No hartal

FROM PAGE 1 continue on the Independence Day tomorrow.

Asked, BNP standing committee member Nazrul Islam Khan and Khaleda Zia's press secretary Maruf Kamal Khan did not clarify the issue.

On the party's programme on the Independence Day, BNP joint secretary general Barkat Ullah Bulu in a press release said, "All leaders and activists of the 20-party alliance are being requested to observe the Independence Day in a befitting manner."

Earlier, the alliance did not withdraw the blockade on February 21, the Language Movement Day and International Mother Language Day. There was no hartal on the day as it was weekly holiday.

On Bangladesh's historic achievement in qualifying the ICC Cricket World Cup quarterfinal, the BNP-led alliance on March 9 announced to relax the hartal for 12 hours. Meanwhile, the 78th day of non-

stop blockade and the last day of 72hour fresh spell of shutdown passed off almost peacefully yesterday. Apart from the blockade that is being enforced since January 6, the opposition combine has been enforc-

ing hartal on every working days since February 1 demanding holding of a fresh election under a non-party administration. Meanwhile, Land Minister Shamshur Rahman Sharif yesterday

said on instruction of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the ministry has formed "resistance committees" comprising of public representatives of union parishad and other local government bodies to protect land offices from arson attack during blockade and hartal. Sharif was talking to reporters at

his village home in Ishwardi.

In Habiganj, police sued 18 Jamaat-Shibir men on charge of setting fire to a goods-laden truck at Bahubol upazila on Monday, reports our Moulvibazar correspondent. In Joypurhat, police arrested five

students and a teacher of Khanjahanpur Modinatul Ulam Hafezia Madrasa in connection with

vandalising a truck yesterday.

The students--aged between 12 and 16 -- are Shibir activists, police told a press briefing held at Joypurhat

Police Station. Five years

FROM PAGE 1 formed on March 22, 2012 to expe-

dite the trial. In last one year, the International

Crimes Tribunal-1 delivered verdicts in the cases against Motiur Rahman Nizami, MA Zahid Hossain Khokon, Mobarak Hossain, ATM Azharul Islam and Abdul Jabbar. All but Jabbar were sentenced to death for their wartime crimes. Jabbar was sentenced to imprisonment until death for the same offences.

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 has meanwhile delivered verdicts in the cases against Abdus Subhan, Mir Quasem Ali and Syed Mohammad Quasar. All of them were sentenced

to death for their wartime crimes. Prosecutor Rana Dasgupta said there were many limitations, but the prosecutors tried their best.

"The trial was actually an unfinished task of the Liberation War. We have tried to complete it with honesty and sincerity. We believe we have not failed. But it's the people who will evaluate whether we are success-

ful," he told The Daily Star last night. Sanaul Huq, a senior member of the investigation agency, added, "We are satisfied with our performance and believe that we have been able to meet the aspiration of the people to some extent.

But the prosecution could not initiate trial against Jamaat-e-Islami as the government has yet to take initiatives to bring amendment to the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1971, which is considered as the main obstacle to prosecuting the party.

The investigation agency on March 25 last year completed its probes into the alleged war crimes committed by Jamaat and handed over the report to

the prosecution. Rana Dasgupta said they were waiting for the amendment so that Jamaat could be prosecuted. The matter whether trial of Jamaat could be held at all would be the centre of

all discussion next year, he added. Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury, widow of martyr physician Alim Chowdhury, feels relieved that the AL government initiated the trial after four

decades of wait. "But it hurts when we see delay in execution of the verdicts and beginning of Jamaat's trial."

"The trial of Jamaat should be taken seriously. We do not like negligence," said Shyamoli, also the senior vice-chairperson of Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee. TRIBUNALS GET OWN MANPOWER

For smooth functioning of the special courts, the tribunal authorities have meanwhile begun recruiting their own manpower, a need that was felt since

phases. The tribunals have so far been functioning with personnel hired from the High Court, Dhaka District

Dhaka, and Administrative Tribunals.

the beginning of the war crimes trial. The recruitment is going on in and Sessions Judges Courts, Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate,

US House urges Obama to send lethal arms to Ukraine

AFP, Washington

American lawmakers voted overwhelmingly Monday to urge President Barack Obama to provide Ukraine with lethal weapons to defend itself against Russian "aggression."

