Myanmar opposition talks with US

AFP, Yangon

An American diplomat met with members of Myanmar's opposition yesterday to discuss economic sanctions but democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi was not present, a political party leader said.

"Altogether eight political parties met with the US charge d'affaires (Larry Dinger) this afternoon and discussed sanctions," Khin Maung Swe, a political leader of the National Democratic Force (NDF), told AFP.

The NDF, a breakaway group from Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party, has previously said it is against the punitive economic measures enforced by the United States and the European Union.

"We explained to them what we have said before regarding the lifting of sanctions," Khin Maung Swe said, adding that the Yangon-based US official asked for "concrete evidence" to support their stance. "They said as yet they

have no plan to reconsider.' Thu Wai, chairman of the

Democratic Party (Myanmar), who was also at the talks, said the US side explained the sanctions were in place to pressure the military government. Supporters of the trade

and financial sanctions say they are the only way to pressure the military rulers of Myanmar, where there are about 2,200 political prison-

Opposition leader Suu Kyi said this month, in an interview with a German newspaper, that sanctions against the junta should remain until "something has changed here".

A rare election in November and Suu Kyi's subsequent release from house arrest have reignited a debate about the measures, and the EU is poised to decide in April whether to continue sanctions against the regime.

European diplomats recently held talks with Suu Kyi, 65, and other opposition members about the possibility of lifting the sanctions, which global think-tank International Crisis Group has criticised as "counterproductive."

A spokesman for Suu Kyi's NLD confirmed yesterday that they had not attended the meeting with the US official but had met him on Sunday. "We were not invited for

this meeting and we didn't know about it," said spokesman Ohn Kyaing. "So far, we have no plan to

meet with them regarding sanctions. The NLD has no voice in a

newly opened parliament dominated by the military and its proxies. It was disbanded for opting to boycott the vote because the rules seemed designed to bar Suu Kyi from participating.

The United States said last month that calls to ease sanctions on Myanmar were

tion work could not be

started because of difficul-

ties in carrying heavy equip-

ment from Kolkata to

lem came when Bangladesh

agreed to allow the tranship-

ment following an Indo-

Bangla accord during Prime

Minister Sheikh Hasina's

visit to New Delhi in January

The solution to the prob-

Tripura.

last year.

kills 13

sources said yesterday.

Overnight, gunmen

stormed into a notorious and

poor district of the northern

city of Mosul, killing six

women and a man, police

were killed last night by

gunmen who stormed into a

home in Al-Tanak neigh-

bourhood of Mosul," a

police major told AFP. The

district is infamous for its

brothels, which are illegal in

A source at Al-Mosul

'Six women and one man

and medical sources said.

Power plant

FROM PAGE 20 heavy-duty trailers carrying

equipment for Palatana Power Station in Tripura can avoid 15 risky bridges and culverts on the way to Akhaura. The equipment was sent

from West Bengal to Ashuganj through

Ramizuddin, subassistant engineer of Brahmanbaria Roads and Highways Department, told The Daily Star that the logistic company, ABC India, won the contract to transport the equipment required to build the 726-megawatt power station.

ABC India got the diversion roads built by contractor Gulf Orient Seaways Limited of Bangladesh.

When four Indian Hydraulic Excel Trailers loaded with equipment around 12:30am started from Ashuganj, high officials of the district administration, law enforcement agencies and customs were present there to provide security and other supports.

Since March 9, ships carrying 16 consignments ranging between 20 tonnes and 285 tonnes have reached the Ashuganj port from Kolkata. Yesterday four of them were sent by the

trailers. The trailers-- three havhospital confirmed that the ing 120 wheels and another bodies of six women and a 128 wheels-- are moving at a man had been received. He speed of five kilometres per said the women were aged hour carrying a consignment of around 80 tonnes

transhipped from Kolkata to

Tripura using the road. Gulf

Orient Seaways Limited will

arrange the transportation

from this end under the

supervision of the Roads and

According to the memo-

randum of understanding

(MOU) between Bangladesh

and India, the transhipment

is supposed to conclude by

Highways Department.

the end of June 2012.

work by June this year.

between 20 and 40. Mosul's Nineveh province is home to armed Total 96 consignments for Islamic groups, some related the power station will be

to Al-Qaeda. Meanwhile, in the north of

Baghdad, "gunmen detonated three sonic bombs in the Cairo neighbourhood as a distraction. When the bombs exploded, the gunmen attacked three jewellery shops, killing the owners and one other person while fleeing with the loot," an interior ministry official said.

