He was barred from contesting the 2001 national elections for corruption

charges against him.
Ershad's coming to the fore again was best manifested by his rendezvous with BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman and State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar at his Baridhara residence on July 27.

In early 1996, when the movement for handover of power to a caretaker administration reached its peak with the AL-led opposition threatening to boycott the elections, the then BNP government had attempted to hold the polls with the

In line with the plan, JP presidium member and former foreign minister barrister Anisul Islam Mahmud held a meeting with the then home minister in the first week of January 1996 to negotiate the JP chairman's release

At the meeting, BNP proposed that all charges against Ershad would in the election. Besides, in case of the AL boycotting the polls, he would be the leader of the opposition in parlia-

On January 7, 1996, Raushan Ershad went to meet him at the central jail and briefed him on the outcome of the negotiations. Ershad then decided to have a discussion with his party leaders.

Barrister Mahmud, Kazi Firoze Rashid and Taiul Islam Chowdhury met Ershad in the jail the same day and suggested that he accept the

tees before consenting to the BNP proposal, he was told that an ambassador would be his guarantor in the negotiation. Still, the talks between them failed.

After the June 12 election in 1996, JP extended support to AL in forming government on condition that Ershad would be released from jail.

At that time, several BNP and JP leaders met Ershad at jail, violating al rules and regulations, and asked him not to give any support to AL.

Later, Ershad told the press that

BNP had offered him the post of prime minister. But he did not agree, because, he said, "it's them who had thrown me in iail." But history repeated itself again in

Before the election, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, who was uncompromisingly anti-autocrat in the 80s, went to Ershad's house to express sympathy for the dethroned tyrant after he was convicted in a graft case by the higher court. Ironically, it was Khaleda government (1991-96) that had filed the case.

Following the meet, Ershad joined BNP-led four-party alliance but later quit. After leaving the coalition, he said in reference to meeting Khaleda: "It is my success that she went to my

The deal between Ershad and the AL government in 2001 seems to have gone one step ahead. When the government assured JP that no more cases would be moved against him. JP parted from the BNP-led four-party ance and rejoined parliament.

While describing it, Ershad said then, "It was a blunder to join BNP-led

The ongoing deal between the BNP and Ershad seems to have gone two steps ahead. The government renortedly assured him that not only the cases against him will be disposed of, he might as well be nominated for presidency.

Now he says. "I was the architect of the four-party alliance. I made a great mistake by quitting the alliance.

After this dramatic shake-up in the political kaleidoscope, it will not be an overstatement if anyone says opportunism has become the order of the day in national politics.

Road march ends

Laboratory and Savar from 3:00pm to 7:00pm. The law enforcers also blocked different lanes and by-lanes of Mirpur Road until the marchers left Russel Square at about 7:30pm. Only a limited number of rickshaws operated on Mirpur Road during the march.

The opposition coalition had held a rally at Aminbazar before the march started from there. It also held rallies at Shyamoli and Gabtoli

Senior opposition leaders including Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak Abdul Jalil, Motia Chowdhury, Suranjit Sengupta, Hasanul Hague Inu Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Bimal Biswas, Dilip Barua, Mainuddin Khan Badal, Nurul Islam, MA Goni Hasina Doula, Murad Jong, and Maqbul Hossain addressed the rallies.

The leaders vowed to resist any election in the country before the proposed electoral reforms are imple-

Saying that the people have now become united under the banner of 14-party coalition, Amu, a senior AL presidium member said the prime minister will not be able to destroy the unity of the people by forming alliance

Regarding Jatiya Party Chairman Hussain Mohammad Ershad's possible joining with the ruling alliance, AL General Secretary also 14-party Coordinator Abdul Jalil said Ershad will take only 30 seconds to say goodbye to the prime minister after the caretaker government takes charge.

After the rallies senior opposition leaders led the march.

to the misrule and corruption, they

They also chanted slogans that turned into pre-election campaign in favour of several prospective opposition candidates from Mohammadpur, Mirpur and Savar areas in the next election. The candidates including Maqbul Hossain, Kamal Majumder, Hasina Doula and Murad Jong supplied a number of marching bands for the march route by singing, dancing

for homebound people from busy areas like Dhanmondi Mohammadpur, Shyamoli, Gabtoli and other parts of the city. No interdistrict bus left Gabtoli for different districts from 3:30pm to 5:30pm.

