Cops go marauding as 36-hr

FROM PAGE 1
remained closed during the hartal.
Motorised vehicles kept off the
roads but rickshaws plied as usual in Dhaka and other major cities and towns. Bus communication between the capital and districts remained suspended while train and launch services operated normally.

More than 20 AL lawmakers

brought out a procession from the NAM flat area at about 10:00am yesterday and started marching towards Farmgate. Police intercepted the procession on Manik Mia Avenue. As the lawmakers tried to proceed on, police resisted them and this continued for more than one hour and a half.

At one stage, police assaulted Ekabbar Hossain and tore off T-shirts of Tanjim Ahmad Sohel Taj and Mohammad Ali. Protesting the police assault, they sat on the street and demanded punishment of the cops involved in the incident. They held a brief rally demanding immediate implementation of electoral

Talking to The Daily Star, Sohel Taj said they would raise the issue in parliament. "We will demand for-mation of a House body to probe the incident, and consequent firing of the police personnel responsible for

When asked, DMP Assistant Commissioner Mizanur Rahman, who was on the spot, denied the

Around 125 people including 20 policemen were injured in a clash between police and opposition workers and locals at Kamrangirchar. Officer-in-Charge of Kamrangirchar Police Station Sarwar Jahan Sarker was among the

injured cops.

The clash erupted when police arrested than unit AL Vice President Nur-e-Alam from a local market. Hundreds of AL workers and locals requested police to release him but in vain. Then they attacked police with sticks and brickbats. Police retreated in the face of the

On information, several hundred policemen in riot gear rushed to the spot from different police stations and charged baton on the mob.

The agitated people built up resistance to police action piling up sand bags and taking cover behind that. They continued throwing brickbats at the law enforcers during the nearly two-hour mayhem that started at 10:30am. Hundreds of women from different houses also pelted stones at police.

Police fired gunshots and rubber bullets and lobbed teargas shells to disperse the mob. More than 100

Seen by the West as the spiritual

head of the al Qaeda-linked

Jemaah Islamiah (II) regional

militant network, Bashir was con-

victed of being part of a conspiracy

behind the Bali bombings that

killed 202 people, many of them

In Australia, Prime Minister

John Howard told parliament: "I

want (Indonesia's politicians) to

understand from me, on behalf of

the government, how extremely

disappointed, even distressed,

millions of Australians will be at the

was one of 88 Australians killed in

the Bali attack, told Sky television:

"Abu Bashir really is to us what

Osama bin Laden was to the

man Max Kwak said: "we were

deeply disappointed that a person

was given such a short prison

Indonesian authorities said

Bashir's jail sentence and release

punishment for Bashir, we cannot

"If the court has decided a fitting

convicted of a 'sinister conspiracy'

In Jakarta, U.S. embassy spokes-

Americans." Continued...

WITHINTHELAW

were dictated by courts.

Brian Deegan, whose son Josh

Australian tourists.

Bali blast convict

opposition workers and locals received minor injures. Being dispersed, the demonstra-

tors took shelter in different by-lanes and houses and continued pelting brickbats at police. At one stage, police entered the by-lanes and houses while firing rubber bullets and lobbying teargas shells to end

theviolence.
Police lobbed more than 100 teargas shells blanketing the area

Later, about 200 ruling BNP men rushed to the spot, joined police and chased the AL workers. The ruling party men caught many of them and handed over to the law enforcers.

The BNP loyalists took control of the area and brought out a proces-The mob set afire a three-wheeler

and a rickshaw and damaged two pick- up vans, protesting the police

Kamrangirchar police said they arrested 11 people on charges of obstructing their duties and violent picketing. Lalbagh police also arrested eight people for picketing and damaging vehicles.

Some 10 people including jour-nalist Rafiqur Rahman Reku of the Amar Desh were injured in a clash between police and pickets near Government Titumir College at Mohakhali. The clash broke out as police intercepted an opposition procession led 14-party leaders Tofail Ahmed, Dilip Barua and Syed

The activists set afire to a threewheeler and damaged about 10 vehicles. Police charged baton and lobbed teargas shells to disperse

Being dispersed, the picketers took shelter at different by-lanes and continued pelting brickbats at police for more than one and half-hour.