The US House of Representatives approved the resolution in a broadly bipartisan 348-48 vote, heaping further pressure on the Obama administration to end its delays in providing weapons and other heavy military equipment to Kiev forces.

Congress has spoken with a largely united voice on the issue -- several lawmakers have spoken out about directly

arming Ukraine forces -- but there are splits in the Obama administration.

Following reported violations of ceasefires between Ukraine's government forces and pro-Russian separatist rebels, the White House this month announced it will deliver a \$75million package of non-lethal defensive equipment to the Ukrainians.

But Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman General Martin Dempsey told a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing that he would "absolutely consider providing lethal aid," while Defense Secretary Ashton Carter said at his confirmation hearing that he too was "inclined" in that direction.

Kiwi dream lives on

FROM PAGE 1

Black Caps skipper Brendon 81 fortwo. McCullum made a typically quickfire 59 off 26 balls at the head of the innings Then came a valuable 103-run part-

nership between Elliott and Corey Anderson and New Zealand appeared to have the game in hand with six overs to go. initiative for South Africa by taking a

the 38th over and by the start of the 43rd, and final, over New Zealand required 12 to win. They started with a bye, a single, a four to Daniel Vettori, another bye and then Johannesburg-born Elliott, who turned 36 last weekend, smacked

Steyn high into the stands as New

wicket and conceding only one run in

Zealand, after losing all six of their previous World Cup semifinals, completed a thrilling win. South Africa, struggling to throw off their unwanted "choker" tag, have now failed to win all four World Cup semi-

finals they have contested. As McCullum flung his bat at the start of New Zealand's run chase, South Africa captain AB de Villiers was forced to take three of his frontline bowlers out of the attack.

Vernon Philander, replacing Kyle Abbott in the side, gave up 14 runs to McCullum with his first over and was immediately replaced by Morkel.

Morkel also lasted one over that cost 14 runs but came back from the other end after Steyn was spelled when McCullum hit two sixes and three fours off his third over.

The return of fast bowler Morkel paid immediate dividends. He undid McCullum who plopped a simple catch into the hands of Steyn at midon and in his next over he bowled Kane Williamson.

After nine overs, New Zealand were

Martin Guptill, looking to back up his World Cup record 237 not out against the West Indies in last weekend's quarterfinal, looked in fine touch making 34 before being run out in a mid-pitch mix-up with Ross

Taylor did not last much longer But Morne Morkel regained the before he was caught behind and New Zealand were 149 for four when Elliott and Anderson set up camp before the latter was out for 58.. De Villiers had set South Africa up

for a big finish with heavy hitters in

hand only to be denied seven overs

when rain swept in when they were 216 for three in the 38th over. He produced a rapid 65 not out and, following the rain break, David Miller's boundary-laden 49 from 18 deliveries got South Africa up to 281

De Villiers was in command in the lead up to the near two-hour rain disruption cracking 60 off 38 balls, but when the weather cleared and play resumed he could only stand and watch as Miller took charge.

Of the 65 put on in the five overs after the resumption, Miller scored 49 after replacing Faf du Plessis who was out for 82 on the second ball after the restart,

Luck was with South Africa when they won the toss, elected to bat and gained early momentum when edges raced to the short boundaries.

New Zealand wicket-keeper Luke Ronchi dropped Quinton de Kock on six and Trent Boult missed a difficult chance to catch Hashim Amla.

But left-arm paceman Boult, the tournament's leading bowler with 21 wickets, added to his tally by dismissing Amla and de Kock on his way to figures of two for 53.

Kabori, Ekhlas

FROM PAGE 16

of the civil society platform collected the form on his behalf from the office of DNCC returning officer (RO).

Meanwhile in Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), the ruling party may face similar situation like in the North, as both AL leader Hazi Muhammad Selim and AL-favoured Sayeed Khokon yesterday bought nomination papers for contesting the

election. At the DSCC RO office, Selim told reporters, "Our party has not extended support to any candidate till now. Party high-ups have asked me to make preparations. So, I am also preparing myself [for the race]."

"Many Awami League leaders are with me. I am hopeful that the party will ultimately back me," said Selim, joint secretary of Dhaka city AL and

MP of Dhaka-7. However, Prime Minister and AL chief Sheikh Hasina on February 26 decided to back former FBCCI president Annisul Huq in Dhaka North and Sayeed Khokon, son of late Dhaka mayor Mohammad Hanif, in Dhaka South as mayor candidates.

