Osman or Ivy

acting General Secretary

Mahbubul Alam Hanif told

ing Deputy Leader of the

House Syeda Sajeda

Chowdhury will talk to

Shamim and Ivy fail to reach

a compromise, both would

be called to the Gono

Bhaban, where the prime

the party might back

Shamim in the NCC polls,

while Ivy might be advised to

contest the next general

elections from any constitu-

mand was divided over who

should get the party's back-

ing in the polls, and decided

not to support any of the

Sylhet doctor

Friday afternoon and

informed the Bangladesh

Medical Association of the

of Sylhet Metropolitan

Police, and other police

officials visited the hospital.

officials picked up four

Indian students of a private

medical college in Sylhet on

Thursday and Friday in

connection with last

month's bomb blast in New

Ahmed and Danesh Batt,

students of 3rd year and 4th

year MBBS, and interns

Tosaddek Rashid and Amir

Amin Reshmi. They all are

from the Indian state of

(retd) Nazmul Islam, princi-

pal of Jalalabad Ragib-

Rabeya Medical College,

claimed that plainclothes

Rab men had picked them

M Sohail, director of Rapid

Meanwhile, Commander

Contacted, Maj Gen

Jammu and Kashmir.

up from the campus.

The arrestees are: Tousif

AB Barua, commissioner

Meanwhile, plainclothes

Earlier, the AL high com-

ency in Narayanganj.

Some leaders hinted that

minister will talk to them.

Party insiders said if

Senior AL leaders includ-

newsmen yesterday.

FROM PAGE 1

them.

two.

FROM PAGE 20

matter.

Delhi.

Survivors call shutdown on Oct 11

AP, Bhopal

For the first time in their 27year fight for justice, Bhopal gas tragedy survivors will hold a day-long shutdown Oct 11 here, seeking correct government figures on health damage caused in the 1984 industrial disaster, a protester said yesterday.

At a press conference here, five organisations called for a peaceful 'Bhopal bandh'. These were Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Stationery Karmachari Sangh, Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Purush Sangharsh Morcha, Bhopal Gas Peedit Nirashrit Pension Bhogi Sangharsh Morcha, Bhopal Group for Information and Action and Children Against Dow-Carbide.

The shutdown is planned to put pressure on the government to present actual figures of health damage caused in disaster at the Union Carbide plant on the intervening night of Dec 2-3,

The Superme Court, which is hearing a petition on compensation for gas victims, may hear the case in October.

Rashida Bee, leader of Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Stationery Karmachari Sangh, said that tragedy survivors were demanding that the state and central governments present correct figures on the health damage before the Supreme

Hasina

FROM PAGE 1

She reiterated that the caretaker government system was nullified in light of the apex court's verdict and the government has nothing to do with it. She advised her leaders to remind people what Khaleda and BNP leaders had said about the caretaker government system after the 1/11 political changeover.

She dismissed the opposition allegation of law and order slipping away and reminded everyone that key political leaders were assassinated during the last BNP

She said the Awam League believes in peace. Briefing newsmen after

the meeting, party acting General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif said Hasina directed them to revamp all grassroots units. "She also asked us to

focus on the corruption of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's two sons, BNP's misrule when it was in power, and its motive of creating anarchy to protect war criminals...," he said.

He said these things would be pointed out in the rallies they plan to hold across the country.

"Whiting of black money" by Khaleda will also be mentioned before the people, he said, adding that the Awami League would not hinder any peaceful programme of the opposition.

Meanwhile, AL yesterday approved the committees of Rajshahi district and city, Sylhet district and city and Chapainawabganj district

Campaign

FROM PAGE 20

The decision came after AL failed to convince either of the two to keep from contesting the elections and the party got divided over who to support, according to party sources.

However, senior leaders of the party observed that if neither of the two aspirants withdraws his or her candidacy by Wednesday, the last

day to do so, it may split pro-AL voters and party supporters, activists and leaders in Narayanganj. The other mayor candidates for the district are Habibullah Kanchpuri, ousted president of Awami

Olama League, SM Akram, convener of district AL, Atiqur Rahman Nannu Munshi, Atiqulla Jibon and Sharif Muhammad.

Over four lakh voters are entitled to exercise their franchise to elect a mayor, 27 councillors for as many general wards and nine councillors for as many wards reserved for women.

Meghna Bridge

The bridge was opened to public in 1991 when the authorities estimated that around 5,000 vehicles would use it every day. Now the traffic is four times that figure.

The bridge is now very bumpy and there is always a banging noise every time vehicles cross the expansion joints, all making for a very scary ride.

