# Road to parliamentary polls

FROM PAGE 16 commissioners and the EC secre-tary alongside about 20 district officers and 300 upazila election officers are seen by senior opposition leaders as politically appointed by the BNP-led alliance government as part of its 'election engineering process'

They also see Justice KM Hasan, who was a leader of BNP, as either politically loyal to BNP or against AL now, and expect him to be the head of the next caretaker govern-

The entire AL leadership includ-ing its President Sheikh Hasina criticises Justice Hasan for being too embarrassed to hold a hearing of the case in connection with the murder of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman', and believes that he will not perform the duties of the head of the caretaker government neu-

Believing that Justice KM Hasan will obviously favour the BNP-Jamaat alliance in the next election, the opposition coalition has long been demanding not to make him the head of the next caretaker government.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, appointed by BNP, will also serve the ruling alliance by all means to ensure its victory again, the oppo-sition leaders observed. They believe that the president, who will have the supreme power to deal with everything including the armed forces during the election, might use the army

against the opposition.

The armed forces, who are usually deployed a few days ahead of the election, have also been politicised by the government and to that end the present government made a loyalist the chief of army staff without regard for seniority, the opposition leaders said adding that they believe the armed forces will perform against them in the next

Deputy commissioners (DC), thana nirbahi officers (TNO) and other thana level officers, who will work on the election day as

returning officers and assistant returning officers, appointed by the government, will also favour the BNP-Jamaat alliance 'just like in the past election', the opposi-

They said the government has already appointed at least 50 DCs, thana level officers on political considerations as part of the ruling alliance's election engi-

including Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), created by the present government, have already begun harassing opposition leaders and activists and the minority com-munities. It believes that the harassments and threats will gain momentum as the election day

finance minister also former AL lawmaker Shah AMS Kibria, and lawmakers Ahsanullah Master and Momtaz Uddin, and the assassination attempt on Hasina at an AL rally on August 21, 2004 which left 24 leaders and activists killed, the opposition leadership fears that such attempts might be made again ahead of the election.

The apprehension has currency among the opposition leaders as the investigations of the cases in connection with the killings, the grenade attack, and the arms hauls at Bogra and Chittagong still did not see any

rise of militancy in the country is the present government's creation and it is still patronising the militants with an intention to use the fanatics in the next election to have political gain.

### Shia reprisals Currently there are 141,000 US troops in Iraq -- more than the 115,000 Iraqi troops in the national

forces are becoming more com-

mon as the parties jostle for power.

ing between the army and a Shia

militia in the city of Diwaniyah,

south of the capital, left 23 soldiers

and 40 militiamen dead. Iraqi and

US commanders have threatened

UK antı-terror

'All I can say is that our knowl-

edge is increasing and certainly in

terms of broad description, the

numbers of people who we have to

be interested in are into the thou-

an offensive to retake the town.

to be shown Sunday evening.

New EC

FROM PAGE 1

On Monday, for example, fight-

Their deaths bring to 17 the number of US servicemen killed in Iraq since Sunday, and to 2,637 since the March 2003 invasion, according to an AFP count based on Pentagon

The four-hour vehicle curfew to protect Friday's worshippers came and went without reports of violence, but preaching at the mosques was marked by anger.

The Iraqi government should stop these acts and the ministries of defence and interior should work to prevent such terror," said Mohammed Al-Haidari, a follower of Shia spiritual leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani.

Haidari told worshippers that in one of Thursday night's attacks, extremists had hired a flat in a Shia residential block and rigged it with explosives, bringing down the whole structure and crushing

wants to exploit local strife and chaos so that Iraq will move into a civil war. Iraqis should be hand in hand against terror to deny these criminals a chance to provoke conflict between Sunnis and Shias," he

The official figures for those killed and wounded across Iraq in August are expected to be released on Sunday, and US and Iraqi commanders expect them to be lower than July's record levels, especially in the war-torn capital.

Iraqi and US troops have launched a large-scale security operation in the city and officers boast that they have cut the daily death toll from sectarian death squad attacks by more than 40 percent.

The final days of the month, however, were marked by a spike in violence across the country, and an AFP tally of official reports put the toll since Sunday at 17 US soldiers and more than 400 Iraqis dead.