Senior leaders of the coalition will meet today to announce the next programmes. Talking to The Daily Star some of the senior leaders hinted that similar programmes will be chalked out for different districts where ruling BNP has the upper hand.

AL presidium members met last night and discussed the next agitation programme, which is likely to be finalised today after discussing it with party chief. Sheikh Hasina.

BNP's thorny

FROM PAGE 1 grassroots level leaders to convince

hem in favour his decision to side with the ruling alliance.

against Ershad, many legal experts said the process will not be so easy and neither it is possible to withdraw or dispose of all the cases within a

ment is not important for us, rather Besides, it is not the government, rather it is the Anti-Corruption survival of the party is all that matters now," Ershad told the leaders. Commission (ACC) that has the jurisdiction to withdraw a corruption case. If the government wants to withdraw cases against Ershad, it will

ings, they observed. About the cases under trial, legal need loyal workers only," he experts said permission of the court is observed.

The grassroots leaders said they will back whatever decision the party chairman will take.

Hawlader, Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Kazi roj Rashid were present there. NO PLAN NOW: BABAR

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar yesterday said the government has no plans now to withdraw the cases filed against former autocrat HM Ershad.

Ershad in the alliance, he said, "In politics, there are practices of this sort. There is no place for last word in politics and it is nothing new.'

Asked whether it was ethical on his part to meet the former autocrat, Babar said, "I am not a bureaucrat. The post of a minister is a political one and I am serving here as a political figure. We're working with a political vision and it is the duty of the ministers to implement

He was speaking to the reporters after a home ministry meeting on smuggling.

Malaysia

FROM PAGE 1

Briefing diplomatic correspondents about the outcome of the 13th Asean Regional Forum (ARF) meeting and his bilateral talks with his counterparts from Malaysia, China, Myanmar and South Korea n Kuala Lumpur, Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan said both Bangladesh and Malaysian governments would ensure that the certain vested quarters do not cause any misery to these workers.

The Foreign Minister said he had meetings with Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing and Myanmar Foreign Minister U Nyan Win discussing the road connectivity. Although Myanmar had some reservations in the past but now they have agreed to the tri-nation road connectivity, he added.

Morshed said if this road could be built, trade and economic cooperation would increase among the three countries. Officials of the three countries would meet soon to discuss the project.

He said the Chinese foreign minister thanked Bangladesh for supporting China to become a South Asian Regional Association for Cooperation (Saarc) Observer.

Morshed Khan also had bilateral meeting with the foreign minister of South Korea discussing bilateral economic cooperation. Referring to the outcome of the

13th ARF meeting, where Bangladesh was admitted officially as its 26th member, he said it is the success of the government's look east policy.

He said the ARF meeting discussed Middle East issue, terrorism, disarmament and maritime security issues. On Israeli aggression on Hezbollah, Morshed said most member states condemned the Israeli actions and called for immediate cease-fire in Lebanon.

Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin was present at the

BB to probe

FROM PAGE 16 suspect party, he said.

Earlier, the Bangladesh Bank collected vouchers of some big

deals done by BD Foods. The bank's sources said details of 360 bank transactions, each involving over Tk 1 crore, will be sent to the CID today. "We think these 360 vouchers

will be important documents in the process of investigating BD Foods' heroin smuggling to the UK," the official said The central bank also found 83

bank accounts of BD Foods and its sister concerns in which transactions of TK 331 crore were reported in the last three years. Of these bank accounts, BD Foods has 30 in Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd and 28 in Exim Bank Ltd.

The UK customs in May 2005 accused Bangladeshi business firms of smuggling heroin to the UK in the guise of exporting food, toiletries, cosmetics and floor tiles. A National Board of Revenue (NBR) investigation confirmed the validity of the UK customs' allegations and involvement of BD Foods Ltd in the

Govt starts talks FROM PAGE 16

ignoring the education minister's invitation over telephone for dia-

NFTE Chief Co-ordinator and Convenor Prof Quazi Faruque said they would not sit in dialogue with the government without government's assurance of fulfilling their principal demands including cent per cent basic salary from the government exchequer.

