Ahmadiyya complex

Urdu Road Dhal Mosque, Shahidnagar Jam-e-Mosque and Kamrangirchar Madrasa.

The fanatics, after the Juma prayers, tried to gather at Azad Field. but police chased them away.

Failing to organise its people, Aamra Dhakabashi formally 'postponed' their capture bid in the after-

"We've decided to postpone the programme, not to drop it," said Belayet Hossain al-Firoii, joint secretary general of the organisation, quoting the decision of an emergency meeting of the organisation held at Moulavibazar Jam-e-Mosque.

"We'll announce a fresh schedule after our leaders are freed, but be sure, we'll go to Bakshibazar and hold our programme," he told The Daily Star.

Some 100 Ahmadiyya youths took position inside the complex on Thursday evening and let in people only after frisking them.

All leaders of the sect, some of them with their families, went to the complex yesterday morning to protect it.

Leaders and activists of the South Asian People's Union against Fundamentalism and Communalism (SAPUFC), which called for civil society resistance to the fanatics' move, and of main opposition Awami League and left-leaning 11-party alliance went to Bakshibazar in procession at 12:30pm, but police intercepted them near the complex.

Police allowed some of their representatives to the Ahmadiyya complex

members who were waiting at Zia

with the birthday of Azad's daughter

Smita Azad that went uncelebrated this

year, as sadness gripped their resi-

dence on the DU campus that was

teeming with fans of the popular

me on my birthday. But this year is

different. He told me he would send

birthday greetings cards and gifts from

Germany. I did not receive the cards

but him -- dead," Smita told

Fuller Road home amid tight security,

as an anonymous caller threatened to

bomb the family and the body on the

Airport Road. No unwarranted inci-

dents were reported until 7:30 last

body. We wanted him to be alive. He

also wanted to live," cried Azad's

Azad's son Anannya Azad and daugh-

ters Mouli Azad and Smita burst into

tears. "He is not my father. Abbu was

not like him," a shocked Anannya said.

received the body that reached the

airport on Bangladesh Biman flight

No-BG058 from Frankfurt at 1:14pm

Hermann Nicolai and Dhaka

University Teachers' Association

President Professor AAMS Arefin

of Aparajeyo Bangla on the DU cam-

SMA Faiz laid a wreath on the coffin.

pus, DU Vice-Chancellor Professor

Matin called on people represent-

ing a broad spectrum of society to pray

for the salvation of the departed soul of

Azad and expressed deep gratitude to

injured in a bomb explosion at

Gopibagh, while at least six more were

wounded when some unidentified

youths damaged a Gabtoli-bound bus

near Dhakeshwari Temple in the

evening. One of the injured, Ershadul,

18, a tailor, was admitted to Dhaka

Another bus was attacked at

Three home-made hand bombs

There were reports of sporadic

Fakirerpool, while a Dhaka University

student of Shahidullah Hall was injured

were exploded at Shantinagar cross-

roads by some identified youths, while

 $police\,recovered\,two\,other\,bombs\,live.$

blasts of crackers at city's Motijheel,

Mirpur, Dhanmondi and Uttara areas

last evening. Some unidentified crimi-

nals set fire to a bus at Dhanmondi at

In Trishal upazila of Mymensingh

several local AL leaders and workers

were injured yesterday afternoon when

police batoncharged as they were

assembling to take out a pro-hartal

the BNP-led four-party alliance's pre-

scheduled programme of holding

rallies and processions across the

country, the ruling alliance on

Thursday deferred its programme to

Hospitals, medicine shops, ambu-

lances, fire brigade, snack shops and

vehicles of journalists and news media

will remain out of the purview of the

vesterday called on all to make today's

hartal a success. The AL leader in a

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil

As today's hartal call coincided with

around 7:15pm.

procession.

as a brick hit on his head at Azimpur.

Medical College Hospital.

The namaz-e-janaza of Azad was

After the body was placed at the foot

Siddique were present there.

all who paid homage.

German Charge d'Affaires

Latifa Kohinoor, wife of Azad,

Seeing their father for the last time.

brother Monzur Kabir Matin.