Against this background, Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's government is pressing forward with plans to take responsibility for Iraq's security back from its allies in

the US-led coalition. On Saturday, Iraq will announce the creation of a joint military command to oversee the work of its navy, airforce and 10 army divi-

sions, five of which are already the lead security force in their areas of responsibility. Hitherto, Iraqi divisions had

been coordinated by US commanders, but over the coming months the national command centre will gradually integrate them into one chain of command leading down from Maliki himself.

In the coming days, the government will also take charge of security in Dhi Qar, the second of Irag's 18 provinces deemed secure enough for British-led coalition forces to take a back seat while local forces lead the way.

Both of these steps have been hailed by US commanders as a sign that Iraq is finally ready to lead the fight against insurgents, who oppose the US-led overthrow of former leader Saddam Hussein or

are inspired by militant Islam. The US commander in Iraq, General George Casey, said this week Iraq would be able to handle its own security within 12 to 18 months and President George W. Bush reiterated his vow to leave US forces in place until this is

tion leaders think. a number of TNOs and other

The opposition coalition fears that the 'widely politicised' police administration will also favour the BNP-Jamaat alliance as the government has appointed a large number of activists of BNP's student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) as police offi-

After assassinations of former

mentionable progress.

Moreover, they believe that the

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haque Inu

alliance as its last aide. The AL will form committees at every polling centre to monitor whether the voters can exercise their right to franchise properly. It will also form Vote Protection Committees, like the one created by Chittagong City Mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury in the last city corporation election army -- and several thousand more there, to guard the places where votes will be counted and from British forces in the southeast of where the results will be declared, the country are gradually pulling so that the administration cannot

out of fixed positions in areas manipulate any of them. outside Iraq's volatile second city The opposition coalition has also plans to dispute the result of any poll if its agents are thrown out or threatened by any means. And finally, the High Court will be the opposition's last resort if any Basra, and Italy's remaining 2,000 troops are expected to leave by the Nevertheless, many challenges remain. Iraq's fragile coalition government has yet to decide how untoward incident takes place to deal with the challenge of the regarding counting of the votes Shia militias, which control several and announcements of the results. Senior lawyers have Baghdad districts and large areas of already talked to 14-party Coordinator Abdul Jalil regarding the south. The militias are linked to power-ful parties in the ruling coalition, and are not in open rebellion

the matter recently. Nigerian boy against Maliki's government. Nevertheless, clashes with security

FROM PAGE 16 cordial in handling such incidents time," she said, adding that the home ministry and British High Commission in Dhaka took immediate steps in this regard.

Peter was kept on Airport Police Station after a closed circuit TV detected the boy wandering inside the terminal of ZIA. On July 26, BNWLA took custody of the boy following a court order.

At first the boy expressed his desire to go to London, saying that his doctor parents were staying there. But an extensive interrogation by the airport authorities revealed that his parents had expired and the man he had been living with for the last five years taught him to say so.

Additional police force will be

deployed for the convenience of the

people," the DMP said in a release

with respect to human rights and

killed and around two hundred

others wounded in police-BDR

firing and clubbing to break up

throngs of demonstrators who tried

to lay siege to the Asia Energy pro-

ject office on August 26 protesting

against open-pit coal-mining plan.

Britain has advised its citizens to

avoid all non-essential travel to

"We advise against all but essen-

Phulbari in northern Bangladesh.

tial travel to Phulbari, Dinajpur.

Violent demonstrations on August

26 in Phulbari have resulted in at

least five deaths plus many inju-

ries," says a travel advice issued by

Office in London on Thursday.

Foreign and Commonwealth

Seven people were reported

British HC

FROM PAGE 16

the rule of law."

TRAVELADVICE

## Iribute to Zia

how the opposition labels him as biased?" Communication FROM PAGE 16 of its various front organisations Minister Nazmul Huda told The were also present. Daily Star yesterday. A large number of BNP activists Everything will go in accor-

and supporters thronged Zia Udyan to pay homage to their late leader dance with the constitution but the opposition wants to foil the and placed wreaths on his grave. next election that's why they have The party will bring out a procesraised questions about demosion in the city tomorrow in celebracratic institutions," he said.

tion of its founding anniversary. Tofail Ahmed, a presidium member of AL, told reporters that The procession will start from Nawab Yusuf Market under Kotwali the government appointed Monsur, who is from Gabtoli in Police Station and terminate at Gabtali after parading main thor-Bogra, the prime minister's constituency, as its own man.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) requested the people to take alternative route during the proces-The EC must be reshuffled following discussions with the opposition," he said.

