Rangamati

Abductors release 13

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Thirteen activists of Partbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) were released by their kidnappers at Naniachar upazila yesterday, two days into their abduction.

Dialogue for negotiation, however, is continuing between PCJSS and United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), the two rival factions over freeing the others, Longudu police said.

According to PCJSS, around 40 UPDF men intercepted an engine boat in Jotetila area of Longudu around 10:30am and abducted at least 70 PCJSS men at gun point.

The PCJSS leaders and activists were returning home from Rangamati town after attending the party's 41st founding anniversary programme.

The abductees include--Moni Shankar Chakma, secretary of PCJSS, Longudu upazila, Josho Chakma, secretary of Juba Samity and its organising secretary Milon Chakma.

However, police could not provide any details on the identities of the kidnappers or the place they were

"A headman (Mouja chief) informed me that the captivators have released 13 PCJSS men but he couldn't provide any further details,' said Md. Rezaul Haque, officer-in-charge o Longudu Police Station.

UK wants

FROM PAGE 20

Sheikh Hasina at Gond Bhaban yesterday morning.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, PM's Deputy Press Secretary Nazrul Islam said they held discussions on a wide range of bilateral issues. Hasina said the

International Crimes (Tribunal) Act has been formulated with a provision for appeal to ensure justice, though there is no such scope under such laws in other countries.

She sought cooperation of the world community, particularly the UK, in creating pressure on the Myanmar government to take back the Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh.

The UK minister highly appreciated the socioeconomic development that Bangladesh has achieved in the last four years under the

present government. Warsi said Bangladesh has witnessed tremendous successes in various sectors, including infrastructure, under the able leadership of

Hasina. Besides, she said, the present government has established peace in the country by containing militancy and terrorism with an iron hand

Mentioning the preparation of the Election Commission (EC) for holding the next general election, the premier said her government has strengthened the EC and

made it independent. Ambassador-at-Large M Ziauddin and British High Commissioner to Dhaka Robert Gibson, among others, were present at the

meeting.

HC orders

FROM PAGE 20 The HC the same day also asked District Public Prosecutor (PP) Khondaker Abdul Mannan to explain on February 20 before it whether his office had opposed the bail order at the lower court.

Yesterday, the HC exempted Judge Md Abdul Majid from personal appearance before it.

But PP Khondaker Abdul Mannan was not exempted, Deputy Attorney General Amit Talukder told The Daily

The HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Mahmudul Hoque directed the police to submit a report to the court by February 24 on compliance

with the arrest order. Following the HC order on February 13, Judge Abdul Majid on Sunday cancelled the bail order and asked the five accused to surrender before him by today.

GB set up firms

responsible for the devia-

"Each one of those bodies should have been more observant to the unusually cavalier interpretation of the provisions of the Grameen Bank Ordinance," said the commission in a report submitted to the finance ministry last week.

Dr Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Bank and globally known as the Banker to the Poor, set up the associated organisations as part of his mission to eradicate poverty.

All the organisations are legally independent and separate companies and have no legal ties with Grameen Bank.

The report said the board did not query whether the Ordinance gives the bank the mandate to create such organisations or whether it was legal to fund the subsidiaries.

The government or the BB did not play any substantial regulatory role in the functioning of Grameen Bank since changes were made to the Grameen Bank Ordinance in 1990, the report said.

"The regulatory framework for governing the bank was weak to begin with, and has become practically nonexistent since the amendments of 1990.

The commission also came down heavily on the Grameen Bank's 12member board.

"The extremely feeble and muted role of the government-nominated chairman and directors indicates that their role has to be strengthened and the regulatory role most certainly has to be devolved to an external body."

The report said the directors of Grameen Bank, both elected and governmentnominated, and the chairmen have been ineffective particularly since 1989. "It is imperative that the

government's representatives -- chairman and directors -- have to be persons who have some experience and knowledge of policy and corporate management," the report said.

The interim report said the board should only take policy decisions.

The commission will make recommendations on the future legal and organisational structure of Grameen Bank, taking into consideration the aims and objectives for which it was

initially set up. However, the commission acknowledges that many underprivileged people at the lowest end of the Bangladeshi society have been empowered and successfully brought out of the

Govt wants

FROM PAGE 20

partner, following the snags over the Padma bridge fund-

According to the WB rules, if the global lender cancels a fund in any project, the recipient country can use the fund for any other project.

