

## Novel way to press home demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The diploma engineers across the country yesterday decided to work an extra hour after the scheduled office time on September 14, in a rare example of placing demands through peaceful means.

The diploma engineers announced the decision at a press conference arranged by the Coordinating Council of the Bangladesh Diploma Engineering Students, Teachers and Professionals at Institute of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh (IDEB) at Kakrail.

The diploma engineers have been staging demonstrations demanding the government to eschew retrenchment of as many as 750 engineers from different state-

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## 7 injured in Shibir-JCD fights in Ctg

UNB, Chittagong

At least seven activists of the Islami Chhatra Shibir and the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) were yesterday wounded in separate incidents in connection with Friday's clash at the Chittagong Polytechnic Institute that was closed indefinitely.

Police said a group of JCD activists on Tuesday night picked up Shibir leader Ahmed Hossain from his house, took him to the nearby Nasirabad hills and stabbed him repeatedly. Ahmed was later rescued

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Sept 04		6-14 pm
Sept 05	5-41 am	

  

Prayer Timings		
September 4		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-35	5-00
Maghrib	6-20	6-24
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation



Police arrest women at hotels and massage parlours at Paltan in Dhaka yesterday in a raid that rounded up about 200 people, 120 of them alleged sex workers.

PHOTO: STAR

## JCD leader dies in factional fight in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader of Barisal city unit died from bullet injuries and four Juba Dal (JD) leaders were injured when two rival factions clashed near Barisal Government Girls' School yesterday.

Arefur Rahman Arif, assistant social welfare secretary of the JCD, sustained bullet injuries and later died. Rabiul Awal Shahin, Shuvo, Munna and Masud of the JD were injured in a clash that ensued over control of locality at around noon.

Police arrested Shuhad, a notorious criminal, from the spot but Akbar, a JCD leader, snatched him from police custody, alleged vice-president of BM College students union, Sentu.

Akbar denied the allegation and said Sentu snatched Shuhad from police.

Masum was admitted to Barisal

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## HPSP project

# JS body for action for embezzlement of Tk 162cr funds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliamentary standing committee on public accounts at its meeting yesterday recommended punitive actions against those involved in corruption and embezzlement of over Tk 162 crore of the Health and Population Sector Programme (HPSP) under the health ministry.

The committee asked the ministry to form a quasi-judicial inquiry committee in this regard and submit report at its next meeting.

Meeting sources said the committee expressed dissatisfaction as it observed huge corruption and mismanagement in the process of

implementing the project.

The committee, at the meeting, discussed eight audit objections under the project. The amount, embezzled and misused, was in customs and VAT related.

The past Awami League government took up the Tk 15,000 crore foreign-aided HPSP project.

The committee also discussed several audit objections under Roads and Highways Department of the communication ministry.

Committee chairman Advocate Haroon Al Rashid presided over the meeting held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. Committee members and officials concerned were present at the meeting.

## Six rounded up by army at Rangamati

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Six people, reportedly supporters of the 1997 Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) peace accord, were rounded up during an army raid at the Naniarchar upazila headquarters in the early hours of yesterday.

Sources said the army picked up Papul Khisha, 34, Robin Chakma, 35, Kousol Chakma, 18, Anil Chandra Dewan, 40, Profulla Chakma, 45, and Binimoy Chakma, 20, from the house of a local headman at around 1:00am yesterday and recovered a locally-made handgun and two bullets from their possession.

Confirming the incident, intelligence sources at the district headquarters said the six men had gathered at the house "for a meeting".

All of them are members of the Shontrash Domon Committee, a pro-peace accord organisation, added the sources.

"They are yet to be handed over to police. We haven't received any clear message from the Naniarchar police," sources in the district intelligence of police said.

## Imam murder

# Mourning rally in Khulna today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A mourning rally to commemorate the slain City Awami League (AL) president Alhaj Advocate Monzurul Islam will be held at noon today at the Khulna Bar auditorium.

Vice-president of Bangladesh Bar Council Barrister M Aminul Islam, President of Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association Rokonuddin Mahmud and Gono Forum Chief Dr Kamal Hossain are expected to attend the rally, among others.