Police intercepted a procession led by AL lawmaker Asaduzzaman Noor near Shapla Chattar at Motijheel. As the opposition men pelted brickbats, police clubbed and chased them. At least five persons including a police official were injured. Police picked up three

The AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue and the adjacent areas including Noor Hossain Square were virtually under police siege since Monday midnight as the law enforcers put barbed wire fences on the roads.

A procession led by Motia Chowdhury was intercepted by police at different points while it was coming towards the AL central

Opposition loyalists held a brief

Joelianto, director general for Asia-

Pacific and African affairs at the

terrorism will be eradicated".

Some analysts say militants

could use Bashir's release to revive

Jemaah Islamiah, which police say

has become decentralised with

factions splitting off and operating

Nick Duder, Indonesian presi-

dent director of risk management

firm Hill & Associates, told Reuters

Bashir's advocacy of a pan-Islamic

Bashir was arrested shortly after

which favours pluralism.

foreign ministry.

independently.

FROM PAGE 1 CMH at about 12:45pm to see the rally on Bangabandhu Avenue under

body of Khurshid Zahan.

about 2:45pm.

Hasina.

Party sources said the body of

Khurshid Zahan was taken to the

BNP central office at Nava Paltan at

noon and her first namaj-e-janaza

was held there at about 2:00pm.

Her second janaza was held at

South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad at

Acting Speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui, chief whip, deputy leader

of the opposition, ministers, MPs,

diplomats and employees of the

Prime Minister and Leader of

the Parliament Khaleda Zia, Acting

Speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui

and Foreign Minister M Morshed

Khan placed wreaths on the coffin.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition

Abdul Hamid placed wreath on the

coffin on behalf of the Leader of the

Opposition in Parliament Sheikh

Khurshid Zahan Haque was

She passed matriculation from

Dinajpur in 1954 and obtained BA

degree from Tangail Kumudini

College in 1958. She was the gen-

eral secretary of Kumudini College

She was nominated as member

of parliament to a women reserved

seat in 1991. Later, she was elected

MP from Dinajpur-3 constituency

Indian road crash

FROM PAGE 16 In April's crash in Uttaranchal, a

bus fell into a 100-metre (328ft)

gorge near the town of Nainital,

The same day more than 50 wedding guests died when their

bus plunged into a canal in Barpeta

district in north-east Assam state,

after the brakes failed and the

vehicle skidded off the road into a

The driver lost control of the bus

leaving 14 people dead.

Students' Union from 1956-57.

born at south Balubari in Dinajpur

town on August 11, 1939.

parliament attended the janaza.

Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) office after

Around 7,000 police, Rab and BDR were deployed in the capital to avertuntoward incidents.

Our Chittagong office reports: The hartal passed off peacefully in the

business establishments and commercial houses remained closed. Delivery of goods to and from

continued normally.

Government offices remained

Train service and Biman flights operated as usual and long distance vehicles started plying in the after-

Stray incidents of violence marked the opposition-called hartal, leaving at least 30 people injured in the district yesterday.

of the ruling BNP and opposition parties. As police resorted to baton charge to bring the situation under control, five of them including a sub-

area and security was stepped up.
Meawhile, Barisal City AL

Convener Showkat Hossain Hiron alleged that Police and BNP cadres had earlier raided houses of AL leaders and workers and threatened them not to take active part in the

avert untoward incidents

All-Arab draw

FROM PAGE 1

stitute. The Tunisians, seeking to win a World Cup game for the first time since they beat Mexico in their first appearance in 1978, led at halftime thanks to a Ziad Jaziri strike after 23

But after dominating the opening period, they lost their way and Saudi Arabia came back strongly in the second half, Yasser Al Qahtan

Tunisia had dominated from the start and were unlucky not to be awarded a penalty after only two minutes and almost scored after

The Saudis produced a few counter-attacks and forced a flurry of corners, but they finally fell behind in the 23rd minute.

Presidential spokesman Andi Mallarangeng said the release did clear, but the ball rebounded off his not mean Indonesia was wavering teammate Hamad Al Montashari and, as the ball fell in space, Jaziri volleyed it beyond keeper Mabrouk in the fight against terrorism as anyone who commits acts of

Zaid from 10 metres.

