Coalition, Shia militants trade fire in Karbala

Sadr threatens suicide attacks

US-led coalition troops and Shia militiamen traded fire in the central holy city of Karbala yesterday, an AFP correspondent said.

The clashes between coalition troops and militiamen loyal to radical Shia cleric Mogtada Sadr erupted around noon, he added.

Polish, Bulgarian and Lithuanian troops are serving in the coalition contingent in Karbala.

Yesterday's firing appeared to be concentrated around the government's office, the office of a Sadr religious foundation and the al-Mokhayam mosque controlled by Sadr lovalists.

Wednesday and Thursday, coalition planes dropped leaflets on the city, urging Sadr's militiamen to hand over their weapons and to withdraw from public buildings.

The leaflets warned that "the law will be respected and order reestablished in Iraq.'

"The Iraqis deserve peace and stability and not chaos and viothe leaflets said, urging members Sadr's banned Mehdi Army militia to "surrender their weapons and withdraw immediately from state buildings."

"We will not allow anyone to plunge Iraq back into the dark days of the bloody dictatorship" of ousted

The prime minister said the govern-

ment has decided make available

Rs 74 crore for students of

madrasas and to recruit two lakh

Urdu teachers to promote the lan-

of the second phase of parliamen-

tary polls on April 26 covering 137

constituencies including 19 in the

crucial state of Uttar Pradesh and

seven in Bihar states where there is

a sizable Muslim population. While

Uttar Pradesh will go to the poll for

the first time in this year's parliamen-

tary elections, Bihar will witness

in the backdrop of BJP's repeated

appeals to Muslims to change their

mindset towards the party, parties

like Samajwadi Party and Bahujan

Samaj Party are working overtime to

ensure the minority community

members remain gravitated towards

them as they have done for over a

Interestingly, Samajwadi Party

chief and his trusted lieutenant Amar

Singh have of late stepped up

attacks on BJP in actions observers

secular credentials and checking

large scale division in Muslim votes

which will benefit either Congress or

the saffron party if the latter's

appeals find a buyer in the commu-

would rather commit 'political sui-

cide' than entering into a post-poll

alliance with BJP-led alliance to help

the latter form a government in the

event of a hung Parliament in the

was created by a significant remark

recently by Vajpayee during a televi-

sion interview last week that BJP

and Mulayam Singh Yadav's party

from Yadav and Amar Singh who

have stepped up the anti-BJP offen-

sive since then. Samaiwadi Party

obviously senses the problem in any

perception of it going soft towards

Congress wrote to the Election

Commission taking strong excep-

Meanwhile, the BJP and

BJP keeping in view the elections.

The remark drew sharp reaction

were 'ideologically close.'

Samajwadi Party's discomfiture

In fact, Amar Singh said his party

decade.

elections.

Political observers here say that

polling for the second phase.

Vajpayee's remarks came ahead

Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein." the coalition added

"Only Iragi security forces and the coalition are entitled to govern Iraq until the people elect their government," it said, in an operation similar to airdrops during last year's US-led invasion urging the Iraqi army not to fight.

Coalition forces have threatened to retake Karbala, located 110km south of Baghdad, from Sadr lovalists who seized the city by force early this month.

A report from Kufa adds: Radical Shia cleric Moqtada Sadr yesterday threatened suicide attacks against the US-led occupation coalition if its troops penetrate Shia holy cities.

