# Sonia starts parley

#### FROM PAGE 1

Two days back, Karunanidhi had declared that his party would stay out of the new Congress-led government but could reconsider the decision. Congress sources said Sonia could succeed to bring Karunanidhi round to joining the government at a meeting between them slated for May 16.

Sonia is also likely to hold talks with other regional groups like Samajwadi Party and BSP on government formation and their possible participation in it. In a boost to her, BSP chief Mayawati, who till the other day has spurned Congress' desperate plea for prepoll alliance in the key state of Uttar Pradesh, said on Thursday night that her party is not averse to back a Congress-led government.

However, it remains to be seen if Samajwadi Party and BSP, which are bitter political rivals, would end up being on the same side of Congress-led coalition.

The big question is, however, if the Left parties, which put up their best performance bagging over 60 parliamentary seats, would join a government under Congress leadership

The highest policy-making forums of CPI(M), which got the highest number of seats of 43 among Left parties, and CPI would meet here in the next couple of days followed by a meeting of Left Front partners including RSP and Forward Bloc to decide whether or not to join a Congress-led government.

Shortly after Congress' win in the elections Sonia told reporters at her residence here it was a normal practice for the leader of a parliamentary party with majority to stake a claim for premiership.

Asked by reporters at her residence amidst outpour of jubilation among party workers if the leader of the parliamentary party of Congress, which emerged as the largest single party in the 543member Lok Sabha, would be the Prime Minister, Sonia replied "that is what normally happens."

This was the closest she came to acknowledge her being the frontrunner for the post of the Prime Minister.

Sonia said after a meeting of Congress Working Committee, the highest policy-making forum of the party, that the Congress would stake claim to form a strong, stable and secular coalition government after a meeting of Congress parlia-

mentary party meeting here today. Her election as the leader of Congress parliamentary party today is a mere formality and a Congressled coalition headed by Sonia appears inevitable

However, the leaders of Left parties, whose support is vital for Congress to ensure majority in Parliament, have made it clear during their meeting with Sonia Thursdaythat the leadership of the new government could not be a fait accompli and has to be discussed

Left party sources said Sonia has en ad

to pose much problem for Sonia as given the numerical strength of CPI(M) and CPI in Lok Sabha and their assured support for her leadership, Congress would not be at the mercy of backing from regional satraps like NCP. Samaiwadi Party and BSP, which have the tendency for extracting their pounds of flesh in

government led by it. Besides, the stunning defeat of BJP and almost all its allies have altered the political landscape of India in a manner which would make it difficult for parties like Samajwadi Party and BSP to join hands with the

saffron party at least in the foresee able future. Except for two key allies of BJP -Akali Dal in Punjab and Biju Janata Dal, other key partners of the saffron party TDP and AIADMK suffered

tary as well as state assembly polls. Analysts said the most important message from the just-concluded parliamentary polls was the need for striking the right alliances. Congress' main weapon in the battle against BJP was the appropriate tieups it forged with regional parties like DMK in Tamil Nadu, TRS in Andhra Pradesh, NCP in

Pradesh and Rajasthan.

to its predicament was the decision For both the AIADMK and BJP, it rivals including Congress. This was

something unprecedented in Tamil Nadu before fresh state assembly elections are due, analysts pointed

with all secular front partners.

and lasted for 35 minutes, flattening ed to meet President A P

Savar to recover encroached BSS, Dhaka

coalition politics, for the survival of a areas

rout in the parliamentary elections. In fact, neither AIADMK led by Jayalalitha in Tamil Nadu nor BJP could manage to win a single seat in the southern state which has 39 seats. The TDP was decimated in Andhra Pradesh, both in parliamen-

Maharashtra and JMM in Jharkhand.

All these alliances worked perfectly, bringing handsome gains not only for the regional parties but also for Congress in states with sizeable number of parliamentary seats. The gain for Congress was so big that it neutralised BJP's near total sweep of the northern states like Madhya

By contrast, BJP found itself being increasingly deserted by allies like DMK and Indian National Lok Dal in Haryana leading to its decimation in those states. Adding to forge new alliance with AIADMK. proved a double anti-incumbency whose weight crushed them and gave all the seats to their political

The bigger loser in Tamil Nadu was BJP as AIADMK has two more years to rule in Tamil Nadu out

They said the BJP-led alliance's debacle in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh mainly contributed to its ouster from power, unlike in the past when Hindi heartland states like Uttar Pradesh used to deter-

Nor'wester kills 3 FROM PAGE 1

mine which party would rule India.