Tunisia lost their sense of urgency after the break and paid for t when a revitalised Saudi Arabia

Mohamed Noor free on the right and from his low cross to the near post Yasser Al Qahtani evaded two markers to steer the ball home.

Load-shedding

state raises "long-term possibilities of conflict with the government"

Duder said "the critical thing for the government will be to continue monitoring what he is preaching" Deputy national police spokesman Anton Bahrul Alam said the cleric's sermons will be watched and police may use local people for that

the 2002 Bali blasts over other charges and later spent 18 months in jail for immigration offences after treason accusations were interfere," said Primo Alui dismissed or overturned. quent power cuts.

Prison staff resent

FROM PAGE 16 "After joining as deputy jailers,

many officers with the highest educational degrees will have to retire as jailer if the new rule remains in effect," a retired senior jail superintendent said. He feared the growing resentment may turn into an outburst soon.

The IG Prisons suggested filling the posts of jail superintendent with deputy superintendents or jailers who have served seven years in total, not separately three years as jailer and four years as deputy superintendents.

Senior officials also opposed the new provision for direct recruitment to 50 per cent posts of jail superintendent. Earlier, direct recruitment for the post used to be only 25 per cent.

The IG Prisons in his letter to the home secretary suggested 40 per cent direct recruitment.

According to the new rule, administrative officers, budget officers and statisticians, whose minimum educational qualification is HSC, can be promoted to the post requiring minimum bachelor

"The jailers and deputy jailers will be discouraged if these officials from clerical posts with low educational qualification and no experience of administrative work are promoted as deputy superintendents," the IG Prisons said in his the process."

The rule also introduced a provision for promoting the assistant surgeons--appointed for the treatment of prisoners and jail officials--as senior jail superinten-

Senior officials think that this provision will deprive administrative officers of promotion and the jail administration will weaken as the assistant surgeons do not have experience in administrative work.

In his letter, the IG Prisons also suggested that the senior jail superintendents with three years' experience-instead of five years of the new rule--may be promoted to the posts of deputy inspector general (DIG).

He also suggested appointment to the post of additional IG Prisons with either someone on deputation or a DIG with three years' experience instead of five years as

fixed by the new rule. The IG Prisons said many fieldlevel officers are losing spirit for the obstruction created by the new rule in the way of their promotion and it posts of deputy superintendent, a may soon cause a stagnant situa-

tion in the jail administration. Since the ministries of home law and establishment and the Public Service Commission are involved with the whole process, it may take some time to solve the problems, he said, adding, "The government has already initiated

police vigilance.
Police also cordoned off the Jatiya dispersing a party procession at about 7:30am near it.

CHITTAGONG

port city yesterday.

Educational institutions, many

Chittagong port remained sus-pended but activities inside the port

open while bank transactions and activities in some private offices also started in the afternoon.

Supporters and opponents of the hartal brought out separate proces-sions at Babuganj upazila headquar-ters that led to clashes between the

The incident left around activists

inspector were einjured. Tension was mounting in the

Police patrolled the city roads to

minutes after coming on as a sub-

levelling in the 57th minute.

eight minutes.

From an inswinging free-kick on the right, defender Tuker headed

A long ball from defence set

supply during world cup matches. Admitting the mob attack on Tuesday night, the general man-ager of Khulna Palli Bidyut Samity Asim Kumar Das told The Daily Star that the situation will go out of control in case of more power

Security measures have also been stepped up in all other seven upazila palli bidyut samity offices following the incident.

Earlier in a press statement on June 7, Ashim Das requested the people of the nine upazilas of the district to make alternative arrangements to watch world cup football tournament due to fre-

BDR-BSF

FROM PAGE 1

according to a report received from across the border.

They are digging bunkers near Ghojadanga, Panitara and Soladana bordering areas under Basirhat Police Station, and Hakimpur, farali, Amudia and Daharkanda areas under Swarupnagar Police Station of 24 Parganas district.

The BSF personnel are patrolling the bordering areas. On the other hand, The BDR has been put on high alert to avoid any untoward incident, BDR sources said.

