Sagar-Runi

said DB sources yesterday.

They said apart from law

enforcers, lots of people,

including the victims' rela-

tives, journalists and curious

onlookers, were let to visit the

crime scene which led to

deputy commissioner of the

Detective Branch (DB) of

police, said they have other

evidence in hand, but he did not

elaborate on it. "We are still

collecting evidence," he added.

Department (CID) submitted

the fingerprint and footprint

report to DB Thursday night.

The report said the prints

provided were not clear

of private television channel

Maasranga, and his wife

Meherun Runi, a senior

reporter of another private TV

channel ATN Bangla, were

killed in their West Rajabazar

The case of the journalist

couple murder was transferred

from Sher-e-Bangla Nagar

police to DB on Thursday. That

day DB officials at a press

conference claimed to have

identified some suspects,

many of whom were under

case with full professionalism.

Several people had been

interrogated but nothing

more can be shared right

journalists, rights and social

activists, writers and analysts

yesterday condemned and

criticised a section of the

media for producing baseless

and controversial reports on

the slain couple's personal life.

Meanwhile, 61 teachers,

now," Mehedi Hasan said.

"We are trying to solve the

constant watch.

flat early Saturday last.

Sagar Sarowar, news editor

enough, said Mehedi Hasan.

The Criminal Investigation

Mehedi Hasan, additional

FROM PAGE 20

ruining the prints.

FROM PAGE 1 Society of Bangladesh in the capital, he also said parliament has adopted a resolution to enact a tougher law to take action against those

obstructing the trials. "Those who are making the trial questionable without any reason and without any basis will be identified and put on trial," private TV channel ATN News reported quoting the minister.

"Obstruction can't stop war crimes trial," Shafique

"Those who committed crimes against humanity like killings, genocides, robberies, rapes and arson in collaboration with the Pakistan occupation forces during the Liberation War will face the trial because it's now a public demand, though a section is working against it," news agency UNB quoted him as saying.

About the recent Al Jazeera television report on the trial, he said, "I've told Al Jazeera that the trial is not being held with any political or religious motive. Only those who committed crimes against humanity during the Liberation War are being put in the dock."

### BNP activists FROM PAGE 1

BNP Chairperson Khaleda

Zia announced the "March towards Dhaka" and the grand rally programmes from a rally in Chittagong on January 9.

Addressing a rally in Chandpur on February 13, she asked the party men to be ready for "peaceful sit-ins" on the streets if law enforcers or ruling party men obstruct them from marching towards the capital.

BNP, however, has yet to decide on the venue for the March 12 rally.

Party leaders hope more than five lakh people from across the country will converge in the capital for the rally. They hinted that the party may opt to stage sit-ins in the capital after the grand

"Thousands of city residents will take to the streets on that day and several lakh people from all over the country will march towards the capital. They will take position on the streets whenever they face any obstruction," said BNP standing committee member Goyeshwar Chandra Roy.

Wishing anonymity, another BNP leader said, "If we can mobilise people, peaceful sit-ins on the streets for several days can force the government to meet our demand."

The party has formed 45 sub-committees across the country to mobilise public support ahead of the Dhaka

**BNP Organising Secretary** Mohammad Shahjahan said they would go for a massive campaign after the International Mother Language Day.

Shahjahan, also a former lawmaker, has been assigned to mobilise people in Comilla and Cox's Bazar.

Several teams have already left the capital to hold meetings with the party's

local units. The BNP chairperson will visit several areas including Laxmipur and Lalmonirhat to drum up public support

for the rally. She is expected to leave the capital for Lalmonirhat on February 27 and speak at

roadside rallies on her way to the northern district. BNP standing committee member Mahbubur Rahman

said the party's next course of action will depend on the people's response to the

programme. He will visit Rajshahi and other northern districts in a couple of days to marshal

party workers. "We will hold our programme peacefully. But we also have a strategy to deal with any obstruction, and we are determined to make the

programme a success by any means." The main opposition has

been mounting pressure on the government for restoration of the caretaker government system, which was scrapped last year. The party has announced

that it will not participate in the next general election if it is not held under a non-party government.

## Law minister | UN calls for end

FROM PAGE 20

The UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that nine unidentified bodies were found in Homs yesterday morning. Two people also died in

the eastern province of Deir al-Zour, it added - a young man who was shot dead by security forces and a soldier.