Nine people were also wounded, he added.

Gulf Orient Managing Many jewellery stores Director Sheikh Mahfuz have been stormed begin-Hamid, however, said they ning last year, most of them are hopeful to complete the in Baghdad. Security officials say insurgent groups The foundations of about may be carrying out such 4,500 crore rupee Palatana robberies to obtain much-Power Plant were laid in needed income to fund 2005, but the main construcoperations.

Kader Siddiqui

FROM PAGE 20 office and urged to take him

back," said Abdur Razzaque, food and disaster management minister, at his office. The minister said he had shared the matter with Prime

Minister Sheikh Hasina and

the AL chief showed no inter-

FROM PAGE 1

violence.

them. In a couple of places,

the rioters even chased out-

numbered policemen by

pelting them with bricks and

stones. Police arrested only

one rickshawalah for the

the violence erupted at

around 9:00am and lasted

more than three hours dis-

rupting traffic and normal life

in Gulistan, Paltan, Motijheel,

Kakrail, Shantinagar,

Malibagh, Moghbazar,

Mothers screamed in

panic as the rioters attacked

vans and rickshaws carrying

school children crying for

help. The bolt-from-the-blue

rampage left thousands of

commuters stranded either

on vehicles stuck up in the

violence or on roads waiting

the streets," said Fahmida

Khatun, a mother taking her

son to school in Malibagh.

"We have been lucky to

Students missed classes

escape unhurt," she said.

"It was a hell let loose on

forvehicles.

Rampura and Badda.

Police and witnesses said

est in this regard. Asked about the rejoining, Kader Siddiqui Bir Uttam questioned whether the minister is the president or general secretary of AL who has the authority to reinstate anyone in the party.

"This is absolutely baseless," he told The Daily Star yesterday wondering why he would propose to join AL, or even BNP.

Kader Siddiqui recently said that BNP founder and late president Ziaur Rahman proclaimed the independence of the nation in 1971.

AL insiders believe that

Siddiqui, a former AL leader

and close associate of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, made the comment out of frustration. Kader Siddiqui resigned from the seventh parliament and the ruling Awami League

BNP waits

in 1999 and floated BKSIL.

FROM PAGE 20

meeting, refused to comment on the issue. BNP Senior Join

Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said i is not time to go for a joint movement against the government, as the matter is yet to be discussed in the party forum. Some BNP leaders said a

section of influential leaders are strongly opposing the idea to revive the alliance, as some senior Jamaat leaders now face trial for their alleged involvement in crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation Jamaat must get cleared

of war crimes allegations for the revival of the four-party alliance, said the leaders.

Otherwise it might leave a negative impression on people. BNP doesn't want to face any criticism over its ties with Jamaat, they said.

The Awami League-led government initiated trial of war criminals in line with an electoral pledge. The main opposition neither supported nor opposed the

BNP and Jamaat participated in the last two general elections under the fourparty alliance, but the coalition has remained inactive after its debacle in the 2009 parliamentary elections.

Iraq violence SC hearing FROM PAGE 20

Yunus and nine board members of the microfinance AFP, Baghdad bank on March 9 filed two A spate of unrelated attacks separate provisional leave to appeal petitions with the around Iraq killed 13 people, including seven in the apex court seeking a stay on northern city of Mosul and the operation of the verdict four during a jewellery heist and the central bank order. in Baghdad, police and other

They filed the writs after the HC rejected two writ petitions challenging the removal order against Yunus on March 8.