NFTE yesterday organised rallies and brought out processions

in upazilas across the country. Earlier, NFTE declared a series of month-long programmes including roads and waterways blockade in the districts on August 1, grand sit-in programme in Dhaka on August 22 and a half-day hartal in Dhaka on August 23.

Furthermore, NFTE will organise representative meets at educational institutions from August 2 to 5, rallies and processions at districts on August 6 and at divisional headquarters from August 8.

Even though the striking teachers' organisations urged the government to hold a dialogue where representatives of all groups would be present, the government will have to sit separately with different platforms since each platform has different agendas to discuss, education ministry sources said.

Teachers and employees of nongovernment high schools, colleges and madrasas under four organisations have been on indefinite strike since July 6 demanding cent per cent salary from the government exchequer, increase in house rent and medical allowance, full festival allowance and implementation of relevant Unesco and ILO recommendations.

PM likely

FROM PAGE 1 held in Kuala Lumpur on July 28.

Bangladesh was made the 26th member of the important forum comprising members of Asean (Association of South East Asian Nations) and some developed

Splintered dreams

On their arrival at ZIA from the wartorn Lebanon at around 8:00am, the Bangladeshis told horrifying experiences of air strikes and bomb blasts that killed hundreds and injured thousands of Lebanese and other nationals, and damaged roads and buildings, and virtually threw their lives into utter uncertainty.

Quite a few employers in Lebanon died or left the country for safety while many foreigners working under them are passing uncertain days on the streets, they said.

"One fine morning, as I was working at my master's house, suddenly heard a rocking sound. ran out of the building and saw it was on fire. Later I heard that all of the six members of the family who had been sleeping on the first floor died in that bomb blast," said Sharmin, 24, who had been in Lebanon for the last five years. The lady who has a daughter and a son back at her house at Dohar of

Nawabganj said her master was supposed to pay around 5,000 dollars as her salary of five years, but now there is no hope of getting that money "Surely I am lucky enough to return home. But I am empty-

handed now. What shall I do for my

children?" she said, adding that the

war has snatched everything except

Omar Molla, 34, from Singair at Sirajganj, who worked in a construction firm in Beirut, left the office along with some other Bangladeshis and other nationals and took shelter in an underground structure.

They stayed there for seven days and used to eat dry bread and pickle, he said, adding, "One day

some Bangladeshi leaders called us and asked us to write applications to the Bangladeshi Consulate in Jordan that prepared our documents to come home.

Bangladeshis and other nationals who worked there ran in and around Beirut amid heavy bombings, the returnees said.

The Bangladeshis are facing greater troubles, as there is no Bangladesh embassy in Beirut.

Meanwhile, some of the returnees reported unconfirmed news of some Bangladeshi women's death in Israeli bombings in Lebanon. " have heard that some Bangladeshi women died in Lebanon," said Mohammad Jamal of Kasba of Brahmanbaria.

Almost half of about 15,000 Bangladeshis working in Lebanon are women, he said.

An official estimate, however puts the figure at 10,000.

Many of the Bangladeshi returnees had to leave a good amount of their earnings in Lebanon, as their employers either died or left for other countries.

IOM's Media official Nahreen Farzana said 70 more Bangladeshis will arrive in Dhaka today while the rest of the 283 Bangladeshis, who registered for returning home from Lebanon and are now staying at different transit points of Syria, would be brought home soon.

Deputy Secretary of the expatriates' welfare ministry Amir Hossain said the returnees will be helped for their rehabilitation here or sent back to Lebanon or other countries if they

Ship-breaking in Ctg

there is an unofficial embargo imposed by the influential owners' syndicate on all information related to pollution and accidents in the 20 ship-breaking yards in which unconfirmed number of people suffer or die every year.

The hazards are on the rise. All ships arriving for scrapping must be washed thoroughly for detoxification, according to maritime law. But most obsolete ships arriving in Chittagong are laden with highly toxic substances and gases. The sellers of obsolete ships take full advantage of the country's sloppy monitoring mechanism and never bother to clean or detoxify the vessels.

According to sources, it is very common to find the vessel laden with asbestos, oil sludge, lead, cadmium, arsenic, biocides and even traces of radioactive sub-

The leaders of the BSBA blame the government for failing to recognise the largest shipbreaking spot in the world as an industry. They said despite repeated appeals, the government has mysteriously remained silent over providing any support for the 'industry'.