"If we are forced to defend our cities, we will resort to suicide operations and we will be human time bombs, which would explode in their faces," he said in his weekly ser-

Sadr, who is wanted by the USled coalition over the killing of a rival cleric, made the threat at Friday prayers in Kufa, just outside the holy city of Najaf, 160km south of Baghdad, where he has been holed up since US troops surrounded the

"We have enough weapons and large number of followers, and there are many believers who are ready to conduct suicide opera-

BJP spokesman Mukhtar Abbas

Naqvi claimed yesterday that such

Muslim votes in the eastern state.

reportedly taking place -- even if it is

Muslims. First, RJD MP Anwarul

Hug quit the party and switched over

to BJP and is the saffron nominee

from Sheohar parliamentary constit-

junior Muslim minister of Bihar

government headed by Laloo's wife

Rabri Devi, and RJD member of

state legislature Shahid Ali Khan

resigned and joined Janata Dal

(United), an ally of BJP both in the

Thirdly there were reports of

discontent among Muslims of

Muzaffarpur and Gaya constituen-

cies of Bihar where RJD fielded two

hardcore RSS men, one of them

allegedly involved in Babri Masjid

demolition. One of the RSS men has

been pitted by Laloo Yadav against

Defence Minister and Janata Dal (U)

candidate George Fernandez in

out of the total of Bihar's 40 parlia-

mentary seats contains just three

reported discontent among a sec-

tion of Muslims about RJD has any

adverse effect on the party's elec-

Besides Anwarul Hug in

Sheohar, the BJP's most prominent

Muslim face in Bihar electoral battle

Shanawaz Hussain contesting from

Muslim-majority constituency of

Kishanjgunj. Hussain is the lone

minority community and youngest

Extremist terror

political parties have stressed

recovery of illegal arms and explo-

sives to ensure their safety. "We do

not favour the use of illegal arms in

politics," said Nazrul Islam Manju,

secretary of city BNP (Bangladesh

and city Awami League said it is

crucial to identify those who are

harbouring extremists, particularly

cadres of PBCP's Janajuddho

Corporation received death threats

last February and had to pay Tk 1

lakh after extremists exploded a

tims of random shooting and bomb

attacks. Attacks on police and

journalists mean that law and order

has come to a point of no return,"

said a former president of the KCCI

who has already moved to Dhaka

with his family fearing assassination

Metropolitan Police said actions

were being planned to crush the

outlaws at any cost. "Soon, we will

give you a surprise by arresting

extremist godfathers. We will not

bother anymore about who belongs

to what party or profession," he said.

A senior officer of Khulna

by outlaws.

"Police have also become vic-

bomb in front of his house at Nirala.

A senior engineer of Khulna City

Two leaders of Khulna district

member of Vaipavee government.

Federal Textile Minister Syed

It remains to be seen if the

RJD's list of candidates for the 26

state as well as at the national level.

Secondly, Monazar Hasan a

uency this time.

Muzaffarpur.

toral fortunes.

FROM PAGE 12

Nationalist Party).

Muslims.

small change -- in the mindset of

ness' in Samajwadi Party.

tions," he said.

"Until now we had refused to do this," he said, adding: "But if we are forced to do it. we will.

Meanwhile, a Sunni Muslim leader warned vesterday that the US-led coalition would face an uprising throughout Irag if its forces attack the flashpoint city of Fallujah. which has been besieged by US marines since April 5.

"I have an urgent message for US forces. You have overstepped the red line. Make sure you do not strike Fallujah again," Sheikh Ahmad Abdel Ghafur Samarrai said during Friday prayers at a Baghdad

"We will not allow the shedding of Iraqi blood. If you strike again, the whole of Iraq, from north to south, from east to west, will become Fallujah," the Sunni cleric said.

Located 50km west of Baghdad the Sunni city has been the scene of fierce fighting between coalition troops and insurgents in recent days.

Official figures show that a total of 271 Iraqis and dozens of US marines have been killed in Fallujah since the troops lay siege to the city on April 5 following the slaying of four American contractors.



Participants of a city rally organised by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon yesterday hold banners and placards to demand cancellation of a government decision to fill up low-lying areas in Dhaka.

Dark secrets

FROM PAGE 12

ment of child sex workers in Dhaka

He added that it takes a lot of time to earn the confidence of street children to get them to willingly reveal their ordeal to the NGO workers. "It is something very personal, we cannot force them to share it with us," said project coordinator Amina Khatun.