## land

Members of the parliamentary standing committee on the land ministry yesterday visited different in Savar to recover encroached land of the Court of Wards Nowab Estate.

JS body visits

It has been reported that encroachers grabbed 1,800 acres of land worth about Tk 3,000 crore belonging to the Court.

Committee Chairman Mahbubur Rahman led the team comprising members Nurul Huda, Golam Habib Dulal, Land Ministry Secretary Azad Ruhul Amin, Chairman of Land Reform Board Golam Kibria and Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Dr Momin and others.

In Savar, Amin Mohammad Foundation and Northern Holding have illegally occupied 150 and 176 acres of public land, which had earlier been detected. Process is on to identify how many acres of land have been encroached by housing estates and individuals in the area.

The Court of Wards Nowab Estate filed separate cases against Amin Mohammad Foundation and Northern Holding with Savar Police Station in presence of the committee members.

During the visit, the committee members expressed resentment at the Ansars providing protection to the encroachers by setting up camps. They asked the district Ansar adjutant to withdraw the Ansars.

Addressing a local assembly, Mahbubur said the encroached public land will be recovered at any cost.

He said four satellite towns will be established on the suburbs after recovering the occupied land to meet increasing population pressure on the city.

He called upon the people to take summary papers from the land ministry, the chairman of the Court of Wards Nowab and Vowal Estates, deputy commissioner and assistant commissioner of land before buying any piece of land from any housing estate.

He said they will take necessary steps soon to recover encroached land in Ashulia

### Savar Textile FROM PAGE 1

nvestigation and scrutiny have approved as recently as on September 24,2003 an additional load sanction for the new gas generator and boiler now under installation in the factory.

The Savar Textiles authorities said they have files of all relevant facts and figures and communications with Titas in their hand and expressed readiness to make those available for cross check and for further inquiry on the matter.

### 3 more

# Bangla Bhai

NEWS

### FROM PAGE 1

Local administration and police the backing of local people who officers claimed that such organisahave united in anti-Sarbahara tion as the JMJB or anyone like resistance." Rahman said. "The Bangla Bhai was not involved in drive will go on until the monsoon." outlaw cleansing. They say local people threw their weight behind the launched its drive in the Sarbaharavigilante action that left five alleged dominated areas of Rajshahi underground operatives killed since Naogaon and Natore. They roamed April 1.

But a visit to three northwestern districts shows the anti-outlaw venture is led by the JMJB and directed by Bangla Bhai who gave his real name as Siddiqul Islam.

The presence of JMJB has brought a brief relief to local people from oppression and killings by underground parties. The same people are now frightened by vigilante action of the JMJB.

The fear factor is so intense that even the local administration refuses to talk about outlaw cleansing. Raishahi Deputy Commissioner Aziz Hasan, contacted by The Daily Star, only said: "I don't want to say anything about it.

Villagers and local administrators said some lawmakers, ministers and other BNP leaders adopted a policy of "fighting fire with fire" and turned to the JMJB to combat the outlaws who killed their relatives. The police failure to check the outlaw activities played a major role in it.

Back in November last year, operatives with ties to the underground outfit, PBCP, killed BNP's Bagmara upazila president Abdul Hamid in Rajshahi city. Gunmen killed Sabbir Ahmed Gamma, nephew of Ruhul Kuddus, in Natore's Naldanga upazila in February.

In a couple of weeks into Gamma's death, criminals killed Wahidul Haq Pakhi, an aide to Gamma, in Puthia in Rajshahi. In March, extremists killed Rajshahi's Durgapur municipality ward commissioner Anwar Hossain, a political aide to parliamentarian Nadim Mostafa from Rajshahi-4 seat.

Besides, the red-flag bearing extremist PBCP (Marxist and Leninist) published a leaflet in February, threatening Ruhul Kuddus, Nadim Mostafa and their relatives and aides with death.

Sources said the killings and threats have enraged the lawmakers who feel the banned outlaws are standing in the way of their political domination in the region. This apparently prompted them to turn to the JMJB for outlaw extermination. The police have accordingly been asked to cooperate with the JMJB and Bangla Bhai.

