Construction

FROM PAGE 16

Recently, some local youths came to know about some "gross anomalies" in the work.

They visited the building Thursday noon and asked the workers about the materials used in construction of walls and outside louvers (vertical structures at equal intervals creating a pattern to enhance the building's beauty).

The workers refused to say anything while Robiul Hossain, consultant engineer of the project, asked the youths to leave. "We were sure about the informa-

tion we got from some local workers earlier about bamboo sticks being used in constructing walls and louvers," said one of the youths, preferring not to be named.

The youths gathered local people at the site and forced the workers to break a louver. The bamboo sticks became visible.

building. On information, officials of DAE and local administration, including upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Damurhuda, rushed to the

Locals confined the workers to the

"We stopped the work and informed the matter to higher authorities," said UNO Faridur Rahman.

A team led by Ayub Hossain, project consultant for Biological Research Center and Lab, visited the site yesterday. Contacted, Ayub said they ordered breaking all 36 walls and louvers and constructing those again.

"Construction of the main building has rightly been completed. But there have been faults in construction of walls and outside louvers," he said, adding that they would report the construction firm to higher authorities. Ali Asgor Tagar, lawmaker of

Chuadanga-2, also visited the site. According to sources, he asked the authorities concerned to properly examine the entire work and take action against the construction firm

DAE Civil Engineer Mahbubur Rahman, who along with a sevenmember delegation from Dhaka visited the spot, told The Daily Star that they directed the contractors to knock down all the louvers. "This is a mystery. It's not clear why bamboo was used when only 5kg of iron rod was necessary to construct the lou-

He said the DAE director general formed a committee to investigate the matter and the site engineer was suspended over the incident.

Contacted, James Costa, manager of the Joy Construction Ltd, said it happed without their knowledge. "The masons are responsible for this. All the masons have been suspended following the incident," he told The Daily Star over the phone.

There might have been a conspiracy by some influential locals who were denied contract to supply bricks, iron rods, cement and sand for the project, he said.

Ansar al-Islam

FROM PAGE 1

The Daily Star could not independently verify the claim.

Meanwhile, the authorities are trying to find clues to the gruesome murder by scrutinising the writings Nazim had posted on his Facebook page.

Mahbub Alam, deputy commissioner (east) of the Detective Branch of DMP, yesterday said investigators were looking into the Facebook posts of Nazim to see what he wrote about

and how people reacted to those. He added the murder seemed to

be carried out by a militant outfit. Nazim's friends criticised Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal for his comments on Thursday that the government was looking whether Nazim wrote anything "objection-

able" on his blogs. Secular online writers too are critical of the authorities' approach towards investigation.

"It appears that if one writes about religion and gets killed, the first priority of the authorities will not be to ensure justice but to evaluate what was written by the person," said a friend of the victim, requesting ano-

nymity. Nazim, a law student at Jagannath University, was hacked and shot to death by unidentified assailants on

the capital's Hrishikesh Das Lane on Wednesday night. Yesterday, he was laid to rest at his

family graveyard at Borauta village in Beanibazar upazila of Sylhet.

His family members did not file any case yet.

Nazim's fellow Jagannath

University students held a rally at the

city's Shahbag yesterday. They reiterated their ultimatum to go on strike row unless the killers are identified and arrested by today.

for an indefinite period from tomor-Lucky Akter, president of Bangladesh Chhatra Union, said

criminals realised that nothing would happen to them as a culture of impunity prevails in the country.

said those who raised voice and pro-

tested against injustice are being

killed one after another.

Imran H Sarker, spokesperson for a faction of Gonojagoron Mancha,

Govt urged to relocate

FROM PAGE 16 people. We have come here to express our solidarity with the people," said Anu Muhammad after a human chain formed from 12:30pm to 1:00pm.

He blamed the company for the

incident and demanded that the

victims be compensated by those responsible for the murder. "We learn that no environment impact assessment was done, no experts' opinion taken and no environment certificate was given for the power plant. Otherwise the reports

would have been published. The project is being implemented forcefully without paying heed to people," he observed. This plant would leave the same

impact on the environment equal to that of 1,500 brick kilns combined, he added. He also said a neutral investiga-

tion team of experts should be formed to study the environmental hazards. Besides, the murders of innocent people should also be investigated by an impartial and trustworthy committee, he added.