Project workers said children between the ages of nine and 16 are most vulnerable. Once they are put through repeated sexual abuse, it becomes very hard to bring them back to normal life. It starts with occasional exploitation but gradually the children become professional sex workers

At least 54 of the 200 children enrolled with Aparajeo Bangladesh were professional sex workers while 97 percent of all children were involved in occasional sex work.

Although girls are more vulnerable, boys living on the streets are also sexually exploited in many ways. So far, project workers identified 51 boys who underwent sexual exploitation. Karwan Bazar, Mirpur Mazar, Mohammadpur Town Hall area, Osmani Udyan, Sadarghat launch terminal. Gulistan and Gabtoli are some of the areas in the city where child sex workers hang

around. Fourteen-year-old Zarina (not her real name) once worked as a floating sex worker before she was rehabilitated with the help of Aparaieo Bangladesh. She told this correspondent how she was forced into the sex trade after being picked up by none other than a policeman.

Zarina was brought to Dhaka work as domestic help. But she, then only 7 years old, was lost in the Mirpur Mazar area.

While living in the streets around the Mazar, Zarina was picked up by a policeman in civil dress in the

name of household work. He took her to a place near the Mirpur zoo that seemed like a police camp. "They (policemen) confined me for 15 days and gave me food only when I agreed to having physical relations with them." she said.

They made her drink some redcoloured liquid (some sort of "love potion") from small bottles that looked like cough syrup. "They said if I drank the syrup, I wouldn't feel hungry, which was not at all true. Now I understand the drink was meant to induce people into doing bad things.

Zarina fled from the confinement and ended up in the streets of Sylhet. "I started doing bad works (prostitution) on my own as I did not have any other option to fill my stomach." She moved from Sylhet to Sadarghat to Mirpur Mazar area during her three years of working as a floating sex worker. "I would not lie to you; I found prostitution the easiest way to keep my body and

Mostly orphans or children from broken families become victims of sexual exploitation. They tend to leave home due to torture by cruel relatives, in most cases stepmothers or stepfathers. "We have also seen cases of girls being sexually violated by their stepfathers," said Amina Khatun of Aparajeo Bangladesh.

Once these children fall into the

pursue a vigorous agenda to meanfully rehabilitate these children and more importantly support efforts to eliminate child prostitution. it will amount to us being willing party to the destruction of our future and to breeding a kind of violence

Garment workers demand holiday on May Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Garment Workers' Federation (NGWF) yesterday demanded that all garment factories should be closed on May 1 to commemorate the historic May Day and express solidarity with the struggle of working people throughout the world. During a meeting at the city's

Muktangon, speakers warned against any attempt to compel garment labourers to work on the day like last year. "If necessary, workers will force

closure of factories on that day and the authorities will have to take the responsibility for any unpleasant situation," they said.

NGWF leaders said despite extensive publicity, 49 garment factories remained open on May 1 last year. Written complaints were submitted to Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association and to the Office of Factory Supervision.

After the meeting, a rally of a several hundred labor leaders and workers carrying red flags marched through Shaheed Noor Hossain Square, GPO, Baitul Mukarram, Gulistan and Paltan Crossing.

BJP-led coalition FROM PAGE 12

the next two rounds of polling to cross the halfway mark," the Indian Express newspaper said of the poll

were based on a combination of an exit poll carried out after the first day of voting on Tuesday and opinion polls for subsequent phases of voting.

tion will still be the best placed to form a government by attracting smaller parties to its fold but would face pressures from these parties, including on key reforms such as

have soared in the past year on the back of reforms and strong economic growth are banking on a convincing win for the BJP-led coalition to push through reforms more aggressively.

Rift in left parties

with greater progressive and democratic forces. The Gonoforum didn't have to form another platform."