But JMJB's self-styled spiritual leader Mawlana Abdur Rahman denies the ruling party links. "We did not launch this drive under any MP or minister's plan. When we formed this organisation in 1998, we never imagined we would ever launch such a drive. A Sura board meeting at our Dhaka head office decided on the anti-Sarbahara drive, as the outlaws killed some of our leaders and activists in these areas.'

Rahman refused to name the leaders and workers who he said were killed by the outlaws. But he

our drive." Rahman claimed.

# Posh Gazipur house

#### FROM PAGE 12 "We are continuing this drive with

case or lodging any complaint. Asked who directed him to file the case, Zakir yesterday avoided the question and told The Daily Star, "Police wait for some time after any property is damaged to see whether the owner files any case. And if the owner fears to lodge a case, police themselves do it.'

Immediately after the assassination of Ahsanullah, home ministry and police termed the killing as an outcome of internal feud and Zakir filed a case under Speedy Trial Act on the same day for rampage at Khwab without waiting for Mamun or his men

Most accused men are activists of main opposition Awami League and its front organisations.

Asked about pro-active police role in case filing, Officer-in-Charge of Joydevpur Police Station Akhtaruzzaman said, "We filed the case not only for vandalising Khwab, but also the BNP offices and 25 buses."

But the record shows otherwise: the case in question (number 10) is filed only for rampage at Khwab.

Asked about the probe, investigation officer of the case Badrul Alam said he arrested three people, all on Friday, but declined to give their names

But AL President of Gazipur district Mozammel Hag said the police arrested over 200 AL members after May 7 and 16 for damage to Khwab

Believed to be the second-incommand of ruling BNP's alternative powerhouse Hawa Bhaban, Mamun, locally known as Juboraj (prince),

crossing Aruamath Bridge in

wife and son was going to see his

Sundari College, from Gopalgani

One of his daughters is appearing in

The magistrate along with his

FROM PAGE 1

Chumurdi Union.

college

the accident.

to the UNB

at noon.

morning.

FROM PAGE 1

Polce Station.

FROM PAGE 1

Madaripur district.

upazila in this connection.

In boara, four people were killed

Two people were killed and four

and four others injured in three

separate road accidents, according

others were injured in a collision

between a bus and a truck on

Noagaon-Bogra Highway at Boalia

bus driver Mofazzel Hossain, 25.

ted to Mohammad Ali Hospita

Sherpur in the morning.

Armed gang

Local people alleged that upazila

unit president of Jubo Dal

Salahuddin brought Rafiq and

Quamrul back to the village to

rehabilitate them and to increase his

influence in the locality

A case was filed with Mirer Sarai

I rader shot dead

Assistant Sub-Inspector Razzak of

were not aware of any such incident.

Sources mentioned that Army

The dead are Momtaz Begum,

Sakhawat Hossain, his two

daughters, Sanjeeda and Taslima,

and their relative Ismail were admit-

In another mishap, one Azhar Ali,

said: "I used to go to Khwab occasionally to pass vacation and let my foreign delegates use the top floor.'

"It is not the common man who destroyed my house, but a section of the mob protesting Ahsanullah's killing attacked my house in a planned way. We have filmed the attack and police have filed a case accordingly," he told The Daily Star last night.

"Nobody from Chhayabithi community was involved in the attack. The attackers came from other places and took away what they could before setting the house afire, Mamun said, said it cost him Tk 8 to 10 lakh in lost property.

"It was 5:30pm that day when around 50 men hemmed in our house, came in scaling the boundary wall and carried out the rampage," the caretaker said.

"While escaping through the back exit, I saw many others rushing in to join the destruction."

The attackers with wooden sticks. rods, brickbats engaged in the destruction for over half-an-hour and left the house setting fire to furniture after dousing them with petrol, he said

The ritzy house on road No. 4 in Chhayabithi that engineers estimate has taken about Tk 8 crore to build still stands out in the posh area, outshining surrounding modern buildings.

The attackers could only damage its fragile decoration and furniture.

don't understand why sir (Mamun) has spent so much money on this imposing house. He and his friends come here only once or twice a month," a domestic help said.

and a half years to complete the three-storey house on eight kathas, about 2 km southeast of Gazipur town. Its walls are covered with specially-made terracotta tiles and a large part of the first and second floors rest on two large steel-coated beams. The duplex house is centrally air-conditioned and full of foreign fittings.

