Oikyafront invited to Gono Bhaban

FROM PAGE 1 Obaidul Quader, Gonoforum General Secretary Mustafa Mohsin Montu yesterday sent the names of the 16member delegation to be led by Dr Kamal.

Of them, five are from the BNP. They are party's Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and standing committee members --Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, barrister Moudud Ahmed, Mirza Abbas and barrister Jamiruddin Sircar.

Other members are Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President ASM Abdur Rab and its General Secretary Abdul Malek Ratan and Vice-president Tania Rab; Gonoforum General Secretary Mustafa Mohsin and its Executive President Subrata Chowdhury; Nagorik Oikya Convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna and its adviser SM Akram; Jatiya Oikya Prokriya Member Secretary ABM Mostafa Amin and its member Sultan Muhammed Mansur Ahmad; and Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Dr

Zafrullah Chowdhury. On October 13, the BNP and four other parties -- Gonoforum led by Dr Kamal, JSD by Rab, Nagorik Oikya by Manna and Forward Party -- formed the Oikyafront.

Meanwhile, Obaidul, also road transport and bridges minister, yesterday said his party agreed to sit with the Oikyafront to continue the democratic and constitutional process, reports

"We will hold this discussion with an open mind," Quader told a press conference at the ministry's conference

"We have trust in Dr Kamal Hossain though we are not sure whether he is the top leader of the Oikyafront or not. When we sit in discussion, it will be clear whether the alliance is being led from London or Bangladesh.

"We did not yield to pressure from anyone as the proposal for holding the dialogue did not come from us," he

Of the Oikyafront's seven-point

demand, he added, several are related

to the constitution and some to the court and the Election Commission. Quader said the Oikyafront talked about a level-playing field, which it

was enjoying even now by holding meetings and rallies. When the schedule for the gen-

eral election will be announced, the EC will deal with the matter, he

Asked about AL's dialogue with the BNP, Quader said, "We aren't sitting with the BNP. We are holding a dialogue with the Oikyafront. But we didn't set any pre-condition whether BNP leaders would be in the discussion or not."

About the polls-time government, he said it had no relations with the dialogue. "The Election Commission will

conduct the election, and the election-

time government will cooperate with the commission. It is the jurisdiction of the prime minister to decide what will be the size of the polls-time government," the minister added. About his talks with Gonoforum General Secretary Mostafa Mohsin, he said different newspapers published

reports that "We have proposed 10 names for the dialogue. It is not true. asked Mostafa Mohsin Montu how many of them want to join the discussion. He said [the number] is 15. I told him if they want, even 20 to 25 persons can come.

On the other hand, BNP Secretary General Fakhrul yesterday said people were doubtful about the dialogue outcome following the High Court verdict that extended Khaleda's sentence to 10 years from five years in the leader Dr Kamal.

Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case. "Jatiya Oikyafront will hold a meeting with the prime minister on Thursday. People will now realise how cordial the Awami League will be about the talks and how fruitful the talks will be," he told journalists in an immediate reaction to the verdict at the party's Nayapaltan central office. BIKALPADHARA HAILS TALKS

DECISION

Welcoming Hasina's decision to hold talks with political parties, Bikalpadhara President Badruddoza yesterday sent a letter to her seeking dialogue with the AL, adds UNB.

Bikalpadhara Presidium Member Abdur Rouf and Organising Secretary Omar Farroque carried the letter to AL president's Dhanmondi office around 6:00pm, said Badruddoza's Press Secretary Jahangir Alam. In the letter, Badruddoza said,

"We're pleased that you've extended

offer to engage in political dialogue to

resolve the problems over the election.

We, on behalf of Juktafront and Bikalpadhara Bangladesh, sincerely thank you. "We'll be happy if you invite us to join

dialogue with you at your convenient time. We believe it's possible to resolve all the problems through our will and cordiality."

FAKHRUL MEETS KADER

SIDDIQUE Fakhrul last night held a meeting with Krishak Sramik Janata League

President Kader Siddique at the latter's

house in the capital's Mohammadpur.

The BNP leader urged Kader to join the Jatiya Oikyafront, said BNP sources.

Kader invited the Oikyafront lead ers to dinner in his house today, said a BNP leader wishing anonymity.

Kader had earlier met Oikyafront

Dialogue initiative remarkable

scenario.

not be any one-party dialogue.

Democracy is a strong institution. We want the dialogue that strengthens the whole process, not any single political

"Bangladesh will fulfill its commitment to hold free, fair and credible election and legislatory election that will reflect the will of the Bangladeshi people," Bernicat, who is scheduled to leave Bangladesh for Washington on completion of her nearly four-year stint in Dhaka, said.