All the 13 expansion joints have been badly damaged. Most of the nuts and bolts of the joints are missing and it is vibrating alarmingly when heavy vehicles go over them.

The bridge has 12 pier foundations on which it stands.

RHD engineers believe that the scouring of the riverbed could have been the result of large vessels plying underneath. However, former vicechancellor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology Prof AMM Shafiullah said, "Fast water flow has caused the scouring. The RHD should have monitored the bridge and resolved all the problems."

The authorities had apprehended deterioration of the structure over the years by observing scouring of the riverbed. Last year, the RHD appointed a Malaysian-British consulting firm to examine the bridge and prepare a design for its rehabilitation. Based on underwater inspection findings and data analysis of detailed hydrological study, experts concluded that five piers (pier 6-10) of Meghna Bridge are under threat due to scouring and disintegra-

tion of concrete. As a result, piles are not having the support it should and they are more susceptible to earthquake damage, the firm mentioned in a report submitted in February this year.

It found 15 metres of scouring at pier-8, which is considered very risky. "Any damage to it would affect other foundations too, endangering the entire bridge," a RHD engineer told The Daily Star.

Sources in the RHD said an incorrect estimate of future traffic volume by the Japanese designer put the bridge in such a state within just 20 years. The designer had not thought about so overloaded vehicles either. It had estimated movement of 500-tonne vessels under the bridge but now ships weighing between 3,000 and 5,000 tonnes ply the river under.

"Scouring happens

where ships ply," said a RHD engineer, adding that the other pier foundations have no problem with scouring as no large ship cross the bridge near them. Sand lifting from Meghna Bridge is another reason of scouring, he added.

The RHD tried to fix expansion joints in 2008 but that did not last long. The repairs were undone due to plying of heavy vehicles.

Most of the 36 hinge bearings have also been affected. Eight bearings are in such a poor condition they require replacement while the rest should be repaired, suggested the experts.

Since there is no alternative to the bridge on Dhaka-Chittagong highway, any disruption will have enormous impact on business and economic activities. Also known as the First Japan-Bangladesh Friendship Bridge, the 930 metre Meghna Bridge was built with Japanese grants by Koei Co Ltd.

BID CHALLENGE The government will face a stiff challenge restoring the bridge, which should hopefully start early next year. Since the bridge is a single carriage way, the authorities have to stop vehicular movement for at least several days

to do the massive work. The government has already taken a Tk 150 crore restoration project for the bridge. "We are expecting that the project will be approved soon so that we can float an international tender," said Shahabuddin Khan, a superintendent engineer of RHD, who is looking into the Meghna Bridge problem.

He said the government is doing everything quickly as any delay in restoration might compromise the bridge's 100-year lifespan.

Shahabuddin said concrete blocks will be dumped around the affected pier foundations so that sedimentation takes place to fill the scouring as per recommendations of the investigation firm.

MEGHNA-GUMTI BRIDGE The consulting firm also suggested repairing the 1,410-metres Meghna-Gumti Bridge (also built by the Japanese and opened to public in 1995) as many of its hinge bearings and expansion joints were damaged.

Meghna-Gumti Bridge is only a few kilomtres away from Meghna Bridge but its condition is not as bad as Meghna Bridge's.

Venus springs

absorbed some of their ultraviolet light.

The paper's lead author Franck Montmessin, of the LATMOS atmospheric research centre in France, explained that Venus' ozone layer sits 100km up; about three times the height of our

The ozone - a molecule containing three oxygen atoms - formed when sunlight broke down carbon dioxide in the Venusian atmosphere to form oxygen molecules.

On Earth, ozone, which absorbs much of the Sun's harmful UV-rays preventing them reaching the surface, is formed in a similar way.

However, this process is supplemented by oxygen released by carbon dioxidemunching microbes.

Speaking of the international team's find, Hakan Svedhem, ESA project scientist for the Venus Express mission, said: "This ozone detection tells us a lot about the circulation and the chemistry of Venus's atmosphere.

"Beyond that, it is yet more evidence of the fundamental similarity between the rocky planets, and shows the importance of studying Venus to understand them

Some astrobiologists assume that the presence of oxygen, carbon, and ozone in an atmosphere indicates that life exists on a planet's surface.

The new results negate that assumption - the mere presence of oxygen in an

atmosphere is now not enough evidence to start

looking for life. However, the presence of large quantities of these gases, as in the Earth's atmosphere, is probably still a good lead, the scientists said.