"We did not want protection for the

The body was carried to Azad's

newspersons at the airport.

night.

vesterday.

"Every year Abbu (father) wished

The arrival of the body coincided

International Airport.

author of 60 books.

where they joined the community

Thanking the civil society leaders for their role, Ahmadiyya Nayebe Amir Meer Mobashwer Ali said, "The secular people of Bangladesh possess a strong power and the dream that attended Bangladesh's birth will come true if they join hands to this end."

The SAPUFC, AL and 11-party leaders and activists earlier gathered at the Central Shaheed Minar and held a rally with SAPUFC President Prof Kabir Chowdhury in the chair.

'We will soon form a platform of pro-Liberation, secular, noncommunal and progressive people to resist fundamentalist threats any where in Bangladesh," Prof Chowdhury said. "Only an united people can stop the extremist and fundamentalist forces who are getting stronger across the country alarm-

Justice KM Sobhan, Prof Ajay Roy Asaduzzaman Noor, MP, Monjurul Ahsan Khan, Rashed Khan Menon, Prof Muntassir Mamoon, Prof Hava Mamud, Hasanul Haq Inu, Khaleguzzaman, MM Akash, Kaja Debnath, Kazi Mukul, Asim Kumar Ukil and Kalandiar Kabir also attended

Police took the four Aamra Dhakabashi leaders to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka yesterday and the court sen

Some policemen were still guarding the Ahmadiyya Complex to pre empt any fresh attack.

held at the DU Central Mosque and

Jagadish Chandra Bose Institute in

Srinagar in the presence of thousands

to his home village of West Rarikhal for

burial, a kilometre from the institute.

Azad's gulkhwani will be held in the

on a fellowship of PEN (International

Association of Poets, Playwrights

Essayists, Editors and Novelists) to do a

research on German romantic poet

Heinrich Heine. A postmortem says

Azad died of heart attack at his apart-

ment in Munich on August 12 between

night of February 27 near Bangla

Academy when he was going back

home from the Ekushey Book Fair, an

annual event in memory of Language

attack on hardline Islamists believed to

be angered by his latest book "Pak Sar

Zamin Saad Baad" which was set in the

1971 War of Independence from

Pakistan. It triggered controversy in

and outside political and academic

circles for his bitter criticism about

He recovered from his critical

injuries after long treatment at the

Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka

and Bumrungrad Hospital in Bangkok.

critic of human rights violations, Azad

received the Bangla Academy Award in

University Teachers Association,

Communist Party of Bangladesh, 11-

Party, Bangladesh Samaitantrik Dal.

Workers Party, Supreme Court Bar

Association, Bangladesh Chhatra

Federation, Khetmajur Samity,

Bangabandhu Lekhak Parishad,

Sangeet Academy and Samajtantrik

Chhatra Front are among a host of

statement appealed to the masses to

make the downfall of what he dubbed

as the 'Khaleda-Nizami Terrorist Jote

Government' inevitable by making the

front organisations took out proces-

sions under tight police surveillance in

the city, drumming up support for

upazila and ward levels protesting the

August 21 massacre that left 19 people

including central AL leader Ivy Rahman

killed and over 200 others maimed. AL

President Sheikh Hasina narrowly

processions in all thana areas in the

AL organised protest rallies and

Dhaka City AL General Secretary

Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya

led a procession amid rain, after a brief

rally in front of the party's central office

The 11-party took out a post-rally

procession led by Saifuddin Ahmed

Manik, Fazle Hossain Badsha and

Abdullah Sarkar from Muktangon,

protesting, among others, activities of

the fundamentalist forces and the

central office and marched the Gulistan

area in procession, led by JSD President

offered at mosques, temples and other

places of worships across the country

yesterday seeking salvation of those

killed from the August 21 grenade

JSD (Inu) held a rally in front of its

Besides, special prayers were

on Bangabandhu Avenue.

attack on the Ahmadiyyas.

Hasanul Huq Inu.

 $escaped \, the \, assassination \, at tempt.$

They also staged demonstrations at

Yesterday, AL and its allies and their

hartal a full success.