During his Washington visit, Muhith will hold talks with Kim on which project the fund could be spent, said the official.

The government has been considering setting up a separate railway bridge on the Jamuna river, since no freight train can run on the railway tracks on the Jamuna bridge.

Fresh river training would not be required for the new bridge, as river training had already been done during Jamuna bridge's construction, said the official.

If the government gets a positive signal from the WB on financing of the bridge, it will start formal talks with the global lender on the utilisation of the fund, he said.

The WB committed \$1.2 billion to the Padma bridge project but cancelled it in June last year over corruption allegations.

In September last year, the global lender agreed to re-engage in the project provided that the Bangladesh government met some conditions. But the government in January withdrew its request to the WB for the bridge loan.

It also criticised the chartered accountant firms who have been auditing Grameen Bank's books for years now.

The report said the firms did not seem to have warned against the instances of bad governance and lack of accountability which include diversion of funds, issuing guarantees, and creation of subsidiary organisations beyond mandate.

"These should have stared right at the auditors' faces demanding explanation before signing off on the accounts," said the commis-

The report said the commission has found another instance of the lax and indulgent manner in which the chartered accountancy firms acted.

The report, however, did not contain any of the firms' names.

reached for comments. In May last year, the government formed the fourmember commission to review the activities of Grameen Bank and the 54 organisations bearing 'Grameen' names, and make

recommendations on how

to run the organisations. The report of the commission led by former secretary Mamun Ur Rashid came amid allegations that the government-sponsored body was not functioning properly.

The deadline for submitting the report was extended twice due to long absence of one of its members and the resignation of another.

Initially, the commission could not function fully, as Moslehuddin Ahmed, a chartered accountant and microinsurance specialist, did not attend office until September last year due to illness, according to sources close to the commission.

But by then, the first deadline for submitting the report had elapsed.

Furthermore, MA Kamal, the then director general of National Academy for Planning and Development, stepped down as the commission's member secretary in September.

The inclusion of Barrister Ajmalul Hossain, a lawyer, in the commission raised some questions, as he had represented Bangladesh Bank in its case against Prof Yunus after the microcredit pioneer was controversially removed from the bank in 2011.

Your Honour

FROM PAGE 20

in yesterday's daily Inqilab,

Sangram and Amar Desh. Judges of both the Appellate Division and the High Court division of the Supreme Court, including the chief justice, received an envelope each containing

the reports. The chief justice called Mizanur, who was appointed to the High Court on July 29, 2002 during the previous rule of BNP-Jamaar led four-party alliance, at his SC office and cautioned him for his action, sources say.

Annoyed with the move, many HC judges met Chief Justice Md Muzamme Hossain in the afternoon and urged him to take measures against Mizanur through the Supreme Judicial Council.

SC employees Jamadar Siddique and peon Nurul Alam Babu carried the enve-

lopes to their recipients. Siddique told The Daily Star that they had done so on orders of Justice Mizanur but they had no idea what was in the envelopes.

Contacted by phone, Mizanur refused to talk to this correspondent, saying he as a judge was not supposed to talk to the media.

He, however, advised The Daily Star to communicate with the chief justice to know the details of the mat-

SC Registrar AKM Shamsul Islam said he had heard about the distribution of photocopies of news items among judges, but his office had not received any copy.

No headway in Rajib murder probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four days into the killing of blogger Ahmed Rajib Haidar, investigators are yet to make any headway in probing the murder.

Detectives, however, are focusing their investigation on Islamist extremist groups who have developed close links with Jamaat-e-Islami in recent years. Rajib, an activist of

Shahbagh movement, was found dead on the road near his residence at Palash Nagar in the capital's Pallabi on Friday night. Lt Col Ziaul Ahsan, intelli-

Action Battalion, suspected religious extremists behind the murder. He said Rajib's stab wounds bore strong resemblance to those of Prof

gence wing chief of Rapid

Humayun Azad. On February 27, 2004, The members of the assailants stabbed commission could not be renowned author Azad with a machete thrice in his head and face near the Bangla Academy in the capital.

Similarly, Rajib was hacked with a machete to his face and shoulder.

Nicknamed Thaba Baba, he had posted comments on the Liberation War and activities of Jamaat on blogs.

Monirul Islam, joint commissioner of Detective Branch (DB) of police, said they were looking into whether the crime was linked with Rajib's ideology and writings on the web.

