Hasina demands early polls

FROM PAGE 1

occasion of the alliance government's three years in office.

Political leaders, academics, bureaucrats and diplomats attended the function. The AL and other mainstream opposition parties observed the day as a "Black Day"

Hasina urged all to reach a national consensus to put an end to 'the misrule of the alliance government' and build a modern, secular and democratic Bangladesh.

She promised people that if voted to office, her government would not try to settle scores out of political vengeance.

The opposition leader painted a detailed picture of what she said were misdeeds of the 36-month Khaleda administration, including the slide in law and order, price hikes of essentials, lack of public safety, unabated corruption, existence of religious militant groups, nepotism and politicisation and persecution of political opponents.

Hasina alleged that the government has unleashed 'state terrorism' for political ends, as it has been killing the prospective leaders of the main opposition, sensing its defeat in the next polls.

The former prime minister also touched on issues including her party stance on the joining parliament, major bomb blasts and arms hauls, custodial killing and successes of the previous AL govern-

The former prime minister accused the government of not investigating the grisly grenade attack on a rally of her party on Bangabandhu Avenue. The evidence has been destroyed and the

perpetrators are being protected. Turning to next elections, Hasina said the level of failure and misrule of the government is so acute that the ruling coalition is 'trying to come to power by circumventing people's mandate' through 'election engineering'.

She outlined manipulative methods the coalition has used to achieve its goal. These include strengthening methods of vote rigging and casting of false votes, as seen in Dhaka-10 by-election, use of illegal money to influence elections, attempt to create an obedient executive through politicisation, minority repression to discourage voting, attempt to influence and control the media, selective killing of popular opposition leaders and repression of AL workers at the grassroots level to create panic.

Hasina said the BNP-Jamaat government has failed to provide security to people and instead, the government itself has become a threat to people's life and properties.

'The crisis is so horrific that foreign envoys are becoming victims of grenade attacks, while donors have to flee the country in fear of their lives.

Activities of the religious extremists have tainted the secular charac-

ter of the country, she added. On killing of people in "crossfire" in the custody of Rab, Hasina said what is going on is inhuman. "Every riaht to justi

everyone wants trial of criminals" She said as many as 307 people have been killed in custody so far. "Killers of Manzurul Imam, Manik Saha, Humayun Kabir Balu and Shamsur Rahman were killed in crossfire only to save godfathers of

the criminals." she alleged. Most parts of the country have turned into valleys of death, she told the gathering. "Victims of rape and acid violence are forced to commit suicide as they know they would not get justice," the AL president

observed. At least 10 journalists were killed and over 1,200 others attacked for reporting on criminal activities and corruption of the prime minister, her cabinet colleagues and ruling

lawmakers, she alleged. She also spoke about mass arrests and closure of mills and factories that left thousands jobless.

"People of the country want elimination of conflicts and political vengeance." she said. "The Awami League does not believe in taking revenge on political opponents and we will stick to this policy in spite of endless repression of its leaders

and workers." she said. She said a total of 153 people were killed and 1,304 injured in 12 bomb blasts in last three years, but no-one was arrested in connection with the incidents. National security is under threat as huge illegal arms have been smuggled into the coun-

"In every incident of bomb blast, pro-liberation democratic political parties. Bangali festivals and shrines were targeted. And it is clear

that those who have delivered speeches against the War of Independence and democracy and taken position against the shrines are the perpetrators of the blasts",

The former prime minister claimed her government had conducted investigations into the bomb blasts at that time. "Later, the alliance government halted those and excluded the chargesheeted criminals while some of them became ministers and lawmakers," she alleged.

Speaking on their boycott of parliament, Hasina said despite non-cooperation and hostile attitude from the government, the AL made a conscious effort to go to parliament. But the AL lawmakers were not allowed to voice their opinion in parliament and the rejection of 2,413 opposition notices and the prime minister's refusal to answer to 921 opposition questions testify to the ruling coalition's attitude.