 $today's\,shutdown.$

organisations that paid homage.

Arson, bomb blasts

A staunch feminist and fearless

The Awami League, Dhaka

His family at the time blamed the

Azad survived a brutal attack on the

4:00am to 6:00am German time.

Azad went to Munich on August 9

village on Monday.

The janaza over, the body was taken

Jalil asks govt to step down without delay STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil yesterday demanded immediate resignation of the BNP led fourparty alliance government for being responsible for the August 21 grenade

On August 21, grenade attacks on AL rally in front of the AL headquarters on Bangabandhu Avenue killed 19 people including AL leader Ivy Rahman and injured over 200 including many AL top brass.

"The grenade attacks on Awami League rally was obviously designed to kill Awami League President Sheikh Hasina," said Ialil while attending a human chain on the High Court pre-

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote (BSJ) vesterday formed the human chain in protest at the attempt on life of Sheikh Hasina, also leader of the opposition.

"The August 21 grenade attack is a severe blow to democracy and civilisation and we just refuse to accept such cruelties," said Justice KM Sobhan.

He said people of this country are now living in intense anxiety, as there exists barely any sense of security.

Advocate Tarana Halim described the ruling coalition as failing in every aspect and demanded it resigns imme-

She urged the people to unite in ousting the coalition government.

A silent procession followed the human chain and marched to the scene of the grenade attacks and paid

Thousands pay tearful Khulna police

took him to Khulna on Thursday. Kamrul is linked to Janajuddho

faction of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP).

Sources said law enforcers will quiz him for leads to the grenade attack as Janajuddho used grenades in their criminal activities in southwestern region of the country.

Our staff correspondent in Khulna said Kamal, an accused in a number of criminal cases, will also be interrogated on the bomb attack on Shachchu and killing of Havilder Akram on April 10 this year in the city.

The High Court last month granted ad interim bail to Kamrul upon a writ petition filed by his father Moulana Abdul Wahab. The High Court also asked Kamrul to appear before a lower court in Khulna on September 13 in connection with Havildar Akram Kamrul is the eldest brother of

Shoeb alias Ripon and Sumon alias Babu, who are self-styled commanders of Janajuddho hit men and close accomplices of the faction boss, Tapan. Both Shoeb and Sumon are most

vanted criminals in Khulna region and accused in 18 murder cases filed with different police stations in Khulna and Bagherhat.

Their family is known to have close ties with Jamaat-e-Islami.

Shaukat Aziz

FROM PAGE 12

"I don't have a magic lamp or wand, but we will use all our abilities and resources to usher in a new era of progress and prosperity for the people of Pakistan," said the prime minister elect, who will be sworn in by Musharraf on Saturday before undergoing a lowernouse vote of confidence.

Opposition members wearing black armbands had earlier carried pictures of exiled former premiers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif and chanted 'Shame, Shame", to protest against the speaker's decision to bar the jailed Javed Hashmi.

Hashmi is serving a 23-year sentence after a court convicted him in April over a letter he distributed, saying t was from army officers criticising President Musharraf.

After hearing arguments from opposition and the ruling party MPs, the speaker, Hussain, ruled that he could not issue an order to produce a convicted person.

Chanting "Restore True Democracy", members of both Islamist and secular opposition parties trooped out of the hall when he announced the start of voting.

"This is a farce, a complete farce, we don't call it election," opposition MP Tehmina Daultana said.

"We are extremely upset at this undemocratic behaviour," she told AFP as opposition MPs gathered in the lobby

Musharraf come to power in a bloodless coup in 1999.

I want justice

FROM PAGE 1

present at the gulkhwani.

Zillur Rahman MP, AL presidium member, told the journalists, "Wherever I look, I see Ivy. I never knew people loved her so much."

"My only consolation now is that Ivy died while protesting against terrorism and people will remember her ideals, her dedication to politics and society for a very long time," said Zillur.

Their children too demanded proper investigation into the grenade attacks so that the culprits are brought

to justice. Ivy was critically injured in the attack with both of her legs blown off. She died in the early hours of Tuesday at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) after fighting for life for three



Activists of the main opposition Awami League (AL) parade through Dhaka City in procession yesterday to drum up support for their countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal today.

