#### Rab arrests Ctg ward commissioner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in a dawn raid nabbed Awami League (AL)-backed Chittagong Ward Commissioner SM Shahidullah with firearms including a revolver at a slum near his house at South Bakalia yesterday.

Shahidullah,36, a commissioner of Chittagong City Corporation's South Bakalia Ward, is accused of several criminal cases including two murders. He is the prime suspect in Bangladesh Chhatra League leader Rana murder case, sources said.

Tipped off, the Rab team encircled his house at about 4:00am. Sensing their presence, Shahidullah skipped off the house through a rear door and hid in a nearby shanty from where he was

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

# Violence flares in northern Iraq

20 killed in suicide car bomb, 25 others in clashes

A suicide car bomb exploded yesterday outside a police academy in Kirkuk, killing 20 including 14 policemen and leaving 36 people wounded, said Dr. Rida Abdullah, head of the Kirkuk general hospital.

"It was a suicide car bomb. There are many killed and wounded," police chief Shirku Shakir Hakim

The car bomb went off just in front of the police academy in Al-Ihtifalat (Celebrations) Square in the

southwest of the city at 3:45 pm (1145 GMT)," Hakim said.

Kirkuk, with its mosaic of Kurds, Arabs and Turkmen, is a frequent target of roadside bombings and shootings, as insurgents seek to upset the delicate ethnic balance in

Meanwhile, thirteen Iraqis were killed and 53 wounded in heavy clashes between US forces and insurgents in Tall Afar while twelve policemen were killed in a joint US-Iragi offensive in Latifiya

Dr. Fawzi Ahmed, from the local

district hospital in this mainly Shia

had been killed and 53 wounded. The US Army reported three of its troops wounded and the Iraqi National Guard two. Witnesses and police said the fighting broke out at around 8:30 am

Turkmen town, said 13 Iraqi civilians

(0430 GMT) when US forces, backed by national guard troops, surrounded two neighbourhoods and started carrying out house-tohouse searches

Columns of smoke filled the sky SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

### HC grants bail to life term convict just before vacation

A hardcore criminal awarded life imprisonment in a murder case seven months ago was granted bail by the High Court on Wednesday just before it went into two-month

long vacation. This has surprised the government and Attorney General AF Hassan Ariff was summoned to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). It is learnt that the attorney was asked to immediately move the Supreme Court against the bail.

A division bench comprising Justice Nozrul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Quamrul Islam Siddigi had granted bail to Abdur Razzak

in Sheba over the next few years to

**MUSTAK HOSSAIN** 

repaid -- OT said.

statement recently.

of the shares of Sheba Telecom in

Bangladesh," the company said in a

Thursday and does not require any

additional regulatory approvals, it

The transaction was complete on

OT intends to invest \$250 million

develop and expand its GSM (Global System for Mobile

Egyptian company

Sheba Telecom sold to

After a long secretive deal, Egypt-Communica-tions) network. based mobile phone operator "Bangladesh is a highly attrac-Orascom Telecom (OT) has bought tive market for mobile services due local operator Sheba Telecom for to its large and highly concentrated \$60 million -- \$50 million in cash and population, low penetration of about \$10 million in debts it has telecommunications services and high growth in mobile subscribers. "OT has purchased 100 per cent it pointed out.

OT already has operations in Algeria, Egypt, Pakistan, Iraq, Tunisia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Chairman Sved Marghub Murshed said the BTRC has no objection to the deal. "BTRC has no problem if anybody legally acquires anything.

Sheba officials could not be reached for comment

The small operator has about 60.000 subscribers in and around

Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet. Bangladesh now has more than three million cell phone subscribers and around one million subscribers of fixed phones provided by stateowned Bangladesh Telegraph and

Telephone Board (BTTB), which also plans to launch 250,000 cel phones by December this year. Earlier, local firm Integrated Services Ltd. (ISL), joint venture partner of Sheba Telecom, had bought the stake of Malaysian