"Even the sensitive topic of August 21 grenade attack and the subsequent carnage that was a concern of every citizen of the country regardless of political affiliations was not allowed to be discussed in parliament," she

Giving a detailed picture of the price hike of essentials. Hasina said cost of living has shoot 80 percent in three years under the alliance rule.

On economy, Hasina said foreign investment plunged 70 percent from what the AL government had left. Chittagong Port has been labelled as "second dangerous port" in the world and a latest report of Transparency International, Bangladesh reveals that about Tk 763 crore has been paid in bribe to the port officials.

On politicisation, the opposition leader said under the directives of a certain 'Bhaban', promotion rules are being violated. A record number of contractual jobs, mass postings, forced retirement and random axing has left the administration ineffec-

Hasina alleged that corruption has been institutionalised in the last three years. "Bribes and commissions for Hawa Bhaban play a regular role in each development project, international tender and

Corruption is rampant in education, agriculture, industries, social welfare, environment and communications ministries, she said, "Scams in the purchase of textbooks, wheat, fertilisers, sugar, jet fuel, CNG-run vehicles and F-28 planes, Hajj flights, involvement of an influential minister in gold smuggling and land grabbing by a minister's wife are the reasons why Bangladesh leads the way in corruption worldwide," she

On foreign policy, Hasina said the coalition government has completely failed on the foreign policy

"Bangladesh has been blacklisted because of terrorist activities. In the eves of international community. Bangladesh is a country synonvmous with human-rights violashe said

"The Muslim world has rejected the nomination of a war criminal and a smuggler for the post of OIC secretary-general. Bangladesh is

losing friends every day. The AL president said her party wants to see Bangladesh as one of

the most attractive investment destinations in Asia. "People don't want Bangladesh

to be a safe home for religious militants, we, like the citizens, want to see Bangladesh as a bright example of communal harmony free from violence and political confrontation." she added.

"The AL does not believe in political vengeance. The father of ndependent Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman conducted national affairs with beliefs of benevolence and forgiveness. We have not veered from that belief in the face of oppression and torture and we will not do so in the future, God willing."

"We want to build a secure Bandladesh for people in the backdrop of the horrific slide in law and order," the opposition leader said.

She added the AL wants to create a nation for future generations where merit, not political obedience, would be the benchmark. "I want a modern generation who would make Bangladesh proud and internationally renowned in the fields of science, technology, education and sports."

"We want to rescue the judiciary the last resort for the oppressed, from destruction and ensure its

independence," Hasina said. "We want to keep the armed

choose the government they wish.

More than one in three want Blair to go

REUTERS, London

More than one in three Britons say Prime Minister Tony Blair should resign over the Iraq war but a clear majority do not blame him for the beheading of Kenneth Bigley in Iraq,

an opinion poll shows. In the first comprehensive sounding taken since the death of Bigley, the YouGov poll in The Mail vesterday showed 36 percent of voters wanted Blair to step down.

blame for Bigley's beheading by militants in Iraq, while 59 percent

problem is trust and what has happened in Iraq generally," YouGov's Peter Kellner told Reuters.

Biglev's hometown of Liverpool staged a day of mourning for him on Saturday and Blair rang the family to offer his condolences.

Coming soon after a report from the Iraq Survey Group (ISG), which destroyed Blair's main argument for waging war on Iraq, the killing looks certain to keep Iraq at the top of the political agenda seven months before an expected election. Up to 58 percent of those polled

by YouGov said they believed the conflict in Iraq had undermined the health of Blair, who underwent an operation on October 1 to quell heart palpitations. Blair has said he will stand for a

fourth, an announcement that has aroused fevered speculation over who might succeed him. Despite his plummeting trust ratings, all polls still point to the

opposition Conservatives have failed to capitalise on his woes. The latest poll in The Sunday Telegraph, taken after the Conservatives' annual party conference, showed the opposition party garnering just 30 percent of support

nine points behind Labour. Writing in the Independent on Sunday, former U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix accused Blair and President George W. Bush of "clinging to straws" to justify their

Both leaders seized on the suggestion by Charles Duelfer, leader of the ISG which hunted in vain for evidence of banned weapons in Iraq after the U.S. invasion, that Saddam Hussein might have started producing weapons of mass had been lifted.

the governments concerned have begun to cling," Blix wrote.