Overloaded trucks

cannot afford it. Whenever overloading occurs, the pressure of a running vehicle on the road multiplies and when an overloaded vehicle applies its brakes, the pressure is even greater. Unchecked overloading is fast damaging the country's communication infrastructure, they said.

"The load capacity on each square foot of a road and a bridge is clearly mentioned by engineers and other experts after their completion. If that limit is violated, the structures are sure to suffer damage," an engineer "You do not see the damage on a

bridge due to overloading in one day. It happens in geometrical progression and takes a long time before surfacing," said another engineer. The director of Marganet One Ltd,

the present leaseholder of the JMB toll plaza, Minhajuddin M Kamal, told The Daily Star that when they got the five-year lease for Tk 51.14 crore in April 2004, the weigh bridges were not in use. The former leaseholder 'never used the weigh bridges and the JMBA also never instructed it to operate Director (administration) of the

JMBA Yusuf Jahangir declined to comment on the matter, saving he was not authorised to talk to the press.

JMBA sources said up to 2,200 trucks cross the bridge on average a Contacted, Communications

Minister Nazmul Huda said his ministry was aware of the problem. Even truck owners' associations want to get rid of overloading, he said.

"I know how much damage is caused by overloading and we have decided to install weigh bridges at all major bridges and we hope to implemonths," Huda said.

Traces of explosives

FROM PAGE 12 bomb in May

Russian officials have repeatedly contended that the rebels who have been fighting Russian forces in Chechnya for nearly five years receive help from foreign terrorist organisations, including al-Qaida.

Friday's claim of responsibility did not refer to al-Qaida, but a group called "the Islambouli Brigades of al-Qaida" claimed responsibility for last month's attempt to assassinate Pakistan's prime minister-designate.

AFP adds: An Islamic group calling itself the Islambouli Brigades claimed responsibility for the crashes of two Russian planes that killed 90 people, hailing it as a first strike to stop Moscow's fight against separatists in Chechnya.

"The Islambouli Brigades declare that our mujahedeen (fighters) have succeeded in hijacking two Russian planes," said the group in a statement posted on a website.

It said: "The mujahedeens have succeeded despite the problems that they encountered at the beginning. They were five mujahedeens in each "Our mujahedeens succeeded in

directing the first strike that will be followed by a series of operations aimed to back and assist our brothers in Chechnya and other regions suffering from Russia," it added. 'Russia's slaughtering of Muslims

continues and will not stop without the start of a war that would shed blood." The group said that it would "soon

publish the wills of the mujahedeens who sacrificed their lives." The authenticity of the statement could not immediately be confirmed.

A group by the same name has claimed attacks in Pakistan earlier this month. The use of the name Islambouli is a

likely reference to Lt. Khaled al-Islambouli who took part in the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in Cairo in 1981.

Govt plans seed

waters, he added.

Anwar admitted the loss of aus rice almost wholly due the deluge in 46 districts out of the 64 for almost a month from early July to early August. 'We still hope to avoid much loss of aman and to reap the maximum out of the next boro season," he said.

On the post-flood agricultural rehabilitation programme, the minister explained that not necessarily all the 2.66 million small and marginal farmers would get aman seeds from the government, rather they would get seeds free-of-cost up to December, in phases. Many of them would get aman seeds, many would get wheat seeds and many others boro, maize and vegetable seeds, he said.

Citing an instance, Anwar said the rehabilitation programme in Narsingdi district will cover 1,08,000 small and marginal farmers out of a total of 1,73,000 farmers, who were affected by the recent floods.

"From mid-August, we'll provide them with seeds and seedlings of 10 crops including aman, boro, wheat maize, vegetables and mustards for cultivating those in 34,050 acres of land till December this year. This will require 605 tonnes of seeds, of which we've already distributed 37 tonnes of aman seeds," the minister said.

Talking to this correspondent last week, Deputy Director of the DAE at Narsingdi Bipad Bhonjon Das said that as aman sowing season was running out, they were procuring seeds and seedlings through 'on the spot quotations' so that farmers could get those in time.