Word of Manik underlines the differences: "We told our friends in the 11-party alliance to play a leading role in our new platform. Everyone except for the BSD

But CPB leaders hold fast to their belief that they will work within the 11-party alliance and strengthen it as a popular movement despite difficulties. Bimal Biswas feels the 11-party

is unlikely to break up although a serious re-polarisation of forces haunts the left-alliance and says the optimistic mood by the Gonoforum and BSD is likely to fall flat.

adds to mistrust among the CPB and BWP activists about the permutation of an alliance with the Awami League that set the April 30 deadline for unseating the government. They also fear the emergence of

Bikalpa Dhara (Alternative Stream) led by former president Badruddoza Chowdhury is weakening their alternative potential Although the CPB and BWP

alternative even more.'

Some CPB workers echoed his

say the parties are also suspicious of any alliance by the Gonoforum undermine their movement.

N Korea train blast

admitted the blast had taken place by accepting help from the Red Cross

and United Nations agencies. North Korea declared a state of emergency after the blast that occurred hours after leader Kim Jong-II passed through the station in his armoured private train on his return from China, Yonhap said.

Given the absence of reliable information emerging from the state, speculation has been building about what caused the accident Five international delegates from

the Red Cross in Pyongyang would be heading by car to the disaster scene today, probably arriving in the early afternoon, Niels Juel, a Red Cross official in Beijing, told AFP. Given the poor telecommunica-

tions connections in the area, the five delegates might not be able to report on the extent of the damage immedi-It was likely that the depot's stocks

of tents, blankets and waterpurification tablets would be released to assist in helping the victims of the explosion, he said.

Residents of Ryongchon, where a train collision wreaked carnage, were living in tents and coping as best they could yesterday as panicky relatives rushed over the border from China to

help.
"As soon as the explosion happened a lot of homes collapsed. A lot of people are using canvas or plastic to shield themselves from the weather," said Li Kaisheng, who has spoken with family in the devastated

"Many people are living outside in tents. A lot of windows have been shattered and roofs blown off."

Relief teams were headed to the remote corner of North Korea yester-

North Korea is on the point of economic collapse. Aid agencies say hundreds of thousands of people, perhaps even millions, have died from famine in recent years. Vital infrastructure is poorly maintained, and experts say the healthcare

handling a major disaster In Washington, US State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said: "We are following the reports of a train accident in North

system would be totally incapable of

"We've seen some reports of very large numbers of casualties from

If the reports are confirmed, "that indeed would be very sad and, obviously, we would express our sympathy to whoever was hurt," he said.

Boucher also said that despite tense relations with Pyongyang, Washington would be ready to help.

"We have always been willing to help the people of North Korea with humanitarian needs, (but) we don't know enough about the situation yet to know whether there is any assis-

tance that might be necessary.' Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda said: "It is a very tragic accident. We want to express our condolences to the victims.

Japan would decide whether to help after learning details, he said

20pc of forestland

for years in collusion with dishonest

bribing forest officials. Then they have their accomplices file court cases to claim ownership of the same land. Once the court rules, the property goes to either party, creatng a legal impediment to the forest department's land reclamation nitiatives, he said

forest department now owns only 527 acres out of 900 acres of land under Savar police station.

The government leased out some of the forestland to various organisations including the army, Ansar force, Bangladesh Radio and the central jail. Some former district commissioners (DCs) of Gazipur also leased out some lands recorded under their names (the Gazipur DC office) to individuals

purchase of the five acres from local

Saudi forces

authorities in December in the wake of a wave of suicide bombings targeting residential compounds which killed 52 people in Riyadh in May and November last year and were blamed on al-Qaeda sympathisers.

Jeddah site told AFP two figured on

since it was issued after three militants figuring on it were killed in clashes with security forces and a fourth turned himself in to authorities, according to official accounts. The latest deaths would bring the

The interior ministry statement said security forces surrounded a site to track down "wanted" militants in the al-Safa neighborhood of Jeddah Thursday night and came

under fire from the suspects. "Security forces responded as

A Saudi passer-by was also injured before the siege of the building in which the gunmen were holed up ended in the early hours of Friday, an AFP correspondent reported.