In Thakugaon, the border guards of the two countries exchanged fire on Molani border under Haripur upazila yesterday, according to the

BDR Subedar Khalilur Rahman of Molani border outpost said the BSF men of Kishanganj Battalion opened fire in the morning without

Iwo outlaws

FROM PAGE 1 Jessore 250-bed Hospital where Belal and Sumon succumbed to their injuries

The PBCP activists were preparing for a major assault in the area as Hatkata Habib of Laxmipur village hired them for conducting some big operation in the area, police adding that they started investigation on the basis of the dying statements of Belal and

Meanwhile, Hatkata Habib and his accomplices Asad and Razaul managed to escape.

Khurshid Zahan Haque was also involved with a number of social welfare organisations and played a significant role in the country's socioeconomic development.

Our Dinajpur correspondent reported that Khurshid Zahan Haque was laid to rest beside her father's grave at Faridpur graveyard in Dinajpur town last night. Her namaj-e-Janaza was held at

Dinajpur Gora Shahid Maidan after Magrib prayers. Thousand of people, including the leaders and workers of the ruling BNP and other political parties, took part in the janaza.

Earlier, an aircraft of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, carrying the body of the minister, arrived at Saidpur Airport. Later, the body was brought to the district town by an army ambulance.

Hosts clinch

ing from the first round with two

defeats in a row. Poland were stunned by Ecuador 2-0 in their opening match.

Miroslav Klose hit the bar, had a shot saved by Boruc and missed with two headers, while midfielder Michael Ballack also struck the woodwork.

Poland's Radoslaw Sobolewski was sent off late on for two bookable offences.

Artur Boruc had earlier made two superb saves in the best passage of play of the match. First, Philipp Lahm cut in from the left and curled a shot toward the far corner, then substitute Oliver Neuville shot first time from six yards. But each time the Polish keeper made superb saves to keep his side in the match.

Germany manager Jurgen Klinsmann made an attacking substitution with winger David Odonkor, who plays in this stadium for Borussia Dortmund, coming on for defender Arne Friedrich.

EC now says

canal, police said.

The EC also decided to revise the existing voter list prepared in 2000 without visiting door to door and asked people to visit the election offices at upazila and district headquarters to register their names in he voter list. Election experts questioned the

legality of the decision and feared this will keep many people out of the list. The acting secretary reiterated esterday that there is no scope in

the laws for visiting door to door for He said the officials, however. will inspect voters' residences to

verify the complaints, if any, filed during the period. "Some people could have remained out of the list had we prepared a fresh voter list. Now, in case of updating the existing voter list also, some people will remain unregistered. We have nothing to

do for this," Zakoria said. Asked if he thinks general people will go to the election offices on their own to enroll their names in the voter list, Zakoria avoided the

question, saying, "No comments." He said the EC will launch massive campaign to inspire people for registering their names at the election offices.

ascertain anything about the pro- yesterday.

cess of deleting from the existing voter list the names of those who have died since 2000. "We will delete the names of dead persons if we receive any complaint. The names will remain in the list if there is no complaint," he said. The EC Secretariat press release

also blamed the media and various quarters yesterday for publishing what it said "wrong information" about the voter-listing task. SHADYEXPEDNITURE Meanwhile, the EC Secretariat is

yet to disclose the actual expenditure for the controversial task of preparing the fresh voter list. In the wake of severe criticism for wasting a huge amount of

money for the task, the EC

Secretariat at a press briefing on

May 31 claimed that it spent Tk 9.70 crore for preparing the draft voter list published on May 3. The EC Secretariat documents. however, show the expenditure at Tk.43 crore, the amount allocated for the task, and a senior official at the secretariat told The Daily Star

yesterday, "The allocated amount of money has already been spent." The EC Secretariat will now have to prepare a fresh budget for

the task. "We have not yet finalised the The acting secretary could not budget for the task," Zakoria said

Chinese firm getting job

China Harbour gave two financial offers -the first one asking for a cost of Tk 253 crore, and the alternative one Tk 215 crore. Hojgaard made an offer of Tk 422 crore Insiders allege that Hojgaard was an 'arranged partner' to make the tenderlook competitive.

China Harbour's performance in Bangladesh is already in question. It was previously awarded contract for the Tk 331 crore New Mooring Container Terminal Project two years ago. The project was scheduled to be completed by December 2005 but till date the company is delaying the job on various pretexts.

Dredging experts told The Daily Star that given the price rise of various materials related to the project over the last one year, the project can still be implemented at less than Tk 150 crore using high quality materials. "Our hunch is that the main area of corruption in this project will be the use of sheet piles and steel," said one expert.