Rights activist advocate Sultana Kamal told the rally, "This project is being implemented to satisfy a few by ignoring the public. Development should be for mass people, not for a few benefited ones." Liakat Ali, former Union Parishad

chairman who is leading the protest, said he is in fear of life both from the law enforcers and hired goons. Poet, journalist and the committee's Chittagong district convener

Abul Momen, Bangladesh Communist Party presidium member Shah Alam, among others, addressed the rally.

PROTESTERS' DEADLINE

The villagers also organised a protest rally in the area around 3:30pm and set a deadline for the government to declare cancellation of the project by

6:00pm on Saturday. Otherwise, they would declare tougher move-

They also alleged that hired goons of S Alam company seized a CNGrun auto-rickshaw and beat up a boy for campaigning for the protest rally in the morning.

Liakat Ali, also convener of Gondamara house and graveyard protection movement committee, said, "We would lay siege to the Upazila Parishad wearing funeral clothes on Sunday."

The rally was organised under the banner of Gondamara Union Bachao Andolan to mourn the dead who were killed on April 4. Former Chittagong city mayor Mahmudul Islam Chowdhury was present as the chief guest.

The Jatiya Party leader said, "It is not a political programme of any party but a unanimous demonstration of the locals. I stand by the demonstrators." Several thousand villagers includ-

justice for the murder of innocent villagers and relocation of the power plant by chanting slogans. PROTEST CONTINUES In a press conference held at Chittagong Press Club at 6:30pm yesterday, Anu Muhammad said

Jamaat men instigated the protest movement. Terming the propaganda an ill motive to destroy the movement, he said they found people irrespective of all parties had taken part in the

many are propagating that BNP-

"But the leaders belonging to three parties [ruling Awami League and opposition BNP and Jamaat] are the beneficiaries of the project and have taken stance against the movement," he added.

view. He suggested the PM regretted

the way the disclosure about his tax

hindsight, he would rather that all of

what has come out over the last four

days had come out on the first day,"

Boles told the BBC Radio 4 Today

can identify with, even if it was some-

thing that he might well have done

have complied fully with all of the

tax laws' and I don't like feeding this

mill of preying on his father's mem-

ory and his father cannot defend

secretary Owen Smith said Mr

Cameron needed to be "clear" about

all his past investments and should

should do it in Parliament next - and

come clean about what the

Government's real intentions are

Those gathered in Tharrawaddy's dusty

courtroom erupted into cheers and

song after the judge delivered his state-

ment, while dozens of police looked on.

dren in emotional scenes before hurry-

ing to the nearby prison to collect the

tery to pay their respects to the graves

of other activists who died in the coun-

try's decades-long democracy struggle.

commit any crime. We suffered in

prison for more than one year. We are

happy but we want the new govern-

ment to release all political prisoners

immediately," Ei Thinzar Maung, 20,

Court officials said they began prepar-

ing to release the students shortly after

Suu Kyi's statement, which said her

government would try to free detainees

still on trial by asking the state prosecu-

confirmed as released yesterday,

though scores of other detainees were

freed from prisons around the country

because their sentences were due to

end during the upcoming Buddhist

students' release, but urged Suu Kyi and

her National League for Democracy

(NLD) party to amend the laws used to

imprison peaceful protesters.

gated in an international effort.

Human Rights Watch welcomed the

No other political prisoners were

told AFP after her release.

ROUTINE JAILING

tor to drop the charges.

new year holiday.

NY Fed

FROM PAGE 1

Tearful parents gripped their chil-

Some students stopped at a ceme-

"Our release showed that we didn't

about tax avoidance," he said.

Myanmar

detainees' belongings.

From page 16

"The Prime Minister now needs to

"allow sunlight to disinfect him"

But Shadow work and pensions

differently if given a second chance.

"I think the instinct is one that we all

"I think he thought 'I know that I

"I'm sure that, with the benefit of

affairs had been handled.

programme.

Cameron accused

FROM PAGE 1

the British government has the power to close the tax loopholes. McDonnell's comments came

after Cameron used a television interview to admit that he and his wife Samantha bought a £12,497 holding in his father's offshore trust in April 1997 for and sold it in January 2010 for £31,500.