"In order to do so I suggested many times, parties must be free to participate in the political process. They have to be able to meet without fear of arrest and free of intimidation. In addition, everybody needs to be able to engage in the process and engage in peaceful practices without intimidation and reprisal."

In order to hold credible election there must be credible opposition so that they are able to act as political parties, not as the subject of intimidation or arbitrary arrest.

Americans are not supporting any particular candidate or party but rather support the democratic process and the values that Bangladeshis and

Americans have in common. On the Digital Security Act (DSA), she said freedom of expression was vital for a healthy democracy, particularly the ability of the members of the media, civil society organisations and

opposition parties to express their views to advocate their policies.

Bangladesh is a far more complex society in terms of political history and political nature compared to some neighbouring countries, she observed.

On US-Bangladesh relations, she

said during her four-year tenure as the US envoy, the relations between the two countries were open and positive despite some contentious issues. Bernicat also said a number of

ambassadors in Bangladesh had been

lobbying with the government over the last two years on the issue of the DSA. She said the ambassadors had urged and continued to urge that if a law was abused, especially and importantly freedom of speech, it was a dangerous

There will be an opportunity to change the law in future, she said. She also demanded a full investigation into the incident of the attack on her car a few months ago in Dhaka.

Bernicat also mentioned that during the liberation war the US policy was changed after the-then consul general of the US in Dhaka Archer K more careful while reporting mainly to Blood sent a message on the war in 1971, highlighting the role of Senator Kennedy in this regard.

On the issue of workplace safety, Bernicat said over the last five years, Bangladesh's progress in safety in garments factories was remarkable, adding, that Bangladesh needed to improve its labour law to make it an international standard one.

She suggested strengthening the Remediation Coordination Cell for running inspection of and remediation in garments factories after the departure of two foreign agencies --Accord and Alliance.

workers in the sector as they were making high quality garment products in an era of fast fashion in the western world.

challenges of technologies in marketing, distribution of garment items and to save the jobs of millions of workers.

She said her government had devised the 10-year long \$26 trillion Indo-Pacific strategy to improve infrastructures and investment. However, this mega initiative of the US would not result in a problem with the Chinese flagship initiative of the Belt and Road Initiative.

She also said the gender equality of Bangladesh was at the top level and such equality was needed everywhere. She also suggested that journalists be avoid any kind of untoward incident. She said the US encouraged the gov-

ernments of both Bangladesh and Myanmar and also the UNHCR for negotiating a safe, voluntary and dignified repatriation of thousands of Rohingyas from Bangladesh to Myanmar.

Saudi coalition sends thousands of troops towards Yemen port

AFP, Aden

The Saudi-led military coalition in Yemen has sent more than 10,000 new troops towards a vital rebel-held port city ahead of a new assault, Yemeni government officials said yesterday.

The pro-government coalition deployed the reinforcements to the Red Sea coast ahead of a new offensive on Hodeida "within days", a military official told AFP. He said they would also "secure

areas liberated" from the Iran-backed Huthi rebels, and that forces from Sudan, part of the coalition, had moved in to "secure" areas around the city. Huthi rebels have for the past 10

tops of buildings in Hodeida city, government military officials told AFP. The adjacent port is the entry point for three quarters of imports to the impoverished country, which is

days been stationing fighters on roof-

teetering on the edge of famine. Saudi Arabia and its allies intervened in Yemen in 2015 to support President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi's government after the Huthis ousted it

swathes of territory including the capital Sanaa. The coalition has used air power to push the rebels back from much of

Yemen, but the Huthis have held onto Hodeida and Sanaa.

Meet demands

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Club. After the rally, they led a procession towards Bangabhaban, the official residence of the president, to submit a memorandum, containing their demands, to him. When police obstructed the proces-

sion near the Dainik Bangla intersection, a 10-member delegation of the LDA went to Bangabhaban to submit the memorandum. They, however, could not meet the president.

At the rally, LDA coordinator and general secretary of Revolutionary Workers' Party Saiful Huq said, "We placed our demands before the govern ment several times for a fair national election, but to no avail. We decided to submit the memorandum to the president as there is no other way.

within the next 48 hours, we will begin countrywide demonstrations from the first week of November."

decision to sit for a dialogue with the alliance of opposition parties includ should not be just a show.