The DB is now investigating the murder case.

Despite repeated attempts, The Daily Star could not reach three Jamaat leaders, Matiur Rahman Akhand, Saiful Islam Masud and Tasneem Alam, over the phone for their comments about the party's links with Islamist extremist groups.

Armenia leader set to win

AFP, Yerevan

Armenians voted yesterday in a presidential poll expected to be easily won by incumbent President Serzh Sarkisian against weak rivals but which is seen as a crucial democratic test for the ex-Soviet state.

The authorities are hoping for a peaceful process that will improve the country's chances of European integration after the vote that brought Sarkisian to power in 2008 ended in clashes in which 10 people died.

Monday's vote is also shadowed by last month's assassination attempt against presidential candidate Paruyr Hayrikyan which has yet to be fully explained and at one point risked derailing the holding of the ballot.

For a cause

FROM PAGE 1 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital. The doctors there declared him dead at 3:45pm, said his

co-protesters. His namaz-e-janaza will be held at the Dhaka University central mosque at 11:00am, Imran H Sarker, a key organiser of the Shahbagh movement, said in an announcement last

night. Shanto launched his career as a cartoonist at Bangla daily Bhorer Kagoj He was also the founder of "Kalpodut", a magazine dedicated to kids and teen-

He had worked for Unmad, a popular satirical magazine, for the last 20 years. Shanto also contributed to entertainment magazines "Tarokalok" and "Kishore Tarokalok" as cartoonist and chief anima-

He was also a producer and playwright. He wrote several plays that have been televised on BTV. Shanto was a member of

Bangladesh Cartoonist Association. Prime Minister Sheikh

Hasina expressed deep shock at the death of the cartoonist and prayed for the eternal peace of his departed soul.

Focus shifts now to SC

FROM PAGE 1

victims of crimes against humanity, would lodge the appeal under the amended provisions of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973.

Parliament on Sunday passed the amendment empowering the government, informants and complainants to appeal against any verdict of the war crimes tribunals. President Zillur Rahman

yesterday signed the bill and the changes would have retrospective effect from July 14, 2009. The government would now issue a gazette notification giving effect to the law. The attorney general

yesterday said his office was working to file the appeal within next week. Additional Attorney General and Chief

Coordinator of the war crimes prosecution team MK Rahman said they would appeal for the capital punand the cancellation of the verdict of International Crimes Tribunal-2 that awarded him life in prison.

He said they had already received all documents required.

MK Rahman said the

verdict was not consonant with the findings of the tribunal as it found Quader Mollah guilty, beyond reasonable doubt, on five grievous charges. The tribunal ought to

grounds that the Tribunal-2

city

have passed the death sentence, the additional attorney general said.

MK Rahman also said they were considering filing of another case with a tribunal against Quader Mollah in connection with him being a leader of Al-Badr, which played a significant role in the attempt to empty Bangladesh of its intellectuals at the fag end of the war.

The new amendment to the act now allows organisations to be prosecuted for crimes against humanity.

Meanwhile, Tajul Islam, a defence lawyer for Quader Mollah, yesterday said they would move an appeal with the Appellate Division seeking cancellation of the life term imprisonment of his ishment of Quader Mollah client, and his acquittal of all plainants to appeal against charges. In the Tribunal-2 verdict

delivered on February 5, the 65-year-old was found guilty of five wartime criminal offences. In two of the five acts of

crimes against humanity, at appeal will be made on the least 350 Bangalees were

killed and a girl was raped. The three-member tribunal awarded him life sentence

(30 years) for the offences. He also got 15 years imprisonment for his complicity in three other criminal offences in which six

people were killed. He was acquitted of the sixth charge.

On that day, people burst into protests after the verdict was delivered. The protesters, who had been demonstrating in Shahbagh since then, feel Mollah was handed down a lenient sentence and that he should be awarded the death pen-

The protesters in their thousands demanded a ban on Jamaat-e-Islami and student organisation Islami Chhatra Shibir and their trial for crimes against humanity.

In the face of the mass outrage after the verdict, the government amendment the act allowing the government, informants and comany verdict of the war crimes tribunals.

Earlier, the government could appeal only in the case in which the tribunal acquitted the accused.

The new amendment has been sent to the press for gazette notification.

