PROTESTS IN THAILAND

Govt-opposition talks end without resolution

sure on Abhisit on the week-

end, threatening to march in

their tens of thousands on the

military barracks where he has

largely from the country's rural

poor who say the British-born

Oxford-educated Abhisit is

only able to lead the govern-

ment's fragile six-party coali-

tion with the powerful mili-

Thailand political analyst

and Thaksin biographer Chris

Baker said Abhisit's decision to

enter talks revealed more

about the feelings of other

establishment figures who

various other people think they

can best manage the situa-

tion?... I think they're likely to

think Abhisit's quite simply

be over so quickly," Baker said.

after a rally Saturday that drew

80,000 people and forced

troops to retreat from several

security posts in the heart of

the capital where they have

been stationed since the dem-

Recording of

depositions

ends at Feni

A special court at 19 Rifles

Battalion under Jailaskar in

Feni finished recording the

depositions yesterday in the

incident of BDR jawans' rebel-

depositions in the court that

took the tally to 22 out of a total

third phase trial process at 19

Rifles Battalion headquarters

at 11:00am with BDR Director

General Major General Mainul

Islam in the chair and Lt Col

Akhteruzzaman and Major

Md Maksudul Alam as the

The court will resume the

Earlier, 62 accused BDR

jawans were produced before

the court at Jailaskar from a

Feni court under supervision

of Rapid Action Battalion and

Salahuddin presented the

the rally for the last two weeks.

headed by standing commit-

tee member Khandakai

Mosharraf Hossain and lead-

ers of Chittagong unit held a

press conference vesterday

afternoon. The leaders at the

press conference pledged to

Addressing the conference

government's failure to fulfil

make the rally a success.

BNP central leaders

accused before the court.

December 20 last year.

BNP's Ctg

FROM PAGE 16

Prosecutor Lt Col Gazi Md

The trial process started on

Eight witnesses gave their

Special court-3 started the

lion there.

members.

trial at 8:30am today.

police personnel.

of 31 witnesses.

A CORRESPONDENT, Feni

"I don't think these talks will

The Reds are riding high

expendable," he said.

onstrations began.

BDR MUTINY

"How do the military and

back the weakened premier.

Their movement is drawn

been holed up.

tary's backing.

AFP, Bangkok

Live televised talks between Thailand's embattled Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva and anti-government protesters ended yesterday without resolution, failing to end two weeks of street demonstra-

The premier refused to bow to the red-shirted demonstrators demand to call snap elections, but both sides agreed to meet the next day at 6:00 pm (1100 GMT) to continue discussions.

"House dissolution can only happen if we see it is not only the way out for the Reds but for the whole country also," Abhisit told three Red Shirt leaders across a meeting table as he sat flanked by two of his senior staff.

The Reds' Jatuporn Prompan, one of the leaders of the movement that backs deposed premier Thaksin Shinawatra, said they would return to the table on Monday, but pressed the prime minister to meet their request within a fortnight.

"We ask you to dissolve the house within two weeks. Whatever your decision should be, if we talk tomorrow, I want you to consider this condition," Jatuporn told Abhisit.

The Reds have staged a series of mass dramatic stunts over the past two weeks in their bid to force Abhisit to call snap elections, picketing the army barracks where he is holed up and throwing their own blood at his office gates.

Abhisit had ruled out talks earlier Sunday, but made an about-face later in the day and looked visibly uneasy throughout much of the three-hour meeting with the Red Shirt leaders, held at a Bangkok educational institute.

The Red Shirts are opposed to Abhisit's Democrat-led government, accusing it of being undemocratic as it came to power on the back of a parliamentary vote that followed a controversial court ruling ousting Thaksin's allies from

They seek the return of the twice-elected populist Thaksin, a former telecoms tycoon, saying that the coup that ousted him in 2006 was

"If you are confident of winning an election, you should return power to the people," Jatuporn told Abhisit. Polls are due to be held by

December 2011. Tens of thousands of protesters sat at their rally ground in Bangkok's government quarter Sunday to watch the televised talks on a giant screen, waving their signature plastic clappers as their leaders

The Reds upped the pres-

Road links

FROM PAGE 1 Amin bus service centring a road accident that left a child killed on Thursday.