He also condemned the police obstruction of their procession and

of Bangladesh (CPB) Mujahidul Islam Selim urged the president to call an emergency session in parliament to restore the caretaker government system by bringing an amendment to the constitution. "The people in power panic when

fair election is held, they will not be re-elected and won't be able to carry out their plunderings," said Selim, also an LAD leader, adding that the formation of a neutral caretaker government is necessary as people believe a free and fair election is not possible under the ruling party.

of Bangladesh Khalekuzzaman, General Secretary of CPB Shah Alam and Chief Coordinator of Ganasamhati Andolan Zonayed Saki, among others, spoke at the rally.

Huge police

local criminals and militants. Besides police will monitor activities of political leaders accused in different cases, those who were on the run or out of the scene.

security initiatives for VIPs, returning and presiding officers and deployment of armed police at polling centres before and after the election, they added.

the election, the PHQ had instructed to start preparing a roster for them. Last month, Md Sohel Rana, assis-

tant inspector general (AIG) of PHQ, told The Daily Star that they had planned for the upcoming national election but it would officially start after the schedule declaration by the election commissioner and following instructions from the home ministry. In the upcoming national election,

the police officials will treat cyber related issues as a major one.

Officials said that a cybercrime "coordination cell" had already started its activities from the first week of September to prevent spread of rumours and fake news during the election. Around 100 police teams across the country are providing updates to the coordination cell in real time and these teams will also

Project-approval

FROM PAGE 16

Minister Kamal yesterday told reporters that earlier he held meetings with all secretaries and told them to submit their projects, regardless of their number, and those would be approved following procedure.

Replying to a query on why such a huge number of projects were being okayed before the election, the minister said the projects would contribute to the development of the country. Asked whether projects would be

approved once the election schedule is announced, he said the prime minister would decide that. The Ecnec yesterday approved a multi-sectoral project for emergency

rehabilitation of the Rohingyas at a cost of Tk 1,058 crore. The World Bank would provide Tk 1,048 crore and the rest would be given by the government. Under the project, various infra-

structures, including roads and power distribution would be built. The Ecnec approved a project for

setting up new dual-gauge rail line from

Bogura to Sirajganj, which would

reduce distance from Dhaka to Bogura by 112km and save three hours of travel time. It would be built at a cost of Tk 5,579 crore and Tk 3,146 crore would be provided from India's third line of credit. The committee also approved a Tk 1,272 crore project for setting up telecommunication and ICT infrastruc-

ture, and developing human resource Intelligence (DGFI). According to the project proposal, it to be moved.

would enhance the DGFI's ability to prevent militancy, provide security to people's lives and properties, secure voice and data connections, prevent crimes using social media and stop cybercrimes.

Other projects approved include:

construction of drains, footpaths, and roads in Gazipur City Corporation (Tk 1,510 crore); construction and repair of damaged roads, drains, and footpaths in Dhaka North City Corporation (Tk 694 crore); widening of road from Madani Avenue to the Balu river (Tk 1,259 crore); construction of road from the Balu to the Shitalakkhya river (Tk 456 crore); building permanent campus for Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University (Tk 1,184 crore); setting up polytechnic Institutes in 23 districts (Tk 3,691 crore); construction of nine government secondary school buildings (Tk 435 crore); construction of a 20-storey office building at the secretariat (Tk 420 crore); building nine residential towers for police (Tk 927 crore).

The planning minister said during the tenure of this government, 1,297 projects, with an estimated cost of Tk 14,86,127 crore, had been approved in 148 Ecnec meetings.

He said Bangladesh Secretariat would not be moved to Agargaon, near the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre. He said the government looked into the original design of the parliament made by and technical capacity of the internationally acclaimed architect Directorate General of Forces Louis I Kahn and the land available there was inadequate for the secretariat

Sacked major Zia FROM PAGE 1 Apart from the eight, investigators

"We have already submitted the charge also found the involvement of another sheet, against eight people, to the suspect in Dipan's murder, but did not home ministry for approval as the case was transferred under the Anti-Terrorism Act. We will submit it to the metropolitan magistrate court upon approval," he said. Six of the eight suspects have already

been arrested under several cases, including the one for the murder of Dipan. They have also given confessional statements in court, admitting their involvement in the Dipan killing, Monirul said while talking to reporters at the Dhaka Metropolitan Police media centre.

The six arrestees are -- killing squad leader Moinul Hasan Shamim alias Samir alias Imran, 24; trainer Abdus Sabur alias Samad alias Sujon alias Raju, 23; top ABT operatives Khairul Islam alias Fahim alias Jishan, 24, Sheikh Abdullah, 27, Abu Siddiq Sohel, 34, and Mozammel Hossain alias Saimon, 25. The CITC officials came to know

about Zia's involvement in the murder from the statement of Samir, who was arrested by police on August 26, 2016.