Beijing to install condom machines

Beijing will install about 1,000 condom vending machines in hotels, bars, universities and on construction sites in the Chinese capital this month to fight the spread of AIDS, the official Xinhua news agency said yesterday.

condoms for 1 yuan (12 U.S. cents) a piece and their quality will be guaranteed, a Beijing Disease Control and Prevention Center official was quoted as saying.

ment 1.700 machines already in the capital, many of which are often out of service or empty. Existing machines will be repaired this month, Guan Baoying, a city health bureau official, saaid.

HIV/AIDS cases, but experts say at least 1 million poor farmers were infected in the central province of Henan alone as a result of a botched blood-for-sale donor scheme.

The United Nations has said the number of AIDS victims in China could quickly rise to 10 million if serious steps to fight the epidemic are not taken.

Low quality and sometimes unpackaged condoms made up nearly three quarters of the two billion condoms used in China last

FROM PAGE 12 Community centre authorities asked Shawkat Bepary, organiser of the function and a resident of Mahi's constituency, to drop the BDB leader's name from the guest list of his daughter's marriage party.

Mahi said he did not attend the occasion after Shawkat informed him about the matter. "I don't know why I was not allowed. As a lawmaker, I have the right to attend any

Opposition observes

Dewan Shafiul Arefin and

Ashrafunnesa Mosharraf along with 11

others from near Dhanmondi road-32

Shyampur and Mohammadpur areas.

people hurled homemade bombs at the

rickshaw at Suritola in Kotwali at

marched on the Mirpur Road from

Sangsad Bhaban while another pro-

Russell Square amid police cordon.

Jahangir, Shahiahan Khan and Jubo

League leader Mirza Azam addressed

Different left leaning political parties

Leaders of the 11-Party alliance,

also observed the 'Black Day' and held

Communist Party Bangladesh (CPB)

and JSD- Inu in separate rallies in the

capital demanded resignation of the

coalition government has disgraced the

country's liberation war through includ-

ing war criminals in the cabinet.

ending yesterday morning.

failure.

The CPB leaders said the BNP-led

The JSD leaders termed the three

Our staff correspondent from

years of the coalition government as

Chittagong reports the hartal was

observed peacefully in the city. The

police arrested 207 people in 24 hours

dents add: the hartal passed off peace-

fully in both the divisional and district

towns without any major incidents

Our Khulna and Comilla correspon-

wise threatened to oust it.

others, addressed the rally.

rallies in the city yesterday.

A procession of the AL lawmakers

Airport at about 10:30am.

Fifteen AL activists were picked up

FROM PAGE 1

across the country. The law enforcers also picked up AL Sports Secretary Dewan Shafiul Arefin Tutul and Mahila Awami League leader Ashrafunnesa Mosharraf in the morning and kept them confined at Dhanmondi Police Station until eve-

A large number of women AL activists were also hauled up to police stations and released in the evening.

The demonstrators damaged at least three buses at Motilheel and Azimpur during the hartal amid deployment of over 7,500 forces including paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), Armed Police Battalion (APBn) and the police in the capital. Most of the shops, business centres

and private offices remained closed during the shutdown. Attendance in government offices was thin. Automobiles went off the road in Dhaka and other cities, although rickshaws plied almost as usual. The shutdown disrupted operations of Chittagong and Mongla ports, stock

exchanges in Dhaka and Chittagong and transactions in most banks. No classes were held at the educational institutions. In Dhaka, the activists of AL and its front organisations were baton-