Many suspects, as well as security personnel, have been killed in similar gunbattles in the past year, and hundreds more presumed Islamist extremists have been

rounded up across the vast king-But the latest incident came close on the heels of Wednesday's

car bomb which targeted a security forces building in Riyadh, killing at least five people and wounding 145

renewed pledges from authorities to crush terrorists as a group linked to al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the attack and threatened more in

owners. A court injunction is now in place after the forest department filed a case against them.

Shajahan Siraj, environment and

He said the government formu-

Forest department sources told

The department has given

The Daily Star of an ongoing land

survey in nine out of 222 moujas to

details of the encroached land to a

high-powered committee compris-

ing secretaries of different minis-

Mindless arrests

to know the reason for the arrest, but

Eight others were arrested from

A few minutes later, a police van

By the evening, some 1,000

came to the scene and hauled the

victims to the police station from

vouths were picked up from railway

stations, launch and bus terminals

and different city points, taking the

number of such arrests since April

job very easy. We fear counter-

The government has made our

where they will be taken to iail

tries, the sources added.

police scared him away.

there in the same style.

dentify its land

FROM PAGE 1

practice grabbers have employed

that land-grabbing began ever since the land ministry allocated the 60,000 acres to the forest department in 1953 through a gazette notification. lated a land recovery project but was forced to put off its land reclamation drives for the time being because of fund constraints.

The forest department alleged acquired five acres of forestland in Shafipur of Gazipur in 2002 to expand its liquor factory that was

They said the Jamuna Group first asked for permission to build a 120foot-long and 20-foot-wide approach road to the factory, but later produced a paper showing

FROM PAGE 12

But the police source at the

that list, naming the pair as Mustafa Ibrahim Mubaraki and Ahmad Abdurrahman al-Fadli, both Saudis, The list has gone down to 22

list further down to 20.

the situation dictated, which led to the killing of three wanted men and the capture of (a fourth). One security man was slightly wounded," it

The suicide bombing drew

essentials, contain terrorism, check corruption and increase investment, and called for popular unity to establish what she termed was people's rights changing the present situation. Chaired by AL Savar upazila unit

Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim MP, Obaidul Kader, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and AFM Bahauddin

tion to an advertisement put out by Samajwadi Party in Urdu newspa pers in Uttar Pradesh projecting Save Hatirihil

FROM PAGE 12

The rally was also addressed by Bapa General Secretary Abu Naser Khan and Joint Secretary General Mahidur Hague Khan, Dr Nuruddin of Seba, Zakir Hossain of Nagorik Uddog, Member-Secretary of Buriganga Bachao Andolon Mihir Biswas, coordinator of Biswa Sahitya Kendra Golam Kibria and Alamgir Kabir of Green Force.

Floods rage

FROM PAGE 1 Sujatpur and marooned villagers in 48 of the 77 unions in Habiganj.

The rush of floodwaters forced minibuses off Sylhet-Jakigani Road as it went under water. The Svlhet-Beanibazar Road remained snapped for the fourth straight day, leaving hundreds of passengers in trouble. Road links with the Companyganj upazila headquarters snapped four days ago after breaches opened on a bridge.

Deputy Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Asadul Habib Dulu visited some flood-hit areas in Sunamganj Wednesday afternoon and Water Resources Minister Hafiz Uddin Ahmad visited the same district on Tuesday.