In the last parliamentary election, Selim, having failed to secure party ticket, contested as an independent candidate in the constituency and defeated the AL candidate.

A total of 33 people, including 11

nation papers for the mayor posts of the two Dhaka city corporations. As for the 124 councillor posts in

yesterday, have so far collected nomi-

Dhaka North and Dhaka South, 1,387 nomination forms have been sold. Meanwhile, RO Mihir Sarwar

Morshed of DSCC issued show-cause notice to 26 councillor aspirants for violation of electoral code of conduct. He had received four complaints

against Hazi Selim for the same. "We've assigned some officials to look into the allegations," he told The Daily Star.

In the DNCC, RO Shah Alam said he had deployed an executive magistrate to conduct mobile court against violation of electoral code of conduct.

Elections to the three city corporations of Dhaka and Chittagong will be held on April 28. Over 60 lakh voters will elect three mayors and 179 councillors of the country's three key city corporations.

Woman, maid killed

FROM PAGE 16 Police suspect it was a robbery-turned-

murder. Raushan's husband Abdul Kuddus was an additional superintendent of

police and died in 1996, according to

police. Md Mustafa, who runs a shop near the house on Kolar Arat Road, said a ground floor tenant of the threestoried building told him around

house was left open for over an hour.

"She said it was very unusual as the landlady [Raushan] would always keep it locked. Then she asked me to go with her upstairs to check if everything was okay," he told The Daily Star.

Then they, along with some other in the apartment. neighbours, went upstairs to find the door to Raushan's apartment on the second floor left ajar.

saw Kalpana's body on the floor with

her throat slit and then found the body of Raushan lying on a bed in another room. Her throat was slit as well.

The almirah, lockers, drawers and

other furniture were scattered everywhere. And then we immediately called the police," Mustafa said.

Police suspect the killings took place between 3:30pm and 4:30pm, and the killers took away some valuables and cash as well.

All five children of Raushan are settled in North America and she would often visit them, tenants said. There was a "To-let" sign in front of

5:30pm that the main gate of the the building named Babar Prasad. Neighbours suspect that the killers might have entered her apartment

> Kalpana's mother Lucky Begum, who too worked as a house help for Raushan, and aunt Champa also lived

impersonating prospective tenants.

Both Lucky and Champa claimed to have been outside the house during the incident. They were taken to Having entered the flat, they first Jatrabari Police Station for quizzing, said Inspector (investigation) Kazi

> Shahiduzzaman. The bodies were sent to Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue for autopsies.

DB quizzes

FROM PAGE 16 him on different grounds related to Avijit and his murder.

On February 26, Avijit, a Bangladesh-born US citizen, was hacked to death on Dhaka University Campus, about two weeks after he came to Bangladesh to visit his family and see two of his books published in the country's annual book fair. Avijit's father Prof Ajoy Roy had earlier mentioned the Buet teacher's

name in connection with the killing. According to him, Farseem organised a meeting, which was attended by Avijit and his wife Rafida Ahmed Bonya, at Bangla Academy before the gruesome killing carried out on February 26. Bonya was also critically injured in the attack. "He [Farseem] is not a person

beyond question," Ajoy told The Daily Star yesterday. Ajoy identified Farseem as an

adviser to a publication called "Zero to Infinity", a science magazine published by alleged Islami Chhatra Shibir activists. Police are yet to identify the killers.

Barely half-an-hour after the attack

on Avijit, a militant outfit calling itself Ansar Bangla 7 tweeted: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is great]!!! Brothers We can!!! Target down here in # Bangladesh."

Shafiur Rahman Farabi, who had issued repeated death threats to Avijit on Facebook, was arrested by Rab from the capital's Jatrabari on March 2.

Govt to go tough

FROM PAGE 16

including Islami Bank Bangladesh, finance militancy and anti-state activities in the name of Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR). "The CSR activities have been

suspended as Bangladesh Bank has been working to formulate a specific guideline to bring transparency in CSR activities," said Mannan. Responding to another query, the

state minister claimed despite the BNP-Jamaat alliance's violent activities, country's economy was on the right track. "The government will be able to

achieve its [economic] target tackling all obstacles," he said. On another question, Mannan

said the looting of public money by controversial multilevel marketing (MLM) company Destiny put a negative impact on the economy. "All the property of Destiny is

being confiscated through legal procedures. The government has decided to return the money to the affected people after selling the property," he The state minister also said some

10 banks made a Tk 10,500 crore profit in the last fiscal year. Of those, Standard Chartered profited Tk 1742 32 crore and it was the highest by a bank.