Ghulam Azam

FROM PAGE 20 The article 4 (2) of the Act reads: "Any commander or superior officer who orders, permits, acquiesces or participates in the commission of any of the crimes specified in section 3 or is connected with any plans and activities involving the commission of such crimes or who fails or omits to discharge his duty to maintain discipline, or to control or supervise the actions of the persons under his command or his subordinates, whereby Lahore. such persons or subordinates or any of them commit any such crimes, or who fails to take necessary measures to prevent the commission of such crimes, is guilty of such crimes.'

The prosecutor showed news clippings of different newspapers including Daily

Azad and Daily Sangram. Simon said the tribunal had categorised the five war crimes charges brought the president. against Azam -- conspiracy, planning, incitement, complicity and torture and murder. The charges are linked

during hartal hours on

Shahbagh protesters, people

across the country wore

black badges while educa-

tional institutions hoisted

black flags to honour the

the organisers called for a

grand rally at 3:00pm on

February 21, the third of its

kind since the protest began

on February 5 demanding

capital punishment to all

people to write letters com-

memorating the martyrs of

the Liberation War and tie

those with balloons and

release in the air at 4:13pm

tomorrow, the moment the

Pakistani forces surrendered

In the morning, the pro-

testers also brought out an

anti-hartal procession

under the banner of "Gono

Jagaron Mancha," urging

people to resist the shut-

down. Starting from the

protest venue, the proces-

sion marched through New

Elephant road, Science Lab,

Russell Square, Panthapath,

Karwan Bazar and

Banglamotor and ended at

protesters chanted various

anti-hartal slogans like

"Jamaat er hartal, Shahbagh

mane na" (Shahbagh rejects

Jamaat's hartal) and

"Oboidho hartal, Shahbagh

manena" (Shahbagh rejects

shutdown protesting the

ongoing war crimes trial

against its top leaders and

the death of its three activ-

The Jamaat enforced the

the illegitimate hartal).

Throughout the day, in the 1990s.

Shahbagh.

on 16 December 1971.

They also called upon the

From the protest venue,

In solidarity with the

FROM PAGE 1

February 6.

three dead.

war criminals.

with the 'superior status' of Azam during the war. Azam as the ameer of

Jamaat backed the March 25 genocide in Dhaka and elsewhere perpetrated by the Pakistani army at a meeting with the then governor of East Pakistan Tikka Khan within 10 days of the horrendous 'Operation Searchlight', Simon added. The prosecutor said Azam met Yahya Khan on June 19, 1971. After his meeting with Yahya, he addressed a press conference at

"In the press conference Azam said the miscreants [freedom fighters] are still active in East Pakistan. People must be provided arms to destroy them," said Simon quoting newspaper reports of that time.

Simon also said before that meeting Azam on June 18, 1971 told journalists that he was going to provide some additional advice to He also showed a photo-

graph dated April 6, 1971 in

which Azam was seen at a

meeting with Tikka Khan

Hartal for war criminals fails

ists during clashes with

police in Cox's Bazar on

try do not accept hartals

called by war criminals and

fundamentalists," said an

organiser to loud cheers

from the crowd. People will

no longer tolerate the big-

otry and violent activities of

Jamaat-Shibir, cried the

Shahbagh in the afternoon

at the untimely death of a

protester, Tariqul Islam

Shanto, who had a heart

attack while partaking in the

one-minute silence in

remembrance of the

departed soul in the eve-

Muhith and Education

Minister Nurul Islam Nahid

went to the protest venue to

lucky to be witnessing some-

thing of such magnitude in

his advanced age, Muhith

congratulated the youths.

He also compared the

mass movement of 1969,

the movement against

Dhaka University joined the

protest in the morning to

express their support, said

Prof Akhteruzzaman of

Islamic history and culture

a hundred artists took part in

the protest and announced

their decision to boycott all

the media houses linked

In the afternoon, around

department.

with Jamaat.

Ershad's autocratic regime

About 200 teachers of

Describing himself as

express solidarity.

The protesters observed a

Finance Minister AMA

But grief descended on

protesters in unison.

movement.

"The people of this coun-

Friday.