The President of BSBA, Zafar Alam said it is not true that ship breakers are polluting the coastal

"There are other industries in Chittagong which are polluting the land, air and sea much more than the ship-breaking yards, why don't vou talk about them?" he demanded.

But the massive activities surrounding the ship-breaking in Chittagong do not go without monitoring and inspections by a wide range of government officials. In papers, almost all ships are legally beached and scrapped. But sources in the trade confirmed that the shipbreakers are able to bring 'any ship' they want, regardless of its toxicity or danger and they get all papers ready in no time. For instance, recently a highly toxic ship laden with asbestos, Alpha Ship, got all clearance for scrapping at a Sitakunda yard. When the matter was reported in the media, the owners were forced by the government to send the ship back to its seller.

In the process of clearing an obsolete ship for beaching and scrapping, the owners have to obtain clearance certificates from inspectors of the Department of Explosives. The investigators are supposed to check the vessel if it contained any toxic material. Four separate groups from the Department of Customs have to certify on general assessment, boarding, ravaging and intelligence. The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) has to issue a port clearance. Finally the Bangladesh Navy has to inspect the vessel and confiscate all communication devices, including radar, walkie-talkies, distress

Govt fails FROM PAGE 16

Meanwhile, Babar said he received

list of godfathers of smugglers and hundi traders that was prepared by the law enforcers. "We're examining the list. But there are only names and addresses of some people. I have asked them to provide profiles photographs and cases against signal equipments and high frequency wireless sets. According to sources close to

the trade, the owners go into package deals with the Department of Explosives, paying around Tk 5,000 for each certificate. Although four separate teams from the Department of Customs are supposed to visit the vessel, only the ravaging team visits the ship under a deal of Tk 25,000 for each clearance certifi-The sensitive communication

devices, which are supposed to be confiscated by the Bangladesh Navy, end up at scrap shops along the Dhaka Chittagong highway in Sitakunda. Posing as a buyer from Dhaka, this correspondent asked two separate scrap dealers if they could supply five high frequency wireless sets, ten pairs of walkie-talkies and five radars. The condition was that all equipments should be functional Both of them readily agreed to sell, instantly providing manuals for the wireless and radar. They said they would need two to three days to ensure supply of all the

equipments. "I can supply the walkietalkies, two wireless sets and a radar now but for the remaining items you have to come back in

two days," said a young trader. According to sources, huge quantities of steel and nonferrous items, such as bronze, aluminium copper, bronzeamalgam, retrieved from the ships are regularly smuggled out of the country through the Feni border.

Although the ship breaking trade is contributing to the country's economy by providing annual revenues of over Tk 800 crore. and meeting about 80 per cent of the country's demand for steel, helping at least 20 other industries to develop, government's indifference to address its problem may make the sector murkier.

Updated voter list

FROM PAGE 16 On May 3 this year, the EC published the draft of a fresh voter list that showed 9.13 crore voters while the existing voter list prepared in 2000 has 7.64 crore voters.

The unusual rise in the number of

voters triggered enormous controversy over its accuracy. The draft list was declared illegal by the Supreme Court as the list was prepared ignoring the High Court judgement. The EC secretary said the finance ministry did not inform him anything on allocation of budget for

terday. He. however, expressed hope that the ministry will allocate the budget in a day or two.

the task of voter list update till yes-

About the progress of the ongoing task of updating the voter list through door to door visits, the secretary said the progress is on an average over 30 per cent while it is below 30 per cent in the capital.

ELECTION PREPARATIONS The EC have started preparations for holding the next parliamentary election, the secretary said, adding that the preparation has got slow pace due to various complexities.

"We are planning to purchase 20 thousand new ballot boxes to add to the present number," he said. At present there are 1.95 lakh

ballot boxes, a senior official said. The EC secretary, however, rejected the demand for introduction of transparent ballot boxes.

Hasina

tion of the judiciary.

"What's the mystery behind it?" She said the BNP-led alliance government has failed to honour its commitments to the teachers' community and regarding separa-

"The government has ruined all the national institutions one after another and destroyed the country's social and economical environment," she alleged.