However, they did not pay tax on the profit as the annual personal allowance for an individual in 2009-10 was £10,100 - meaning jointly the profit was just outside the threshold. Up until his admission, Cameron

had denied he was a beneficiary of Blairmore Holdings that was set up by his father Ian in the 1980s and whose existence was revealed in the Panama Papers.

However, Cameron's previous answers did not rule out the possibility that he had been a beneficiary in the past.

McDonnell said people had the come to the country - I think he right to expect better from the Prime Minister.

"What's happened over this recent period is there's significant erosion of trust in the Prime Minister because he wasn't straight and he didn't answer straight away and responses, as others have said, had to be dragged out of him," he said.

"The discussion that has taken place over the last 24 hours has revealed that he actually did benefit from his father's exercise in terms of an offshore trust.

The Shadow Chancellor, who published his own tax affairs at the start of the year, said it was important for senior ministers to do the same.

He said: "I think it's up to the individual politicians but if you're holding senior office, particularly in regards to the management of the economy, I think actually it's important that you do, that's why I pub-

lished mine." Downing Street this morning put up the Skills Minister Nick Boles to defend Cameron in a radio inter-

CID quizzes

FROM PAGE 16 around 4:30pm on Thursday and

quizzed them. The CID team also interrogated

Tonu's elder brother Nazmul Hossain, cousin Laiju Jahan, her friend Manisha and Ismail Hossian, an employee of cantonment board. They were taken to Comilla CID

office around 8:30am yesterday for the interrogation. The team recoded their statements till 11:00am. Sohagi Jahan Tonu, 19, a second-

year history student of Comilla Victoria College and a member of Victoria College Theatre, was found lying senseless with severe injuries in her body in a bush adjacent to their house on the night of March 20. The two army men were on duty in

that area on the fateful night. Tonu was then whisked off to

Combined Military Hospital where

doctors declared her dead. The case filed in this connection was shifted to the CID on March 29 to expedite the probe.

ment, they said.

heightened concern that religious extremists are getting a foothold in Bangladesh, a Muslim country with traditions of secularism and tolerance, and that authorities are failing to provide protection.

Meanwhile, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein urged the Bangladesh government to take urgent, concerted measures to ensure the protection of all those being threatened by extremists "operating in the country", reports UNB.

Hussein made the call saying they are alarmed by the violent killing of Nazim. "We call on political and religious

leaders to unequivocally condemn

such murders, and on the authorities

to swiftly investigate and bring the perpetrators to justice," he was quoted as saying in a statement received from Geneva on Friday. AP reports that in December, USbased human rights groups urged the US to offer "humanitarian parole" for Bangladeshi writers targeted by

extremists for their secular beliefs. ing a huge number of women joined Karin Deutsch Karlekar of PEN the rally. They repeatedly demanded America reiterated that call to the US and other countries Thursday, saying that Nazim's killing "is a cruel illustration of the costs of inaction." State Department spokesman Mark

Toner strongly condemned the "barbaric murder" of Nazim and told reporters the US offers "unwavering support to the Bangladeshi people in their struggle against violent extremism." He said that humanitarian parole

for a select number of bloggers who continue to be under "imminent danger" is one option under consideration, but referred questions on it to the Homeland Security Department. Shin Inouye, press secretary at the US

which is responsible for administering such cases, declined to comment about any specific requests for humanitarian parole, citing privacy rules. Humanitarian parole is used sparingly to bring a person into the United

Citizenship and Immigration Services,

due to a compelling emergency. No group has claimed responsibility for the killing of Nazim, a supporter of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's secular Awami League party.

States for a temporary period of time

Bangladeshi police said they suspect Nazim was targeted for his outspoken atheism and for supporting capital punishment for war crimes committed during the Liberation War against Pakistan in 1971. Hasina's government set up special tribunals to try war crimes cases, including against senior leaders of an Islamist party.

Hasina's government has accused the opposition of supporting religious radicals it blames for the attacks on bloggers, members of Shia community, Christians and foreigners. Some of the attacks were claimed by the Islamic State group, but the government dismisses those claims and says the Sunni extremist group has no presence in the country. STATEMENT OF THE US

DEPARTMENT OF STATE The US Department of State in its

statement said, "Nazim Uddin knew and Bangladesh's history has shown that violence can – will not defeat Bangladesh's proud tradition of free and independent discourse."