In an interview with a TV chan-nel Monsur said, "My track record shows that I have been working as a public servant with neutrality. Law Minister Moudud Ahmed

said to a TV channel yesterday, According to the law there is no scope for discussing the matter with the opposition.

BNP sources said the party high ups took the decision to appoint an election commissioner to keep pressure on the opposition, which is agitating for implementation of its proposal for electoral reforms.

An influential section of the government is now planning to appoint yet another election commissioner to ensure its control on the EC as the government policy makers are determined to dominate the commission at any

cost, government sources said. Previously the government pointed SM Zakaria and Justice Mahfuzur Rahman as election commissioners, prompting the opposition to strongly protest

their appointments. Opposition sources said both of them are also known as BNP Land grabbers' list

said the government will use around 5,000 militants still at large and different outlawed organisations in the south-

western region of the country

against the opposition coalition

are implemented, holding a free

and fair election will not be possi-

ble until the politicised police and civil administration is

and rise of militancy is thwarted

ahead of the next election," Inu

problems will have to be sorted out through discussions, off

Persons affiliated with the BNP-Jamaat alliance looted tens

of thousands of taka from the

people in various ways including

hiking up the prices of essentials through syndication and by

collecting tolls from all kinds of

construction and development works, the opposition leaders believe, and fear that the 'black

money' will be used in crooked

ways against the opposition in the next election. They also fear

that the ruling alliance will pat-

ronise local criminals with the

'looted money' against the 14-

number of senior opposition leaders said these challenges are

understandable as the govern-ment has decorated the adminis-

tration with at least five layers of

flunkeys to rig the next election. In addition to all these conspira-

cies they will have to face

national and international

intrigues and intra-party feuds,

problems except implementation of the proposed reforms in the system of caretaker government and the Election Commission

(EC), which they believe will help to obliterate most of the barriers

to a free, fair and neutral election.

istration will remain untouched, working for the BNP-Jamaat

But still the politicised admin-

They see no solution to these

the leaders added.

Talking to The Daily Star a

course, ahead of the election.

He however added that these

"Even if the electoral reforms

in the next election.

FROM PAGE 1 of forestland -- 320 acres in Dhalghata, 200 in Charandip, 10 in Matarbari, 350 in Siradia and 32 acres in Lemshikhali. But the matter virtually ended there.

Chittagong Coastal Forest Officer MA Khaleq said, "We are still filing cases. But so far our efforts to recover the lands have seen little progress. We have published the list to draw the administration's attention and seek their help in repossessing the lands and

Soon the list will be submitted to the deputy commissioner (DC) of Cox's Bazar, he added.

The failure to bring the culprits to book in fact encourages the land grabbing to go on unhindered, Cox's Bazar Forest Range Officer Kush Kumar Baidya said.

"We have received copies of the court orders for recovery of 912 acres of land but have yet to take any action due to lack of manpower and logistics. On the other hand, the grabbers continue to warn us against any drive for land recovery," he added. Advocate Faridul Alam, legal

adviser of the Chittagong Coastal Forest Department, told The Daily Star that a section of high officials of the government helps in irregular allocation of government lands to political leaders and influential individuals.

Recently, The Daily Star has run a number of reports on indiscriminate land grabbing in the coastal area that has been going on in the on July 17, the coastal forest department published a list of 15 land grabbers. The first name on that list was that of ruling party lawmaker from Cox's Bazar-4 Alamgir Mohammad Mahfuz

In response to the developments, the district administration has ordered illegal occupants to vacate the lands in Paraban on the offshore island of Moheshkhali in Cox's Bazar.