#### 'UNBALANCED' RESOLUTION

The BBC's Jim Muir in neighbouring Lebanon says the passing of the resolution at the UN General Assembly clearly is not affecting events on the ground, but it gave all parties a chance to air their One-hundred-thirty-

seven member states voted for the motion, which called on the Syrian authorities "to stop all violence or reprisals immediately, in accordance with the League of Arab States initiative". The regional grouping has

called on Mr Assad to hand over power to his deputy, who would form a national unity government within two months. "The UN General

sage to the people of Syria the world is with you," US permanent representative Susan Rice said. Russia and China were amongst the 12 states who

Assembly sent a clear mes-

voted against the nonbinding resolution. There were also 17 abstentions. Before the vote, Russia's

Deputy Foreign Minister Gennady Gatilov said the resolution was "unbalanced". Syria's permanent representative, Bashar Jaafari,

meanwhile argued that it was a message of support to the "extremists and terrorists" he said the authorities in Damascus were fighting, and warned that it would only lead to more violence. But UN Secretary General

Ban Ki-moon accused the Syrian authorities of committing "almost certain" crimes against humanity.

Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Zhai Jun, who has met some opposition figures, yesterday was due to meet President Assad in Damascus for talks.

Before leaving Beijing, he condemned violence against civilians and called on the Syrian government to respect the people's "legitimate" desire for reform.

But he added: "China does not approve of the use of force to interfere in Syria or the forceful pushing of a socalled regime change."

Our correspondent says the chances for successful mediation right now seem very slight.

Arab and Western powers will be meeting in Tunis in a week to step up support for the Syrian opposition. Two days after that, the government is going ahead with a referendumonanew constitution.

### Padma bridge

FROM PAGE 20

will start with the availability of funds," he said in Kalihati of Tangail. He was addressing a brief

rally after inaugurating Pungli Alternative Bailey Bridge on Tangail-Bangabandhu Bridge Highway. Eminent columnist Syed Abul Maksud was, among others, present. Works to repair the cracks

on Bangabandhu Bridge would be completed by October next, while all damaged roads and bridges across the county would gradually be repaired, the minister said.

Quader said the High Court in a ruling recently asked the Sarak Bahban to vacate the building as it was set up on the HC property near Matsya Bhaban intersection. "We've respect on the court ruling and we've already taken initiatives to vacate the house," he said.

Talking to newsmen after visiting the repair works on the Bangabandhu Bridge and activities of its weight scale, Quader said his ministry would show zero tolerance to any irregularity and corruption.

"Effective steps have been taken for checking corruption at weight scale on two ends of the Bangabandhu Bridge, and actions have already been taken against 14 people or different charges in two phases," he said.

# German president

FROM PAGE 20 his Bellevue palace.

Germany needs "a president that enjoys the trust of not only a majority, but a broad majority of citizens,' said a sombre Wulff, with his wife Bettina at his side.

The developments of the last days and weeks have shown that this trust and therefore my effectiveness have been damaged.

"For this reason, it is no longer possible to carry out the office of president both domestically and abroad the way it needs to be done," added the head of state.

"I have made mistakes, but I was always honest," he

Prosecutors in the Lower Saxony state where Wulff was formerly premier said late yesterday they had asked parliament to lift his immunity in order to investigate allegations he abused his position.

Merkel's hand-picked choice for Germany's head of state has been battered by almost daily allegations in the media that he accepted favours when he was premier

of Lower Saxony. Wulff is from the same conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party as Merkel who cancelled a planned trip to Rome to meet Italian premier Mario Monti on the euro crisis to make her own state-

ment later. Wulff's role is largely ceremonial but carries important moral weight and the announcement by the prosecutor in Hanover, the capital of Lower Saxony, marks the first time the German parliament has been asked to lift presidential

immunity. The 52-year-old president has been rocked by scandals and allegations since mid-December largely over his connections to wealthy businessmen, initially over an advantageous home loan

from a friend's wife. He then faced claims he tried to hush up the story, as well as reports of free holidays accepted from friends. round.

But the Hanover prosecutor's case focuses on his relationship with film producer friend David

Groenewold who is also

facing investigation over

dealings between his firm

and Lower Saxony while Wulff was state premier. He also reportedly picked up the bill for Wulff's hotel during a short holiday in 2007. Wulff's lawyers have said he repaid the money in

cash later. Speculation about whether Wulff could remain in office reached fever pitch after the prosecutor's announcement following two months of almost daily

media reports about Wulff. "I assume that the parliamentary commission for immunity and the Bundestag (lower house of parliament) ... will vote in favour of the request by the Hanover prosecutor," deputy head of the CDU parliamentary group Michael Meister told

Deutschlandfunk radio. "It's over now, Christian Wulff must resign, demanded the influential Bild daily in yesterday's

editorial. Wulff landed in hot water in December when Bild reported he had failed to declare a 500,000-euro (\$660,000) home loan at an advantageous interest rate he accepted in 2008 while pre-

mier of Lower Saxony. He then left an angry voicemail for the paper's editor-in-chief over the story and publicly crossed swords with him over claims he had tried to hush up the article's publication.