On March 15, the apex court adjourned the hearing of the appeals for two weeks.

The appeals have been recorded as third and fourth items in today's hearing list of the Appellate Division.

Stalker stabs

FROM PAGE 1 the victim, told The Daily Star that Mahmuda around 9:30am stepped out to go to her cousin's residence nearby and on way Rafique, 26, of the area, waylaid her, dragged her to a lane and

stabbed her. Hearing Mahmuda screaming, locals rushed to the spot, but by that time

Rafique had fled the scene. Mahmuda was taken to a local clinic and then shifted to Dhaka Medical College

Ali said Rafique is an accused in several cases and used to stalk his daughter on way to her college.

He had complained to Rafique's parents about his stalking but to no avail, he said.

"We dared not go to police as he is a notorious criminal in the area," he added.

Kadamtali police yesterday said they could not catch the stalker as he went into hiding following the incident.

General Hospital and the other by DMCH doctors. The DMCH doctors con-

and commuters were late to work in the violence-wracked areas of the city. to the streets at the call of

Bangladesh Rickshaw-Van Malik-Sramik Sangram Parishad after Dhaka Metropolitan Police extended a ban on rickshaws to eight new roads in addition to 13

and Hosne Ara of Shariatpur

General Hospital. They pre-

pared the much-talked-

about autopsy report of Hena

Akter, which totally avoided

mentioning injury marks on

Shariatpur was raped by her

cousin Mahbub, 40, on

January 23. In local arbitra-

tion the next day she was

lashed at least 50 times upon

a Fatwa (religious edict).

Hena succumbed to her

report by Shariatpur doctors

disturbing, the HC yesterday

said criminal proceedings

will be drawn against them

on charges of damaging and

concealing evidence and

depicted the death as a case

of suicide, the HC bench of

Justice AHM Shamsuddin

Chowdhury Manik and

Justice Sheikh Md Zakir

Hossain said Civil Surgeon

Golam Sarwar primarily

masterminded the whole

the magnitude of illegality,"

said Justice Shamsuddin

The justice said the medi-

cal board has unequivocally

stated that the second post-

mortem report compiled by

the doctors of Dhaka Medical

College Hospital (DMCH) is

credible and acceptable

while the report that

stemmed from the doctors of

Shariatpur is just the oppo-

The court termed the

It ordered the health sec-

retary and the director gen-

eral (DG) of Directorate of

Health to take departmental

actions against the four phy-

highest punishment for

committing such offences is

10 years' imprisonment

while the doctors may lose

their jobs if departmental

supervise the process of

initiation of the criminal

proceedings, instructed the

Bangladesh Medical and

Dental Council to take statu-

tory action against the four

order examining the probe

report by a seven-member

high powered medical board

headed by the DG

formed as per an HC directive

on February 10 to find the

reasons for information

varying in two autopsy

reports -- one prepared by

four doctors of Shariatpur

The medical board was

Directorate of Health.

It also directed the head of

The home secretary will

A legal expert said the

sicians immediately.

actions are taken.

HCbench.

doctors.

action and attitude of the

four "miscarriage of justice".

Chowdhury Manik.

"We are appalled to see

episode.

Citing that the doctors

trying to hide the truth.

Terming the autopsy

injuries on January 31.

Fifteen-year-old Hena of

FROM PAGE 1

the victim's body.

roads where non-motorised transport like rickshaws are not allowed to run. The organisation has recently been agitating against strict enforcement of the ban and traffic rules on these roads. The new roads brought under rickshaw ban are located in

Moghbazar, Mouchak,

Malibagh, Bangla Motor,

Motsyabhaban, Shilpakala

and Doel Chattar to High

Court.