Zia and another suspect Akram Hossein alias Hasib are still on the run, the CTTC chief said.

Regarding the whereabouts of the two, Monirul said they were yet to identify their specific locations but warrants would be issued for their arrest once the charge sheet was sub-

include his name in the charge sheet as they were not able to verify his actual identification and address. "If we are able to verify the suspect's identity later, then we will submit a supplementary charge sheet," said Monirul.

On October 31, 2015, Dipan of Jagriti Prakashani was murdered at his office in the capital's Shahbagh. His wife Dr Razia Rahman filed a murder case against unidentified assailants

with Shahbagh Police Station. The case was primarily filed under the penal code but after finding ABT's involvement, the investigators later transferred the case under the Anti-

Terrorism Act, said Monirul. Just hours before the attack, publisher Ahmedur Rashid Tutul and his friends, bloggers Ranadipam Basu and Tareque Rahim, were injured in a

Both Tutul and Dipan were publishers of freethinking online activist writerblogger Avijit Roy, who was hacked to death by assailants in the capital's TSC

According to investigators, ABT, said to be the Bangladesh branch of Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), carried out targeted attacks on secular writers, bloggers, publishers, freethinkers and LGBT rights activists

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saying the single-aisle jet plunged into

The accident has resurrected concerns about Indonesia's patchy air safety record which led to a now-lifted European airspace.

Yesterday, Indonesia's transport minister ordered an inspection of all 737-MAX aircraft but he stopped short of grounding the new models.

Dozens of divers were taking part in the recovery effort along with helicopters and ships.

the smashed jet's location and flight data recorders expected to be crucial to the crash investigation.

Scores of relatives thronged a hospital building being used for victim identification.

Pinang city, a jumping off point for beach-and-sun seeking tourists on nearby Belitung island, when it dropped out of contact around 6:30 am (2330 GMT). The pilot and co-pilot had more

than 11,000 hours flying time between them and had undergone recent medical checkups and drug testing, the carrier said. Aviation experts said it was too early

to determine what caused the accident. But investigators would look at

everything from catastrophic mechanical failure and pilot error to weather conditions or unusual cockpit activity that could point to a hijacking or pilot suicide, they said. "Locating the so-called black boxes

is most important now," said Terence Fan, an aviation expert at the Singapore Management University. "That should show how the aircraft and pilots actually behaved."

On Monday, Lion Air acknowledged the plane had an unspecified technical issue fixed in Bali before it was flown back to Jakarta, calling it

first officer's instruments.

between 2013 and 2016.

Lion maintenance staff would have consulted Boeing on how to fix any problem with the new jet's pitot-static system, which determines speed and altitude among other measurements, said Stephen Wright, an aviation

expert at the University of Leeds. "It's a critical system -- you don't muck about with it... There are fixed

procedures," he told AFP. On its last flight, the jet was travelling at a much faster speed than would be expected, but the pilot did not declare an emergency or attempt a water landing.

"That might mean the plane was out of control," said aviation analyst Dudi Sudibyo.

Boeing suspended release of the fuel-efficient 737 MAX just days before its first commercial delivery last year due to an issue with engines. Lion Air, Indonesia's biggest budget

airline which has been engaged in huge expansion, announced earlier this year it was buying 50 Boeing 737-MAX 10 jets for \$6.24 billion.

It currently has 10 737-MAXs in its fleet while national carrier Garuda has

In 2014, an AirAsia crash in the Java Sea during stormy weather killed 162

Mother, daughter

FROM PAGE 2

Inspector (Investigation) Jahir Hossain of Double Mooring police said Parvin and Motin rented the house in Mogultuli one month ago. Sohel lives on the same floor, he added. Jahir suspects that the murder took

place sometime at night and Motin might have been involved.

Reshmi Akhter, another daughter of Hosne Ara, said Motin used to take drugs and torture her sister over family

"Motin killed my mother and sister as they protested against his wrongdoings,"

Reshmi said on the spot.

Police said they are looking for Motin, who remained absent from the garage where he keeps his rickshaw since Tuesday morning.

Male migrants' remittance drops 11pc

Asian countries," said Tasneem Siddiqui, lead researcher for the study and chair of Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU)

at Dhaka University. The RMMRU conducted the study with support from Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

RMMRU researchers Ananta Neelim and C Rashaad Shabab presented the findings, which are significant given that some 10 million Bangladeshis, including five lakh women, work abroad.