Gold nuggets

FROM PAGE 16

If the findings – and subsequent extraction process - are borne out, the waste products from just one million Americans could be worth as much as \$13 million, according to a recently published study in the journal Environmental Science and Technology.

The scientists hope their findings, presented at the 249th national meeting of the American Chemical Society in Denver, may also help to limit the environmental impact of human waste.

"The gold we found was at the level of a minimal mineral deposit, lead scientist Dr Kathleen Smith said

Aside from gold, the researchers also found traces of rare earth metals palladium and vanadium, used in mobile phone and laptop technology

"We're interested in collecting valuable metals that could be sold, including some of the more technologically important metals, such as vanadium and copper, that are in cell phones, computers and alloys," Dr Smith told the audience.

The US Geological Survey scientist explained that after minerals pass through the human body and waste facilities, the precious metals are concentrated in 'biosolids'.

Several million tonnes of biosolids are produced by waste treatment plants every year. Half is used as fertiliser and the rest - deemed useless - is either incinerated or discarded in landfill sites. In a two-pronged investigation,

useful minerals for profit and those harmful minerals that prevent the waste being reused. "If you can get rid of some of the nuisance metals that currently limit

how much of these biosolids we can use on fields and forests, and at the same time recover valuable metals and other elements, that's a winwin," Dr Smith said. The scientists are experimenting

with extracting the minerals using similar a technique, involving environmentally harmful chemical called leachates, to industrial mining operations.

India, China agree to maintain border peace measures for maintaining peace and AFP, New Delhi

India and China yesterday agreed to foster peace along their Himalayan border after wrapping up two days of talks designed to resolve a longfestering boundary dispute. In comments issued after the round

of talks in the Indian capital, the governments of both countries stressed their common desire to maintain calm and to press ahead with further negotiations. "Both sides agreed to take necessary steps to maintain peace and tranquility in the border areas, which is a pre-

bilateral relations," the Indian foreign ministry said. And the Chinese foreign ministry said both sides had agreed to make "joint efforts to safeguard peace and tranquility of the border area," which has been the scene of several recent

requisite for continued growth of

military standoffs. China's special representative Yang Jiechi and Indian national security adviser Ajit Doval led their respective delegations at the talks, which were first agreed during President Xi Jinping's visit to India last year.

The talks that started Monday were part of a push to make progress on the border dispute before Modi's expected visit to China in May. China defeated India in a brief but

bloody war in 1962 but an agreement

on their border remains elusive, with each side regularly accusing the other of sending soldiers to encroach on territory. Tensions peaked last September when hundreds of Chinese troops allegedly moved into the Himalayan

territory just as Xi arrived in India on a landmark visit, casting a shadow over his talks with Modi. While there was no details on how the negotiators were progressing, the Indian foreign ministry statement said both countries had "agreed to further

expand such contacts as these consti-

tute important confidence-building

tranquility". Speaking at a briefing in Beijing,

Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said that Yang and Doval "spoke highly of the progress we have achieved". "They agreed to bear in mind the

national interests and the benefits of the two peoples, follow the right path and press ahead with the framework negotiations," Hua added. National security adviser Doval last

October said India would strive to fix the border problem with China, but without compromising on its own national security and territory. US base row

worsens over

Tokyo-Okinawa

AFP, Tokyo

dispute

A row over a controversial US military base on the Japanese island chain of Okinawa worsened yesterday as Tokyo dug in its heels against the local governor's order to halt construction.

The central government insisted work was carrying on as usual at the sparsely populated coastal site chosen as the replacement for the Futenma Air Station, which sits in a crowded urban area, and the defence ministry filed an appeal against the stoppage order. "We do not believe there is any

reason to stop the work at this point, said top government spokesman Yoshihide Suga. "The government will continue the drilling survey as planned, while pay-

ing full attention to the environment." Tokyo's hardening stance came after anti-base Governor Takeshi Onaga said Monday that coral just outside the permitted zone at the site on the island's northeast coast had been damaged and demanded a halt to the work.