Wulff's presidency was rocky from the start.

His election in 2010 proved humiliating for Merkel as members of her own coalition broke ranks and refused to vote for him in parliament amid a strong challenge from a former East German dissident, a political outsider.

Wulff, who had once been considered a potential challenger to Merkel, only eked out a victory in the third

The signatories include Advocate Sultana Kamal, Prof Abul Barkat, Prof Anu Mohammad, Prof MM Akash, Prof Ali Riaz, Prof Mesbah Kamal, Barrister Sara Hossain, Prof Giti Ara Nasrin, Dr Faustina Pereira, Zobaida Nasrin, Robaet Ferdous Rehnuma Ahmed.

In a joint statement they expressed concerns that such rumours might overshadow the fact, impede the probe and delaythe finding of the killers.

They described the media's act of interrogating the victims' five-year-old son over and over as torture and urged not to bother him anymore. The signatories also demanded justice.

### Blake's advice

FROM PAGE 1

independent and sovereign country and it is run by its people. Had Bangladesh run by the direction of the Blakes, it would never have been independent.... Even, no policy has been formulated in the country on instructions of the Blakes," he said, reacting to a comment by Blake on the

next parliamentary polls. The visiting US assistant secretary on Thursday hoped that the ruling Awami League and the main opposition BNP would reach an agreement through discussions to ensure a free, fair and participatory

election. On the debate over the caretaker government system, Suranjit urged the BNP to raise the matter in parliament, and

not use force. The government scrapped the system in June last year following a Supreme Court verdict that declared the system illegal, but opined that two more parliamentary elections could

beheld under the system. BNP maintains it would not go to the polls unless those are held under a non-partisan

caretaker government. Claiming that the government has restored the 1972 constitution, Suranjit reiterated that the constitution would be amended further if need be.

He was talking to reporters at a reunion programme of Jagannath Hall Alumni Association at TSC of Dhaka University. "If you [BNP] have any

acceptable formula [on care-

takersystem], come to the House for discussion," he said, and accused the BNP of trying to "realise the demand by force". "You talk about parliamentary democracy. But you don't come to parliament, trying to

make it dysfunctional.'

Several hundred former students of Jagannath Hall, including politicians, government officials, businessmen, academicians and media personalities, were present with their families on the occasion.

Among others, Dhaka University Treasurer Prof Mijanur Rahman, Jagannath Hall Alumni Association President Kanotosh Majumder and its General Secretary Ranjan Karmaker attended the daylong function.

# 21 Bangladeshis

A convict, however, can escape death only if the victim's family pardons him.

"Execution of Bangladeshis abroad hurts the image of the country and can affect its overseas employment sector," said Dr Zafar Ahmed Khan, secretary of the expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry. Besides, it is the state's

responsibility to ensure legal support to its expatriate citizens, he pointed out. Considering its damaging

effects on the country's labour market, the government is trying to arrange compromises between the families of the victims and the convicted, said officials at the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET). Mohsin Chowdhury,

said many workers do not even know the laws of the foreign countries they work trial. in. "We are now briefing job seekers about foreign laws before they fly off abroad. Contacted, Prof Imtiaz Ahmed of the international relations department at

director (welfare) of BMET,

Dhaka University, said though arranging clemency for the convicts is the immediate task now, the government must be cautious about ensuring that no criminal goes abroad with a

There are allegations of serious irregularities in the visa-related issues of the migrating workers, he maintained. "If that is so, the government has to deal with it strictly."

The DU teacher stressed signing extradition treaties with the labour-importing countries to make way for trying the accused at home. The execution of eight

Bangladeshis in Saudi Arabia in October last year sparked criticism at home and abroad. Many said the government had made no sincere efforts to save its citizens from being executed for killing an Egyptian. Expatriate Bangladeshis

country's GDP, according to Bangladesh Bank data. CASES BY COUNTRY: UAE In the United Arab Emirates, five are convicted in three cases and 25 are undergoing

send home \$12 billion a year,

around 13 percent of the

The government's initial efforts for arranging compromises for two convicts Harunur Rashid and Shahabuddin of Chittagong have failed. The Bangladesh mission

Saudi Arabia There are five convicts and three accused in this

in Dubai has sought a

month's time from a Dubai

court to arrange pardons.

Middle East country.