Rampage for rickshaws

The authorities said the restrictions were meant for easing traffic congestion and to discourage arrival of new unregistered rickshaws on the roads. The capital city teems with tens of thousands of unlicensed rickshaws. DMP Joint Commissioner

(Traffic) Mahbubur Rahman

said the rickshaw-pullers,

provoked by rickshaw owners,

carried out the vandalism. The restrictions have been imposed in public interest, he During yesterday's rampage, the protesters chanted slogans such as "where there is road, there will be rickshaw"

and "restriction on rickshaws

will not be tolerated". They stopped and over-The rickshaw-pullers took turned many vans and rickshaws carrying passengers, including school children and their mothers. They also attacked many rickshawpullers who did not join the protest, and ransacked their rickshaws while the bus and

firmed a good number of

injury marks on Hena's body

and reported that the reason

behind the death was haem-

orrhage followed by

septicaemic shock as a result

of wound from blunt object

and were ante-mortem and

The same HC bench ear-

"We are particularly dis-

lier issued a suo moto rule on

mayed by the discrepancies

between the two reports.

Bearing in mind that fate of a

vast majority of murder cases

depend on post-mortem

reports, we are alarmed to see

that some reports may not be

accurate," Justice Manik,

senior judge of the bench,

mortem reports mean mis-

carriage of justice and it is

obvious from the high-

powered medical board

report that such incident

The bench was of the view

that Golam Sarwar, civil

surgeon of Shariatpur, pri-

marily masterminded the

whole concealing exercise

and set up the autopsy team

and issued a certificate of

accuracy, said the judge,

adding that it was the civil

surgeon who prima-facie

devised a story of suicide

although the viscera report

did not agree with the suicide

reasons to prima-facie sus-

pect that Golam Sarwar

played a diabolic role in

hiding the truth," Justice

admittedly aware of the fact

that Hena was admitted to

hospital with physical inju-

ries. Yet he was horrendous

enough to establish his sui-

cide theory," said Justice

be surprising that the other

doctors of the post-mortem

team at Shariatpur were

directly or indirectly influ-

cious enough to insist that

the report prepared by the

doctors was accurate, imply-

ing that the post-mortem

report prepared by the

DMCH doctors was inaccu-

transpires from the report

that Hena was discharged

yet to recover, the HC

observed, adding, had her

treatment continued, Hena

cal board in its report said the

doctors of Shariatpur

General Hospital and district

Civil Surgeon Golam Sarwar

are "equally" guilty of not

mentioning the injury marks

ABM Altaf Hossain yesterday

placed the report before the

Deputy Attorney General

on Hena's body deliberately.

The high powered medi-

It was also prima-facie

rate, the court said.

might survive.

The court passed the from hospital when she was

Golam Sarwar was auda-

enced by Golam Sarwar.

The court said it would not

"Golam Sarwar was

Manik said.

Manik.

There are overwhelming

the doctors of Shariatpur.'

He said, "Wrong post-

homicidal in nature.

this issue.

auto-rickshaw drivers were beaten up as they tried to speed away from the violence.

Shiblee Noman, officer-incharge of Ramna Police Station, told The Daily Star the rioting rickshaw-pullers vandalised several hundred vehicles in the areas stretching from Purana Paltan to Rampura Bazar and blocked roads at Mouchak intersection and Paltan. They also set garbage and tyres on fire in some spots. Vehicular movements on these roads halted during the vandalism. Witnesses said the rick-

Muktangon where a rally was supposed to be held. Dhaka Medical College and Hospital sources said at least seven auto-rickshaw drivers received treatment for injuries. Agitating rickshawpullers beat them with iron rod, rickshaw chain and pipes at Hazipara area of Rampura

around 9:30am.

shaw-pullers carried out

vandalism at different points

on their way to the city's

Rickshaw-Van Malik-Sramik Sangram Parishad convenor Rustom-e-Zaman, who is also the general secretary of Bangladesh Rickshaw Owners' League, told The Daily Star, "We have been forced to organise the protest programme following continuous repression by the law enforcers on the roads and torture of the rickshawpullers as well as the owners.' Prosecute 4 doctors