A few hundred workers toiled one

"Entering through the wide entrance that displays awe-inspiring modern architecture, a visitor would be amazed to see two walls made of decorative glass, dazzling furniture in the drawing room and foreign fittings

in the kitchen. All of them are now damaged." he said

There is also a bedroom and a garage on the ground floor. A stone staircase with railings of steel and decorative glass leads a visitor to the first floor where there are four bedrooms, two kitchens and a large balconv.

Another stair runs to the second floor and the roof. There is a gallery and a small garden on the rooftop.

DHAKA SATURDAY MAY 15, 2004

"The attackers vandalised and set fire to 20 sets of sofa, three refrigerators, two 34-inch television sets, fans and other furniture including almirahs, dining tables and cots," Shamsuddin said

Tarique's school friend from Pirojpur, Mamun, who stays at Mohakhali DOHS, did not visit the house after the rampage. Some officials are supervising the renovations to the building.

the last three days of April that the

mobile phone operators had have

for necessary actions, he said, "I

don't know why the four operators

could not update the billing systems

of their half a dozen exchanges in

operators would be billed at the

reduced NWD and ISD rates as of

May 1, so "If they bill mobile phone

users at our old rates, the BTRC

Last Tuesday, the private opera-

tors received a directive from the

telecoms regulator that rejected

their pleading for deferment of the

new tariff regime's launching.

"We've done it to maintain a consis-

tent regulation and to safeguard

consumers' interest." BTRC

Chairman Syed Marghub Murshed

He warned against overcharging

any pre-paid or post-paid mobile

phone user: "No operator, whether

public or private sector one, may

impose any fictitious tariff and the

law is very stringent in this regard."

told The Daily Star.

should intervene and counteract."

The BTTB chief also said, as the

that 72 hours."

### Cell phone operators Accidents kill 12 at about 9:30am when the car driver

#### lost control over the steering and FROM PAGE 12 dashed a roadside tree just after

necessary information pertaining to tariff reduction. They never had this alleged problem in the past and have no cause to have it now. too." Nurul Islam said the BTTB had

two daughters, students of Sarada been routinely reducing its NWD and ISD tariffs during the last eight years of mobile phone operations in the HSC examinations from the Bangladesh. Pointing out the difference between the two parties' The car was badly damaged in practices and attitudes, he said, 'Our connection fees are much The magistrate and his wife were lower than those of the mobile buried at their family graveyard at phones and unlike the private Kachabali village in Rajoir upazila of operators we have been reducing A case was filed with Bhanga the call charges considering public nterest."

> The mobile phone operators had also asked the BTTB not to commence the long distance tariff reductions until today.

Ruling out any technical constraint requiring more time for the commencement. Nurul said it took only 62 hours for the BTTTB to update its 172 digital telephone exchanges across the country with 30, wife of Sakhawat Hossain and the reduced billing data. Referring to

# US troops

In the wake of the JMJB drive, an environment of suspicion and mystery has engulfed the northwest. "There is no one called Bangla Bhai, nor any party is called the JMJB. It's the local people who have forged resistance. I have come to know about Bangla Bhai through newspapers," Rajshahi

Witnesses said the JMJB

Lalpur, Durgapur, Puthia, Bagmara,

Naldanga, Atrai and Raninagar and

shouted slogans "In the Name of

with the slain relatives of the deputy

minister, the JMJB introduced itself

as "Gamma Bahini" in some places

and "Pakhi Bahini". Elsewhere,

JMJB leaders and activists claimed

to be al Qaeda, Taliban and

Mujahedin members. Bangla Bhai

led processions and rallies of all

In an attempt to establish a link

Allah ... Allah is Great"

groups.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Masud Mia said. Later, Masud contradicted his statement, "Bangla Bhai's regime has ended. We have now complete control over the situation. We have isolated the Sarbaharas."

On the other hand, Bangla Bhai who has set up his den in Hamir Kutsa in Bagmara held a meeting with the JMJB amir and other leaders on May 9 at the office of Bhabaniganj Kachari Kotalipara

Later in the day, the leaders talked to The Daily Star correspon-

dent at the union parishad chair-

man's office. Police were seen

Officer Monirul Islam said: "There is

no such person as Bangla Bhai in

Bagmara. People have built resis-

tance. I have never seen Bangla

Bhai whom you are talking about."