A Pakistani victim's family has agreed to show mercy to Akhtar Hossain o Chittagong in exchange for 4 lakh Riyal (Tk 88 lakh). The Saudi government has agreed to pay the money for Akhtar as he is poor, BMET officials said. KUWAIT

The seven convicts in three cases are Alim of Jamalpur, Tabibur Biswas of Magura, Makbul of Brahmanbaria, Rinu Mia of Brahmanbaria, Iqbal Hossain and Ridoy of Munshiganj, and Ramzan of Comilla. A process is on for arrang-

ing pardons for them. BAHRAIN A court has rejected the

of Mizanur Rahman of Uttara in the capital. The government is trying to arrange mercy for him. Singapore Though Kamrul Hasan of Tangail has been convicted

appeal of convict Russel, son

of killing an Indonesian woman, he has denied seeking mercy, claiming that he is innocent. He has requested a reopening of the trial in the Supreme Court. MALAYSIA

A court has convicted Shamim Reza of Pabna and Masud Rana (address could not be known). They have appealed against their convictions.

Late on February 23, the

### Nat'l flag lowered **FROM PAGE 1** press report noted:

tabled a resolution in the House to the effect that Bangla be adopted as the state language of Pakistan. He noted that the case for Bangla was supported by the government of Pakistan. Additionally, he made it clear that on February 21, the students had committed an offence by violating Section 144, an act that had led to the shootings. In the aftermath of the

tragic happenings of February 21, students at educational institutions lowered the national flag to half mast in memory of those killed on the day. They also organized demonstrations at various places in the capital. For its part, the authorities appeared determined to demonise the students as a way of putting up a defence for itself. As a

'On the Nawabpur Road

another unruly crowd overpowered the police officers in charge of the forces . . . Since it would not disperse, firing was resorted to in order to disperse it. A lathi charge was also made in the university area.' The authorities went to every extent possible to paint the students in negative colours. They even

tions, had been injured as a result of student violence. The strike called in the province went beyond February 22 and well into February 23. Shops stayed closed and no vehicles were seen on the streets of Dhaka. Railway workers stayed away from work, leaving trains stranded at stations

enquiry in a bid to delay the

process and avoid refunding

Dhaka AFM Muhitul Islam,

who had conducted an

enquiry the second time,

said none of the 57 project

heads did their jobs in fiscal

second time, a few of them

showed us some work that

they did in a hurry after the

expiry of the deadline to

complete the projects."

to pay double the amount.

Sadullapur UNO Golam

Mowla told The Daily Star

that the defaulters would

warrants.

said the UNO.

But during enquiry the

DRR Deputy Director in

across the province.

Gaibandha.

the money."

2009-10.

Tamaddun Majlis issued a statement severely criticizing the government over its response to the strike of two days earlier. It resolved to continue the struggle for Bangla. Meanwhile, condemnation of the government action on February 21 also poured in from Alia Madrasah, Islamic Brotherhood, Dhaka Traders Association and other reported that Hasan Ali, the organisations. On the same minister for communicaday, the Karachi-based English language newspaper Dawn wrote a long editorial on the incidents o February 21. Part of the editorial read:

'We can assure the people of East Pakistan that the people of West Pakistan will not grudge them the equality with Urdu which Bengali has at last won.'

# Relief schemes

FROM PAGE 1 political leaders and activists formed committees to implement the projects. They received the allocated rice and wheat for the jobs

but did nothing. There have been allegations of corruption against all 57 committee presidents.

The food and disaster management ministry issued several notices to the committees asking them to return the money but they did not pay any heed to it.

However, four committee presidents refunded the money because they wanted to contest the last union parishad polls.

The ministry's findings show how test relief funds get squandered every year. Nearly 4.1 lakh tonnes of grains worth about Tk 1,200 crore have been allocated this year under the scheme.

In Sadullapur, the test relief programme involved the renovation of mosques, schools, madrasas, Muktijoddha Sangsad offices and public toilets and purchase of school furni-

Sadullapur Project Implementation Officer Moniruzzaman told The the given period. Daily Star that failing to get the refund even after serving several notices, the authorities in May last year filed have to settle the cases by cases against 53 project chiefs under the Public Demands Recovery Act, 1913. His predecessor Abu

report, was transferred to

He said he had recently Hena, along with the then served another notice to the upazila nirbahi officer Ariful defaulters, asking them to Haq, had inspected the pay the money. "Six of them project areas and submitted a report on the unfinished task to the Department of consider that." Relief and Rehabilitation (DRR).

have so far approached me with pleas for more time. I'll ments. This was the last time he served a notice, and if the Hena, who incurred the money was not refunded he project heads' wrath for the would issue arrest warrants,

the hill tracts region in Talking to The Daily Star October last year, said over the phone, Abdur Moniruzzaman, Later, Hena Rashid, one of the defaultgot a posting in Phulchhari, ers, admitted that he had not renovated a mosque at Abu Hena alleged that the Jamubhanga in Sadullapur, project chiefs had tried to a task he had been assigned fend off allegations against for, within the given time. them by "exerting political He, however, claimed that he finished the job before the pressure on us to write to the DRR asking for a further second enquiry.