Sources said the accident

Police arrested the driver

But former chairman of

Jhilonja union and also the

president of AL Cox's Bazar

unit Md Mujibur Rahman

Shah Amin authority before

sitting for any mutual settle-

Joint convener of the

Parishad Mohammad Musa

told The Daily Star that the AL

leader also threatened to stop

demanding immediate steps

ment, sources added.

not fulfilled.

conducting any autopsy.

occurred at Banglabazar at a local community centre, under Ramu upazila when a Mosharraf Hossain said BNP is speeding bus of Shah Amin organising the divisional knocked the child leaving him rallies to protest against the dead on the spot. present government's differ-Locals grabbed the driver ent moves inimical to people's and gave him a good beating interests, and condemn the before the arrival of police.

and also took initiative to The BNP chairperson at the settle the issue through an rally will give guidelines as to understanding on compensahow the leaders will organise different programmes in tion as the victim's family requested them to allow the protest at the government's body to be buried without anti-state and anti-people

its electoral pledge.

moves, he added. Mosharraf termed the clashes between two groups of local BNP in the city's Dewanhat on Friday and demanded Tk 5 lakh from Saturday as stray incidents, and alleged that one or two newspa-

pers had put extra focus on them to create confusions. BNP standing committee

member Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, central vicechairman Abdullah Al Noman, movement of the Shah Amin Chittagong city BNP president buses on Chittagong-Cox's Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, BNP chairper-Bazar route if his demand is son's adviser Mir Mohammad They called the strike Nasir Uddin, MP Jafrul Islam Chowdhury, Barkat Ullah to resolve the dispute and stop Bulu, Amanullah Aman, Giasuddin Quader any sort of extortion, he said adding that the strike will Chowdhury, Syed Wahidul continue until fulfilment of Alam, Golam Akber Khondoker, Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Annie and Dr Shahadat Hossain, among

press conference.

conference.

Opposition Chief Whip in

parliament Zainul Abdin

Farroque delivered the wel-

come speech at the press

their demand. When contacted, Mujibur others, were present at the

said he demanded the money as compensation for the victim's family. People bound for different destinations including Patiya,

Anwara, Banshkhali and other

southern upazilas suffered

immensely due to the strike.

Rab chief rules out killings in 'crossfire'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The director general of Rapid Action Battalion yesterday refuted the allegations of extrajudicial killing by Rab and said investigations are carried out after each death in gunfight with Rab.

"Rab members never get involved in any activity which is extra-judicial," Hassan Mahmood Khandkar, the Rab chief, said at a press briefing at its head quarters in Uttara.

Rab follows a legal framework and is aware of human rights, Hassan added.

He said the battalion didn't even spare its 850 members for breaching the code of conduct. Of them, 400 members have been punished.

Since Rab was formed, a total of 620 people have been killed in crossfire. Underlining its successful

role, the Rab chief said about 64,664 people and around 7,000 firearms have so far been seized. Religious militancy and extremism have also been brought under control. "There are still some prob-

lems and efforts are underway to solve them," said Hasan,

He also stressed the need for forming a national committee to check the use of drug for its harmful effect upon the society.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Sahara Khatun last night said Rab members are left with no option but to open fire when criminals shoot at them.

Law and order has improved because of the relentless efforts of police and Rab, she said while addressing a dinner and cultural programme organised on Rab's sixth founding anniversary at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre. State Minister for Home

Shamsul Haque Tuku urged Rab members to work with sincerity and honesty as thei wrongdoings or negligence to duty stigmatise not only the force itself, but also other forces from where personnel come to Rab on deputation.

Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad and the Rab DG also spoke at the event. The principal secretary, home secretary, chiefs of three forces, social dignitaries and top serving and retired police and Rab officials attended the programme.

Strike stops

FROM PAGE 16

illogical, Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan yesterday called upon the agitating workers to resolve their problem through discussion, reports UNB.

Talking to reporters at his ministry, he said berthoperators have agreed to reinstate some 2,500 workers.

But federation leaders want to reinstate those sacked workers by themselves to get back the power they lost after formation of Dock Board, said the minister.

Talking to The Daily Star Golam Mohammad, president of the federation, said a meeting between the labour and shipping ministries on October 26 last year decided to take in the terminated workers and formed a committee in this regard.

Around 2,700 workers selected by the committee for reappointment, were yet to get back their jobs, he said.

"The minister wants the selected workers to be appointed under the berth operators and this process won't protect our interest, alleged the federation presi

We want the appointments to be made through CPA as it was earlier under the control of now dissolved Dock Workers' Management Board, he said.