"We can use these new observations to test and refine the scenarios for the detection of life on other worlds," said D Montmessin.

Bangladeshi

FROM PAGE 20

recovering the dead bodies, sent them to nearest morgue for autopsy and admitted the girl in the hospital, said Devdas Bhattacharya, Superintend of Police of Barisal district quoting the information received from Bangladesh High Commission in India.

He also said police identified them after the national identity card of Zanu Begum was recovered from her possession and her daughter also identified the victims.

Police trying to collect more information about the incident and victims, he added.

Nurul Islam, Officer-in-Charge of Gournadi Police Station, said they started investigation about the family after receiving a message from Barisal police.

Their neighbours informed that the family went missing from the area since they went to Khulna to visit their relatives on September 2.

Rice of hope

FROM PAGE 1 month and the grains mature in 107 to 110 days during Aman season even when the water table depth goes down to 70-80 cm.

BRRI dhan-57 can withstand drought up to three weeks but the grains mature even earlier -- in 100 to 105 days.

"This means jute farmers can go for late Aman production with this variety while potato growers can think of reaping the paddy quickly and free the land for winter vegetable prior to cultivation of the next Boro rice," explained Tamal, who heads the BRRI Regional Station in Comilla. "Climate change is likely

to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events such as drought," said Dr Mohammed Zainul Abedin, IRRI representative in Bangladesh. "Equipping Bangladeshi farmers with rice varieties

that can tolerate dry condi-

tions will be vital," he

added. IRRI has recently helped some other countries release some droughtproof varieties -- Sahbhagi dhan in India, Sahod Ulan-1 in the Philippines and Sookha dhan in Nepal.

Criminals FROM PAGE 20

Police Station said quoting injured Sajjad.

Motiar and Sajjad went to the BSCIC area on business purpose, the OC said.

Reason behind the attack could not be known immediately.

Dipu Moni FROM PAGE 20

Investment Opportunities

in Bangladesh on October

Dipu Moni had last held talks with Hillary during the UN General Assembly in September 2009. Sources said Dipu Moni

may seek US assistance in repatriation of the condemned killers of Bangabandhu to bring them to justice and US support for trial of war criminals.

She is also due to meet with several US Senators and Congressmen at Capital Hill. The foreign minister will attend a reception to be hosted by the Bangladesh embassy in USA.

There was a move to arrange a brief meeting between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and US President Barack Obama or Hillary during this year's UN General Assembly. But neither Hasina nor Dipu Moni got any appointment for a meeting, said sources.

The foreign minister is expected to return home from USA on October 14.

Prisoner

FROM PAGE 20 said Shafiul Alam, jailer of the prison.

Being turned down, Tahiful continued insisting

In a sudden flash of temper, Faruk attacked him with a kitchen knife.

As chief jail warden Mahbub Alam, 45, and prison guard Alim Uddin, 40, reached there to stop the aggressor, they also came under attack.

Mahbub was rushed to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital with severe injuries to his hands and

Tahiful was admitted to Kishoreganj Modern Sadar Hospital while Alim received first aid treatment.

Police seize

FROM PAGE 20

AC Abdullah Al Mahmud told The Daily Star that they had raided the Shibir office on information from detained Jamaat-e-Islami office assistant Badiur Rahman. No arrest was made in

this connection.

Police arrested Badiur from Moheshkhali in Cox's Bazar on Friday afternoon in a case filed with Panchlaish Police Station for his alleged involvement in vandalising vehicles and launching attack on law enforcers at Muradpur intersection on September 19. Three policemen including AC Abdul Mannan of Panchlaish zone were injured in the incident.

Tale of a torchbearer

FROM PAGE 1

teachers. They also do other work at the centre.

The vocational courses include sewing and boutique training for all the children, 55 of whom are girls. Thanks to such educa-

tion, training and care, some of them have overcome their physical and mental barri-Ten-year-old mentally

challenged Shuvo, for example, has changed in many ways. His mother said he can now respond to and follow instructions. "He can also write," she said. Towhid Islam, also 10, has

no hands. At the centre, he has mastered the skill of writing with his toes. The "school" is unique in

that it has no steadfast rules for learning, nor is there any rigorous test. It is a caremore-force-less method. However, three examinations are held every year as in other schools, and students are required to pass for promotion to the next class. Most students take two years to complete each grade. On completion of educa-

tion at the centre, a number of students got admitted to other schools. A few others now work at different tailoring shops in the area. Shamsunnahar, a third

year student of Ghatail GBG College, teaches Bangla and Social Science at the centre. She said the instructors had no training in teaching physically and mentally impaired children, but they are doing it sincerely.