The CPA on the other hand argues in its revised proposal that the original estimate was not based on design or investigation and that the revision did not incorporate any major change in the project.

The original estimate puts the cost of 2,500 metres of riverbank protection with sheet pile at Tk 37.5 crore. But based on the tender, the CPA said, the cost of 2,750 metres of riverbank protection alone will be Tk 198 crore. It reiterated that the original estimate was done without site investigation and design.

The original estimate puts the cost of dredging at Tk 35.8 crore policesaid.

while the revised cost is Tk 53.3

Meanwhile, Karnaphuli bridge project that prompted conceiving the dredging project, is being awarded to a Chinese company that furnished a grossly flawed design. The government has put its full political weight behind this project, seen as a major issue for the ruling BNP to gain political mileage in the next general elections.

3 bombs

FROM PAGE 1

The bombs caused no damage but leaving black marks on the walls. The attackers used tin containers and stuffed those with small pieces ofstones.

The CEC along with his three brothers-in-law bought the building in 1995 and used to stay on different floors. MA Aziz shifted to the government-allotted house two and a half months after he was made the CEC. Saying that they are not feeling

insecure, Advocate Fayaz said the

CEC asked him to contact police to file a general diary (GD) instead of a case. Ramna police said they filed a GD in the evening. Earlier on Tuesday, unknown criminals opened fire on the first floor of Election Commissioner (EC) Justice Mahfuzur Rahman's

capital. The bullets hit the wall and broke the windowpanes of the EC's Humayun Road house around 5:30am, half an hour before the 36hour hartal began, Mohammadpur

house at Mohammadpur in the

Khurshid Zahan Haque 14-party

days' anti-government

programmes, including Dhaka-siege and 36-hour countrywide shutdown. The new programmes also include a demonstration in the capital tomorrow and across the country on June 17 to protest police atrocities on the opposition men during the hartal.

The opposition combine will mobilise people in favour of electoral reforms from June 18 to 19 under each police station and ward in the capital.

On June 20, it will lay siege to the EC Secretariat in the capital and district election offices across the country from 11:00am to 1:00pm.

The opposition combine and other political parties concerned will conduct mass communication across the country during June 22-30 to inform people about the all-out misrule of the BNP-Jamaat alliance government and mobilise them in favour of the electoral

They will put blockades on highways and rail tracks and obstruct river communication on July 2 from 9:00am to 3:00pm.

Briefing the newsmen, the AL president strongly condemned the police assaults on three AL lawmakers during yesterday's hartal. Hasina accused the alliance government for assaulting all AL lawmakers over the last four and a half

The coalition government began looting public money, torturing the opposition men, minori-ties and journalists immediately after taking charge, she said, add ing that it has hiked prices of everyday essentials through a syndicate of Hawa Bhaban. "The situation should not be allowed to go on

The opposition leader accused the government for harassing AL leaders and workers following gunshots at an election commissioner's residence.

"As the alliance government knows that people will not vote for them, they are now conspiring to rig the next election," she said, adding that the countrymen will not allow the government to steal votes in the upcoming election.

The meeting was attended by senior leaders of the opposition combine, including Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Abdul Jalil, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Kazi Zafarullah, Motia Chowdhury, Obaidul Quader, Hasanul Haque Inu, Dilip Barua and Bimal Biswas, among others.

DEPZ

Abdullah Yusuf rushed to the DEPZ and addressed a worker ruby. Following his assurance of taking action against the GM as per BEPZA rule and based on investigation report, the workers' anger

Workers and staffs of RJL said Mukhlesur Rahman, organising secretary of Bangladesh Tanty Dal used to visit the factory with firearms in hand and threat workers who protested supplying lowquality tiffin by Rahman or any 'illegal' decision taken by the GM. The workers have decided not to

take the tiffin supplied by Rahman On June 1, 16/17 cadres led by drivers Masud and Rahim, and factory workers Hossain Khan and Bakul beat up Shanaz Parveen, and Habib, two factory representatives to Worker Representatives Welfare Committee (WRWC), for their alleged involvement in mobilising

workers against the factory author-Masud, a close associate of Peterson and Mukhles, also filed a case against nine workers including some factory representatives to WRWC the same day accusing them of looting valuables and gold ornaments worth Tk 75,000 from his wife Jeasmin, a security guard of the factory, during workers' unrest

at the DEPZ Factory workers also alleged that they have to remain confined to their houses and they could not go to the factory even for drawing last month's salary due to threat by men engaged by Peterson and

"Autocratic behaviour by some mid-level-management officers has created the situation," Shahnaz said, adding, "I filed complaint with the DEPZ, but I am still threatened with police harassment and terrorist attacks.