Amin. The meeting led to the formation of the Peace Committee, which abetted

the Pakistani occupation

and Pakistan Democratic

Party (PDP) leader Nurul

force to kill innocent Bangalees. He also said a token onetaka note signed by Azam was issued to raise funds during the Liberation War to "save Pakistan" which revealed his 'superior sta-

Ghulam Azam was and what his role was during the Liberation War," the prosecutor said, adding that Azam did these things knowingly. The proceeding of the

case was adjourned until

"This exhibits who

today. Meanwhile, the Tribunal 1 asked the prosecution to submit a formal charge or progress report of investigation against war crimes suspect Abdus Sobhan on

April 16. The tribunal gave the order after the prosecution had sought more time in this

Student leaders from

different organisations gave

speeches in the morning

while protest songs and

poetry recitation continued

candles on the streets was

"3,00,000 + 1" to denote the

lives lost in the 1971 war and

Madhya Badda in the morn-

Writ in spring flowers and

throughout the day.

that of Rajib Haidar.

Business

FROM PAGE 1

regard, added the sources.

AFP, Baghdad

ing hour. Its conductor, Md Iqbal, 35, died on the spot. The desperate Jamaat-Shibir men last night attacked Rajshahi Awami League office at Binodpur, leaving at least five AL men injured, two with bullets.

The ruling party activists in retaliation vandalised a mess of Shibir in Alupotti area. In the ensuing fight both sides blasted several cocktails and a Shibir man suffered injuries.

The Jamaat-Shibir cadres also smashed at least 25 vehicles and torched 10 others in Gazipur, Chittagong, Bogra, Joypurhat and Sylhet and Shahbagh movement to the Khulna and injured three policemen in Rangpur in Liberation War of 1971 and sudden attack. In Rangpur, Shibir activ-

ists attacked policemen and

vandalised police van. Later,

people helped police arrest at least four Jamaat-Shibir activists. The city residents also torched Shibir-run Retina

Coaching centre. Jamaat, however, claimed the hartal a success. The party also announced to hold discussion and prayers on February 20 and 21 to mark the International Mother Language Day.

PM worries about security of protesters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed concern over the health and security of the Shahbagh demonstrators who have been demanding death penalty for all war criminals. Hasina said the govern-

ment has already enacted a law allowing the state and complainants to appeal against any verdict of the war crimes tribunals in line with demands of demonstrators. Besides, the government

has empowered the tribunals to try various organisations, including Jamaat-e-Islami, alongside individuals for committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War, she added. The premier was talking to some of her cabinet mem-

bers after the weekly cabinet meeting at the Secretariat yesterday. Hasina said people who have been staging non-stop demonstration since February 5 might become

sick, and they should take

Tariqul Islam Shanto, a Shahbagh protester, died of a heart attack yesterday afternoon. The demonstrators

should consider finding a

care of their health.

way to end their demonstrations, highly placed government sources said quoting the premier as saying. In this context, Hasina mentioned that she supports the 3:00pm to 10:00pm

time frame set by the pro-

testers for demonstration at

Shahbagh. Two major hospitals are in the area and the patients have been facing difficulties

spirit of the young generation, but she is worried about their security as different kinds of people throng there at different times and

The prime minister entrusted State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Jahangir Kabir Nanak with the task of talking to the demonstrators in this

claims bombings

Al-Qaeda's front group in Iraq has claimed a wave of bombings targeting Shiite areas of Baghdad that killed at least 21 people Sunday, in the latest violence to hit Iraq as it strug-

Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) carried out the attacks "in

in the north of the city on Sunday, car bombs exploded in Ameen, Al-Husseiniyah and Kamaliyah in the east, and a roadside bomb blew up in Karrada in central Baghdad, security and med-

widely seen as weaker than during the peak of Iraq's sectarian bloodshed from 2006 to 2008, but is still capable of carrying out masscasualty attacks on a regular basis.

relatives.

to go there, she said, adding that patients would be benefited if the time frame is followed. Expressing solidarity with the movement, she said she has absolute support for the

no one knows their motives.

Al-Qaeda offshoot **Baghdad**

gles with protests and a political crisis. The al-Qaeda-affiliated

revenge for alleged criminal acts by the Shiite-led government in Sunnis areas of the capital," said the SITE monitoring service, which tracks extremist Internet forums. Three car bombs struck the sprawling Sadr City slum

ics there said. Another roadside device went off in Saidiyah in the capital's south. Al-Qaeda's front group is

Residents of Sadr City were enraged by the bombings, and hospitals in the area were quickly crowded with people searching for

"What did we do? We're always the victims of conflicts between politicians," one woman shouted.