The opposition leader said the government has made Bangladesh dependent on smuggling and for-She alleged that the government

has made scores of CDs containing

propaganda against her party for telecasting before the coming national election through the private television channels launched by BNP leaders using their black Hasina said the alliance government has looted crores of taka

money would be used for buying votes in the next parliamentary election. She urged people to remain alert

during its tenure and that black

against "the vote thieves." The Al chief also accused the government of playing a "dirty game" with the updating of voter list. ignoring the High Court verdict and said it is not possible to hold a free and fair election under the supervi-

sion of the present Election

She urged all Awami League leaders and workers to remain alert so that everyone having the age of 18 is enroled in the electoral

Skop strike FROM PAGE 16

Commission (EC).

announcement and implementation of the national minimum wage, stopping privatisation, reopening all closed factories in the country, providing appointment letters to the workers working in industries which are not well organised and other facilities such as ensuring weekly holidays and mater-

The government did not take any initiative to solve the problems permanently despite their repeated appeals he added

Wajedul Islam Khan, general secretary of Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra (BTUK), said Amanullah Aman, state minister for labour and manpower, on July 27, told them that their demands were 'under process' of being implemented and urged them to withdraw the strike.

"How can he [Aman] meet the demands at the twilight of the government's tenure when he failed to do that earlier," he added. Different district bound buses from

Dhaka will not be allowed to ply during

the strike, he told The Daily Star last The leaders said hospitals, ambulances, newspaper vehicles, restaurants, surgical instruments shops, dispensaries, vehicles carrying bodies and wedding entourages will be out of

the purview of the strike. Nurul Islam, president of BTUK, Ray Ramesh Chandra, general secretary of Jatiya Sramik League, Shafiuddin Ahmed, general secretary of Jatiya Sramik Federation Chowdhury Ashiqul Alam, general secretary of Trade Union Sangha were present at the conference

The Skop leaders also held a rally at Muktangon in the city in the evening and brought out a procession.

Robbers loot

FROM PAGE 16 Zilani, warehouse guard Abdus Salam and sweeper Bhanu Chandra Das for interrogation. Police also formed four teams to hunt down the burglars and recover

"The gang of burglars entered the bank through a window by cutting its grills sometime Saturday night. They broke into the strong room, broke the locks and cut off the door-hinges of two iron-safes and then took off with Tk 10,02,000 in cash and the rifle," police said.

US envoy

FROM PAGE 16

corruption in Bangladesh does not inspire investors' confidence that the country is serious about fair. open and transparent procurement and a level playing field for business, she said. What is important is how a country deals with corruption. she opined.

election, Butenis said, "We want the tradition to continue. We want the next election to be free and fair, with an outcome generally accepted by all as the product of a fair election just like previous elections." "In today's polarised political

Regarding the next general

environment in this country, any statement I make or don't make is seen by one side or the other as favouring their opponent." she said adding, "We support democracy and the democratic process. We do not support any particular party." Speaking at the meeting, Peter

M May, vice president of Ficci said poor governance, slow and changeable decision making, an unsatisfactory law and order situation, lack of sanctity of contracts, inadequate infrastructure, and endemic corruption remain as deterrents. Andrew L Fawthrop, executive

committee member of Ficci. MA Matin, its secretary, and other members of the chamber were also present at the meeting. after a revitalised effort.

52 killed in Lebanon

of flattened homes and an underground shelter to find survivors while mothers hugged their dead children in a final hopeless embrace.

"At least 52 people were killed. They include 30 children," said Salam Daher, the local civil defence chief. Lebanon's health minister said a

total of 750 people had been killed. most of them civilians, and more than 2.000 wounded in Lebanon since Israel launched its air, sea and land assault on July 12.

"The bombing was so intense that no-one could move," said a distraught Ibrahim Shalhoub, 26, "I succeeded in getting out and everything collapsed. I have several members of the family inside and I do not think that there will be any other survivors."

In a separate attack, five members of the same family -- including two children -- were killed Sunday in an Israeli air raid on Lebanon, which destroyed their house in the border village of Yaroun, police said.

The bombardments intensified on the village and a house two stories high collapsed completely, burying the five members of the Khanafer family who lived there," said police.