Of the 28 people on the latest forest department list, Kala Mia of Ghotibhanga has occupied 50 acres, Badsha Mia of Ghotibhanga 50 acres, Mohammed Ishaque of Fakiragona 100, UP member Bashir Ahmed 50, Mahmud of Kutobjum 50, UP Member Badsha Miya of Kutubjom 20, Mohammed Shafi of Kutubjom 20, Abu Bakar Shikder of Gorakgata 150, Reduan of Battoly 130, Abdul Gafur of Kutubjom 70, Mohammed Maksud Shikdar of Kutubjom 70, Amir Hossain of Kutubjom 60, Makshud Sikder 60, UP Member Abdul Monaf of Kondakarpara 20, Shaedul Quader Shikdar of Gorakgata 120, Baro Moheshkhali UP Chairman Shahidullah 75, Anowar Pasha Chy of Fakiragona 30, Abdus Shukur, Kabir Ahmed, Jalal Ahmed, Akter Kamal Chy, and Mahmud Ullah each 135, former UP chairman of Baro Moheshkhali Sharif Badsha 100, Mujibur Rahman of Baro Moheshkhali 100 and Abdul Malek of Ghotibhanga 20 acres.

## RMG workers

The NGWF activists held their demonstration at Muktangan at 11:00am. They said the pay structure has not been declared yet because of the indifference of garment owners and the govern-

They declared agitation programmes including protest rallies and processions from September 3 to September 6 at Gazipur, Tejgaon, Mirpur and Ashulia. They will declare greater agitation programmes on September 8.

NGWF President Shahida Sarker, General Secretary Amirul Haque Amin and others addressed

The BPSSF also held a rally and brought out a procession on the same demand. Its leaders blamed the garment owners and government for ignoring the workers'

BPSSF President Towhidur Rahman, General Secretary Khadiza Begum and other leaders addressed the rally.

General Secretary of Bangladesh Garment Sramik Karmachari Federation Kamrul Ahsan told The Daily Star that they will go for agitation from of trafficking, it is possible to repa-triate the victim within a short ment to declare the minimum ment to declare the minimum wage immediately.

Meanwhile, Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (Skop) at a press conference yesterday said the owners are playing games with the workers, dillydallying in settling the workers' minimum wage and implementing the tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU).

The government, garment owners and the workers' leaders signed the 10-point MoU on June 12 and decided to implement those in phases to address the labour unrest, ensure labour rights and peaceful atmosphere in the facto-

Endorsing the wage board formed on May 31, the MoU set a one-month deadline for addressing nine other issues including issuing appointment letters and identity cards to workers, allowing them one-day weekly holiday and other government holidays according to the existing labour laws, maternity leave for the female workers with regular salary, and overtime if a worker works more than eight hours.

Lack of government initiatives and hostile mood of the garment owners are the main reasons for not honouring the agreement, the Skop leaders said, adding that the owners are hatching plots not to comply with the agreement.

They reiterated that the Skop will not compromise and the government and garment owners will be responsible if fresh movements recur in the garment sector.

The Skop will declare its agitation programmes from a workers' rally at Muktangan on September

Skop Convener Dr Wazedul Islam Khan, General Secretary of Jatiya Sramik League Roy Ramesh Chandra, President of Jatiya Sramik Jote Bangladesh Abdul Qader Howlader, President of Sramik Jote Mesbah Uddin Ahmed and others were present at the press confer-

# BSF, BDR trade fire

In another incident, the Indian border guards of Pakhirdanga fired a bullet at the Ghona BDR camp in sadar upazila at about 4:00am. The BDR troops retaliated firing two

Major Humayun Kabir, commander of Satkhira 41 Rifles Battalion, said an "uneasy situation" was prevailing in the border areas following the firing by the BSE

The unprovoked firing by the BSF took place a day after the fourday border conference between the two forces at Shillong, capital of eastern Indian state Meghalaya, on Thursday, agreeing to take effective steps for defusing tension on the

Our Sylhet correspondent reports: The situation along Amolshid and Barothakuri borders of Zakiganj upazila got tense as the BSF of Labharpota border camp opened fires on the Bangladeshi farmers when they were returning home from cropland adjacent to border pillar No. 1351.