Scientists urge

increased as Russia briefly turned off gas supplies in December in a dispute with Ukraine, Iraq's insurgency has escalated as has a nuclear row with Iran, factors that boosted oil prices to record levels.

Environmentalists say the topic

has dominated discussions in the lead up to the G8 summit in St Petersberg from July 15-17, pushing a follow-up to the resounding Gleneagles climate change declarations all but off the agenda. President Bush, who signed the Gleneagles declaration but has not

ratified the Kyoto Protocol on

tackling human-caused global warming by cutting carbon dioxide emissions, has called for reduced U.S. dependence on imported oil. Partly as a result of energy security worries there has been a surge in interest in nuclear power and

coal as power sources. "As some of the most intensive users of energy in the world, the G8 nations bear a special responsibility to help stimulate the clean energy revolution that will deliver economically, environmentally and socially while ensuring the lights stay on," Rees said.

India mull laws to stop female infanticide

REUTERS, New Delhi

India plans to tighten laws banning tests to determine the sex of unborn babies in a bid to curb the killing of thousands of female fetuses, Health Minister Anbumani

Ramadoss said on Wednesday. India's Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques Act -- which outlaws doctors from carrying out sex determination tests -- has been in force since 1994 but social activists say local authorities lack the will to

combat female infanticide. Besides, families seek sons over daughters and unscrupulous doctors attempt to get around the law, making enforcement difficult,

A joint study carried out by researchers in India and Canada recently suggested that half-amillion unborn girls may be aborted in India every year, with parents preferring boys as being a better asset to the family. Following a meeting with

Ramadoss told a news conference that a series of amendments aimed at giving the law more teeth were being discussed. 'We are going to take into consideration everyone's view in order to further strengthen the act and its

enforcement and implementa-

tion," he said. "This is an issue where we need quick action."

Amendments being considered include improved monitoring of deaths of girls across the country, making doctors more accountable striking them off the medical council if found guilty, and forcing traditionally conservative states to better enforce the law.Officials say states like Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and also cities like Delhi and Chandigarh are not enforcing gislation and as a result have

heavily skewed sex ratios.
On average in all our states, we have around 924 girls to every 1,000 boys. But in some states like Harvana and Punjab, the ratio of girls has dropped as low as 500 or 600 to every 1,000 boys," Renuka Chowdhury, junior minister for women and child development,

told Reuters. Ramadoss said the central government could take states to court if they didn't enforce the womens' groups, members of parliament and social activists, legislation banning sex determina-

Another amendment to the law seeks to speed up convictions against those found guilty, he said.

Since the legislation was passed 12 years ago, health officials say there have been 387 cases lodged under the act but only one had resulted in a conviction.

weaver creates a web with the required strength and flexibility to

cope with the impact of fast-flying

insects - and the struggling which

occurs once the prey is captured in

the sticky trap.

The evolutionary success of this

design can be seen in the high diversity of true orb weavers, which

currently number 2,847 living

This astonishing diversity also owes much to the way in which the

basic design can be easily modified.

"One modification to the web is quite fantastic," Dr Penney told the

'Picture a normal, spiral orb

121m yrs old spider found in amber

BBC ONLINE

Spiral orb webs, which to many people typify spiders, were catching insects in their sticky silk while the dinosaurs still walked the

million years ago are the oldest of their type yet found.