Israel, which has received staunch US backing since the conflict began on July 12, unleashed its firepower on Qana after flatly rejecting a UN call for a 72-hour truce to allow the delivery of humanitarian aid to Lebanon.

finding an end to the conflict until there was an immediate halt to Israel's offensive, signalling the likely failure of Rice's efforts to win support on both sides for the deployment of an international force in Lebanon. "There is no place on this sad morning for any discussion other than

an immediate and unconditional

ceasefire as well as an international

Siniora ruled out any talks on

investigation into the Israeli massacres in Lebanon now," he told report-Rice, on her second trip to the region in less than a week, refrained again from calling for an immediate

truce after talks in Israel and a trip to

Lebanon was cancelled "I think what it is time to do is get to a ceasefire, we actually have to put one in place," she said. "We want a ceasefire as soon as possible, I would have wanted a ceasefire vesterday if possible, but the parties have to agree to a ceasefire and there have to be certain conditions in place.'

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert Sunday rejected calls for Israel to halt its offensive in Lebanon following an air raid in the village of Qana that left dozens of civilians dead. "The state of Israel, the govern-

ment and the IDF (armed forces) express deep regret for the incident," Olmert said at the end of a weekly cabinet meeting. Israel needs 10 to 14 days more to continue its offensive in Lebanon, Olmert told visiting US Secretary of

government official said Sunday. Olmert told Rice that "Israel eded 10 days to two weeks to continue the operation", the official told

State Condoleezza Rice, an Israeli

"This period of time is what we need to achieve the goals of the operation," the official quoted Olmert

as telling Rice. Olmert told her that Israel wanted a multinational force of at least 10.000 troops to be deployed in Lebanon.

request the defence establishment to stop the fire or change the type of operations," he said. The army, while voicing "regret" for the civilian deaths, pinned the blame on Hezbollah, saving it used the village

as a base to launch rockets, and that

residents had already been ordered to

"Despite the hard incident I will not

But reaction was fierce across the Arab world, and even Britain, Washington's closest ally, condemned

the Qana attack as "quite appalling." The village, said by some to be where Jesus turned water into wine, was the site of an Israeli bombing of a UN base in April 1996 that killed 105 people during Israel's "Grapes of Wrath" offensive -- also aimed at wiping out Hezbollah

Dozens of other villages around the southern port city of Tyre were also bombarded with fire from the Israeli navy, air force and artillery. Israeli planes also tore up the Masnaa border crossing into Syria, leading to the closure of the main Damascus-Beirut

ligers FROM PAGE 1

six, and reached 50 with a calm two through the same region. His knock featured a dozen fours

and the six before being removed by Eddie Rainsford. With Rajshahi-mate Mashud as

partner, he added 71 for the sixth wicket in good time as Bangladesh attempted a fight back. He was dropped at mid-off by Justice Chibhabha on the dot of the halfway mark. Mashud held the innings together with a typically workmanike unbeaten 48. Rafique, who was later adjudged

man-of-the-match, scored 33 off 44 balls. His partnership with Mashud was an important cog to hold the innings together. The third match will take place on

August 2 at the same ground with the Tigers looking to take the lead

Israeli ground troops also launched a new cross-border incursion and were engaged in fierce battles with Hezbollah guerrillas on the outskirts of the southeastern village of Taibe.

About 30 rockets fired from south Lebanon also landed across towns in northern Israel, without causing any injuries, police said.

The attacks came after defiant Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah vowed to strike cities in the centre of

Israel if the Jewish state continued to attack civilians in Lebanon. Israel has refused to set a date for ending its war on the Shiite Muslim group that has made hundreds of thousands homeless and destroyed

much of Lebanon's infrastructure. Israel has mobilised thousands of army reservists and says it plans to create a narrow buffer zone in Lebanon until the mooted internationa

force is deployed. Israel has lost a total of 51 people since the conflict erupted, many of them soldiers killed in combat. Last week it lost nine soldiers in

Bint Jbeil in its biggest single-day death toll of the conflict, facing tougher-than-expected resistance despite its military superiority. On Friday the Israeli military claimed to have hit a launch pad it

suspected was used to fire a new type

fighting around the key border town of

of missile that hit Afula, 50km south of the border, the deepest strike into Israel since the warring began. US President George W. Bush had stressed in his weekly radio address Saturday that "militias in Lebanon must be disarmed, the flow of illegal arms must be halted, and the

Lebanese security services should

deploy throughout the country".