"Assuring us of resolving the matter the minister in the meeting asked us to postpone the work abstention. We didn't agree as the government had enough time to make the appointments," he said.

Meanwhile, during the work abstention, the workers beat up four clearing and forwarding (C&F) agent employees known as jetty sircar. The latter were entering the port to take delivery and load goods on behalf of the shippers.

Protesting at the incident, jetty workers stopped taking deliveries and loading goods at the port since 1:00pm, said Alamgir Hossain, joint secretary (customs affairs), C&F Agents Association.

C&F Agents Employees Union president Abul Kashem said, "No jetty sircar would enter the port until the port

authority ensures our safety." "The workers attacked us as we went to work instead of joining the work abstention called by the federation we

don't belong to," he alleged.



and another member retired district judge AKM Zahir Ahmed yesterday visit old High Court building, the venue selected for the trial.

Mosquito menace FROM PAGE 1 Khoka said a massive drive

the chemical used to kill adult mosquitoes.

It was estimated that more than 4 lakh litres of adulticide is required each year to combat the menace of mosquitoes in Dhaka, but until October, 2009 the corporation had only 50,000 litres. Another 25,000 litres of adulticide arrived in January, with a further 75,000 litres arriving in March.

However, the DCC has had adequate reserve of larvicide, which is used to kill newly hatched mosquitoes, as well as mosquito eggs. Workers have allegedly

been negligent in carrying out cleaning operations. The have complained that bureaucratic tangles have prevented them from being paid by the DCC.

An official from DCC said they have a budget of Tk 17.50 crore to address the menace this fiscal year, including around Tk 1.64 crore to clean water bodies.

Jamshed Mia, toll collector at a Dhaka ghat, Behind Bangladesh Bank Colony, said before the DCC cleaned the water last week, he had not seen a single cleaning operation in the last one year.

Mayor Sadeque Hossain

throughout the city has started last week. "We will continue the drive until the mosquito population is under control.' Under-construction build-

ings with blocked drains also create breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Continuous load shedding is also intensifying the sufferings of residents, who are even more susceptible to being bitten without the draft of electric fans.

The areas most badly affected by mosquitoes include Pallabi, Mirpur, Kazipara, Sheorapara, Mohakhali, Tejgaon, Eskaton, Hatirpool, Khilgaon, Bashabo, Madartek, Shahjahanpur, Rampura, Shanti Nagar, Gopibagh Lalmatia, Mohammadpur, Uttara, Gendaria Segunbagicha, Islambagh, Lalbagh and Sutrapur.

A spokesperson from DCC said it has 169-mosquito crew and 396 spray team personnel who use 393 fog machines, 893 hand sprayers, 50 wheelmounted sprayers and six ultra low volume (large) and ultra low volume (portable) sprayers to kill mosquito and larva.

Serve villagers

FROM PAGE 16 village areas, she said.

Some 11,000 health clinics were set up and the rest were supposed to be set up in time, but the next BNP-Jamaat alliance government had stopped the project on political grounds, she added.

"Now following the massive victory of the December 29, 2008 General Election, the country's people have again reposed a sacred duty on us to serve them. We all together have to work round the clock to fulfil their aspirations," she said.

Hasina also asked the authorities concerned to make people aware about cheap but highly rich foods to recover the nutrition deficits of the people.

As the BMA leaders raised the issue of the corruption and irregularities that took place during the BNP-Jamaat rulers in various sectors including the health sector, the premier gave the example of planned Sheikh Abu Naser Specialised Hospital in Khulna with 250 beds.

She said the specialised hospital was to be set up almost free of cost with finance from a development partner of Bangladesh, but the last BNP-Jamaat government had stopped construction of the hospital only because it was named after Sheikh Abu Naser.

"If the specialised hospital could have been constructed, people of the southern region

would get free modern medical facilities," she added. The premier stressed the need for setting up child health unit with child cardiac

surgery units in all hospitals of

the country.

Hasina further emphasised on taking collective programmes and projects for effective treatment to the children suffering from autism and other mental diseases.

The BMA leaders hailed the present government's plans and programmes and promised to stand by the government to make the country's health sector fully active and effective again.

Health Minister Dr AFM Ruhal Huq, Health Adviser to the PM Dr Syed Mudasser Ali and PM's Office Secretary Mollah Waheeduzzaman among others, were present.