Despite the damage of many seedbeds across the country and delay in sowing aman, about 90 percent of aman production target can still be

Power from banana

they are bruised or too small. Normally they are left to rot on the

ground but Clarke said this damaged the soil and wasted a potentially useful resource. He has successfully used bananas

to generate electricity in the laboratory and is assessing whether a power plant could be commercially viable. Clarke lets the bananas decom-

pose in sealed vats and uses the methane from the rotting fruit to power an electricity turbine "However, we dont know is if

bananas are a cost-effective energy source, so my research parameters are designed to discover how long it will take to convert the bananas to methane and how much methane is pro-

This involves mashing, pulping

and shredding the waste bananas to find the most efficient way to make them decompose, as well as adding enzymes to speed up the process.

Clarke said he would know by February next year whether bananas were a viable energy source. If they are, the banana industry will consider building a banana-fuelled power plant capable of powering about 500

Clarke said electricity generated at the plant would be sold to the national grid, providing banana growers with a source of income from what was normally regarded as a waste product.

However, he said the technology's application was limited as it took 60 kilograms (132 pounds) of bananas to power a household appliance such as a fan heater for 30 hours.

Captors execute would maintain its "civil and military"

presence in the oil-rich country.

But early on Thursday Italy's Foreign Minister Franco Frattini said Rome was prepared to pull its soldiers out if the interim government in Baghdad requested it.

Italian sources in Iraq confirmed the Al-Jazeera report of Baldoni's death to Italy's Ansanews agency

"These are horrifying pictures," said one Italian source who had seen the videotape. An Italian civil servant was heading for Qatar to obtain a copy of the video, Ansa said. The agency said the video, which had

been seen by Italy's ambassador to

Qatar, was "brief and bloody". Baldoni

had not been decapitated but shot, it Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi reacted immediately after Baldoni's death had been confirmed.

"There are no words for an inhuman act which at one swoop wipes out centuries of civilisation and returns us to the dark times of barbarism," Berlusconi said in a message of condolences to the family of the 56-year-old journalist, who was married with two children.

The prime minister expressed his compassion and solidarity, while stressing his "firm determination to fight

Speaking at his villa in Sardinia Berlusconi added: "Italy will maintain its with the provisional Iraqi government in the framework of the UN deliberations to return peace and democracy to Iraq."

Interpol briefed

FROM PAGE 1 statement of AL President Sheikh Hasina at her Dhanmondi residence Sudha Sadan.

Sources at Sudha Sadan said Hasina told the probe body the attack on her could not have been made withou $government\, support.$

"That is why we sought an interna-

tional probe into the matter... If the inspector general of police and Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner are interrogated, more information can be obtained," one source quoted Hasina The probe body also took the state-

ments of the driver of Hasina's car Abdul Matin, personal security officer Major (retd) Shoeb and Major (retd) Mamun about the incident. After the nearly 45-minute meeting

with Hasina, Convenor of the body Rokanuddin Mahmud told journalists they would make a report considering all aspects of the incident. Member of the probe body Dr Kamal Hossain said they want to

publish a proper, independent and neutral report on the incident. "In the past, many such bomb blast incidents took place in the country, but probes into those incidents were either not completed or their reports were not disclosed.' Earlier in the morning, the team

visited AL's Bangabandhu Avenue headquarters and recorded statements of party leader Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Jubo League Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanak and General Secretary Mirza Azam MP. The leaders told the probe body the

grisly grenade attack on the AL rally was made from the rooftop of a building and it was followed by gunshots targeting Sheikh Hasina. It appeared that the attack was carried out under the patronisation of police as the law enforcers fired teargas shells amid the grenade and gun attacks creating a panicky situation for the victims, they They said there were no police on

City Bhaban opposite the AL headquarters and in the alley between City Bhaban and Ramna Bhaban through which the attackers fled. Mahbub, security guard of Hasina,

was killed as the culprits fired to kill the leader of the opposition, they added.