Officials at the local administration

told The Daily Star that they were

When Bangla Bhai roams the

area in a microbus, people gather to

see him and leave the scene with

question in their eyes. The Daily

Star correspondent asked them to

share with him what they know

about Bangla Bhai, but they were

eager to know from the reporter

the alleged links to the JMJB opera-

tion and said: "I have not deployed

any JMJB or Bangla Bhai to fight the

Sarbaharas. I don't know them. Nor

outsider organisation entered his

constituency to combat the outlaws

but asked the people of the locality

to resist them with the help of the

superintendent of police and the

Advocate Nadim Mostafa simi-

The deputy minister said that no

Ruhul Kuddus denied right away

rather than telling him.

did I contact them.

deputy commissioner.

not interested in talking about it.

Bagmara Police Station Duty

Union Parishad.

nearby at the time.

J Abdul Kalam Friday and seek a few days' time to firm up the loose ends of government formation.

Sources in Left parties said they are likely to insist on formation of a committee for the economic agenda of the new government, especially relating to certain sensitive aspects of economic reforms including wholesale privatisation

But it is unlikely that Left parties would join a Congress-led government given the fact that they are rivals in states like West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura.

Nonagenarian CPI(M) general secretary Harkishan Singh Surjeet who emerged as the lynchpin of efforts to build a non-BJP alternative, said all those who contributed to the defeat of BJP in the elections should play an important role in the forming of a new government.

But analysts said this is not going

# **CPA** officials

#### FROM PAGE 12

including lobbying for long at the ministry for awarding the job to the German company, sources said. The company asked around Tk

80 lakh to assess the requirements and prepare a plan of action for implementing the code. But the shipping ministry came to

know that the Mongla Port authorities had implemented 70 percent of the work entirely with its own resources, without any foreign consultation.

The ministry also found the quoted figure to be abnormally inflated. A meeting of shipping experts and high officials of the shipping department estimated that the work could be done at a cost of less than Tk 15 lakh

So, a high-powered meeting at the CPA office last week ruled out the need for foreign consultation and decided to have the ISPS code implemented by the authority with its own resources. The meeting formed a committee headed by Principal Officer of Mercantile Marine Department Captain Shafigullah to assess the requirement and submit a plan of action.

The meeting also had asked the authorities of all major installations along the Chittagong Port channel to report on their security systems, future plans and suggestion by last at least 1000 thatched and tin-shed houses. It also damaged over a dozen educational institutions and uprooted trees and electric poles.

The injured people were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, Netrakona Sadar Hospital and upazila health complexes.

### US waits FROM PAGE 1

probing the case, appears to have failed to find out the leads regarding the gunrunning.

not accept the offer.

Director General of Department of Shipping AKM Ahsanul Azim chaired the meeting, where CPA Chairman Shahadat Hossain and Chief Nautical Surveyor Captain Habibur Rahman were present, among others.

The committee members were to visit some important places of the channel and outer anchorage where ocean-going ships wait before entering the channel. The committee also would identify vulnerable points in the channel and two nautical miles area of the outer anchorage in the Bay of Bengal.

After the committee submits its plan of action, the ministry and the shipping department will monitor

security arrangements on a regular basis. The government also will inform the IMO of its preparations and the steps taken. If everything goes as planned,

the IMO is unlikely to blacklist Bangladesh's premiere port on security grounds, a high official hoped.

Besides, most of the ships registered in Bangladesh have already developed their internal security measures in accordance to the ISPS code, he added.

Tongi.

After recovery of four AK- 47 rifles at Badda near the US Mission in the capital in November last year. the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of the US had proposed the government to probe the matter. That time, too, the government did accused FROM PAGE 1

Tongi Railway Station and in the adjacent areas. Monir and Mahbub are residents of Amtoli and Dulal of Morkut in

During interrogation at the CID office last night, Dulal alleged AL members had named him in the first nformation report out of mere suspicion. "As my father was killed by AL men several months ago, they thought I might have been involved

in the killing of Ahsanullah oout of vengeance," a CID source quoted Dulal as saying. Police will produce the three before the court today with a petition for a seven-day remand.