Muggers kill army man in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Hospital.

A case was filed.

Muggers stabbed an army soldier to death in Rangpur district town early yesterday. The dead was identified as

Aahadul Islam, 30, of decide to engage army personnel to help ease the water crisis Matiranga army camp in in the capital, a source said. Khagrachhari. The party president asked Sources said a gang of

them to help resolve the crises. muggers intercepted Aahadul Hasina and other party and stabbed him indiscrimileaders expressed frustration nately after he arrived at the over the pro-AL panel's setback central bus terminal from in the polls to the Supreme Dhaka at about 4:00am.

Court Bar Association and Aahadul was going to his in-law's house in the town.

Dhaka University Syndicate. They blamed the lacklustre The muggers left the scene performance on lack of coordias locals rushed to the spot nation. hearing screams of Aahadul. On awarding nomination, He died on the way to

AL deputy office secretary Rangpur Medical College Mrinal Kanti Das said the nomination for the by-polls would be finalised after scrutiny.

First task FROM PAGE 1

hopeful that enough evidence would be found to try the offenders," he told The Daily Star last night.

"The agency will also investigate complaints from individuals," said Matin, a former additional secretary of the law ministry and a former Dhaka district judge.

The three judges of the tribunal and a few members of the investigation and prosecution teams spent their first working day at the tribunal office in the old High Court building yesterday.

The government on Thursday announced formation of the three bodies to try persons who committed genocide, crimes against humanity and peace during the Liberation War of Bangladesh.

Tribunal Chairman Md Nazmul Huq and two members ATM Fazle Kabir and AKM Zahir Ahmed inspected the courtroom and held a meeting at the chairman's chamber.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed also went to the tribunal building and visited the courtroom at that time.

The judges of the tribunal refused to talk to journalists but some government sources said a spokesperson is likely to be appointed to deal with the media on behalf of the tribu-The tribunal will formulate

rules to run its function in light of the rules. But the most cherished

thing--start of the trial of war criminals--would depend on the performance of the investigation agency. "When the investigation

UP chairman,

his aide

Dinajpur

murdered

in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

A union parishad chairman and

his close aide were stabbed to

death in Nawabganj upazila of

Five people were arrested in

The deceased were identi-

fied as Sirajul Islam, 45, chair-

man of Binodpur UP, and

Aminul Haque Jewel, 40, son of

Ismail Hossain o

Locals said Sirajul and Jewel

were returning home on a

motorcycle after attending a

cultural programme at

Nawabganj Pilot High School

organised by upazila Awami

League at about 12:30am

Sunday. As they reached

Masuapara village some

unidentified criminals blocked

their way and dragged them to a

nearby bamboo cluster and

The villagers sent them to

stabbed them indiscriminately.

Nawabganj Upazila Health

Complex where on duty doctors

referred them to Dinajpur

Medical College Hospital. But

they succumbed to their inju-

Begum and her husband Zayed

Hossain, Rakibul Rahman,

Ramzan Ali and Salim Ahmed of

Ramchandrapur village in this

AL lawmakers

Abdur Razzak and Suranjit

Sengupta could not attend the

meeting. Razzak is now out of

sure to save power from differ-

ent sources to ease the ongoing

factories for at least 15 days to

save electricity is one option, as

the government would not be

able to generate more power so

suggestion, saying the govern-

ment has an adequate stock of

direct the related ministry to

issue a notice on the matter in a

to take immediate steps to ease

the sufferings of the people who

voted us to power," said a senior

party leader wishing anonym-

said she is aware of the suffer-

ings of people especially in the

city due to power, water and gas

crises. She is concerned," the AL

The prime minister may

The leader [Sheikh Hasina]

The AL leaders backed their

The premier is expected to

We requested the premier

They recommended a mea-

The shutdown of fertiliser

the country while Suranjit is ill.

connection.

FROM PAGE 1

crisis.

soon, they said.

couple of days.

leadersaid.

Police arrested Rehana

ries on the way to Dinajpur.

Rambhadrapur village.

the district early yesterday.

this connection.

agency will prepare a case about any individual it will come to the prosecution team and then we will move forward to start the trial," advocate Mosharraf Hossain Kajol told The Daily Star at the tribunal office. Chief investigator Abdul

suspected persons from the government to proceed with investigation. "We will decide who could be accused in this tribunal based on our investigation," he said.

