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## Fuel station strike called off on govt assurance

25 hurt in Khulna clash  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Petroleum Dealers, Distributors, Agents and Petrol Pump Owners Association withdrew its strike yesterday while in Khulna a clash between police and the strikers left at least 25 people injured.

The indefinite strike, which took effect yesterday morning, was called off following a meeting with the government in the afternoon the same day.

Earlier on August 31, the associations announced to stop buying fuel from the government depots if their 12-point demand was not met by September 27. In line with the announcement, they went on strike yesterday.

Invited by Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), the association leaders yesterday had a daylong meeting with Energy Ministry Adviser Mahmudur Rahman and Chairman of BPC.

Terminating the meeting fruitful, President of the petrol pump owners association Mohammad Nazmul Haque said, "Energy adviser and BPC chairman have acknowledged the logical ground of our program. We have withdrawn the strike on having assurance from the government".

"The government has requested us to call off the strike, as they said it will cause immense sufferings to the people," he added.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS REPORT

# Dhaka now 110 out of 117 countries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has been ranked 110th in the Global Competitiveness Report (GCR) 2005-06 covering 117 countries, eight notches down from last year's ranking.

India and Pakistan have improved their positions in the ranking to 50th and 83rd this year from last year's 55th and 91st.

The GCR 2004-05 ranked Bangladesh 102nd among 104 countries.

The country's ranking would change marginally to 101st this year from last year's 102nd if the GCR would cover the same countries. This shows many new entrants to the survey are better placed than Bangladesh.

Releasing the GCR simultaneously

with other countries, Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, told newsmen at the CPD office in Dhaka the countries that are behind Bangladesh are facing conflicts or some other problems and volatility.

"Overall picture is deteriorating in Bangladesh compared to the global situation. Corruption and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



PHOTO: STAR

Members of Bangladesh Rifles come out of the Dhaka Central Jail after conducting a massive search for addictive drugs there yesterday.

## High profile Central Jail raid yields 10gm ganja

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five hundred security men, in an extensive search lasting over four hours, yesterday seized 10 grams of ganja-like substance at the Dhaka Central Jail, the largest prison house and a reputed den of drug peddling.

Information of the raid was leaked out beforehand, sources said, alleging that jail guards were behind the act.

Over 200 members from police, Rab and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) started operations at around 9:00am

at the request of jail authorities, following allegations of various illegal activities, particularly drug peddling inside the jail, which houses over 12,000 prisoners.

Although the jail authorities said it was a routine search, this was the first time that RAB has taken part in such an extensive operation in the Dhaka Central Jail.

Accompanied by about 300 jail guards, the security men split into 12 squads and continued the search until 1:00pm.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

## No steps taken yet to tackle Monga

Observes JS body, slates govt inaction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliamentary standing committee on agriculture ministry yesterday again blasted the government for not taking any permanent measures to eliminate Monga, a near-famine situation that occurs in every September-October in the northwestern region.

In 2003, the government pledged to start corps diversification

programme and undertake projects of small and cottage industries in order to create alternative jobs for people, who lose their purchasing capacity as they do not have jobs during the two months.

But no significant step has been taken to mitigate sufferings of the people in the northwestern districts, observed the committee.

The opposition lawmakers in the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## Students call off strike after Buet agrees to extend Puja vacation

DU CORRESPONDENT

Students of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) on Tuesday night withdrew the indefinite strike after the authorities had agreed to lengthen the Durga Puja vacation.

Meanwhile, activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), ruling BNP's student wing, attacked a procession of left leaning Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) round about yesterday noon, leaving at least six students injured. Besides, the rampaging JCD men assaulted photojournalists Azad of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## Shadhana fined for unhygienic operations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court yesterday fined Shadhana Aushadhalaya Ltd, a renowned herbal medicine producer in the country, Tk 1,20,000 for keeping huge amount of rotten stinky molasses for use as raw material for the herbal drugs, and not maintaining hygienic condition inside the factory.