He said that during his meetings with British Prime Minister Tony Blair in Washington Friday they agreed that a "robust multinational force must be dispatched to Lebanon quickly". Bush and Blair did not call for an immediate ceasefire, and warned

must become "proper and responsible members of the international community" or face "the risk of increasing confrontation" Blair said world powers would meet at the UN Monday to discuss the possible deployment of a multinational

Israel's archfoes Svria and Iran --

supporters of Hezbollah -- that they

force. But Syria said it would simply be an "occupation force" that served Israel's interests The British leader defended his siding with Bush on the Lebanese crisis, and brushed off mounting protests at home about the use of a

Scottish airport by US jets carrying weapons bound for Israel. Two Indian UN peacekeepers were wounded on Saturday in an Israeli air raid on their post in south Lebanon. Four UN military observers

on their observation post. With 800,000 Lebanese displaced by the fighting, the International Committee of the Red Cross has tarian situation and said Israel had to

were killed last week in an Israeli strike

do much more to spare civilians

Iran warns FROM PAGE 16

When asked to elaborate on what specific measures Iran might take, Asefi replied: "They know what I am talking about." Iranian leaders have already

warned they could halt cooperation

with inspectors from the UN's

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and even quit the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

They have also played up Iran's regional clout and oil wealth. A text of the proposed UN resolution was distributed to the 15 council nations on Friday, and US ambassador John Bolton told reporters that a vote could be held early in the

If Iran continues enriching ura-

nium, "the next step will be the

consideration of sanctions in the

Security Council, and it would be our intention to move forcefully to get those sanctions adopted," Bolton said. The first stage would be political and economic sanctions, diplomats

stressed, pointing to a vote within a few days. "My hope is that we will be able to adopt it by Monday," said French

Ambassador Jean-Marc de La

Sabliere, whose country holds the

rotating council presidency for July. 13 satellite

'We have no other option but to stop

providing these popular channels since there is a government prohibition although we know our subscribers will miss the channels a lot," SCNOA President Mir Hossain Akhtar told The Daily Star. The service providers will resume broadcasting those channels as soon as the government withdraws its decision, he added. The SCNOA and DCF went on a

wildcat strike from Saturday protesting the government order. The government in a handout

yesterday requested all cable operators to continue providing all channels approved by the government except the prohibited 13

Come polls

And it is nothing new.

help of Jatiya Party.

When Ershad demanded guaran-

price hike of essentials, rise of militancy and disruption of power and water supply. A government led by AL chief Sheikh Hasina will bring an end

their followers who rejoiced all through and seeking votes for them. Lack of vehicles caused sufferings

The marchers also blasted the four-party alliance government for

many central leaders are also opposed to joining the BNP-Jamaat alliance, fearing that it might spell disaster for JP in the next election. On withdrawal of the cases

have to interfere in the ACC proceed-

required to withdraw a case. Considering the legal complexities, many senior leaders of the JP believe the party will not join the ruling alliance. "We are just passing time as the government is putting pressure on our party chairman," a JP presidium member told The Daily Star on

condition of anonymity.

"Ershad himself knows well about the complexities of withdrawing the cases. So, he has put forward the conditions," he said adding that the conditions may be a tactic to refuse the ruling party proposal.
VIEW-EXCHANGE WITH **PARTY LEADERS**

and he will sit today with the leaders of Comilla unit. 'We won't get expected results if we should contest the election on our own and that's why I have taken this decision," Ershad told the leaders. The former president said JP is now the focus of all attention in poli-

tics. Media and some quarters are

blaming him. " If it's not wrong for me

to join the 14-party coalition, then why couldn't I join the four-party alliance,"

The JP chairman yesterday held a

view-exchange meeting with grass-

roots level leaders of Sylhet division

Dismissing the Jamaat leaders' comment that he is unpredictable,

the former president said a soldier Besides the grassroots leaders, could never be unpredictable. "How much sacrifice do I have to make," he said adding, "It is easier for some people to be a lawmaker and make money, using my name. But this time I won't give anyone any

> Criticising his brother and JP Presidium Member GM Quader, he said he [Quader] speaks as if he is the only patriot in the country. "I don't need any hero in the party

"I did not get justice in last 15

years. The number of seats in parlia-

Among others, JP General Secretary ABM Ruhul Amin

Talking on the move to have