charged by the police when they took

out processions in Lalbagh, Nawabpur and on Dhaka University campus. The police went on action at Old Dhaka's Chawkbazar crossing after the AL activists from a procession led by former MP Haji Selim pelted stones on

them. A police sub-inspector received head injuries during the battle. Witnesses said the demonstrators turned unruly and chased the law enforcers when they cordoned the procession off at around 8:15am. Police also lobbed teargas shells to

disperse the demonstrators and picked up 18 people from the spot. Another AL procession led by Asaduzzaman Noor MP came under police clubbing in Motilheel when the protestors tried to march towards Dainik Bangla intersection breaking police barricade. Three AL activists

were injured in the clubbing. The AL leaders scuffled with the police when they were drugging seven Mahila AL and Sramik League leaders to a police van.

At least 15 AL supporters were wounded when police charged baton to disperse them at Rathkhola in Sutrapur. The demonstrators hurled stones and brickbats at the police. On the Dhaka University campus

the police clubbed the AL-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists when they took out a procession at about 11:00am. Seven demonstrators including BCL President Liakat Shikder and Vice-president Balaram Poddar were injured and three BCL activists arrested

The police picked up AL leader

which houses a state warehouse for

with scrap have been found in

Delhi's commercial district of

Mayapuri, police said, adding that

they have also recovered tank

turrets and dismantled

machineguns originating from

countries in Asia, Africa and the

shells from metal consignments at

Tughlagabad and said the arsenal

comprised mortar rounds. anti-tank

shells, anti-aircraft missiles and

experts in the northern city of Jaipur

recovered 20 live shells from a

private foundry, police superinten-

He said police Saturday recov-

ered more than 1.000 mortar rounds

and bombs from another local

factory but only 90 of these were

along with live shells is being dug

out and searched," Srivastava

"Some of the ordnance is unsta-

"Tonnes of scrap buried probably

dent Anand Srivastava said.

In a similar hunt Sunday, the

fragmentation shells

Experts Saturday found 100

Some of the projectiles imported

FROM PAGE 1

cargo containers.

Crashed F28

FROM PAGE 12

Biman has a \$3 million insurance coverage for the F28 aircraft with UK-based Lloyds Aviation Insurance Company Ltd. State-run Sadharan Bima Cooperation (SBC) is the reinsurer of the insurance agreement.

when AL leader Faroog Khan MP led a Peter Tyrer, senior surveyor and procession near Zia International adjuster of CTC, a member organisation of Lloyds, and Shanti The police dispersed opposition Narayan Das, deputy manager of activists when they were trying to take SBC, yesterday thoroughly out processions in Mirpur, Jatrabari, inspected the ill-fated aircraft that Mohakhali, Tejgaon, Azimpur, skidded off runaway injuring 30 of the 83 passengers and crew on Abdul Kalam, a rickshaw passenboard Friday. ger, suffered injuries when unknown

A Biman official said insurance officials will start analysing condition of the aircraft whose nose went four feet deep into a canal, causing serious damage to its cockpit.. The wings also got damaged but the fuselage of the plane is still in a relatively good condition, he said.

cession led by Mohammad Nasim MP The Biman official said if the ioined it before staging a street rally at Lloyds representative finds that the plane can be repaired to make it Deputy Leader of the Opposition worthy for flight, it will be recovered Abdul Hamid and AL leaders from the crash site. The insurance Mohammad Nasim, Abdul Matin company may seek logistic help of Khasru, Dr Abdul Mannan, Prof Abu Civil Aviation Authority (Caab) to Sayeed, Panchanan Biswas, KM drag the plane out of the canal.

"However, if the insurance company think the plane cannot be made fit for flight, the company will put the engine and other scraps for In a separate rally in front of the AL auction and pay the insurance headquarters, AL leaders said the coverage money to Biman," the

alliance government in its three-year Riman official said rule has absolutely failed to run the Refuting the allegation about the country. They demanded immediate poor condition of the runway as the resignation of the government, othercause of the crash, State Minister for Civil Aviation Mir Mohammad AL presidium members Tofail Nasir Uddin said, "As the runway is all right, operation of flights is now Ahmed and Motia Chowdhury, among going on smoothly in the airport."