The rally is part of a 20-day programme organised by city and district units of AL following the murder of Advocate Monzurul

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## Rejoinder and our reply

Petrobangla in a rejoinder to The Daily Star news headlined "RPC's new power project to worsen gas situation" published Wednesday said that Petrobangla at a meeting on July 31 decided to construct a 20-inch pipeline from Dhanua to Kodda to ensure gas supply to the RPC plant by 2005.

Our reply: The July 31 meeting of Petrobangla discussed how gas supply could be ensured for the 450mw power plant and it identified the need to set up a 20-inch pipeline. The meeting did not approve any plan or project. Till date there has been no official plan, proposal or allocation for this pipeline. Besides, the Petrobangla did not even work out the source of the gas and other technical details associated with the 20-inch pipeline.

# Poland takes control of huge swath of Iraq

AFP, Baghdad

Poland took command of a large chunk of Iraq yesterday, officially becoming the third country after the United States and Britain to accept responsibility as an occupying force.

As head of a 21-nation multinational division, Poland assumed control from the US Marine Corps amid pomp and ceremony in the amphitheater of Babylon, built by Saddam Hussein on the ruins of the original theatre erected by Alexander the Great in 330 BC.

The ceremony was attended by

Polish Defense Minister Jerzy Szmajdzinski and his Ukrainian counterpart, Evhen Marchuk, along with Spanish officials, whose nations will take charge of the provinces from the exiting marines.

"The multinational division has become a first, it was founded with the help of our American friends and thanks to the brave decision by 21 countries," said Poland's Major General Andrzej Tyszkiewicz near the site of Iraq's ancient glory outside Hilla, 100 kilometres south of Baghdad.

"Our common focus is to help Iraqi

people, and to wipe out the traces of Saddam Hussein's monstrous dictatorship and build a new basis of peaceful existence."

Tyszkiewicz was handed a red folder, symbolising the change in control, from the commander for the US marines in the south, Lieutenant General James Conway.

Conway told his successors the greatest challenge in the south was to restore electricity, end fuel shortages and get factories up and running.

The multinational division was

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# Tax evasion charge against ticket reservation firm

M SHAMSUR RAHMAN and NAZMUL AHSAN

Allegations of tax evasion has been levelled against Amadeus, a company offering automated global ticket reservation system.

The Anti-money Laundering Department of the Bangladesh Bank yesterday asked the company to provide information about its businesses, tax and revenue payments.

Amadeus operates through a liaison office in Dhaka. But it is allegedly violating the liaison office regulations by marketing its products and doing transactions locally.

On August 2, the industries ministry asked Amadeus to submit its income tax certificate and a statement of the funds it remitted from Bangladesh during the last three years.

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## Giant asteroid to safely pass us by

AFP, Paris

The Earth is not quite so doomed, experts said yesterday.

Fears that a giant asteroid could wack into the planet on March 21, 2014 and plunge it into a nuclear winter are misplaced, they said, explaining that fresh calculations showed the monster rock would safely pass us by.

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# Circular river route funds doubled

RAFIQ HASAN

Allocation for the first phase of the project to introduce a river route around the capital has been raised to Tk 36 crore from Tk 15.72 crore and it will be implemented by June next year instead of June 2005.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) at a meeting yesterday approved the increased allocation and revised the implementation period of the project.

Sadarghat-Ashulia section of the circular river route will be completed in the first phase of the project. Permanent landing stations and launch terminals on the route will be set up at Swarighat, Katashur, Rayer Bazar, Gabtali, Amin Bazar, Kholamura, Basila, Nawabganj and Ashulia.

The government will acquire around nine acres of land for the landing stations.

The ECNEC meeting, chaired by Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman, also decided to release funds quickly so that the project could be implemented within the stipulated time.

Financed by the government under its Annual Development Programme (ADP), the project is being implemented by the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).

Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain told The Daily Star the river route will help reduce traffic jam in the city and improve transportation of goods, particularly essentials like rice and vegetables.

On completion of the project, launched in July 2000, many passenger launches would start from Amin Bazar to ease pressure on Sadarghat launch terminal, he added.

The minister mentioned that dredging of the Buriganga river is already going on and a big portion of the route is now ready for river traffic. He hoped that the project would also help develop tourism facilities along the river.

According to shipping ministry sources, Tk 11.32 crore had been spent on the project by June this year and Tk 7.89 crore was allocated under the ADP for fiscal 2003-2004.