The BDR retaliated the continued firing with some shots. The border guards of both the countries traded over a hundred gunshots in the evening on the Biabail-Labharpota borders. The Bangladeshi farmers man-

aged a safe return but Shabana sustained serious bullet injuries. The girl was admitted to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

Meanwhile, the inhabitants of at least 15 villages, including Chinirchak, Boloramer Chak, Munshir Chak, Uttar Aior, Hasanpur, Montala, Noagram, Sonarchak, Matargram, Ichhamoti and Shiberchak, left their homesteads for safer places. Following the incident, both the

BDR and BSF deployed additional

troops along the borders in the last

The BSF also forced a few Bangladeshi farmers to leave their farmland attached to pillar No. 1348 at 4:00pm yesterday, threatening them with "serious consequences", sources said.

An official said a protest note against the unprovoked firing was sent to the BSF DIG from the BDR sector commander in Sylhet yester-

## PM trying

FROM PAGE 1 claims about massive development taking place, Hasina asked her why then she is afraid of carry-

ing out the proposed reforms. The government is now preparing a fresh list of criminals, the AL chief said, and demanded making it public before handover of power

to caretaker government. She apprehended that a num-ber of AL leaders and workers might be included in the list as part of the government's conspiracy to eliminate the opposition.

Hasina once again demanded that militant kingpins who have been awarded death penalty be taken to condemned cell and allowed to speak to the media before the court verdicts are executed. It is not being done to hide the fact that the government itself created and patronised the militants, she added.

The people now want an end to the BNP-Jamaat government's misrule and corruption, Hasina said, urging all to unite to realise

#### Regional dialogue FROM PAGE 16

FROM PAGE 1 society representatives of the district will speak at the dialogue. Members of the 'Nagorik

Committee 2006, who are preparing a Vision Paper for Bangladesh, will also be present at the dialogue to receive public feedback.

## Family to appeal

FROM PAGE 16 filing an appeal because they have

no faith in 'man-made' law. Expressing her reaction to the verdict, Atika said the verdict was not according to the law of the Quran and Sunnah that had been demanded by the mujahids for

Besides, the government should consider all the matters properly before delivering such verdict, she

Atika's husband Md Abdul Kadir said he tried several times recently to meet Shaikh Rahman, Ataur Rahman Sunny and Abdul Awal to seek their consent to filing an appeal but the authorities did not allowhim.

He termed the verdict as 'too quick'.

Senior assistant judges Jagannath Pandey and Sohel Ahmed were killed in a suicide bomb attack at Purba Chadkati in Jhalakathi town on November 14 last year in the wake of a series of bomb attacks by the militants across the country.

#### Criminal killed FROM PAGE 1

When they reached there, Mujibur's accomplices opened fire on the law enforcers, prompting them to retaliate.

According to Rab, Mujibur received bullets during the shootout and died instantly. One home-made gun, five live

cartridges and one used bullet shell were recovered from the spot. Rab said Mujibar was wanted in several criminal cases, including two for murder, recorded with

## Khulna factions

Swarankhola Police Station.

FROM PAGE 16 factions against each other.

On Thursday, hundreds of Manju supporters led by Whip Ashraf Hossain marched in a procession and attacked the Lobi faction at noon demonstrating near Kadamtala area under Khalishpur as the Lobi faction

showed black flags to Whip Ashraf

and branded him a black sheep of

Two leaders of Khalishpur thana BNP, Sajjad Ali and Abul Kalam, were injured and four shops were vandalised during the clash.

Followers of Ali Asgar Lobi filed a case at around 10:00pm against Whip Ashraf Hossain and eight others -- followers of lawmaker Nurul Islam Manju -- accusing them of attacking on a peaceful demonstration brought out by followers of Lobi.

Soon after that, Manju followers also filed a case at 10:40pm against Abdul Malek, president of Khalishpur thana BNP, and four others from Lobi faction making similar accusations.

## Ahab to float

"We've completed our preparation for launching the new party. The announcement regarding the launch is now only a matter of time," said Salafi adding that they will contest the next election mainly from the constituencies across the northern districts.

Ahab and Ahab Jubo Sangha organised the conference demanding immediate release of Ahab Ameer and Rajshahi University teacher Muhammad Asadullah Al

He, along with Shaikh Abdus Samad Salafi, Ahab General Secretary Nurul Islam and Ahab Jubo Sangha President ASM Azizullah, was arrested on February 22, 2005 on suspicion of being the brains behind the growing Islamist militancy in the coun-

Galib is still behind bars while the other three have come out on bail recently.