Asked about his experience in working for these disadvantaged children, Rafiqul said, "Sometimes they are considered a burden on the family and society, but it is not true. They can lead a normal life if they get proper care and some training."

It pains him that many parents do not treat their challenged kids well. "They [parents] spend a lot of time and money for their 'normal' children, but ignore the needs of the challenged Initially, six young boys

and girls began teaching at the centre without any remuneration. In February this year, three other teachers were appointed. They all now get a little honoraria. In the beginning, arrang-

ing money was his main challenge. So he started a microcredit programme to maintain costs. The Ghatail cantonment authorities came forward to provide a second-hand microbus and Tk 1 lakh. Things eased further for him when local political, social and business leaders extended support to his cause. In 2005, the then deputy

commissioner of Tangail allotted a piece of land at Chandusi of Ghatail municipality for the setting up of the centre. "Basically, the centre runs on the income from the

microcredit programme and

some donations," Rafigul

BECOMING A

city

TORCHBEARER

Born in 1968 in Baguntali under Tangail upazila, Rafigul remained at home for much of his childhood. His parents, whom he lost in his 20s, took him to many doctors but no treatment could restore his vision.

In 1983, he undertook a series of training at the National Federation of the Blind, as he wanted to grow into a self-dependent man. He also received a multitude of vocational training.

He joined Tangail Cotton Mills at Mirzapur as a worker in 1989 but lost his job when the company laid off staff in 2002. It was time for a new

beginning, he thought. So he returned home and set up the centre with the money he had saved and got through the golden handshake. The school section

started its journey with 15 students in May the same Rafigul Bari terms the

progress made in the last eight years positive. But his challenges lie ahead. "I want to set up a hostel for the children and arrange training for the teachers," he said. As for himself, Rafiqul,

still single, lives in a tin-shed room near the centre. He does his own shopping, cooking, washing and everything else. He can move alone. He

has his stick to show him the

Top Jamaat, IOJ leaders

told The Daily Star.

opposition in the House, Khaleda will address six street rallies on her way to Sylhet, BNP's Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi told journalists at the party's Naya Paltan office yesterday.

At the September 27 rally of the alliance, the BNP chairperson announced a set of agitation programmes, including road marches towards Sylhet, Rajshahi and Chittagong, to drum up support for its movement for reinstatement of the caretaker government system.

BNP Standing Committee Member Khandakai Mosharraf Hossain, coordinator of the Dhaka-Sylhet road march committee, earlier told The Daily Star steps have been taken to make the programme a suc cess. He hoped it will intensify their ongoing antigovernment movement.

BNP has discussed the event with some like-minded smaller parties apart from its allies -- Jamaat, IOJ and

Bangladesh Jatiya Party. Asked about participation

eight citizens of a single

country at a time is rare, said

Fakhrul Basher Masum, a

Bangladeshi expatriate in

dog Amnesty International

has slammed the

beheadings, noting that

Saudi Arabia has recently

seen a rise in the number of

such executions. Court

proceedings in the kingdom,

said AI, fall far short of inter-

national standards for a fair

officials said when the case

was taken to court, the

embassy appointed lawyers

for the Bangladeshi workers

and contacted the victim's

family through the Egyptian

at the Egyptian embassy in

Saudi Arabia informed us

that Saeed's family had

refused our offer of blood

money in return for clem-

ency for the Bangladeshi

workers," said Haroon-or

battle for them at all levels.

Bangladesh's foreign and

expatriates' welfare minis-

tries had repeatedly

appealed to the Saudi

authorities for clemency.

Even President Zillur

Rahman solicited pardon for

the convicted from the Saudi

king, said the labour coun-

Lawyers fought a legal

Rashid.

sellor.

"Two years ago, officials

mission in Saudi Arabia.

Bangladesh embassy

The human rights watch-

FROM PAGE 1

Saudi Arabia.

Rahman Akand, assistant publicity secretary of Jamaat, said they were yet to decide which of their upper-tier leaders will join the march. "We will decide on the matter

of top leaders, Motiur

Admitting that the party is in trouble now, the Jamaat leader said "We have however directed our leaders in Sylhet and other areas connecting the route of the march to participate in the programme." IOJ spokesperson

Abdullah Wasel claimed its chief Fazlul Haq Amini will not be able to join the road march as the government has "confined" Amini to his Lalbagh residence. "But we hope that rest of our top-level leaders, including the secretary general, will participate," he said.