The probe team also recorded statements of some people on and around Bangabandhu Avenue. Meanwhile, investigators of six

intelligence agencies yesterday visited the spot where the grenade attack was made and collected some evidence. They inspected Bata Showroom on Bangabandhu Avenue and went to the AL headquarters building to visit Muktijoddha Janata League office on the third floor of the building. But the office was under lock and key.

Villagers see Rangpur

Bholaram Chandra Barman, Shushil Chandra Barman, Jitendranath Barman and Shachin Chandra Barman

About 35 men, women and children of those families are now living in the open after some 40 BNP men led by Abdul Zabbar, former vice president of Sawla union BNP, and his family members burnt down their houses last Monday.

"They have been repeatedly threatening to evict us for long and used to throw stones at our houses, steal household goods and disturb our women and girls, Shushil said.

"We complained to police many times. in vain. They never took any step to solve our problem, prompting Zabbar's nephews to boast pointing to the police inaction," he added, with other victims nodding in agreement. The persecution started in 2001, when

Zabbar and his nephews -- Raju, Saju, Taju, Sabu and Lazu -- ousted the families of Nira Shah and Indu Mai from the village Nira and Indu had borrowed two

maunds of unhusked rice to meet a crisis on condition of paying Tk 500 in return, narrated several Hindu and Muslim But, when the time arrived to pay back

the loan, Raju demanded Tk 50,000 instead of Tk 500, which they failed to pay and consequently were evicted from their land at the village. Members of the two Hindu families were later forced to flee to India following threats on their lives, the villagers said.

The victims of Monday's attack also alleged, at the end of 2001, Raju tried to rape Shilpi Rani, wife of Sukumar Chandra Barman. But the villagers caught him redhanded. Later Zabbar persuaded the villagers to let Raju go assuring them of ustice that was never done.

In 2002, Suren Chandra Barman filed a case accusing Zabbar, Raju and his four brothers of threatening to displace his family. In retaliation, Raju's gang carried out the threat -- torched Suren's home and built a house on his land after driving the

The six people accused by Suren received bail from a Rangpur court on

August 16 last and then launched the raid last Monday, the victims said.

Talking to The Daily Star, Rangpur Superintendent of Police Abdus Salam wever denied the allegations of police indifference saying no one had come up with any complaint about ejection threat on the Hindu families.

"And even if there was any previous charge against the accused of arson attack. police have nothing to do, as those cases might now be at the court," observed the

district police chief. He said police on Thursday arrested Raju, the prime accused of the arson, raising the number of arrestees so far in the case to four, out of a total of 21

Red tape halts

FROM PAGE 12

ties and number of students. On April 8, the education ministry sent a letter to the directorate demand-

ing an explanation how the colleges were included in the MPO system without changing their code numbers. "The directorate is tasked with changing college code numbers, but

non-government teachers are bleeding

because of its neglect," said Ouazi Faruk

Ahmed, president of Bangladesh College Teachers' Association. But sources in the directorate said some colleges were given the MPO

atus without following the proper rule. "Teachers of 263 colleges drew the government part of their salaries using their intermediate college code numbers," said a high official of the director-

code numbers to colleges, rather the education ministry holds the authority, Mohammed Junaid, director gen-

The directorate does not issue new

"The codes of some of the colleges have been changed and the teachers there will get the government part of

their salaries soon," Junaid added,

Railway sees Tk 215 cr

higher than the existing number of staff. Around Tk 80 crore is spent from the BR funds for 40,000 pensioners a vear," one source said.

The BR cannot meet the high demand for railway transportation due to shortage of locomotives and carriages. It operates 278 locomotives and 1,349 carriages across the country that carry 4.45 crore passengers a year. About 75 percent of the locomotives have already crossed their economic life -- 20 years -- and about half of the carriages have crossed their normal

life span, 30 years, sources mentioned. They said 70 locomotives for metre and broad gauge lines are 36 to 50vear-old, 54 are 31 to 35-year-old and 86 are 21 to 30-year-old. It has become impossible to provide quality service to travellers with these rundown dated signalling system and century-