court submitted by the high

gence in preparing the

autopsy report is proven,

which is against medical

ethics," said the report, add-

ing that the first post-

mortem report was vague,

also ordered the health secre-

tary and the DG Directorate

of Health to implement the

recommendations of the

high-powered medical board

in order to make future post-

The court ordered the

health and home secretaries,

DG Directorate of Health,

inspector general of police

(IGP), Shariatpur deputy

commissioner and superin-

tendent of police to submit

separate reports to it by April

further order on this issue,

dispose of the criminal case

against the four doctors of

Shariatpur based on appro-

priate evidence and wit-

influenced by the HC obser-

asked the IGP to implement

the Shariatpur SP's recom-

mendation for departmental

actions against two officials

Mirza Abul Kalam and

Muhammad Aslam Uddin

Mollah -- for mentioning

irrelevant issues while pre-

paring the inquest report and

from Barrister Sara Hossain,

advocates Seema Zahur and

Alena Khan before passing

Howlader for the helm of

Jaikathi union parishad,

while Farid Khan is compet-

ing with his nephew Tareq

Moshiur Rahman and his

father Syed Akhtaruzzaman

are pitted against each other

for controls of the Tiyakhali

Mohammad alias Monir

Mollah and Shawkat Hayder

alias Shamim Mollah--are

chairman candidates at

Kalaiya union in Baufal

upazila. Both are nephews of

ASM Feroz, the ruling Awami

family are in the union

parishad race. They are

Fakharuddin Khan

Mosharef Khan, Mozammel

Khan, Dulal Chowdhury and

Ibrahim Chowdhury.

Two brothers--Faisal

union parishad.

Patuakhali-2.

Idris Rahman.

In Kalapara upazila, Syed

Ali Khan at Lohalia union.

The bench took opinions

recording the case.

the directives.

Battles

FROM PAGE 20

of Naria Police Station

vations, the bench added.

The trial court will not be

The HC yesterday also

may have been committed by saying that the trial court will

nesses.

The court fixed April 24 for

mortem reports infallible.

The HC bench yesterday

but the second proper.

"The civil surgeon's negli-

powered medical board.

Fierce battle on

FROM PAGE 20

mined road. Pro-Gaddafi forces have dug into positions near the front line, and are shelling opposition fight-

"Sirte will not be easy to take. Now, because of Nato strikes on [the government's] heavy weapons, we're almost fighting with the same weapons," said General Hamdi Hassi, an opposition commander from the city of Bin Jawad. There was fresh fighting

further west in rebel-held Misurata as well, where rebels admitted that Gaddafi forces had gained control of part of the town after days of heavy fighting and despite air strikes on Saturday by French and British forces. "Part of the city is under

rebel control and the other part is under the control of forces loyal to Gaddafi," a spokesman told the Reuters news agency. Nine people were killed

overnight by snipers and shelling by pro-Gaddafi forces, according to a doctor there, while a resident told Reuters that 24 people had been wounded in mortar attacks by government forces. A Libyan government

spokesman claimed Misurata had been liberated. STRETCHEDLINES Al Jazeera's James Bays has

been following the rebel offensive, which has seen them claim the towns of Ajdabiya, Brega, Ras Lanuf and Bin Jawad. Speaking from Bin Jawad

Bays said it was uncertain where the frontline was People coming along the coastal road from Sirte said Gaddafi forces were gathered around 60 km outside the city, positioned in trees, our correspondent said. The speed of the rebel

advance has stretched lines of communications and created logistical problems, said Bays. One problem is a lack of electricity, which means that petrol pumps don'twork. "At petrol stations they're using plastic bottles on

strings down into the tank below the station to pull up fuel," said Bays. The rebels' advance along the coast has triggered exuberant celebrations in towns along the route such as Ajdabiya with rebel fighters

bration. But government forces appear to have been withdrawing their heavy armour, rather than engaging with the

firing their weapons in cele-

There were reports on Sunday of a column of military vehicles including truckmounted anti-aircraft guns seen leaving Sirte in the direction of Tripoli, accompanied by dozens of civilian cars carrying families, according to a Reuters reporter in the vicinity.