"So we stand with the Bangladeshi people in rejecting this vicious act and uniting to preserve a tolerant and inclusive society that protects freedom of expression. The United States will continue to support the Government of Bangladesh in its efforts to combat terrorism, counter violent extremism, and bring to justice those who commit such heinous acts," said the statement.

Study shows

FROM PAGE 16

"The possible factors behind these are familial conflicts, family food habits, lack of playgrounds in the schools or open spaces and a lack of community life," Sadia, who runs a private counselling firm, told this correspondent. Majority of the urban students

spend time watching television, playing video games, using computers or mobile phones and browsing social media sites via Internet, she said. "Such a lifestyle is not helpful for

children's proper mental and physical growth," she said. Oftentimes, Sadia said, there are

conflicts between parents in a family, and if that continues, it has huge a negative psychological impact on children. If children remain mostly at homes and under pressure of studies, they do

not become social, rather become selfcentred, she noted. The study recommended that the authorities formulate policies so that

schools and residential areas have playgrounds. It also suggested that communities take initiatives to make sure that children can socialise.

York Fed President William Dudley "Children are our future leaders. said in his first public comments on They need to have scopes so that they the recent heist, which is being investican grow physically, mentally and intellectually. Therefore, there should "This is something we focus on very, be initiatives from the state, communities, social organisations and families

US condemns | Hard days for miners

The MGMCL is also facing a financial

It has not been able to sell rocks to its main clients -- Bangladesh Railway, Roads and Highways Department, Water Development Board and construction companies under different government and non-government organisations, said its officials.

However, they hoped that the production would resume within the end of this month as "the equipment had already been purchased and would reach the mine site very soon." Mohammad Aminuzzaman, for-

MGMCL, claimed that the company would be able to overcome the loss once the production resumed. For rock extraction and mine maintenance, the MGMCL signed the contract with the GTC in September,

2013 and the production began in

February next year. Operating three shifts, the foreign company was producing nearly 4,000 tonnes of rocks daily. Still, it was nearly 1,500 tonnes less than the quantity mentioned in the project proposal, said MGMCL officials.

Every day, the company was increasing its production and was heading steadily towards the target. But suddenly in August last year, it shut down the production, saying many of the available equipment went port in Chapainawabganj. out of order and the work could not continue this way.

As per the agreement, the MGMCL was supposed to provide the GTC

with the machines, said officials of

the state-run company. Abul Basar, the then managing

director of the MGMCL, had told The Daily Star that they could not buy the equipment for lack of funds. Later, Basar was removed, and Mohammad Aminuzzaman, manag-

ing director of Barapukuria Coal Mining Company Limited, was made the acting MD of the company. In November last year, the MGMCL initiated the process to import the equipment worth Tk 100 crore with

financial support from its parent organisation, Petrobangla. MGMCL officials said the equipment

mer acting managing director of the was already in the Chittagong port and was about to reach the mine site. "It would not take more than a

> month for resuming the production once the machines reach the site," said a top official, wishing not to be named. While visiting the site in Parbatipur recently, this correspondent talked to

> failing to get those from the MGMCL. In the last eight months, nearly 20,000 tonnes of rocks were imported through the Hili Land Port in Dinajpur alone, according to the port

> Shipment of Indian rock also enters Bangladesh through the Benapole port in Jessore and the Sonamasjit

> Engineer Nawshad Islam, who joined the MGMCL as its MD on March 23 this year, said he hoped that the production would resume "very quickly".

New land raises

13,660 sqkm water bodies, according to government figures.

only 24 decimals while the quantity of agricultural land is even less -- 14 decimals, one of the lowest in the world,

If the trend continues, the per capita agricultural land would reduce to only six decimals by 2050, the report warns. In 2008, a CEGIS study found that

Later in 2013, Bangladesh Soil Research Development Institute in a Availability in Bangladesh" stated that

The report mentioned that char formation intensified between 2000

Uchkhali, New Dalchar and Keringchar

The government has taken an initiative to build a cross dam at Urirchar, which would connect Sandwip island with the mainland. This may lead to

All this, however, will not change the official land area of the country because these chars are emerging out of the already calculated 1,47,570 sqkm area. But it will change the ratio of land area and water bodies, said Md Fayekuzzaman, acting director general of the land survey and record director-

land has emerged, but we have been continuously working to record the new pieces of land. Currently, our team is working in Jamalpur, Patuakhali, and Maheshkhali of Cox's Bazar," he added.