"We would have to wait for a few more days for the probe body report. The Caab chairman-led probe committee will submit the report at the earliest," he told a press confer-

ence at the VIP lounge of the airport. He said the government will undertake a Tk 120 crore expansion project for the Sylhet airport which includes increasing the runway by 500 feet, establishment of boarding bridge and construction of new

terminal building. "On implementation, the project will ensure safer operation of flights, especially for wide-bodied aircraft which Biman is going to procure soon." the minister said.

The minister also rejected comments on the quality of F-28 aircraft and said, "The planes were procured for their cheaper cost. Due to fund shortage, Biman cannot buy modern and costly aircraft."

The minister said the cost of damage caused by Friday's crash would be measured by the insurer. "Biman would decide on and take steps for using the engines of the craft, as they were reportedly still in good condition," he added.

Caab Chairman and probe committee head Zahed Quddus, Biman MD Mahmudoor Rahman and Biman's internal probe body members also visited the crash site yesterday.

Meanwhile, doctors at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) yesterday released Captain Sahana no sustained injuries ir Friday's crash. Abdul Muyeed Chowdhury, executive director of Brac, who was trapped in the plane for six hours, is improving fast. Doctors said he is out of danger.

First officer of the flight Abu Safa was released from the CMH on Saturday.

Clarification

FROM PAGE 1 government regularly monitors fiscal deficit. On a different note, it said the government has only prioritised programmes to mitigate the flood-damage within the resource constraints in the budget as funds for post-flood rehabilitation were already provided in the current

OUR REPLY The report was based on informa-

tion gathered from Bangladesh Bank's "Major Economic Indicator: Monthly Update" for September, which is based on government borrowing from banks in July.

German

FROM PAGE 1

religions are being used in politics." Citing recent attacks on the Ahmadiyya community, protests against womens' sports, existence of the Vested Property Act, Andreas termed these incidents indicators of religious militancy in different forms, and said the government needs to address the issues.

Moudud in his statement said, 'Although fundamentalism and terrorism may exist in Bangladesh, it's too limited in scope and size to elicit fear."

"The situation in India and Pakistan is much worse and absence of serious communal violence in Bangladesh in the aftermath of the Gujarat incident testifies to its tolerance," he said, adding, The recent attack on the Ahmadiyya sect is an aberration in Bangladesh's long tradition as a moderate and tolerant Muslim

"We should practice more tolerance," Moudud said, adding that our prime focus should be on achievements made in the development of Bangladesh, especially in the education and health sectors. On Iraq War, the law minister

said it is a war against terrorism, not The four-day conference on the current realities of religious militancy and its link with nationalism

and terrorism in different countries in the region and possible ways to address the problem, ended yester-

Afghan polls fair despite

FROM PAGE 12 But midway through Saturday, all 15 rivals of U.S.-backed interim president Hamid Karzai had announced they were boycotting the poll because a system to prevent voting fraud had failed.

Many demanded a new vote but Karzai, the favorite to win, rejected the demand.

At issue was indelible ink put on the finger of everyone who voted to stop them voting again. Some election workers used the wrong pen to mark voters, and the ordinary marker ink was quickly washed off. And with questions over the late

and rapid registration of 10.5 million voter cards in a population of about 28 million, there were accusations of illegal multiple voting.

"While the reasons for the incorrectly applied indelible ink remain to be seen, a fairly democratic environment has generally been observed in the overall majority of polling centers." FEFA said. Karzai said the wishes of the

people had to be respected. "I would advise my fellow countrymen, the 15 other candidates, that we must all respect the fact that millions of Afghans came out on foot in rain and snow and dust and

waited for hours to vote," he said. "Just because 15 people have said 'No', we can't deny the votes of

COUNTING TO GO AHEAD Before the election, the main worry had been the threat posed by the Islamic fundamentalist Taliban guerrillas and their vow to sabotage

But there was only some scattered election-related violence. The Interior Ministry said 10 members of the security forces had been killed in the violence while 25 militants were killed in a firefight in restive Uruzgan province.