Matin told The Daily Star that

they do not have any list of

As the investigators will primarily look into archival materials, the investigation team would write to archive



Abdul Matin

authorities in the country to provide them with print and video materials containing information about the offences and the offenders of 1971.

"As we will not be able to visit different countries to look for archival materials, we will write to the foreign ministry to ask all Bangladesh missions to collect necessary documents of 1971 from the archives in those countries," he said.

The investigators will scan everything in archives-newspapers, books, official documents, still pictures, films, documentaries, drama. Matin said when they will

have enough evidence against a person they will prepare a case to start the trial. But the chief investigator is not sure yet if they have the power to arrest any suspected

person with or without the permission of the tribunal. He said they will serve a notice on a person, if necessary, after gathering enough evidence against him, asking

that person to appear before

the tribunal to give statement. Jamaat-e-Islami leader Mir Kashem Ali, who was allegedly involved in war crimes, recently left the country for Saudi Arabia. Asked what they would do when someone goes into hiding after receiving the notice, Matin said they will have to act as per the law in this regard.

A legal expert linked to the tribunal's activities told The Daily Star that the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973 does not bar trial of any accused in absen-

The chief investigator said they will start working formally today after a meeting of the investigation team, which had an introductory meeting with the 12 members of the prosecution team at the law minister's house last evening.

Travel alert

Sources said Law Minister Shafique Ahmed and Home Minister Sahara Khatun expressed their disappointment over the incident and directed authorities to investigate the

Questions are now being asked as to how Kashem managed not only to flee the country but to also use the airport's VIP lounge. The government has pro-

vided the authorities at interna tional airports as well as land and seaports with a list of around 40 alleged war criminals along with their photographs. However some sources claim

that authorities were not provided with specific information relating to Kashem and that he relied on his identity as the chairman of Diganto Television, rather than as a member of Jamaat's executive committee.

A source told The Daily Star that National Security Intelligence (NSI) and the

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) have prepared separate lists of alleged war criminals, which have been approved by the home ministry and have also been distributed to

air, land and sea ports. The home minister said the government will, if necessary, seek help from Interpol to track down the accused and identify war criminals now abroad.

While talking to reporters attending an annual school sports programme in the capital, Sahara urged the public to cooperate with the newly formed war crimes tribunal by providing information about those who may have committed war crimes during the Liberation War of

In the past Kashem played a key role in lobbying Saudi Arabia to promote the interests of

He is also a director of Islami Bank and he was instrumental in setting up Saudi-based NGO Rabeta al-Islami.

tatives from all upazilas of

uled at Shahid Satu Hall could

not be held there due to imposi-

tion of Section 144 imposed by

the administration in appre-

Phulkuri Islamic Academy.

It was later shifted to

BCL, ruling Awami League's

Mojaheed called for unity of

Depicting a grim situation

the nationalist forces to undo

the expansionist design of

prevailing in the country he said

the ruling party is playing in the

hands of expansionist forces

who have decided to reduce

ing from severe power and gas

crisis. People are frustrated at

deteriorating law and order

He said the nation is suffer-

Bangladesh to their market.

student wing, had called for

meeting at those places vowing

to resist the Jamaat leaders and

branding them war criminals.

The meeting earlier sched-

Rajshahi division.

hension of trouble.

dividing the nation.

Mojaheed warns

freed under the Shimla treaty.

They warned the govern-

ment of "dire consequences' for such a move.

"The government is making a farce of the trial of war criminals," AHM Hamidur Rahman Azad, party's Dhaka city unit secretary, said at a meeting of Jamaat Hazaribagh unit in the capital yesterday. Azad, also a Jamaat law-

maker, claimed that the government is trying to hide its failure by terrifying people in the name of trial. 'Different human rights

organisations have raised voices against the government move," Azad said.

The Jamaat leader said the government revived the issue of war crimes that had been settled 39 years back.

Mojaheed said, "Jamaat is not a party swept here by waves. It has its roots among the people. It will be mistaken if anyone thinks Jamaat can be wiped out."

noon.

situation. He was speaking at an organisational meeting at the party office in headded. Chapainawabganj in the after-

Manipulation of tenders and extortions by the ruling party cadres are now very common,

Islam Bulbul, Aminul Islam and Prof Nazrul Islam, among oth-The meeting of Majlis-eers, addressed the meeting. Sura was attended by represen-

Prof Mujibur Rahman, Nurul