Bangladesh awarded FROM PAGE 1 and countries which showed regional

on behalf of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, at the Headquarters of African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, a foreign ministry press release said.

Earlier the prime minister was invited by the founder of the Switzerland-based WIP, Silvana Koch-Mehrin, to receive the award. The premier sent a video message scheduled to be played at the closing day of the WIP Award Ceremony today. The World Economic Forum's

"Global Gender Gap Report" recently revealed that Bangladesh is one of the top 10 countries in the world in reducing gender gaps. The WIP Awards 2015 were pre-

leadership in closing the gender gap in politics. The state minister, while receiving the award, dedicated it to the over

2,00,000 women who were subjected to the worst form of gender violence during the Liberation War in 1971. The audience applauded when the state minister informed the house that Bangladesh has a unique situation where the Prime Minister, the Speaker

of Parliament, the Leader of Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the House are all women. On the sidelines of the WIP Summit, Shahriar Alam met the

director general of Ethiopian

AL, BNP working on

FROM PAGE 16

country," said Mahbub, also former army chief. The BNP will announce in a couple of days its decision on whether it will take

part in the polls, he added. To counter the BNP campaign, the AL will highlight the violence, killing of people by arsonists, and patronising militancy by the BNP-Jamaat alliance.

"The allegations that we as well as the entire nation made against the BNP for its support for militancy and terrorism will naturally come during our polls campaign," said AL Presidium Member Nuh-ul-Alam Lenin.

AL Organising Secretary Khalid Mahamud Chowdhury said they would try to convince people that the BNP was doing negative politics and became isolated for its violent activities.

"We will urge the city dwellers to boycott BNP for its misdeeds," he told The Daily Star. Political analysts say the winning party will get an upper hand in the

national politics in the wake of the current

political situation. "If the AL-backed mayor candidates win the polls, the party can claim that people have rejected the BNP for its violence politics," said Hafizuddin Khan, former adviser to a caretaker govern-

ment. "But if the BNP favourites win the mayoral race, the party may use the success to intensify the ongoing movement," he added

scientists are examining removing the | ment system expert, thinks the city polls in the polls on their own. have created a win-win situation for the two parties. "If the elections are held in a free and

Prof Tofail Ahmed, a local govern-

fair manner, the government can take credit for it. And if the ruling partybacked candidates come out victorious, the government can portray the win as people's support for it," he added. If the BNP-supported candidates fail

to win and if the polls are not held in a free and fair manner, the BNP can highlight the fault in the electoral system and use it to step up its agitation, he said. BNP policymakers are considering

own candidates. their participation in the city polls as part of their ongoing movement. The party Friday.

Ethiopian state minister for trade and sented to countries recognised for

political empowerment of women, Investment Commission.

will try to bring all anti-AL professional bodies and political forces under one umbrella to defeat the AL, said Mahbub Hossain, Khaleda's

A delegation of pro-BNP professionals plans to meet the chief election commissioner today to request him to create a level-playing field for all in the polls,

sources said.

Pro-BNP professional bodies will also campaign for the BNP-backed candidates, added the sources. If the BNP-led 20-party alliance joins the race, the AL may change its current strategy. The AL earlier decided that its partners in the 14-party alliance would

contest the polls individually. But if the BNP joins the race, the AL may change this decision. The ruling alliance will discuss the

issue at its next meeting on March 29, insiders said. "Till now our decision is to back our own party candidates as it is a local body election," said Mohammad Nasim, AL presidium member and 14-party spokesperson.

If alliance leader Sheikh Hasina decides that the 14-party combine would jointly participate in the polls, the alliance partners will withdraw their candidates and support the ALsponsored contenders. Sources in the 14-party alliance said

partners as the BNP was expected to boycott the polls. This frustrated some of its allies who decided to participate JSD General Secretary Sharif Nurul

the AL did not pay any attention to its

Ambia said local elections should be nonpartisan. "We have backed our own candidates and they will contest the elections," he

Workers Party General Secretary Fazley Hossain Badshah said if the BNP decided to join the race, the 14-party alliance would definitely fix its strategy.

Gonotantri Party, another partner of the 14-party alliance, would also back its

Party Presidium Member Nurur Rahman Selim said they would announce the names of their party candidates on