Asked whether he himself will attend it, Wasel replied in the negative. "But we have asked our local units to ensure huge turnouts in the

rallies." However, insiders of the halt after police crackdown.

Arabia's highest court issued

the order for their execution

in August 2009, the

Bangladesh embassy made a

final request to the king-

dom's highest advisory

council and the appeals

court for clemency. But all

efforts went in vain, he said.

conducted on the basis of

Sharia laws and only the

family of the murdered

person has the right to grant

bodies of the eight

Bangladeshis home, Rashid

said the Saudi authorities do

not send bodies of people

executed in the kingdom to

Expatriates' Welfare

Secretary Zafar Ahmed Khan

said, "We did all we could to

the number of executions in

Saudi Arabia this year stands

at 58, 20 of which involved

foreign nationals. The figure

was 27 in 2010, says an

Amnesty International

dog says defendants often

have no lawyer and are

unable to follow court pro-

ceedings in Arabic. They are

rarely allowed formal repre-

sentation by a lawyer, and in

many cases are not informed

of the progress of legal pro-

It observes that many of

ceedings against them.

The human rights watch-

report.

Rashid said when Saudi those executed have no

With Friday's beheading,

In his comments,

their home countries.

save them, but failed."

Asked about bringing the

clemency, he said.

Trials in the kingdom are

parties say fear of police action and arrest is keeping their leaders off the march. Under pressure from law

enforcement agencies, IOJ has apparently stopped its political activities after its activists went on the rampage in the capital and elsewhere during its April 4 harta demanding cancellation of national women policy. The party, however, or

September 28 announced fresh three-month agitations demanding cancellation of women and education poli-Jamaat is passing through

a tough time after arrest of its

top five leaders, who are now behind bars on war crimes charges. Police arrested several top leaders of Jamaat after its activists torched a number of vehicles, including a prison van and a police jeep, during

September 18. The party's agitation or streets apparently came to a

access to influential figures

such as government author-

ities or heads of tribes, or to

financial resources -- crucial

factors in paying blood

money or securing a pardon

Amnesty International

deputy director for the

Middle East and North

Africa, has said the

increased number of execu-

tions in recent years in Saudi

Arabia puts the country at

odds with the worldwide

"The government must

had no choice but to get

involved in petty crimes for

penalty.

she said.

says.

salaries.

he added.

Hassiba Hadi Sahraoui

when convicted of murder.

a clash with law enforcers at

the city's Kakrail on

Sunny was taken to Sutrapur

morning after his family members handed him over to Nagorpur police in Tangail on Friday.

Meeting at the workshop, the trio made a plan about

Al Amin and Sunny went out at 8:00pm to watch a movie leaving Dulal and

On their return at midnight, Sharif opened the

Sharif pressed a pillow on his

establish an immediate the scene. moratorium on executions in the kingdom and commute all death sentences, with a view to abolishing the

death penalty completely," Saudi Arabia applies the death penalty for a wide range of offences. The accused may be convicted found Tk 3000, of which Al

solely on the basis of confessions obtained under duress or deception, the report Fakhrul Basher Masum, the Bangladeshi expatriate, said many foreign workers

village home at Gayahata. Police said they will produce Sunny before a Dhaka

Court today, while hunting for Al Amin and Sharif was The body of the deceased

ily members yesterday after conducting an autopsy at Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue.

Action Battalion's Legal and

Media Wing, told The Daily Star that they did not arrest the Indian nationals and that they are trying to find out whether any other law enforcement agency has picked them up.

Sunny

FROM PAGE 20

Police Station yesterday

Sunny on September 29 afternoon phoned Al Amin at Gayahata in Nagorpur and expressed resentment that his father had recently almost stopped giving him pocket money, which he

used to buy drugs. Al Amin in reply told him to kill his father, mentioned KSA executes 8 Bangladeshis the OC quoting Sunny.

Asked for help, Al Amin agreed to assist in the crime on a contract of Tk 500 and accordingly, he reached the factory on that evening.

the killing.

Sharif at the workshop.

door silently. At around 1:00am, Al Amin held the chest of Dulal while Sunny tied his legs and

trend against the death Seeing Dulal forcing strongly to be free, Sunny was afraid and tried to flee

> He, however, again joined the two and confirmed Dulal's death within min-

Later they dug a hole inside the workshop and buried the body. They then broke open the cash box of the factory and

Amin tookTk 1,300, SharifTk 1,000 and Sunny the rest of the amount. They left the spot for their

survival, as their employers

often did not pay them their was handed over to his fam-Things are unlikely to improve unless such irregularities are done away with,