On their political affiliation, Ahsanullah's brother Motiur Rahman Moti said, "They belong to no specific political party. "They are involved in all sorts of crime in the area and were angry

with my brother [Ahsanullah] as he took steps to stop their drugpeddling business," he added. Moti had named 17 people including the three as the killers in a case

filed with Tongi Police Station on May

The other accused on the run are Nurul Islam Dipu and his brothers Shahidul Islam Shipu and Ohidul Islam Tipu, Kana Hafiz, Ratan Mia, Anowar Hossain Anu, Sohel Shohagh, Jahangir, AL Amin, Faisal, Rony, Bulu Mia and Syed Ahmed Majnu With this latest arrest, the number

of arrestees in the case now stands at seven. The CID arrested Nasiruddin, Suman, Oli Mian and Qaiyum Tuesday night and said they knew them to be the associates of some professional killers. They are now peing guizzed under six-day remand. SPECIAL PRAYERS

Special pravers were made after Salat-ul-Juma yesterday for the salvation of the departed soul of Ahsanullah at jam-packed mosques in Gazipur.

The Tongi unit of AL held a condolence meeting at Notun Bazar AL office yesterday. The party will also hold a citizens condolence meeting at Paltan Maidan at 3:00pm today. THREATS CONTINUE

Unknown callers continued vesterday to make threats over phone to Ahsanullah's family members.

"Yesterday evening, one caller said I was pushing too vigorously for their trial and asked me to stop it," Moti said yesterday. "He said it would take very little time and effort to kill

me.

larly said: "I did not have any comadmitted to holding meetings with muniqué with any JMJB or Bangla elected public representatives of Pourasabha and Union Parishad and talking to some local parliamen-

tarians by phone. "They supported

# First ODI today

### FROM PAGE 1

game. Another ordinary display from the two and Faisal or Hannan Sarker could be called in. There is even the possibility of including Razzaq as an extra bowler sacrificing a batsman in the second ODI as it will be played on the same pitch.

"That victory gave us a lot of confidence as it was against a decent team. We would have loved to have won by seven or eight wickets but the bottomline is that we won. And I thought we looked very relaxed mentally," said Whatmore

The Bangladesh coach also sent a message to those who doubt Tigers' status as an international side.

"People say all sorts of rubbish about the risk of getting complacent when facing Bangladesh. With all due respect, two years ago, this could have been true but now the other teams know that we are coming at them. We are pushing them all the way.

"We are making a statement that we have every right to be here. The boys walk with their chins up. They don't fear anybody."

With Brian Lara not playing the first two ODIs, Whatmore said that it could act in the Tigers' favour.

"He could have come here and made a zero but his mere presence would have lifted his side tremendously. So when I heard that Lara was not coming, I was happy," said the Bangladesh coach.

Although stand-in West Indies captain Ramnaresh Sarwan spoke of guarding against overconfidence, veteran wicketkeeper Ridley Jacobs had every respect for the tourists.

"I don't understand why they keep saying that Bangladesh are a weak side. They have fought against us the last time we plaved them and now they should be a much improved team." said Jacobs after the home team had their first practice TEAMS

Bhai, I don't know them." "I have read about them in news papers. I object to the claim that we have brought them to our area."

Bangladesh: Habibul Bashar (Captain), Shahriar Hossain. Manjarul Islam, Rajin Saleh Mohammad Ashraful, Alok Kapali Mushfigur Rahman, Khaled Mashud (wicket-keeper), Khaled Mahmud, Mohammad Rafique, Tapash Baishya. West Indies (from): Ramnaresh

Sarwan (Captain), Chris Gayle, Khan Group was led by a local JCD Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Ricardo cadre. Army Khan. A mob him on Powell, Dwayne Smith, Ridley February 10 that led to his death on Jacobs, Dwayne Bravo, Ian February 22. The locals then drove Bradshaw, Tino Best, Fide Edwards, Ravi Rampaul, Sylvester away all members of his group. Joseph.

### Armed cadres FROM PAGE 1

Dhanmondi Police Station rushed to 'The outlaws will not venture into the spot in front of the school at Bagmara in my absence, as I have around 8:00pm and sent the twicethousands of supporters, who will bullet-hit body to Dhaka Medical act tough against the outlaws," he College Hospital (DMCH) for said autopsy.

Before their pullout, Bangla Bhai and JMJB's self-styled spiritual leader Abdur Rahman held a twohour meeting with the local union parishad chairmen and political

## ROK

FROM PAGE 12 Constitutional Court ruling," presidential spokesman Yoon Tae-Young

leaders.

said in a statement. "We deeply thank all the people for your encouragement and support.