"The railway authorities lack funds to maintain and repair the locomotives while many rundown carriages. have remained inoperative for long," a

the number is on the rise. In 2000-2001, the number of passengers was 3.87 crore, in 2002-2003 it was 3.90 crore and last year it rose to 4.45 crore.

since the independence. The country

while it had only 400 km when British rule ended in 1947. But the railway network of 2,880 km at that time, mostly set up before 1905, still remain almost unchanged. A 53-km-long broad gauge line

between Darshana and Jagati in Kushtia was constructed first by Eastern Bengal Railway in 1862, they Train fare has not increased since 1992 but fuel price has gone up almost

three times. Staff salary has also increased. But the railway's income from ticket sale has risen over the last three vears. The earning totalled Tk 159 crore in fiscal 2001-2002, Tk 161 crore

in 2002-2003 and Tk 178 crore in 2003-2004, sources said The DG said the BR has launched a comprehensive Railway Recovery Programme (RRP) to improve its

financial position through increased

efficiency and cost reduction. "We will expand our network establishing direct railway links between Dhaka and Laksham to shorten the distance by 90 km and between Jamuna Bridge and Bogra to reduce the distance by 114 km,'

Mustafizur said. The BR already floated tender to buy 130 carriages, he mentioned. "We will also get 11 locomotives from South Korea by next year. We are planning to buy another 150 carriages

Sadr militias hand

war to depose Saddam Hussein last year, of the huge hurdles ahead in Iraq. President Bush acknowledged for the first time on Thursday he had miscalculated postwar conditions in Iraq, the New York Times reported.

made "a miscalculation of what the conditions would be" in post-war Iraq. Tens of thousands of Shias arrived on the outskirts of Najaf on Thursday, heeding a call by Sistani to march on the city. Just after dawn on Friday, they walked past dozens of pockmarked

Spent ammunition littered the city center, which a day earlier had been

emotion at the gold-domed mosque. Some kissed the ornate walls inside the shrine and wept after they queued to

only brought destruction," said Kassem Hameed, a 52-year-old oil worker from the southern city of Basra.

Some chanted pro-Sistani slogans and held up posters of the reclusive Iranian-born cleric. The occasional

Iraq's government also said Sadr would not face arrest. Earlier this year an Iragi arrest warrant was issued for Sadr in connection with the murder of

The peace deal came after a day of

bloodshed. The Health Ministry said at

a rival cleric in Najaf last year.

least 74 people were killed in mortar and shooting attacks in Najaf and nearby Kufa on Thursday. Sistani arrived in Iraq on Wednesday after three weeks in

adopted home in Najaf, Iraq's center of Shia learning. challenged the collegiate leadership of the Najaf clergy headed by Sistani and

Elsewhere in Iraq violence, Allawi and his US backers still face problems: A car bomb exploded near a US military convoy in northern Iraq, wounding at least 10 civilians, and the Italian government confirmed on Thursday that hostage takers who grabbed

Al Jazeera television said Baldoni's kidnappers killed him because Italy refused to withdraw troops from Iraq. Scores of foreigners have been taken hostage in Iraq in the last five months. Most have been released but several have been killed.

Friday it would halt its operations in Iraq after a group holding seven of its drivers hostage said it would release them if the firm left the country.

eral of the directorate, admitted that teachers of 263 non-government colleges were not getting their salaries.

now has 28,000 km of paved roads

old railway network

senior official said seeking anonymity. According to a BR report, over one lakh people travel by trains a day and

Sources said successive governments have ignored railway sector

who said it was his personal weapon and would not be given up, added: "I will keep this warm and wait for Savved Mogtada's order.'

The Najaf uprising has been a stark

reminder to the interim government

and the United States, which led the

The paper quoted Bush as saying during a 30-minute interview that he

and destroyed buildings to the

infested with snipers. Many pilgrims were overcome with

"We pray today that Najaf will recover. The military operations have

crackle of gunfire echoed nearby.

Under the peace deal, Najaf will be

London for heart treatment. The uprising had erupted as he left his

Sadr, aged only about 30, has styled himself as the face of anti-US Shia resistance.

Italian journalist Enzo Baldoni had killed him.

A Kuwaiti transport firm said on