Rashid, an ex-member of Jamubhanga union, avoided answering the question of why he had not responded to the notices. Rashid said he had been allotted grains worth Tk 22,500 and now he would have to return Tk 45,000 to the government treasury.

### Martyr Barkat FROM PAGE 20

furniture, displays and other equipment.

Contacted, in-charge of Since the deadline stiputhe museum and DU Pro lated in the notices for Vice-Chancellor Pro refunding the price of the Harun-or-Rashid said he has allotted grains has expired, failed to open the museum the project heads now have as the district council did not supply a multimedia projec-Muhitul Islam said they tor. He claimed it to be a all have to refund double the necessary item for creating a price of the allotted grains patriotic atmosphere at the even if they claim that they museum. had completed the task after

However, Administrator of Dhaka District Council Hasina Dowla told The Daily Star that they have never been approached for a projector. paying double the price of

Clothes, portraits and the grains. Otherwise, the other materials used by project heads will face arrest Barkat will be on display in two galleries of the museum. It will also have a library and a reading room for the visitors to learn more about the country's historic move-

College.

Barkat was a master's student at the Department of Political Science of DU when he was killed in police firing near Dhaka Medical

#### Telcos puzzled **FROM PAGE 20**

BTRC Chairman Zia Ahmed

said the operators will sit with him tomorrow (Sunday). He, however, said, "We have sent them the letter

are pending with the court, demanding renewal charges. The officials said they do not have the certified copy of the High Court judgement on Grameenphone. So it is not possible to know what the court said in its verdict, they claimed

Mehboob Chowdhury, chief executive officer of Citycell, said, "We have received a letter from the BTRC that has confused us. We can't understand the content of the letter. We will seek clarification from the regulator." Citycell is the only operator that did not go to court on

licence renewal dispute. But it will have to pay more than Tk 8 crore in late fees, said its officials. Kazi Monirul Kabir, chief communications officer of Grameenphone, said they did not get the certified copy of the judgement. He said

they have an option to go to

the higher court in 30 days,

but the regulator did not give

them enough time to do that. Officials of Banglalink and Robi claimed that if they deposit licence renewal fee to the regulator, they would face contempt of court charges as their cases are still in the

Mahmudur Rahman, executive vice-president of Robi, said, "We are looking into the letter and will respond to the regulator. We will pay any amount we owe the government as per law." Another official of Robi

said the High Court delivered the verdict on licence fee but did not say anything about the 5.5 percent revenue sharing amount. But the BTRC has asked the operators to pay the previous revenue sharing amount with late fee from 2010 which has already been deposited to the National Board of Revenue, he said. The court did not say

anything about the fine or late fees but the regulator has imposed the charges, the official said. A Banglalink official said

the Grameenphone's verdict is not applicable to them. BTRC Chairman Zia Ahmed said as the operators did not pay 15 percent Value Added Tax deducted at source to the regulator since 2010, they will have to pay the

amount now. "It's not a mat-

ter of court's verdict, it's a

### due," he said. Dhaka joins

**FROM PAGE 20** 

coalition's secretariat, has outlined 16 actions that can be taken to cut short-lived pollutants and slow global warming by 0.5 degrees Celsius by 2050.

The world's goal is to limit

the rise in temperatures to two degrees Celsius by that date, she and US officials The work of the coalition will "complement but not

supplant" the main international efforts to fight climate change, which focus on cutting carbon dioxide emissions but also other socalled greenhouse gases. Methane comes from landfills, coal mines, the oil

and natural gas industry, agriculture and cows. Black carbon hails from cook stoves, kilns and diesel vehicles, while HFCs are used in aerosols, refrigerators and insulating foam.

Experts say such gases contribute disproportionately to climate change. "They also destroy millions

of tons of crops every year and wreak havoc on people's health," Clinton said. This coalition, the first international effort of its kind, will conduct a tar-

geted, practical and highly energetic global campaign to spread solutions to the short-lived pollutants worldwide, she added. It will mobilise resources, assemble political support, help countries develop and

implement a national action plan, raise public awareness, and reach out to other countries, companies, nongovernmental organisations that include environmental and other activist groups and foundations.

### after consulting with law-Officials of the operators said even though two cases the BTRC has issued the letter