Amir Hossain Chowdhury, divisional forest officer of Noakhali, said they had a target to plant trees on 19,000 hectares of coastal land in the next five years. "The soil is not hard yet. The trees

will eventually make the newly emerged land hard," he added. SPECIAL EPZ On the newly emerged land in Sonagazi of Feni, the government has

special economic zones. Development work on 700 acres of land is on and by next year, the BEZA expects to develop around 7,500 acres

of land there.

to pay compensation to land owners. The government has undertaken a mega development project also in the

These projects will be implemented

economic zones on 15,000 acres of land in Teknaf, Maheshkhali and Cox's Bazar Sadar upazilas. "The land ministry has already

Cox's Bazar.

ening our natural lives, according to a new study which suggests that life could be prolonged by effectively

which also have the GSK-3 protein found that the molecule could be inhibited by low-level lithium use, which extended their lives by 16 per At low doses, lithium prolonged

the life of fruit flies in lab experiments. At high doses, lithium reduced their lifespan, reported BBC. Scientists say the finding is "en-

lead to new drugs to help people live longer and healthier lives. Lithium is used in psychiatry to

of serious side-effects at high doses. How lithium acts on the brain is not fully understood, but in fruit

flies the drug seems to extend life by And perhaps more importantly,

knowledge of the molecule could

animals such as mice before moving on to primates and then humans.

Biology of Ageing and the European Molecular Biology Laboratory were also involved in the research, which is published in the journal Cell

several rock traders. They said they had to import rock from India after

officials.

FROM PAGE 1 "We cannot say exactly how much 1,33,910 sqkm land and the rest

The per capita land in Bangladesh is

according to the annual report (2014-15) of the land ministry. Every day, an estimated 220 hectares of land is converted for commercial uses.

Bangladesh gained 597 sqkm of new land between 1973 and 2008. During the period 1,642 sqkm of new land formed while 1,045 sqkm was lost in erosion.

report titled "Agricultural Land 5,47,128 hectares (5,471 sqkm) of new land emerged until 2010 since independence in riverine areas alone.

and 2010. Towards the beginning of this millennium, Subarnachar and Nijhum Dwip of Hatia have virtually connected with the mainland due to char formation. Several other islands, including Char Kabira, Char Alim, Sagaria,

also developed around Noakhali.

the emergence of more chars.

been setting up one of the biggest

The BEZA chairman said some 633 metres of new land emerged in the coastal area of Sonagazi each year.

Generally whenever a char emerges, people go there to start cultivation. Sometimes they get allocation from the district administration. So the government has taken up a policy to develop economic zones in the newly emerged land so that it does not have

coastal area of Cox's Bazar.

on 35,000 acres of land in Maheshkhali, Pekua, Ukhia, Teknaf and Kutubdia. The BEZA plans to set up 10 special

approved some of these projects," said Ali Hossain, deputy commissioner of

[Our Cox's Bazar correspondent Mohammad Ali Jinnat contributed to this report.]

could mean that all sorts of diseases

related to ageing could be prevented

for the near future if it was to

become a therapy starting in middle

age. I think that's an even more exciting

perspective than life extension," he

Institute of Healthy Ageing, another

author of the study, cautions that a

GSK-3-related anti-ageing pill is

unlikely within the next ten years

and may not be available for several

decades. When it does appear it could

development that perform broadly

similar functions would be used.

Prof Linda Partridge of the UCL

Key piece of aging

switching them off. Experiments with fruit flies -

couraging" and could eventually

help stop mood swings but has a risk

blocking GSK-3.

also unlock the secret to pushing back the onset of age-related diseases such as Alzheimer's, diabetes, cancer and Parkinson's, said Dr Jorge Ivan Castillo-Quan, lead author of the study.

potentially extend life by around seven to ten years, he said. Although any anti-ageing pill could use lithium it is more likely that various other drugs still under

> This is because lithium, a therapy for bipolar disorder, can have side-effects such as making people feel dazed and fatigued. The researchers will now conduct GSK-3 research in more complex

The Max Planck Institute for

very intently," and want the New York Fed to be "buttoned up in terms of to create scopes for their proper develcyber security risk," he added. "We're excited about GSK-3. It Reports. opment," the study said.