Reopen laid off Mulayam Singh Yadav as the 'mesfactories, stop siah' of Muslims alleging that Samaiwadi Party was trying for privatisation votes along communal lines, thereby violating the model of conduct set by the poll watchdog for

Trade union leaders demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

advertisement reflected 'nervous-Unlike Samajwadi Party and A federation of trade unions at a rally BSP. Bihar strongman Laloo Prasad vesterday afternoon asked the government to reopen all laid off Yadav's Rashtriva Janata Dal (RJD) has so far had no big competitor for industries including Rangpur Sugar Mills and stop privatisation of state-But a change in Bihar too is

> Paltan Maidan in the city, with Abul Bashar in the chair. Speakers at the meeting demanded of the government to announce and implement a minimum wage scale for the private

committee to protect industries and

sector workers and introduce trade union rights in all sectors including the export promotion zones. The demands for immediate formation of pay commissions and wage boards as per the provisions of existing agreements in different industrial sectors and a 10 percent

workers were also emphasised. ing the prescriptions of the World

Fund. The meeting adopted an agitation programme to drive in the demands. The agenda includes lending support to a strike called by the jute mill workers in Khulna tomorrow, conducting a mass campaign to drum up support until May 15 and observing what it styled as 'industries and

FROM PAGE 1 masks put up a barricade with two cars at Bhuighar in Fatullah at about 8:30pm Thursday. They forced Zitu and Aziz into one car while Ali in the

They beat Zitu and Aziz and demanded a ransom of Tk 5 lakh for their release. Ali, the slain, vehemently protested at the assault on Zitu and threatened the gang of dire consequence, police sources

At about 11:00pm the gang after taking the car, a mobile phone and a Rolex wristwatch allowed Zitu and

with them. Aziz was later admitted to Dhaka

None was arrested and police could not recover the car till 7:00pm. Our Narayangani correspondent meanwhile reported that the inci-

Rain disrupts FROM PAGE 1

total of 53 millimetres (mm) of rain was recorded in Dhaka city yesterday. The highest rainfall recorded in the country was 63 mm in Maijdee Court in Noakhali. Rain also crippled life in major

cities like Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi where almost equal amounts of rainfall were recorded. Sylhet and Barisal cities and Sitakunda also experienced sub-

stantial amounts of rainfall yesterday and more rain with wind is expected in the next few days, said

owned enterprises (SOEs). The 'national co-ordination

workers' organised the meeting in

dearness allowance for public sector The trade union leaders alleged the government was destroying the country's industrial backbone by privatising SOEs, shutting down factories one after another and retrenching workers, 'blindly' follow-

Bank and International Monitory

workers protection day' on May 19.

Lawmaker's staff

Aziz to leave the spot but kept Ali

Medical College Hospital. Shyampur police sent Ali's body to Mitford hospital for autopsy.

dents of car lifting have increased Dinajpur was an NGO worker. alarmingly in the region right under The driver of the speeding truck the nose of local law enforcers. fled the scene. Police took the

bodies to Panchbibi police station. Following the accident an angry mob put barricade on the road for more than two hours, police said.

Police said the accident took place when a Manikgani bound passenger bus coming from Saturia fell into a roadside ditch at Golara. The identity of the deceased could not be known. The injured were admitted to Manikganj Sadar Hospital.

soul together," she said firmly.

hands of criminals, they are almost always induced or forced into the flesh trade and chances of their full rehabilitation are slim.

Project workers said unless we that feeds on itself.

2 killed in accident

FROM PAGE 12

went with over Tk 5,000 to buy electrical goods Farhad died on the spot while Sajjad died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Hospital sources said they found Tk 5, 651 in the

pocket of Farhad. The driver of the Volvo, Tariqul Islam said, "Before I could realise anything a bus from the other side tore down the island and struck my

Tariqul Islam and passengers Abdul Kader and Bacchu Mia were taking treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital while the others were given first aid. Chairman of BRTC Advocate

Taimur Alam Khandaker visited the

spot immediately after the accident.

In another road accident three

members of a family were killed at Bagjana on the Joypurhat- Hilli highway in Panchbibi yesterday. Police and witnesses said Nasir Uddin, 42, his wife Shanaj Akther, 35 and their son Aarongajeb Babu, 4, died on the spot when a Joypurhat bound loaded truck hit the motorbike they were riding from

morning. Nasir son of Nazar Uddin of Tatoppur village under Birampur in

the opposite direction yesterday

Two more people were killed and 10 others injured on Dhaka-Paturia Highway yesterday evening.