"The millions who came to the polls clearly wanted to turn from the rule of the gun to the rule of law,' said the Organization for Security and Cooperation of Europe, which had 40 experts accredited.

"The validity of election results should be dealt with as the law provides. The candidates' demand to nullify the election is unjustified, the OSCE said.

The Joint Election Management Body of UN and Afghan experts were to investigate the irregularities over the ink. But it said vote counting, likely to begin Monday after ballot boxes are collected yesterday, would go ahead.

În Kabul's main Pul-i Khisti bazaar, back to its usual chaos after the vote, opinions about the poll were divided

"I'm happy for what happened yesterday," said Mohammad Yousuf, his turban and shawl framing his bearded face. "And to the person I voted for, I am appealing to him to please look after our country and help the poor."

But another man, Nasir Ahmad, said: "It is clear that vesterday's elections were fraudulent and illegal because a person can only vote once, not five times. They should hold another election."

Saturday's vote came three years after U.S.-led forces invaded Afghanistan to oust the Taliban regime for harbouring Osama bin Laden, architect of the Sept. 11 attacks.

President Bush, facing his own election battle next month, has claimed the Afghan vote as a foreign policy success and is hoping it can be mirrored in Iraq. "Today's an appropriate day for Americans to remember and thank

forces who liberated Afghanistan. Bush said as he campaigned in St. Louis on Saturday.

the men and women of our armed

He did not mention the poll boycott.

But the wait for a ruling on irregularities will be worrying for a nation made up of a patchwork of ethnic groups and often warring

"The greater risk during the counting period is probably the danger of rumor and conspiracy theories taking hold," said Thomas Muller, an analyst the Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit think tank.

"And the problem with the ink vesterday is a prime example of where a problem occurs and it snowballs into a large issue.

Karzai is an ethnic Pashtun, the country's largest ethnic group. His opponents include several commanders from ethnic minority communities who fought the Taliban and have a fearsome reputation for warfare, including Uzbek General Abdul Rashid Dostum and Tajik leader Yunus

4 cops hurt

FROM PAGE 1

those in a water-filled bucket, the crackers exploded injuring Barua and two locals. Later in a joint raid, police of

Araihazar and Rupganj recovered

some of the looted goods from the river Brahmaputra under Kachi Kata bridge on Kalibari Manahar Road.

3 killed

FROM PAGE 12

The blast was the latest in a series of attacks on Shia or Sunni Muslim targets which have killed more than 70 people in the past 10 days. A suicide bomb attack on a Shia

mosque in the eastern city of Sialkot killed 30 people on October 1. A car bomb attack on a Sunni radical party gathering killed 41

people in the central city of Multan in Punjab state on October 7. On Saturday unidentified attackers murdered two Sunni Muslim clerics in the southern port city of

Most of Pakistan's Sunni majority and Shia minority live peacefully together. But fanatics have been involved in bitter tit-for-tat violence since the 1980s. The conflict has so

Rebels hit Baghdad

FROM PAGE 12 bers of the coalition to decide that the pain and the unliness and the difficulty of the task is simply too great,"

Rumsfeld said. "They know they cannot defeat us comes about three weeks before the

Rumsfeld, who held separate meetings with US commanders, US Ambassador John Negroponte and Iraqi interim Prime Minister Ivad Allawi in Baghdad arrived a few hours after two blasts brought more bloodshed to the capital.

The first explosion was near the Oil Ministry and a nearby police academy soon after 7 a.m. (0400 GMT). Ministry spokesman Assem Jihad said 17 people had been killed by a suicide car bomb that may have gone off before it reached the police academy, where recruits were lining up.