Technology Resources Industries

Astronomer

signal report

Astronomers have moved

swiftly to quell speculation

they may have received a

deep-space radio signal

It was reported on the

internet that the signal had

been found using the

Seti@home screensaver that uses computer down-

time to analyse sky data

But researchers connected with the project told

BBC News Online yester-

day that no contact with

extraterrestrials had been

"It's all hype and noise," said its chief scientist, Dr

Dan Wertheimer. "We have

nothing that is unusual. It's

Harvard University, who

specialises in hunting for

possible alien contacts

added: "It's not much of anything at all. We're not

And Dr Paul Horowitz, of

all out of proportion."

from telescopes.

deny ET

**BBC ONLINE** 

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

### Kashmir peace plans okayed at Delhi talks

#### Foreign ministers sit today to discuss further

AFP, New Delhi

Top Indian and Pakistani officials yesterday approved proposals to break the logjam over Kashmir and strengthen bilateral ties on the eve of a meeting between the rival states' foreign ministers.

The draft plans cover issues ranging from improving trade and cultural ties and combatting terrorism and drug trafficking to steps towards resolving the decades-old dispute over Kashmir, a joint state-

The proposals will now be submitted to Indian Foreign Minister Natwar Singh and Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri when they meet here today and tomorrow for the first ministeriallevel talks on Kashmir in three

"The foreign secretaries agreed that the discussions had beer

productive and had taken place in cordial and constructive atmo-

Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran and his Pakistani counterpart, Riaz Khokhar. "Several useful ideas and suggestions were made by both sides, it said, referring to meetings in the

sphere." said the statement issued

at the end of talks here between

past few months between bureaucrats from India and Pakistan. In Saturday's talks, the two sides "discussed the ways of taking the

(peace) process forward. 'They would be reporting to the foreign ministers with the recommendation that the Composite Dialogue should be continued with a view to further deepening and broadening the engagement between the two sides," it said.

No details of the proposals were SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

#### Khulna UP chairman held for outlaw link

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Hujjat Ali, chairman of Amirpur Union Parishad in Batiaghata upazila in Khulna was arrested on Friday afternoon at the office of the Superintendent of Police Habibur

"The UP chairman is a top leader of Khulna-Batiaghata unit of Janajuddho, a faction of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

**BLAST INJURY** 

#### 10 more AL leaders off to India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) on its own sent yesterday 10 more of its leaders wounded in August 21 grenade attack on an AL rally, to India for

In this phase, Vice-President of Dhaka City AL Sheikh Bazlur Rahman, Joint Secretary Awlad Hossain, Information and Research Secretary Mohammed

> Prayer Timing September 5 Azan 4-35

> > 12-45

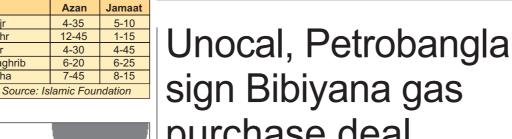
6-20

7-45

Zohr

Maghrib

Esha



UNB, Dhaka

corporation Petrobangla and interday entered into a gas purchase and sale agreement (GPSA) on Bibiyana gas field.

The gas field in Habiganj has a proven reserve of 2.4 TCF (trillion cubic feet) of gas. Some 300 MMCFD (million cubic feet) of gas is expected from the field by December 2006.

Production in the hydrocarbon mine, from where once the US company had intended to export gas to India, will be gradually increased-- 400 MMCFD by October 2007 and 600 MMCFD by December 2008.

Andrew L Fawthrop and Petrobangla Director (PSC) Raihanul Abedin initialed the deal on behalf of their respective sides at

The giant Arecibo telescope is used to scan the skies

Now the GPSA will go to the law ministry for vetting. The final agreement is expected to be signed in a month, on approval of Prime

Negotiations for the Bibiyana deal had begun in early June 2004 after the government approved a \$ 230 million development budget for the field, but stalled over the wheeling charge issue.

Unocal paved the way for signing the GPSA for Bibiyana by agreeing

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8



investigating it further. For six years, the Seti@home project used a downloadable

screensaver on millions of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## Unocal, Petrobangla purchase deal

State-run oil, gas and mineral national oil company Unocal yester-

Unocal Bangladesh Chief Petro Centre.

Minister Khaleda Zia.