Besides, a large number of monkeys were found in and around the factory compound on Dinanath Sen Road of Sutrapur in the capital while flies and ants were seen moving on drug producing materials during the drive by the court led by Magistrate

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## News reports on army men's links a fiction

Says ISPR on Aug 17 blasts

UNB, Dhaka

The army headquarters yesterday said newspaper reports about the involvement of ex-lance corporal Harun-ur-Rashid and a number of other retired and serving army men in the August 17 bomb blasts were all a fiction.

Such reports are "totally fabricated, imaginative and baseless", it observed on the basis of crosschecks conducted on the reports run by

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## HUNT FOR ISLAMIST MILITANTS

# Combing operation soon in Sundarbans

Bangla Bhai's property attached

STAR REPORT

Law enforcers will soon launch a combing operation against Islamist extremists hiding in the Sundarbans since the August 17 countrywide serial bomb blasts.

Meanwhile, law enforcement agencies yesterday arrested eight activists of Jama'atul Mujahideen

Bangladesh (JMB), which is blamed for the August 17 attacks, in Comilla and Joypurhat, and police attached the valuables of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) leader Bangla Bhai from his house in Bogra.

According to highly placed sources, 33 Islamist extremists of the banned JMB, JMJB, Ahle Hadith Andolon Bangladesh (Ahab) and

Harkatul Jihad of Khulna division went into hiding in the Sundarbans after August 17.

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar at a views-exchanging meeting in the southern district on Tuesday directed three law enforcement agencies to crack down on the Islamist extremists and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

## Peeved Tuesday Group postpones meet on polls

REZAUL KARIM

The Tuesday Group, a club of foreign diplomats in Bangladesh, has decided to postpone its much-talked about conference on "electoral practices" in Dhaka, expressing disappointment over government's denial to permit it.

The grouping planned to hold a conference on "international best electoral practices" on January 22-23 next year, aiming to "promote

international standards electoral practices in support of free and fair parliamentary elections in Bangladesh."

The government, which does not recognise the Tuesday Group, declined to permit the holding of the conference, saying that such move will amount to interference in the internal affairs of the country.

In a press release issued yesterday, Tuesday Group Chairman and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## Security plan taken for Durga Puja

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has chalked out comprehensive security measures to check any untoward incidents during the Durga Puja, the biggest Hindu festival, in the second week of October.

As the number of puja mandaps increased by about 2,000 from last year's 19,700, the home ministry has opened a monitoring cell to receive security-related complaints round the clock from across the country. Rab and police have also opened separate monitoring cells to receive complaints.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



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## CROSS-BORDER HIGHWAY

# Dhaka, Yangon fail to finalise draft deal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Myanmar failed to finalise a draft agreement on a proposed cross-border highway project during the three-day high-level meeting held in Yangon from September 25 due to disagreements on some issues.

The disagreements have deferred the construction work on a 23-kilometre road scheduled to start

in end-October. Bangladesh government is supposed to finance the road, part of a 133-km highway linking Buthidaung in Myanmar with Ramu in Bangladesh.

However, the two sides agreed to hold its next meeting in Dhaka in November to finalise the draft framework on establishing direct road-link between the two countries. An agreement is likely to be

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## Rejoinder

The finance division yesterday contradicted a news item headlined "WB may defer credit as no move to vacate stay" carried by The Daily Star on September 26, saying the report on the role of the finance division is "baseless".

The report said the complications arising out of the privatisation of Rupali Bank may further defer the World Bank's Development Support Credit (DSC) to Bangladesh. It also said the International Monetary Fund expressed dissatisfaction over the issue and questioned the government's sincerity in initiating

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Buet rejoinder

The registrar of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) yesterday in a rejoinder said the vice-chancellor (VC) did not hand any student over to police on Tuesday during an altercation with them.

VC Prof Mohammad Alee Murtuza called the law enforcement agencies to ask about the identity of a student who was wearing short-pants, the rejoinder said.

It also mentioned that the name of director of students' welfare is Monowar Hossain instead of

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