Roh was suspended from office and stripped of his executive power by the National Assembly impeachment vote on March 12.

Roh has scheduled a news conference for Saturday at which he is expected to issue a statement.

An unnamed senior presidential official told Yonhap news agency that Roh was preferring a "low-key" return to presidential duties, which have been assumed in the interim by Prime Minister Goh Kun.

### 30, was killed in a road accident at FROM PAGE 12

whatever its size," he said. Yet in another incident, one Sadr's fighters seized control of Tofazzel Hossain, 35, was killed in a Najaf in early April and have been traffic mishap at Sariakandi in the digging in with heavy weapons on a hill overlooking Bahr. Their military command post is also in this area, right behind the shrine.

The fighting came a day after Najaf police chief Ghaleb al-Jazairi accused militiamen of "terrorising"

residents and asked them to leave. Najaf's US-appointed governor, Adnan al-Zorfi, told AFP late Thursday that a "US entry into the centre of Najaf may be imminent."

Meanwhile, Juma (Friday) prayers at the revered holy Shia shrine of Imam Hussein in Karbala were cancelled yesterday because of the threat of fighting between US forces and militiamen of the radical Shia cleric Moqtada Sadr.

"Because of these unusual circumstances, there will be no Friday prayers in the Imam Hussein shrine," said Sheikh Maitham Rahi who has links to the Iraq's most revered Shia Muslim leader, Grand Avatolloh Ali al-Sistani

## Small means out of poverty

#### However, the duty officer of the FROM PAGE 12 police station said at 9:00 that they

2002 to grant one-off assets of choice to over 70,000 ultra-poor households in the rural and comparatively poorer northern Bangladesh.

Under the programme, villages in the region were surveyed to catalogue who were "ultra-poor" and in dire need of assistance. The ultra-poor were then given options of assets, ranging from cows, goats and seeds to additional training to enhance the chances of the recipients to make the best use of the granted assets.

Olima was granted chickens as her assets and assets they did become. She took the chickens with a pull of hope for a more prosperous future.

Her daily grind starts at dawn with feeding the chickens and lurches into the night with the maintenance of the coops. She also receives regular training from Brac on poultry maintenance. With eggs to be taken from the coops, secured in her little basket and delivered to the markets, Olima's busy days

The centre of the city around the two revered shrines of Imams Hussein and Abbas were empty, with militiamen controlling the buildings and hotels nearby, close to troops of the US-led coalition.

Sporadic bursts of automatic gunfire were heard but there were

no major clashes The town, 110 kilometres south of Baghdad, was the scene of violent clashes Wednesday that left 22 of Sadr's militiamen dead,

according to the US-led coalition. Another report adds: A US marine was killed during fighting in the restive western Al Anbar province west of Baghdad, the coalition said in a statement vesterday.

The statement said the marine was killed in action on Thursday while "conducting security and stability operations," but gave no more details.

The latest death brings to 778 the number of US soldiers killed since the start of the invasion of Iraq in March 2003

have been sprinkled with the joy of

building her own house on a land she purchased four months ago.

The money is rolling in: after a year of grooming her 50 chicks into chickens, she gets Tk 400-500 worth of eggs a week. She can now buy food and clothes for her children and save money for her husband to start a shop in the near future

The granted assets are one-off, but the stories like Olima's are spread throughout the region and Rojina, an abandoned women in her mid 20s, is another who has invested in even more chickens rather than purchasing her land.

While Josna has turned granted seeds into a field of green vegetables, while the grant for Tosiron came in the form of free medical service that has allowed her to work again -- these stories are perhaps one key to unlock the puzzle of how the hole in the bucket of the ultrapoor can be plugged and the bucket of a decent life can be filled.

Another student FROM PAGE 1 him out of the house and forcibly picked him by a motorcycle at around 10:00. Meanwhile, Amitav Kundu Shah,

18, son of Dr Sukumar Kundu Shah, a second year student of Kushtia Government College, was released after his family members had paid his captors Tk 1.50 lakh. He was abducted on Wednesday night.

Nayan Rahman 17, son of Matiur Rahman of Mohonpur in Kumarkhali upazila, is still missing.

At least 18 teenagers, most of them school students, have been abducted in the district since January 1. Of them, two were killed by their captors as their family members failed to pay ransom three rescued by police, six still missing and the rest bought their freedom, paying Tk 50,000 to 2 lakh