Our Chittagong correspondent adds: Three people were killed in ties, was more of a comrade than a separate road accidents in the parent to his son.

district yesterday. A speeding bus rammed into a bus parked on the road at Anjurhat in Patiya upazila at noon, killing its driver Rafiq, 25, and helper Mozammel, 32, on the spot, wit-

nesses said. The two were doing some mechanical work of the bus. In another incident, 60-year-old Md Nuruzzaman was killed when a Nazirhat-bound minibus ran over

him at Sathiya in Hathazari upazila

at around 9.30am Thabo Mbeki reelected South African president

AFP, Johannesburg

President Thabo Mbeki, who was re-elected to the top post by members of parliament yesterday, has dedicated his entire life to the antiapartheid struggle and to rebuilding a new multi-racial South Africa.

Growing up as a herdsboy who

preferred to read books rather than

keep an eye on the cattle, he had a

simple but tough childhood where

he learnt from an early age that the

fight against apartheid was a way of Born into a family of prominent activists in the poor village of Mbewuleni in Eastern Cape province, the liberation struggle separated him for long periods -- up to 27 vears -- from his father, a moderate communist intellectual. Govan

"By the time we grew up, we

were used to being without our parents. We didn't feel the separation, it was a condition of life," Mbeki told the authors of his biography. Govan Mbeki, who was jailed for 24 years for anti-apartheid activi-

Mbeki, who died in 2001.

conducted by AC Nielsen. The Express said the findings

Analysts say the BJP-led coali-

India's financial markets which

FROM PAGE 12 alliance that encouraged any unity

refused."

A politically sensitive atmosphere

leadership dismisses such claims as ridiculous, a BWP activist says: "Our alternative force was already marginalised. The launch of Bikalpa Dhara and Oikya Mancha is marginalising the left-democratic

Some CPB and BWP leaders

and BSD with Bikalpa Dhara and Krishak Sramik Janata League of Kader Siddiqui, as they fear it will

FROM PAGE 1

forest officials to encroach upon forest land. forest minister, told The Daily Star The grabbers first obtain fake land ownership documents by

The condition is so bad that the

"Since independence, we haven't had any office in Savar. Now it is very difficult to identify our land there as we were unable to keep track of it over this long period of time," Akbar said.

and organisations.

originally on an adjacent piece of

attack from criminals during drives against them. But now some of the victims even don't utter a word after

held a rally.

vehicles at that snot

19 to 6,000

AL procession FROM PAGE 1 baton-charged the agitators and nabbed at least 77 people. The

demonstrators later damaged some

At Russell Square, police in the same manner scattered a procession immediately after it took off with Abdus Samad Azad in the lead. Despite the police attack, some of the marchers continued to move on towards Mohammadpur, where they

At Dholaikhal in Old Dhaka, police oicked up AL Presidium Member Motia Chowdhury along with some other opposition workers. Motia was released about half an hour later. In Mirpur, a gathering led by

former AL lawmaker Kamal Ahmed Majumder came under police attack when it tried to march on the street. Senior AL leaders including Amir Hossain Amu. Tofael Ahmed and Suranjit Sengupta tried in vain to hold a rally in front of the party's

Bangabandhu Avenue office. Talking to newsmen they said, by acting so tough, the government was forcing the opposition to enforce more hartals instead of observing peaceful programmes. The ferocious police charges on AL workers showed the government's 'tyrannical attitude,' ney remarked. Addressing a rally at Savar in suburban Dhaka yesterday, AL

President Sheikh Hasina reiterated

her demand for midterm poll, saying

the people want the change. The leader of the opposition in parliament blasted the government for failure to bring down prices of

President Hasinaddowla, the rally was addressed, among others, by

Vajpayee vows