The spiral webs have proven an extremely successful strategy for catching prey - evidenced by the great diversity of orb weavers

True orb weaving spiders found

trapped in amber from 121-115

present today. Two specimens are described in the UK Royal Society journal Biology Letters. The fossil spiders were found

Lower Cretaceous. Amber is a form of protective resin extracted from trace that has hardened over millions of years, it is very useful to scientists studying the history of past life because ancient animals and plants are often preserved in the gem-like

material. David Penney of the University of Manchester, UK, and Vicente Ortuno of the University of Alcala, Spain, assign the arachnids to a newspecies: Mesozygiella dunlopi. Typical orb webs consist of

(spoke-like) lines are attached, providing support for the characteristic spiral sticky line that occupies most of the web's surface. By using two different types of silk - one strong and rigid, the other weaker but stretchy - the orb

outer frame lines to which radial

26 militants

FROM PAGE 16 Osama bin Laden following the

Sept. 11 attacks.
"This is not just about killing or capturing extremists," US spokesman Col. Tom Collins told reporters in Kabul as he announced the operation. "We are going to go into these

areas, take out the security threat

and establish conditions where

government forces, government

institutions, humanitarian organizations can move into these areas and begin the real work that needs The force of more than 11,000 troops is the largest deployed in Afghanistan for one operation since the 2001 invasion. Previous

offensives have involved several thousand soldiers. US troops on Wednesday built walls of sand and guard outposts around the small forward operating base that will support the oper-

Maj. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley, US operational commander in Afghanistan, had earlier told The Associated Press that coalition and Afghan troops would attack "Taliban enemy sanctuary or safe haven areas" in Kandahar, Helmand, Zabul and Uruzgan provinces."Right now ... they'll be in one area, they'll move out of that area, they'll conduct an attack in another area, then move back to a safe haven," he said last week in an interview at Bagram, the US military headquarters north of Kabul.

This is our approach to put simultaneous pressure on the enemy's networks, to cause their leaders to make mistakes, and to attack those leaders," Freakley told the AP ahead of the operation.

The offensive began May 15 with attacks on Taliban command and control and support networks. According to US military and Afghan figures, about 550 people mostly militants, have been killed since mid-May in the fiercest fighting since the Taliban's ouster. At least nine coalition troops have been killed in combat during the

That fighting included up to 200 Taliban rebels attacking Musa Qala before fleeing from hundreds of coalition and Afghan forces. Conditions permitting,

Thursday will mark what the mili-

into areas we haven't been in before, and now there's a back-

Reconstruction projects also play a The operation will involve about 2,300 U.S. conventional and special forces, 3,300 British troops, 2,200 Canadians, about 3,500 Afghan soldiers and coalition air support, Freakley said. Some American forces will rotate out once the operation finishes at the end of the summer. while the British and Canadians The offensive, which the mili-tary has been planning for 18 months, coincides with a surge in militant attacks in the southern

Another major offensive, involving 2,500 U.S. and Afghan troops, was launched in April in eastern Kunar province and its reconstruction phase is continuing, Freakley said. But the Taliban is the strongest in the south. Since the Taliban regime's defeat in late 2001, the militants have gained strength, said another military spokesman, Lt. Col. Paul Fitzpatrick. "I think this summer

and eastern provinces near the Pakistani border, where Afghan authorities have little or no pres-

Militants have launched more suicide bombings against coalition troops in recent months, and staged nighttime attacks on government headquarters in small villages. The Taliban campaign, officials said, aims at convincing villagers the government cannot provide security, as well as to test NATO forces moving into the area. Some of the increased fighting

can be attributed to many more

the Taliban is stronger than they've

troops now being in the south "A year ago there was one infan-try company in Helmand. Now there (are) 3,300 British," Freakley said. "The enemy was doing what-ever they wanted. Now we're going

Maj. Geoff Catlett, an operational planner for the offensive, said coalition and Afghan forces would pressure Taliban militants in western Uruzgan and northeast

web and picture running down from it a ladder-type structure which is also made from sticky silk. embedded in amber from Alava in northern Spain. They date to the This has evolved to trap moths, which have scales that rub off. "When a moth flies into a normal orb web, it's the scales that, stick and the moth tumbles out of it. But with the ladder structure, the moth tumbles down until all the scales come off and eventually it gets caught." 3 killed FROM PAGE 16 The government and the Tigers

have accused each other of break-

ing the ceasefire and stepping up

killed in clashes since December

despite the truce, which the moni-

been killed in the island's Tamil

tary calls the start of major and

decisive anti-Taliban operations

lasting through the summer.

major role.

separatist conflict since 1972.

More than 60,000 people have

At least 690 people have been

BBC News website.