The opposition's National Council has said it expects a major battle to occur in the area around Tripoli, as opposed to at Sirte. NATO COMMAND

Meanwhile, international air

strikes continue yesterday with British Tornado aircraft attacking and destroying Libyan government ammunition bunkers in the Sabha area of the southern desert, the British defence ministry 'Storm Shadow missiles

were launched against ammunition bunkers used to re-supply Libyan government troops attacking civilians in the north of the country, including Misurata," it said in a statement.

Nato on Sunday assumed

Afghan suicide attack kills 24

AFP, Sharan

Three suicide bombers rammed an explosivesladen truck into a construction depot in eastern Afghanistan, killing 24 workers and wounding 59 others, officials said yesterday.

League lawmaker from The bombers forced their way into the privately-run At Chalitabunia union in construction facility in Galachipa upazila, Liton Paktika province by shoot-Talukder is competing ing a security guard dead against his maternal uncle before blowing up their truck late Sunday, the inte-At Kalagachia of the rior ministry said. upazila, five members of a

Taliban militancy.

The provincial administration condemned the attack in Barmal district, which shares a long, porous border with Pakistani areas troubled by

He added that the prime minister has directed the

Board Act 2011.

full command of coalition air operations in Libya. "We have directed Nato's top operational commander

to begin executing this operation with immediate effect,' Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Nato's secretary general, said inastatement

"Our goal is to protect civilians and civilianpopulated areas under threat from the Gaddafi regime."

The operations will be led by Canadian General Charles Bouchard, Nato said.

Speaking to Al Jazeera, Rasmussen said that Nato was "impartial" and not picking sides, and that its mandate was only to prevent violence against civilians.

Rasmussen said that

Nato's taking authority over

the military intervention

would provide "unity of command". He also confirmed that several non-Nato countries would be contributing to the military effort, but said he would leave announcements up to individual governments. James Spencer, a Middle East and North Africa

defence analyst, told Al

Jazeera that removing Gaddafi from power was "not within Nato's purview". "If you listen very carefully, the Secretary-General of Nato has been very clear. [Intervention] is to protect

attacks," he said. Alim in jail

civilians against Gaddafi

FROM PAGE 20

The tribunal said it adjourned the hearing of the

tors can make preparations for placing argument against It asked the jail authorities to produce Alim, who was a member of late president Ziaur Rahman's cabinet,

before the tribunal on March

bail petition so the prosecu-

The court, however, ordered the authorities to take care of his health and provide treatment.

The order came in response to a petition by the prosecutors for its permission to keep him detained till completion of the investigation into the allegations of war crimes against him.

Alim was taken to the tribunal around 8:30am in a prison van and was produced before the tribunal in a wheel

chair at about 10:30am. Police picked up Alim from his Joypurhat residence on Sunday night after an arrest warrant was issued for

The tribunal on Sunday ordered the police to arrest Abdul Alim following a petition by the prosecutors to the effect that Alim was involved in the killings of more than 10,000 people in collaboration with razakars and Pakistani occupation forces during the war.

The petition also stated that Alim, the then peace committee chairman in Joypurhat, killed local Awami League leader Abul Kashem on July 26, 1971.

Zead Al Malum appeared for the prosecution, while Tajul Islam argued for Alim.

Hajj 2011 FROM PAGE 20

This year, 1,20,000 pilgrims

are expected to perform hajj. Of them, 15,000 will go under government management and the rest under private arrangements. Briefing journalists after

ter's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad said the hajj is likely to be performed on November 6, depending on the sighting of the moon. Those going under pri-

the meeting, prime minis-

vate arrangements will have to deposit Tk 1,33,000 to the government authorities.

Those going under government management have been asked to carry extra Tk 30,000 each.

Last year's government hajj package was Tk 232,040. Azad said the govern-

ment has decided to appoint

one guide for every 45 pilgrims. The government will arrange transport for those housed at least two kilometres away from the Haram Sharif.

authorities concerned to ous year.

ensure all the facilities for the pilgrims like the previ-The cabinet also approved in principle the draft of Bangladesh Rubber