The number of Bangladeshi migrants has increased significantly in recent years. In 2014, 4.26 lakh Bangladeshis migrated to different countries. The number was 10.08 lakh last year.

However, remittance from migrants fell to \$13.5 billion last year from \$14.9 billion in 2014, show Bangladesh Bank data.

Zahid Hussain, lead economist at the World Bank's Dhaka office, termed it a puzzling phenomenon. Common explanation for the

decline was that a large number of migrants send money home via informal channels as the cost of money transfer through formal channels is high. However, the latest findings give a new perspective, he said. Tasneem said their study found at

least 32 percent of the migrants either face joblessness abroad or don't get regular wages. Many of them return home a few months after going abroad. Often they have to pay high amounts for visa renewal -- a factor

that may lead to a decline in per capita remittance, she said. "It is clear that many of the migrants, who go abroad with hopes of higher incomes, are not achieving

their expected goals. Many do risky

jobs," said Tasneem, who teaches

political science at Dhaka University. On the other hand, the average migration cost of Bangladeshis is still very high though it came down to Tk 3.42 lakh each last year from Tk 3.82 lakh in 2014. The recruitment cost remains high

mostly because of the presence of several

layers of manpower brokers, she added. For male migrants, it takes about three years to recoup the migration cost, while it is one year for women migrants, said the researcher.

When migrants return from abroad and stay here, their income drops. This means the migrants' remittance has not been invested in a manner that leads to sustainable income of the migrants' households, she pointed out.

"Labour migration was earlier a sort of insurance for the households. However, its effectiveness has declined. Unless the risks are removed, labour migration may not be a vehicle of sustainable income growth," Tasneem told The Daily Star. Most of the female migrants come

from lower social and economic strata. If they face sexual or physical abuses abroad, female migration would drop significantly, she said. "The government needs to be strong bers and some "outsiders" assaulted in terms of governance and protection of the migrants. If bilateral relations with

the labour-destination countries don't work, we need to go for multilateralism in migration negotiations," she said. Tasneem suggested that the government bring informal manpower brokers under legal framework for hold-

ing them accountable. Dr Khan Ahmed Sayeed Murshid, director general of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, said Bangladesh has reduced its dependence on foreign aid largely due to the

remittance from migrants. It is now important to look at social impacts of international migration

SDC Deputy Head of Mission Beate Elsasser suggested that the authorities maintain records of the returnee migrants to assess the socio-economic impacts of migration on them.

and take policies accordingly, he said.

"If migration is to be meant for sustainable development, it has to be

safe," she said. Death of student

FROM PAGE 2

claimed.

Talking to The Daily Star, Afreen's brother, Emranul Haque Antor, claimed his sister's death was caused by wrong treatment by the hospital doctors. "They removed her [artificial] venti-

lation equipment at the intensive care unit without informing us and kept her body in a shroud for two hours until we forcibly entered in," he said. There were no doctors or nurses inside the ICU and only some Ansar

Contacted, an official at the hospital, wishing not to be named, said Afreen died of dengue though they tried their best to save her. After the girl died, her family mem-

men stood guard in front of it, he

some doctors and nurses. They even broke the windows of the ICU and took away the body without paying the bills amounting to Tk 60,000, the official alleged. On being informed, police visited

bal complaint with Dhanmondi Police Station that night while the hospital authorities filed a general

The family members made a ver-

diary the next day over the incident, said Officer-in-Charge of the police station Abdul Latif. The hospital authorities formed a

committee to probe the allegation and asked it to submit a report within seven working days, added the official.

She praised the productivity of the "If our demands are not met She suggested preparing to face the

> Welcoming the government's Jatiya Oikyafront, a newly formed ing the BNP, he said the dialogue

urged the government to stop repression on opposition party leaders and activists. President of the Communist Party

we talk about fair polls, because, if a

General Secretary of Socialist Party

FROM PAGE 16

along with keeping an eye out for The PHQ had also earlier planned

As police members would require to work for some extra hours during

Data from that flight suggested the plane may have flown erratically and a technical log circulating on social media pointed to different speed and altitude readings on the captain and check activities during the polls.

machete attack at Tutul's publishing house "Shuddhoswar" in Lalmatia.

area on February 26, 2015.

Indonesia hunts

minutes after take-off, with witnesses the water.

ban on its planes entering US and

Authorities are trying to pinpoint

The plane was en route to Pangkal

"normal procedure".