"Most of the dead were passersby, including seven women," Jihad said.

investigators were still trying to decide if the blast was caused by a bomb or a rocket. He put the death In eastern Baghdad, the US militarv said a suicide bomber

attackéd a US convoy, wounding an American soldier who later died. Two civilians were also wounded. Earlier a US marine was killed by insurgents in the western Iraqi prov-

the troublespot of Falluiah is located. the military said Sunday. "A marine assigned to the First Marine Expeditionary Force was killed in action October 9 while conducting security and stability operations in the Al-Anbar province,"

it said in a statement. The Interior Ministry official said the bomber's charred body was found inside the vehicle.

Insurgents and militants trying to undermine the US-backed government have mounted frequent bomb. rocket and mortar attacks on state buildings and Iraqi security forces.

The Pentagon and the interim insurgents from derailing them.

somewhat less improbable on Saturday after a fiercely anti-US Shia militia agreed to disarm in Baghdad and delegates from rebel-held Falluia said the Sunni Muslim city wanted to vote in the polls

anti-American insurgents since US

The city is also said to be a sanchostage Kenneth Bigley on Thursday.

Sunday showed Bigley appealing to the British government to meet his captors' demands just before masked men cut off his head with a "Here I am again (Tony) Blair and

A video posted on the Internet on

tape showed the 62-year-old engineer saying. "These people, their patience is wearing very, very thin and they are very serious people. Please, please give them what they require, the freedom of the women in Abu Ghraib

beheaded soon afterwards by Zarqawi's group, which demanded the release of women prisoners from US jails in Iraq.

Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr agreed to hand over weapons to Iraqi police from Monday under a deal that could end fighting in Baghdad's Sadr City

The government said the Sadr City accord was a good chance for "all misled armed groups in Iraq to rejoin civil society. Sadr's militia has staged two

uprisings against US and Iraqi forces this year. A Sunni insurgency still rages on.

strikes have attacked suspected Zargawi targets in Falluia. Civilians have been among the casualties. Karim al-Bakhati, negotiating for people in Sadr City, said US forces

Shi'ite slum. Falluja delegates said the city wanted to take part in the elections and could accept the return of Iraqi

security forces. Insurgents in Falluja said on Sunday they were ready for a truce with the government if US troops stayed out of the city. Some said they

The government has vowed to retake all rebel-held areas before the

Flooding improves

meeting between the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and the BSF was held at Kaijuri zero point in India yesterday afternoon. BDR Kushkhali company commander Subedar Abdul Jalil and BSF Kaijuri company commander Pramanta Barman led their respective sides.

that water from Bangladesh is submerging Indian territories but the BDR vehemently protested the comment saying that the embankment at Khaitala point was cut to release floodwaters for saving Indians from inundation. The BDR however asked the BSF to refrain from cutting the embankment again otherwise BDR will take stern action

tion in Kalaroa, Tala, Sadar and Assassuni upazilas remained unchanged as rivers here fail to discharge the water quickly.

Waterlogging in those areas has brought immense sufferings to the people. Hundreds of people who have taken shelter on high lands and in schools and madrashas are facing acute scarcity of food, drinking water and medicine. Over 60,000 people of the affected areas are still marooned and their miseries increased due to incessant rainfall.

Some 30 people including children have been attacked with diarrhoea till 6:30pm yesterday. Local people alleged that the authorities have not yet started any relief operation in the area and they

forces, built and developed from the Liberation War, above politics and create professional and modern

armed forces." She said a reformed and flawless electoral system is required to protect democracy and constitution so as to ensure people's right to

But 65 percent said he was not to

believed the government had done everything it could to secure the engineer's release. They are not blaming the govment for Bigley at all. Blair's

third term but will not stand for a

Labour Party being the comfortable winner of the next election as the

decision to go to war in Iraq.

destruction again if U.N. sanctions 'This is the new straw to which

to fight Aids REUTERS. Beiiina

The machines will dispense The new machines will supple-

China says it has 840,000

Mahi

156 missiles found

to India," he said as the army destroyed part of the Tughlaqabad cache Sunday. In the nearby city of Ghaziabad, four shells were found in two of 11 trucks that were searched, an army

spokesman said.