Ahab leaders addressing yesterday's rally threatened to go for a tougher movement against the government, if Galib is not released within a month.

"In the last election, we cast votes for the BNP-Jamaat alliance so that an Islamic state is established. But they have betrayed our trust and arrested our ameer [Galib]," said Nurul Islam, general secretary of the Islamist outfit.

He alleged that Galib was arrested because he wrote against the activities of Jamaat-e-Islami. "Jamaat made the government

arrest Galib as they feared that

Galib might disclose its misdeeds

in the name of Islam," said Azizullah. Among others, Prof Sirajul Islam, SM Abdul Latif, Muhammad Sakhawat Hossain, Moulana Jahangir Alam, Moulana Abdul

Mannan spoke at the meeting. A procession followed the grand conference. Chanting slogans against the 'misrule' of BNP-Jamaat government, it paraded through different city streets.

## Taxi cab

Metropolitan Police Abu Raihan Mohammad Saleh said two people suffered minor injuries in the The names of the injured could

not be known.

## 14-party to lay siege

The 14-party aims to besiege the EC Secretariat in the city and election offices across the country on September 6. The following day will e observed as 'Day against

Before laying siege to the PMO on September 12, the opposition parties will go on a mass public elations campaign in the districts adjacent to the capital from September 10 to 11.

A team comprising senior leaders of the 14-party will lead a countrywide mass awareness campaign from September 14 to 17. Then at a grand rally in the capital on September 18, the opposition line-up will announce the final round of agitation programmes aiming to make the government concede the demands for reforms in the caretaker government and electoral

Briefing the newsmen, 14-party Coordinator Abdul Jalil warned the government against holding elecions before carrying out the

Referring to the prime minis-ter's recent speech where she said that the elections would be held under the caretaker government of Justice KM Hasan, he said the comments are devoid of political

"Trampling on the popular demand for electoral reforms, the prime minister has in fact chalnged us to a confrontation," Jalil said adding, "When the people are calling for reconstitution of the Election Commission, Khaleda Zia has appointed yet another election

commissioner on political considment is doing everything possible to manoeuvre the next election in its favour as they fear that if the election is held in a free and fair manner, the alliance would not get

any election without implementation of the electoral reforms, Jalil

14-party meeting was attended among others by Rashed Khan Menon, Bimal Biswas, Dilip Barua, Obaidul Quader, Abdur Rahman, Syed Zafar Sazzad, Pankaj

# Syria to respect

FROM PAGE 16 Lebanon if UN peacekeepers were deployed on it under the UN resolution that led to the August 14 ceasefire between Hezbollah and

Annan said he also discussed with Assad the establishment of diplomatic relations between Syria and

Syria is prepared to establish normal liplomatic relations with Lebanon. and that Syria is prepared to go ahead with the delineation of its border with Lebanon," Annansaid.
That could include the disputed Shebaa Farms district, located at the

"The president informed me that

and captured by the Jewish state during the 1967 Middle Eastwar. Although the tiny territory is now claimed by Lebanon with the approval of Syria, the United Nations wants Damascus to sign a formal

junction of Lebanon, Syria and Israel,

document to that effect. Annan's 10-day tour is aimed at implementing Resolution 1701 which halted the 34-day conflict that killed more than 1,200 people in ebanon, overwhelmingly civilians,

Meanwhile, five ships carrying

nearly 2,500 Italian troops reached the Lebanese coast on Thursday. The

troops are to make a beach landing in

and 160 Israelis, mostly soldiers.

the southern coastal city of Tyre on Saturday, a UN spokesman said The troops are part of the van-guard of the expanded UN force that

will eventually total up to 15,000 Indonesia said Friday it would send up to 1,000 troops, after Israel eased its previously blanket objec-

tion to the participation of countries with which it does not have diplomaticrelations. In Israel, tens of thousands rallied in Tel Aviv late Thursday, putting pressure on the government to secure the release of two soldiers captured by Hezbollah and a third

"We do not abandon soldiers on the battlefield," read white banners emblazoned in red hanging behind a stage in Rabin Square. Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Siniora, who is demanding the end of an Israeli air and sea blockade, has

held captive by Gaza militants.

