## Mugger killed in police firing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mugger died in police firing in Shyampur area in the early hours yesterday.

Police identified the mugger as Kawser, 22, a listed criminal of the Shyampur Police Station who had several cases against him, including two for murders. Two of his wounded associates - Bashir Uddin alias Emon and Abdul Kader - were arrested during the incident.

Shyampur police said Kawser and his 14 to 15 other associates, armed with guns snatched two mobile phones from Arefin Computers in Notun Jurain area at 11:30pm on Sunday.

The gang later started mugging pedestrians at Alambagh Gaspipe Rasta and Kalu Mia Sarder Road.

While they were snatching mobile phones, money and

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## Three more die in Gaibandha tornado

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Gaibandha

With three more tornado victims' death at Rangpur Medical College Hospital yesterday, tornado death toll now rises to 63, according to unofficial sources.

However, the district relief and rehabilitation office figured the death toll at 52 while Gaibandha civil surgeon's report said the figure was 60.

## UAE to deport 2,700 camel jockeys soon

UNB, Dhaka

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) authorities have decided to deport soon some 2,700 underage boys used as camel jockeys to their respective countries, including Bangladesh, to end the ordeals the children undergo in the Arabian deserts.

Of late, the UAE has prohibited camel jockeying and requested the countries concerned to repatriate the boys rescued from individual camel racers.

The UAE government would also be vigilant so that these boys along with their mentors could not be transported to any other neighbouring countries.

An official source in the foreign ministry told the news agency yesterday that ambassadors of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sudan, Mauritania and Somalia attended a meeting at the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs on March 26 when the UAE government's decision was conveyed to them.

Ali Mohd Ali Al Zorooni, Director (Consular) of the UAE foreign ministry, told the envoys that it had been decided that henceforth all persons travelling to the UAE must travel on their own passport. "The UAE government would not accept any male children below 16 years to

travel on his mother or father's passports. All such boys must travel on their own passports."

The UAE government has also updated its immigration and visa rules. It said those who are already staying in the UAE will have a respite of six months before the passport of their underage children are separated from their parents' passport.

There would be no exceptions for anybody—even for those who are coming on a government job, company job, any professionals, Imams or whatsoever.

Moreover, those already living and working in the UAE, other than labourers, will have to pay a visa fee of Dh. 200 per child for 2 years. If the contract is for 3 years, the visa fee would be Dh. 300 per child plus medical fees.

The Director (Consular) of the Gulf state informed that the UAE government is determined to apply the rules strictly because of the "humanitarian concerns of the underage boys being used as camel jockeys."

He asked each of the countries to extend their cooperation for stopping such cruel practice once for all. He requested respective governments to plug the gap and not allow

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## Owners to run buses, trucks on highways during hartals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Long-range buses and trucks from now on will be operated on hartal days under police protection, bus and truck owners yesterday declared.

The decision will take effect from the upcoming hartal on March 31. The Truck Owners Association (BTOA) and Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity (BSPS) said in a joint statement.

Leaders of the organisations at a press conference yesterday said t h a t

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## Three Rab robbers denied bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected the bail petitions of three Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members, arrested on charges of stealing Tk 7.8 lakh from a cattle trader in the city's Mirpur area on March 23.

Metropolitan Magistrate Towfiq Alam passed the order when Sergeant Atiqur Rahman, Sergeant Waliullah and Constable Khورشed Alam were produced before him on completion of their three days' remand.

The investigation officer (IO)

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## DHAKA-YANGON ROAD LINK

## Myanmar taskforce submits land acquisition report

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The visiting Financial Task Force of Myanmar at a meeting yesterday handed over the report of land acquisition and final alignment design of the Bangladesh-Myanmar Friendship Link Road to Communications Minister Nazmul Huda.

The task force led by U Han Zaw handed over the design to the communications minister. Myanmar

envoy to Dhaka U Thane Myint was present.

The meeting at the communications ministry reviewed the progress of the link road project and financing potentials in this regard, said a press release.

The project has aimed at enhancing regional cooperation and promoting socio-economic progress by strengthening economic and trade relations in South and Southeast Asia.

The 153km friendship road from Taungbro to Kyauktaw in Myanmar through Ramu-Gundom in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh will be constructed in two phases at a cost of Tk 933.46 crore.

Initially, the Bangladesh government with its own resources will build a 20km stretch of the road from Taungbro to Bawli Bazar in Myanmar as a mark of friendship between the countries.

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## Restaurants feed dead chickens to customers

### One held with 53 dead birds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested a man at city's Mirpur area with 53 dead chickens as he was allegedly going to supply those to local restaurants.

Immediately after the arrest, a number of restaurateurs at Mirpur-13 and Pallabi area shut their restaurants.

The arrestee, Mohammad Azad, 28, admitted that many others like him had long been supplying dead

chickens to restaurants in Pallabi and Mirpur-13 area.

"The restaurants have been feeding customers dead chickens for a long time, and a syndicate of poultry farm and restaurant employees are involved in the act," Entezar Rahman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Mirpur Police Station, told The Daily Star last night.

A mobile team of Mirpur police held Azad on suspicion when he just stepped out of Shah Ali Market in

Mirpur-1 with a sack yesterday morning.

Later opening the sack at Mirpur Police Station, the policemen found 53 dead chickens.

"Azad told us that he had bought those from a poultry depot at Shah Ali Market," said the OC.

According to the arrestee, employees of the depot used to preserve the dead chickens and sell those to him and some others.

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## HABIGANJ BY-POLLS

### BNP picks Mubin Chy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The ruling BNP has nominated former chairman of Habiganj Zila Parishad Abu Lais Mubin Chowdhury to contest the by-election in Habiganj-3 constituency scheduled for April 25.