Kandla during the nationwide hunt for war junk, officials said Sunday but added the bombs had been disarmed before the shipment. The alarming recoveries prompted the Indian government to tighten rules Saturday on scrap

Police also found 50 shells in

containers in the western port of

affected countries such as Afghanistan and Iran. "Import of scrap will now be permitted only in shredded or compacted form while other metal waste will be allowed into the country after total inspection at major ports." the Directorate-General of Foreign Trade said in a statement.

Media reports Sunday quoted

customs officials as saying that it

was almost impossible to rummage

through some 1,000 containers that

arrive daily at New Delhi's

Tughlagabad warehousing complex

metal imports, especially from war-

ble and it's a miracle they did not blow up the ships that ferried them after landing at various ports of the Tougher anti-terrorism

unstable

mean," she said in an about 50minute address to the nation over radio and television marking three years in office of her four-party alliance government. The prime minister urged the

opposition to shun the politics of

gambling and pursue the politics of

ballots instead, as "we all have

adopted the ideals of democracy as

the mode of running statecraft".

She categorically said her government ernment would not tolerate any kind of terrorism in Bangladesh, be it "in the name of politics, religion, ideals or social revolution". Khaleda also cautioned that her government would not hold back from framing more stringent laws

similar to that of other developed

democratic countries of the world for

eliminating terrorism and ensuring

peace and security of public life. The prime minister said the criminals responsible for the August 21 incident must be found out so that such incidents do not occur again. She said all possible measures have been taken by the government to track down the perpetra-

Khaleda said her government

would discharge its responsibility by

upholding the constitution and not

allowing anyone to trample the rules of running the country through vandalism, riots and use of force on the streets. The prime minister said people gave the alliance government the responsibility of running the country with an over-two-thirds majority and

it would discharge its due responsi-

She said her government could not dishonour the people, deny their preference and ignore their opinions. There are no alternative to dealing sternly with political terrorism and undemocratic activities to ensure safety of people and safe-

Khaleda said no civilised nation

She urged all to move forward on

could give an open licence to anar-

chy, terrorism and destruction of

property in the name of politics.

trend in the next two years.

silent revolution of ballots.

guard democracy.

the basis of reality by containing emotion and forge ahead by remain-The prime minister said her government has achieved much success despite relentless movements, threats and smear campaigns outside the country by the opposition and vowed to sustain the

Khaleda expressed her thanks to

the public for electing the BNP-led

alliance three years back through a

On the adverse impact of negative politics on life, she said her government had been trying hard to confront the politics of darkness and Reminding the people of her seeking cooperation from the leader of the opposition to fight terrorism, Khaleda said she (opposition

leader) had rejected their efforts to

that end and only wanted the gov-

ernment to step down

(BSS, UNB)

militarily. But they are hoping they can win the test of wills. It's a battle of morale. It's a battle of perception, declared Rumsfeld, whose visit US presidential election.

An Interior Ministry official said toll at six. Police put it at nine.

ince of Al-Anbar on Saturday, where

government are eager to improve security throughout the country before the January polls for a national assembly and prevent Credible elections began to look

far cost more than 4,000 lives.

forces failed to dislodge them in an April offensive. tuary for foreign militants such as Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, whose group beheaded British

your government, very, very close to the end of my life," the four-minute

prison. If you do this the problem is solved," said Bigley. He was kidnapped on Sept. 16 with two Americans who were

The Mehdi Army militia led by

Sadr City has seen nightly clashes with US forces, while US aid

had promised to halt attacks on the

were willing to hand over heavy weapons and allow Iraqi National Guards to come in.

elections if other options fail. US and Iraqi forces have already stormed

Meanwhile, overall flood situadecided to guard it. Meanwhile, a company-level flag

At the meeting the BSF claimed