said his government has not been contacted by Israel for negotiations on the two soldiers seized by Siniora was in Stockholm, where donor nations on Thursday pledged 940 million dollars in aid to help structure, shelter the homeless and remove unexploded Israeli ord-

# Iran air disaster

skidded off the runway and crashed into the nearby barriers, leaving gaping holes in the fuse-

The incident was the latest tragedy to hit Iran's aviation industry, whose fleet is made up largely owing to the US sanctions imposed after the Islamic revolution in 1979. According to figures published in the Iranian media and not

counting Friday's accident in Mashhad, more than 1,460 people were killed in 17 air crashes in the past 25 years, including an Iranian olane shot down over the Gulf by a US warship in 1988. The first television pictures showed the plane, owned by the

of the airport, with one huge hole burned out in the centre of the Rescue workers used hoses to

Iran Airtours carrier, lying flat

without its wheels on the outskirts

ground around into a quagmire of mud and water. Several corpses were on the ground beside the plane, swathed in blankets.

"As the plane was landing one of its tyres burst, forcing to it to swerve off the runway before hitting nearby barriers and bursting into flames," an airport official in Mashhad told AFP.

An Iranian civil aviation official was quoted in the media as saying the plane did not ask for an emergency landing before the accident.

US sanctions mean that Iran

can only shop for Airbus or Boeing

planes on the used market, and Iranian officials have blamed the blockade for the regular plane crashes in the Islamic republic. Iranian media are reporting that

regular flights have been resumed in Mashhad international airport The sanctions cover not only US-made airplanes and spare parts, but also European ones, like Airbus, when they use significant

suspending enrichment.
According to a Western diplo-

mat in Vienna, those talks would be

followed by a meeting in the German capital of Britain, China,

France, Germany, Russia and the

Washington said it was now time to

Once the UN deadline expired,

In a speech to a US veterans'

"We will continue to work

group, President George W. Bush said: "It is time for Iran to make a

closely with our allies to plan a

diplomatic solution, but there

must be consequences for Iran's

defiance and we must not allow

Iran to develop a nuclear weapon."

told France-Info radio that Tehran would repel any US military attack.

"If they go that way, we will be forced to defend ourselves. We are

capable of defending ourselves and

confronting any sort of threat," he

Both sides used firearms, rods

Sekander Bepari, joint secretary

and sticks during the clash that

of the committee, said the leaders

Iran's ambassador to France

# Tehran reaction

douse the plane, turning the elements of US origin.

forward.

students, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said: "We will consider a whole range of options but only those options that take us

tudents, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said: "We will consider a whole range of options ... but only those options that take us forward. The IAEA report was filed to the

Security Council as an August 31

deadline for Iran to suspend ura-

nium enrichment expired, and could lead to UN sanctions against Tehran. Uranium enrichment provides fuel for civilian nuclear reactors but in highly refined form can also

serve as the raw material for atom bombs. In New York, US ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton said the report "provides ample evidence of (Iranian) defiance".

European foreign ministers meeting Friday in Finland were faced with a diplomatic tight-rope act -- considering sanctions with Washington without compromising dialogue with Teheran.

"European Union diplomacy remains the number one way forward," Finnish Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja told reporters. 'If their (Iran's) response is truly

what they say, that they are ready to engage in negotiations, then we have to see what the conditions are, if these can be met," he said. As the Security Council deadline

passed, EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana also sought to maintain diplomatic efforts, agreeing to meet with Iran's top nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani in Berlin on Wednesday. They were to discuss Iran's 21page response to an international package of political and economic 4 bullet-hit FROM PAGE 1 Aslam Hossain were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

lasted for 30 minutes

and members of the former committee carried out the attack because the shop owners forced them to dissolve the committee in August last year on charge of corruption. He alleged that the former committee members embezzled

Tk 3 crore and indulged in massive

irregularities in allocating shops to

Both the groups filed separate incentives in exchange for Tehran cases with Paltan Police Station.

He said the BNP-Jamaat governthe people's mandate for its 'cor-

The opposition will not allow

Chaired by AL Presidium Member Amir Hossain Amu, the Bhattacharva, and Nurul Islam.