Obama attacks bank reform critics

lic".

Lobbyists

the lessons of the crisis, so we

don't doom ourselves to repeat

ensure that the markets no

longer "operated in the shad-

ows of our economy, invisible

to regulators and to the pub-

rampant, the president said.

The reform proposals include

setting up a \$50bn (£32.5bn)

fund to assist with orderly

liquidation of banks. But

Republicans see this as still

allowing taxpayer bail-outs,

arguing that any fund could

intended for the viewers in the

mid-west and the deep south,

people all over America who

resent the power of Wall Street."

Mark Mardell BBC North

The bill also suggests limiting

banks' involvement in propri-

etary trading - where they trade

their own money rather than

that of investors - the so-called

Volcker Rule, after the former

head of the Federal Reserve

who is now an adviser to

banks' investments in hedge

funds and private equity funds,

and more say for investors on

Mr Obama made special

mention of the "battalions of

financial industry lobbyists

descending on Capitol Hill, as

firms spend millions" to try to

President Obama has a 59-41

Democrat majority over

Republicans in the Senate, but

that is one vote short of the

the bill as just more govern-

ment bureaucracy, and they

are pushing for parts of it to be

changed. All 41 of them have

signed a letter saying that they

will not back the bill as it

forces as per the directive of

the Election Commission,'

AL and BNP blamed each

Hafiz, also a former minis-

'About 1,000 cadres and

other for the attacks, and for

disrupting election environ-

ter, accused AL of creating a

reign of terror in the constitu-

outsiders of Awami League

are now roaming around

freely in Lalmohan and

Tajumuddin terrorising the

voters. But my party's central

leaders were not allowed to

come here," he complained at

AL's Tofail Ahmed said the by-

election will be held in a

peaceful atmosphere.

Ruling out the allegations,

A group of BNP leaders led

from entering the constitu-

ency in the morning. They

were intercepted at

Rab CO Lt Col Monirul

The BNP leaders later

Thursday midnight until the

later withdrew his acquies-

But BNP candidate Hafiz

poll is over.

outright.

a media briefing.

ment at the last moment.

Republicans largely view

And it proposes limiting

America editor

President Obama.

executive pay.

block his reforms.

Awkward spot

number needed.

"His real message is

borrow from the Treasury.

Abuses and excesses were

Financial reforms would

BBC NEWS

US President Barack Obama has attacked critics of his banking reforms in a speech which warned that without change the financial crisis will be repeated.

Reckless practices and financial firms that acted like "bandits" should never be allowed to operate again, he said.

But it was now essential that He told Wall Street bankers regulators had the power to that regulatory reform was in "shut these firms down with the least amount of collateral the financial sector's interests. damage to innocent people After the speech Democrats brought forward a critical vote and businesses".

financial markets. It will now be held in the Upper House, the Senate, on

on tighter regulation for the

Monday. Consumer protection agency Mr Obama was speaking to an audience of bankers and financial experts at the Cooper Union college in New York.

" A free market was never meant to be a free licence to take whatever you can get ' Barack Obama

It was approved by the Lower House, the House of Representatives, in December.

The proposed rules would include a new body to safeguard consumers' rights - a consumer protection agency at the US central bank, the Federal Reserve - which would have powers to regulate all

But many people in the financial sector are aghast at the proposed changes. Mr Obama said that he was

not, as some have argued, against the power of the free Doomed to repeat

'But a free market was never

meant to be a free licence to take whatever you can get, however you can get it. That is what happened too often in the years leading up to the crisis," he told the New York audience.

"Some on Wall Street forgot that behind every dollar traded or leveraged, there is a family looking to buy a house, pay for an education, open a business or save for retirement.

"What happens here has real consequences across our country," he said.

"It is essential that we learn stands.

30 hurt in violence

required number of our

he said.

constituency as attacks and

clashes took place at least at 11 places in Lalmohan and Tajumuddin all through the day, injuring about 30 persons. The two polling agents of

the BNP candidate were hacked at Western Para near Lalmohan Bazar by their rivals around 5:00pm. Their appointment letters were also snatched by the attackers. Protesting the attack, the

BNP camp brought out a march, and ransacked several vehicles near BNP candidate Maj (retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed's residence, spreading the tension to adjacent

The protesters ransacked two election camps of AL candidate Nurunnabi Chowdhury Shawon.

Shopkeepers put their The administration shutters down as chase and deployed large numbers of counter chase between the police, Rab, and Armed Police supporters of BNP candidate Battalion personnel in the and police took place sendconstituency. They were seen ing bystanders running for patrolling the electoral area. Check-posts were also set up Tofail Ahmed told The at strategic points. An uneasy

Daily Star that the BNP activclam was prevailing in the ists stopped his motorcade constituency. near Hafiz's residence and hrew brickbats at his car. by Moudud Ahmed were Jubo Leaue leader Kamrul barred by the law enforcers

slam alleged that the BNP activists attacked and looted nis shop at Lalmohan Bazar. BNP, however, denied the

Kunjerhat. allegations. "Awami League cadres attacked a residence Haque told reporters at of a BNP activist near Kunjerhat that they were just Lalmohan Bazar, in which a implementing the EC decilittle boy was injured, and sion of not allowing any outthat caused the tension," sider into the constituency claimed Joint Convener of during the period of the elec-Lalmohan upazila BNP Marshal Himu, also a cousin

of Hafiz. returned to Bhola around Meanwhile a t Tajumuddin Bazar two BNP activists were beaten up by missioner, and leaders of

rival AL activists in the eveboth parties including the ning. two candidates at a meeting In the early hours of the on Tuesday decided that no day eight AL activists were central leader or lawmaker of injured in an attack by BNP any political party, and no activists at Dalal Bazar in outsider would be allowed Lalmohan. into the constituency past

Several other people

ncluding a woman were wounded in a clash in Phool Bagicha of Lalmohan later in the morning. Rapid Action Battalion

cence with the decision, and urged the commission to Commanding Officer Lt Col allow his party's central Monirul Haque however told leaders into the constituency The Daily Star around to observe the election, but 8:00pm that the situation the EC rejected the request was brought under control. "We have deployed the

gage seized.

FROM PAGE 16

Abdus Salam was then handed over to police while his lug-

ETV chairman

He was booked under the Indian Arms Act and placed on a two-day police remand, Tambe said.

"Abdus Salam claimed that he had come to Mumbai on business purpose and had his flight to Bangladesh in the morning today (Friday)," the officer said.

He was carrying a valid passport and arms licence of Bangladesh, said police, adding that further probe was on.

BCL men

FROM PAGE 16

Al Amin and Polash were arrested from their halls at Ruet following Wednesday night's clash between the groups of Harunur Rashid and Rezaul Karim that left four activists of Karim-led faction critically injured.

Protesters withdrew the barricade around 1:30am when senior BCL leaders assured them of arranging release of two BCL men.

BCL at Ruet is divided into three groups--Al Amin, Rashid and Karim. Al Amin-group sided with Rashid group during the clash.

Meanwhile, Motihar police arrested Rezaul and Akram Hossain Shahin from the campus following a counter case filed by Al-Amin-led faction yesterday morning. Police sources said the four

released on bail yesterday The BCL factions are fighting over establishing suprem-

arrestees of the factions were

acy at Ruet for last two weeks. They are also blaming each other for helping Islami Chhatra Shibir men infiltrate into their party.

Intelligence

FROM PAGE 16

constituted with 125 members, while one unit of UIF with 25 members, he added

Head office of the BDF intelligence agency will be set up in the capital outside the BDR Pilkhana headquarters.

Earlier the BDR authorities dissolved the Rifles Security Unit (RSU) following its failure to give any hints at the last year's mutiny in the border force. There was no civil officer

BDR sources said a process to recruit officers from retired army personnel has begun recently. The record wing of the army has proposed a number of names after evaluating their records, they said, adding that the selected officers will be given training before their joining.

"The new intelligence agency will work as an independent body and its members will not be transferred to the operation battalions," said the official, adding that the members can be reassigned within the three wings.

It will unearth any possible unrest in the force to inform the authorities immediately. It will give necessary suggestions to the authorities after detecting any corruption or irregularities in the force as well as subversive and destructive activities against the country, says the

organogram. The three wings will submit daily intelligence reports which will be evaluated regu larly by the higher authorities.

PM leaves

FROM PAGE 1

will begin on April 28. This is for the first time the landlocked Bhutan is hosting the

Saarc Summit. With the holding of the summit, Bhutan will assume the Saarc chair of the eightmember regional forum representing Afghanistan Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Maldives and Pakistan.

Hasina will make a statement at the opening session of the summit to be held at the Grand Assembly Hall. Leaders of seven other Saarc countries will also make statements at the opening session. The chief election com-

After the opening session, the permanent secretariat of the Saarc Development Fund will be inaugurated at the Grand Assembly Hall. On the second day, the

Saarc leaders will go for the Summit Retreat at Bhutan House, Saarc Village. Later, the leaders will make

joint royal audience with His Majesty the King of Bhutan. On the sidelines of the

summit, Hasina will hold bilateral meetings with South Asian leaders including the prime minister of India.

The PM will return home on April 30.

Bhola-3 by-polls

NEWS

FROM PAGE 1

government just as the incumbent ruling AL did after the controversial Magura byelection during the rule of BNP in 1994.

On the other hand, by defeating its rival candidate in the constituency the AL wants to prove its popularity as reflected in the ninth parliamentary elections is still intact. Given the magnitude of the

Bhola-3 by-poll, the EC took some innovative measures, including use of video cameras, deployment of "silent observers", setting up check posts at launch and bus terminals to prevent outsiders from entering the constituency, to ensure a credible election. Election officials have vid-

eoed the two rival candidates' campaign events since Monday as each of them complained that their activists had been attacked by the other's support-Twelve more video cameras will be put to use today to record

responsible for any irregulari-This is the first time that the EC has decided to use video cameras in an election.

the poll to detect individuals

In the wake of clashes between AL and BNP activists centring poll campaigns, the EC has expressed a tough stance on the by-poll, even warned of cancelling election results, if the election does not satisfy the commission as regards its fairness.

It also took some unusual decisions regarding appointment of polling officials, appointing the Dinajpur district election officer the returning officer for Bhola-3 by-election and recruiting 86 presiding officers from outside of the constituency to ensure their neutrality.

Following objections from both the candidates, around 80 out of 547 assistant presiding officers were also replaced with officials from outside the constituency.

EC officials said immediately after announcing the poll schedule, the commission transferred the UNOs and officers-in-charge of Lalmohan and Tajumuddin upazilas that constitute the Bhola-3 constituency.

The superintendent of police of Bhola and four subinspectors and two assistant sub-inspectors of police of the two upazilas were also transferred last week for the sake of a free and fair election, the EC officials added. No outsiders, even lawmak-

ers and central leaders of political parties, were allowed to stay in Bhola-3 constituency area after Thursday night, the last day of electoral campaign.

The EC has deployed at least three dozen its own officials to monitor the poll as "silent observers" on the polling day. On receiving information from them, it will take instant action regarding any anomalies, EC officials said.

Anumber of local and internaional organisations have taken permission and cards from the EC Secretariat to observe the polls, ECofficials said.

Since the announcement of the poll schedule, the EC has been keeping constant watch on developments in the constituency as many political analysts believe the battle of ballots will determine to some extent the current EC's future.

Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda and election commissioners Muhammed Soul Hussein and Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hossain visited the area to motivate election officials and law enforcement agencies to ensure an atmosphere conducive to holding a free and fair election.

the rules of political governments. The EC top brass were even forced to resign before ending their tenure. The BNP has already accused the EC of acting like "an agent of the government" to

After restoration of parlia-

mentary democracy in 1991, all

successive ECs were mired into

controversy for their failure to

function independently during

ensure the ruling party candidate's victory in the by-poll and warned of waging a movement against it if the poll is not held in a free and fair manner. The constituency fell vacant when the EC on February 3 published a gazette notification vacating AL lawmaker Maj

(retd) Jasim Uddin's member-

ship in parliament following a

Supreme Court verdict, which

declared him disqualified for

contesting the December 29 polls. The battle here is between senior politician Maj (retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed of BNP, who was elected MP six times, and AL candidate Nurunnabi Chowdhury, who is standing for

SECURITYMEASURES

the first time.

The main opposition BNP has repeatedly demanded deployment of army in Bhola-3 to maintain law and order and talked with the EC regarding this several times in the last few

The EC, however, did no agree with it but assured the party leaders of a foolproof security for voters by deploying adequate members of Rab, police and other law enforcementagencies. As part of the security mea-

sures, over 300 members of Rab were deployed at each union under the electoral area alongside police and ansars. Besides 21 mobile and four strike forces will be patrolling the area to avert untoward incidents until April 29, EC officials said. Four judicial magistrates

running mobile courts will hold trials of electoral offences summarily. Another 33 executive magistrates were deployed to assist the mobile teams and strike forces. EC officials said 52 of the total 86 polling stations were identi-

fied as vulnerable and extra security measures were taken to this end. A total of 24 members of police and ansars were deployed for each poling station while each of the 52 vulnerable centres got five more. The officials said members of coast guard were asked to

assist law enforcers in Char Zahiruddin area. BLAMEGAMECONTINUES

Meanwhile, both the Awami League and BNP yesterday continued blaming each other overtoday's by-election. The BNP alleged that the

Election Commission under government influence is set to hold a farcical election with a pre-determined result while the AL alleged that BNP's prime objective is to create an issue for launching a movement, not a fair election.

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain told journalists at the party's central office at Naya Paltan that the ruling party wants to prove its popularity by rigging the by-

He said if the government has the courage, it must prove its popularity by holding a free and fair election.

At another press briefing at AL chief's political office in Dhanmondi, AL Joint General Secretary Mahabubul Alam Hanif alleged that anticipating certain defeat in the poll the BNP is trying to create an issue to hinder the trial of 1971 war criminals.

The AL would face any issue politically, he added.

TU leaders demand every two years, he said.

FROM PAGE 16 labourers and their families to have a low intake causing malnutrition. It will bring about health and social disasters in future unless it is addressed immediately, he said.

Presently, the minimum wage under the government pay scale is Tk 4,100 and in the readymade garment sector Tk 1,662.50. Most of the sectors have not yet introduced the minimum wage. Millions of children are

being forced either to beg in the streets or work for bread, and its consequence is never good, Ramesh said. Therefore, it is urgent that

the government pays attention to the issue, he said. A four-member family needs a minimum of Tk 15,498 meaning if two members are capable

of earning, they each should get atleastTk7,749, he added. "Given the overall economic condition and employers' ability we demand Tk 5,000 as

minimum wage," he said. Besides, labourers should also receive annual dearness allowance to keep pace with inflation and it should be

Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies Assistant Executive Director Sultan Uddin Ahmed said a reasonable national minimum wage is very vital to maintaining a socioeconomic balance. "It should not be a matter of

great importance for only the workers but for political leadership too," he said. Labour leader Zafrul Hasan said such an arrangement could

be the best means to eradicate

Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad Coordinator Wazedul Islam Khan said labour is an essential part of production, but still none provides adequate price for it.

The owners, however, cannot pay less for other factors of production. This must be ended, he noted.

Bangladesh Mukta Sramik Federation President Mujibur Rahman Bhuiyan chaired the roundtable. Trade union leaders Mesbahuddin Ahmed, Lutfar Rahman, Badur Raja Hawlader, Abdul Matin Master and Razekuzzaman Raton, among others, spoke at the discussion. adjusted with the basic wage

EDWARD COLLEGE Students leave

hostels on BCL's threat

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

Students of Pabna Edward College are leaving dormitories in the face of threats from alleged Chhatra League activists following the college unit BCL council on Thursday. The unit's BCL committee is,

however, yet to be announced.

Sources said supporters of some BCL leaders aspirant for the committee swooped on the three dormitories of the college Thursday night and threatened the students to leave. The next day most of the resident students started leaving their rooms. During a visit to the dormitories yesterday, most of the

rooms were found under lock and key. There are at least 500 students living in the dormito-A resident student of Kamal Uddin Hall said the dining hall

of the dormitory was closed Friday. Secretary of Pabna district unit BCL Mostaq Azad admitted some elements swooping

on the dormitories but he

denied Chhatra League's

involvement with the incident. He said the college unit BCL committee would be announced today (Saturday). There are five aspirants each for the president and secretary

posts, Mostaq added. Meanwhile the college authorities said they have heard about the incident and visited the dormitories. Vice Principal of Pabna

Edward College Prof Bazlur Rahman said he talked with the resident students and most of them were leaving out of panic. Contacted, Officer-in-Charge of Pabna Sadar Police

Station Md Motiur Rahman

said police visited the campus

and are ready to ward off any

Bolivian president creates 'Mother Earth Ministry

AP, Bolivia

trouble.

Bolivia's president says he is creating a "Mother Earth Ministry" to promote the planet's rights and says that he would like to establish an international court with the power to punish nations that fail to obey emissionsreduction agreements.

The court of "climate justice" would be located in Cochabama, the central city where President Evo Morales recently hosted a three-day climate-change conference. It was attended by environmentalists, Indian communities and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.

Morales revealed the plans yesterday as he launched a campaign to plant 10 million trees -- equal to Bolivia's population -- by April 22, 2011. He did not say what he would do to garner other nations' support for the climate justice

Ahmadinejad seeks new partners in Africa

AP, KAMPALA, Uganda

Iran's president is in Africa this week to build alliances to evade stronger U.N. sanctions for his country's nuclear program, ease its international isolation and strengthen its economy.

Both Zimbabwe and Uganda, the two countries President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is visiting, have something to offer. Iran has been under harsh

criticism from Western nations for pressing ahead with uranium enrichment programs it says are to produce nuclear energy. The West fears the militant Islamic state could develop nuclear weapons. "Iran hopes to persuade non-permanent members of

the U.N. Security Council, such as Uganda, to vote against new sanctions or at least abstain from the vote," said Alireza Nader, an Iran expert at the Washington-based Rand Corp. "Zimbabwe's isolation from the West also appeals to Iran, which is coming under stronger pressure due to its ongoing nuclear program." In Uganda, Ahmadinejad

will discuss his country's nuclear program with President Yoweri Museveni. Uganda has not yet ruled out the possibility it could vote for sanctions against Iran over its nuclear program, said Tamale Mirundi, a spokesman for Museveni.

Crucial 5 unions

FROM PAGE 1

Sonapur and Charmalonchara unions in Tajumuddin upazila to win the poll.

Badarpur union has 20,600 voters, Kalma 25,000 voters, Farashganj 14,820 voters and Sonapur and Charmalonchara 10,300 voters. BNP leaders from the

unions said the AL has established "absolute supremacy" in the unions. They alleged that followers

of the AL candidate have already overpowered them through "systematic intimidations" of "musclemen" over the last couple of days. Lalmohan upazila

tions, claiming that a peaceful atmosphere was prevailing everywhere. Shahin Akhter, Farashganj union BNP joint convenor, alleged that they could not

appoint polling agents as everyone in the area was frightened by AL cadres' "Turnout in tomorrow's voting, especially of female voters, will be less than

situation on the eve of the election," he said last night. Hafez Babul, a BNP leader and chairman of Sonapur Union Parishad under Char Zahiurrudin, an area

expected because of the

31 Bangladeshis FROM PAGE 1 Alam said the crewmen cannot go to the mainland as they

don't have visas. He said the shipping company was trying to sell the old ships but it did not succeed.

"The company owes us

four months' salaries. Yet, we resigned and requested them to provide us with tickets but they did not pay heed to our request," Ashraful said. Zahirul Islam told The Daily Star that there are

Nigerian crewmen in other

ships of the company but they are not facing any crisis of food, fuel or water. The Bangladesh authority seems to be slow in approaching the authorities

concerned in Benin to bring

back the stranded seamen. Meanwhile, a foreign ministry official said the government was trying to communicate the Benin government through Bangladesh missions in Beijing, and Greece, but was yet to receive any response.

Jasim Uddin, chief nautical surveyor of the Department of Shipping, said they formed a committee to probe the matter.

21 grenades

FROM PAGE 1

The workers informed the local military personnel soon after they found the grenades and the mortar shells.

Military sources said the grenades and mortar shells were made in Pakistan.

The Pakistani soldiers might have left these ammunition during the Liberation War in 1971, they added.

Brahmaputra

FROM PAGE 16

question of the hydel project in Zangmu over Brahmaputra river did come up. The Chinese foreign minister assured me that it is a small project which will not have any impact on the river's downstream flow into North East India".

During the question-hour,

BJP member Kumar Deepak Das said it was not a small project as claimed by China but was a 450MW hydro electric Later, when he wanted to

know the status of the talks with China over trans-border rivers like the Brahmaputra, Krishna said, "We have an expert-level mechanism to address the issue and a meeting of experts from India and China is scheduled to take place between April 26 and 29 in New Delhi. The hydro power project on Tsang Po river has caused

concern in India, particularly in Assam, following media reports that it would involve diversion of water of the Brahmaputra. This was the first time China admitted its project construction activity on the river. According to China the project would not entail storage of water and it is a run-offthe-river project. Experts from

rivers.

detached from mainland Tajumuddin upazila, also alleged that voters are frightened as they are receiving threats from ruling party activists.

"Five persons were attacked for meeting our candidate Maj (retd) Hafiz. The ruling party men even fined a boatman Tk 30,000 for transporting BNP lawmaker Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Annee," he said.

However, AL organising secretary in the upazila Nurul Momin ruled out the allegation. Convener of Kalma union

BNP, Anwar Hossain alleged Chairman Nazrul Islam, also that their political oppochief polling agent of the AL nents asked BNP supporters candidate, denied the alleganot to go to poll centres. "Ruling party men said they would set up check posts to prevent voters in the areas known as a stronghold of BNP from going to poll centres," he said.

general secretary of upazila Jubo Dal and a BNP leader of Badarpur union, said, "Ruling party cadres are frequently attacking people so that they do not cast votes for the BNP candidate."

25 hurt

FROM PAGE 1

Ahsanullah Ahsan of ward-6 also BNP Pallabi thana unit president.

League for the attack. He also said that police helped the About 80 BNP activists including two councillors were confined in BNP office at

Chalantika crossing for one

Dhaka City Mayor Sadeque

Hossain Khoka blamed Awami

and a half hours. Later police arrested them, he said. "The procession was the part of our ongoing agitation movement in demand of solving power, water and gas crises immediately and improving

the law and order," he added. Abu Nayeem Mohammad Zihad Uddin, sub-inspector of Pallabi Police Station said they rescued two councillors and about 76 BNP activists who were confined in BNP office for

about an hour. Vehicular movement on Mirpur Milk Vita Road came to a halt for about two hours due

to the clash. Ali Azam, a shopkeeper of the area, said around 10 shops

were looted during the clash. Meanwhile, BNP standing committee member Mirza Abbas at a rally at Balur Math at Sabujbagh also demanded immediate solution to gas,

water and power crises. After the rally BNP brought out a procession in the area.

Land dispute

FROM PAGE 16

Hospital and Mitford Hospital One of the injured, Ainal Haque, 50, died at DMCH later. Police and Rab were deployed in the area to avert

further trouble. A conflict between the leaders was going on since long over the ownership of a

disputed land in the area. Meanwhile, BNP Joint Secretary General Goyeshwar Chandra Roy in a statement condemned the incident and demanded arrest and punish-

ment of the killers.

4 killed **FROM PAGE 16**

College Hospital. Our correspondent in Chapainawabganj adds: A bicyclist was killed in a road accident at Ekbarpur intersection of Shibganj upazila in the district yesterday morning.

The victim was identified as Jahangir Alam, 23. The accident took place at

around 10:30am when a Binodpur-bound passenger bus from Shibganj knocked the bicycle Jahangir was riding on while he was going to Binodpur Bazar from his residence.

Student 'pushed'

FROM PAGE 16

around 7:30pm on Thursday. An unidentified person from Dhaka Medical College and

Hospital informed him over phone early yesterday that Sohanur died after he was pushed out of a Dhaka-bound train at Malibagh, Idris said. Sohanur was travelling along

quoting the caller. Nazrul Islam, sub-inspector

India and China will meet in of government railway police, New Delhi next week to share confirmed the incident but hydrological data on the comcould not ascertain the reason mon Brahmaputra and Sutlej for the youth's death.

with his female friend, Idris said

Nazrul Islam Nayan, joint