The nomination followed interview of two aspirants -- Mubin and former district BNP general secretary Chowdhury Ashrafur Bari Noman -- at the party central office in the capital yesterday, party sources said.

The seat fell vacant due to the death of Awami League (AL) lawmaker and former finance minister

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## India blames world for ignoring Pak nuke trade

AFP, New Delhi

Indian Foreign Minister Natwar Singh yesterday accused the world's superpowers of turning a blind eye to nuclear commerce in South Asia, saying it was having an "adverse impact" on his country's security and on global peace.

Singh's comments come ahead of a May conference in New York called to review the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which bans the transfer of nuclear weapons

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PHOTO: STAR

Richard Larison (left), CEO of Apollo Hospital, yesterday shows a model of the 450-bed joint venture hospital being built in Dhaka.

## Apollo hospital opens tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Apollo hospital, the first of five joint venture hospitals being set up in the capital by leading overseas healthcare enterprises and their local partners, opens tomorrow.

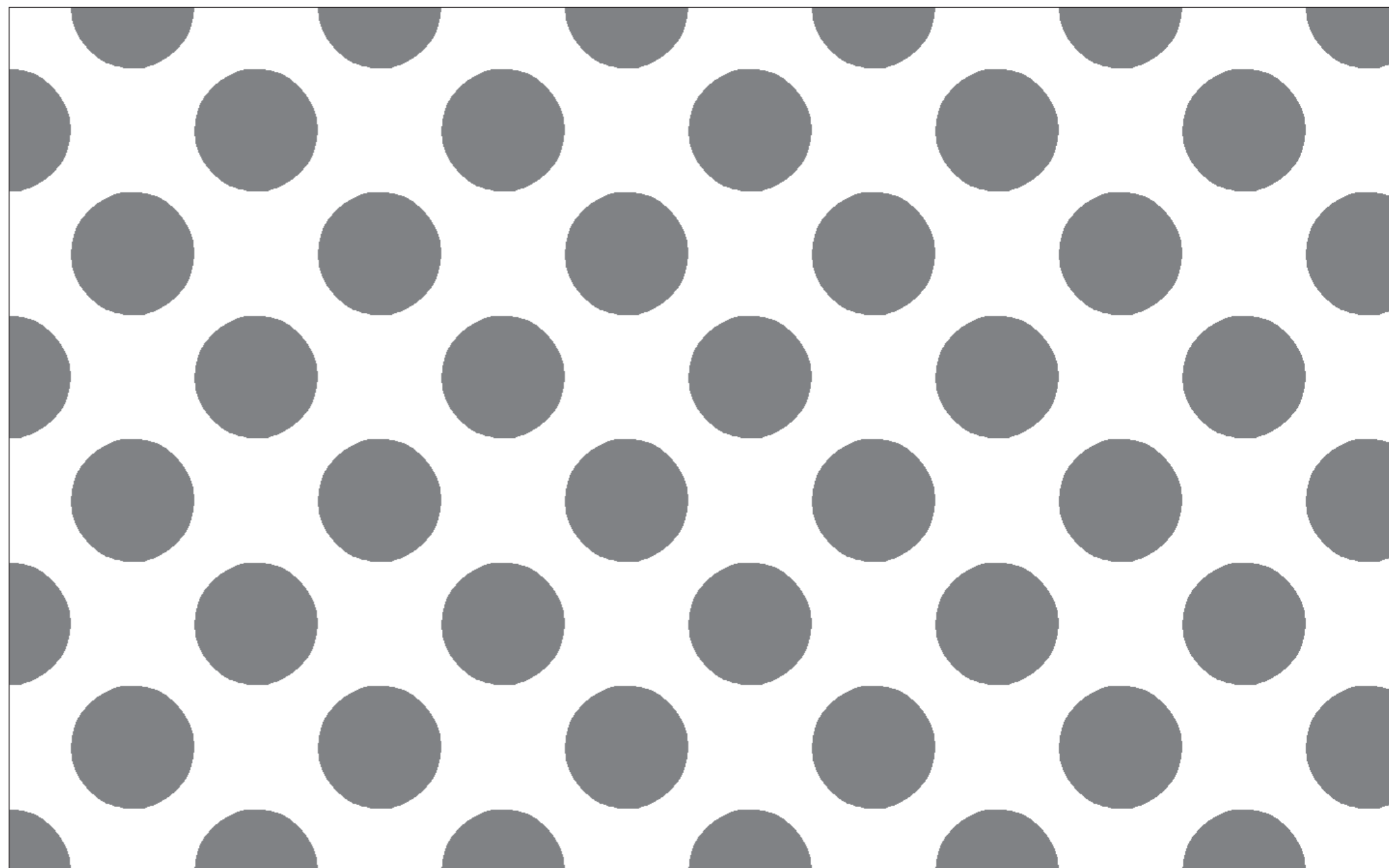
Located at Basundhara, the hospital will however take a few

more days to open its doors to patients on some medical rounds.

Richard Larison, chief executive officer of the hospital, yesterday told reporters, "We have a mission to improve the standard of healthcare facilities in Bangladesh by transferring technology and training Bangladeshi doctors." Many eminent Bangladeshi doctors working abroad are coming back home in response to invitation from the hospital, he added.

The hospital, built on a 400,000-square-foot area, will be the largest commercially run healthcare provider in Asia. Funded by local business group STS Holdings and managed by American, Indian and Bangladeshi staff, the 10-storied hospital will be the largest of 37

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### Prayer Timing

March 29

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-20
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-20	6-25
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation