last year's 86.91.

classroom.

leapt to 88.03 percent from

Chairman Prof Fahima

Khatun said providing train-

ing to teachers contributed

greatly to the success, apart

from the government's firm

She said it is needless to

Dhaka Education Board

DHAKA SUNDAY MAY 16, 2010

Girl students

FROM PAGE 1 percentage point than the male students. The number

of female students was 8,001 above the male students. About 1,96,075 female students took the examina-

tion under Comilla, Chittagong, Barisal, Sylhet role in ensuring lessons in and Dinajpur Education Boards while the number of male students was 1,88,074.

say that English and Of them, 72.63 percent of Mathematics are the decisive the females and 78.27 perfactors in achieving good result, as most of the stucent of the males passed the dents are scared of them. exams, say the stats.

higher than last year's.

the pass percentage of girl

students this year is less than

boys. Pass percentage of

male and female students

this year is 81.84 and 77.95.

The pass percentage of

female students was 68.41 in

2009, 70.45 in 2008, 55.47 in

2007 and 59.75 in 2006, said

students with GPA-5 is also

The number of female

The girls of science group,

nowever, are a bit ahead of boy

students with an average 89.85

percent pass in the eight gen-

eral education boards while it

Rasheda K Chowdhury,

well in obtaining top posi-

tions, they still lag behind in

terms of average result, she

exemplary in ensuring their

participation but it is not

enough. We have to focus

more on quality education,

exams this year. It was 58.41

Board had the lowest 71.70

percent of successful stu-

Dipokendra Nath Das said he

had regularly interacted with

the students of class X of over

100 institutions and tried to

feel free to share everything

with their teachers. So

listened to their problems

and later discussed those

with the teachers to solve

duty to hold and publish

exam results, rather it should

work as a bridge between the

students and teachers, the

The Madrasa Board this

year did exceptionally well

compared to the other nine

and students pointed out

several reasons behind this

vear's record-breaking

results. They include stu-

dents' clear notion about

GPA-5, equal emphasis on

every subject and regular

impact on such a big success,

Education Minister Nurul

Islam Nahid said they had

taken several steps to check

drop out and ensure proper

Besides, the ministry

asked all institutions to give

special attention to English

and Mathematics as many

students fail in the two sub-

The minister said this year

the avarage pass percentage

lessons in classroom.

Education Board.

education.

ects, he said.

Dhaka board.

FROM PAGE 16

Hospital.

Sunamganj.

family sources.

Overjoyed

heart attack, they said.

North East Medical College

dead. He had been suffering

from diabetes and died of

Pulok appeared at the SSC

exam from Bhimkhali High

School in Jamalganj of

board chairman said.

education boards.

RESULT

REASONS BEHIND

RECORD-BREAKING

It is not the board's only

"Many students do not

solve their problems.

them," he said.

Board Chairman

percent last year.

the former adviser added.

Stipend has become

is 89.5 in the case of boys.

the stats.

education boards.

83.57 in Dinajpur.

the last few years.

The students studied well The average pass percentage of SSC, SSC (vocational) as the government had gone tough on copying or other and Dakhil examinations dishonest means during under 10 education boards, exams, she said. showed a tremendous boost in pass rate that stands at

"We have provided training to teachers especially in 79.98 percent, 9.09 percent rural areas to improve their quality," she said. As in the previous years,

This year students from rural areas did remarkably well. Now the main task is to retain the quality, she added. CONCERN OVER COLLEGE ADMISSION

The big success in SSC exams also causes concern for many as a large number of successful students now have to compete harder to get admitted to reputed colleges.

less than male students in all There are about 92,386 seats in government and 3.70 lakh in non-government colleges across the country. In Dhaka, the number of colleges stands at 135 with 39,000 seats, said officials at the education ministry.

The pass rate for the girls of About 3.70 lakh students science was the highest 93.16 secured GPA-5 and GPA 5-4 in Barisal while the lowest is while the number of seats in reputed colleges is nearly former adviser to primary and

mass education ministry, said Strike on river the trend has been there for

Although girls are doing

resumed. And loading and unloading of cargo at Chittagong port will resume this morning while that at Mongla port will resume after withdrawal of arrest order against seven workers, report our correspondents in Chittagong and Khulna.

The agreement was signed by Nur-e Alam Chowdhury, chairman of the parliamen-Rajshahi Education Board tary body on shipping minisperformed better this year try; Israfil Alam, chairman of han seven other general the House body on labour and education boards. The board employment ministry, and had the lowest pass percent-Chowdhury Ashiqul Alam, age last year. Of the general secretary of the federexaminees under the board,

85.61 percent passed the In a related development, Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry Dinajpur Education President MA Latif, MP, said yesterday the CCCI will go to court demanding compensation for losses caused by the

> spondent reports. In a statement, he said they would file cases within a day or two against people responsible for paralysing Chittagong port by enforcing a strike that caused losses of crores of taka

strike, our Chittagong corre-

Meanwhile, Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan welcomed the decision of withdrawal of the strike.

At a press briefing at Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority office, he termed the strike a conspiracy. government dealt with the conspiracy with a heavy hand in cooperation with some anti-strike organisations and law enforcement agencies.

He claimed that around 90 percent of passenger vessels, 60 percent of cargo carriers and 80 oil tankers continued movement during the strike. Board chairmen, teachers

In reply to a query, the minister said he would go for the next course of action concerning the agreement immediately in consultation with the home minister, and labour and employment minister.

He alleged that pro-strike The examiners' flexibility workers resorted to subversive activities to put the governin giving marks also had an ment in an embarrassing situation. said officials at the Dhaka

The sramik federation enforced the strike on May 8 rejecting the new wage structure announced by the government for water transport workers.

In the announced structure, wages of workers have been raised by 50 to 100 percent, fixing the minimum wage at Tk 2,850.

Sylhet Polytechnic

FROM PAGE 16 Witnesses said general stu-

both in English 1st paper and dents brought out a proces-2nd paper is 87.08 while it sion on the campus and held was 74.39 last year under rally condemning the sexual harassment of a female stu-On the other hand, the dent of Computer Science on pass rate in Mathematics May 13 by Saikat Chandra

They branded Rimi and his associates extortionists and stalkers. A memorandum was submitted to the principal Doctors declared him demanding expulsion of Rimi and his associates from the institute.

BCL activists attacked the demonstrators with lethal weapons triggering the clash. At least 10 BCL activists were

wounded. This year it was his last BCL leader of the institute chance after two consecutive Zahirul Alam dismissed the failed attempts. That is why his allegation against Rimi. He parents were very much worsaid the demonstration was orchestrated by Shibir and ried about his result, said Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal.

2 gunned down FROM PAGE 1

Chakma, 22, son of Laxmi Manno Chakma of Jurachhari Upazila, locals said.

The killers took away the bodies, they said.

However, PCJSS central leader Sajib Chakma said they were yet to be sure whether the victims were members of their organisation. A group of four to five

UPDF men stormed a house at Chhoto Paanchhari at about 8:00am when the two were having breakfast there. The attackers sprayed bullets on the two, leaving them dead on the spot, said locals.

Md Rafiqul Islam, officerin-charge of Jurachhari Police station, said on information they rushed to the spot but could not find anybody there.

Meanwhile, UPDF Rangamati unit leader Michael Chakma ruled out involvement of UPDF in the killing. The incident could be an outcome of disputes among PCJSS factions, he said.

PCJSS backed the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Agreement while the UPDF opposed the deal.

4 drowned

FROM PAGE 16

Nagar Housing Project in Rampura at around 1:30pm after their classes were suspended for publishing of SSC

The two drowned as they did not know how to swim. They were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, but were declared dead on arrival. Kawsar's brother Zia said.

Gulshan police found Selim's body floating in a pond adjacent to the hospital

around 10 in the morning. They said he might have drowned while having a bath.

Selim, who got admitted to the hospital on Wednesday, had remained missing since Friday night, hospital sources

In Ramna, police recovered the body of a youth floating in the Ramna lake around

11:00am.

FROM PAGE 1

None fails

72 with zero pass rate. This year the number of institutions having 100 percent pass has increased in al education boards except for Barisal and Madrasa educa tion boards. In Barisal board, it has declined from 35 to 32 while it is from 2,327 to 2,308 in Madrasa board.

The number of schools having 100 percent success rate in eight general education boards increased to 561 this year from 343 last year.

Rajshahi, Comilla and Chittagong education boards have no institution with zero pass rate, while the number is one for Dhaka and Sylhet

education boards. Four institutions of Barisal board, two institutions each of Jessore and Dinajpur education boards have failed to have any successful student. A total of 31 madrasas and eight institutions under the TEB could not secure a single success.

However, Comilla board has seen no educational insti tutions going without a success for the third consecutive year this year.

Madrasa

FROM PAGE 1

some 1,82,431 students passed Dakhil exams from Madrasa Board this year.

Of them, 20,755 students obtained GPA-5 and helped the board win second place after Dhaka Board among GPA-5 achievers in the coun-

Some 14,610 male students and 6,145 female students secured GPA-5 under the board.

The pass rate of male and female students unde Madrasa Board this year is

89.02 and 84.09 respectively. Female students couldn' cut a good figure in any other education boards in the coun try other than the Technical Board, in which, they accomplished a little better than the

male students. The pass percentage among the female students under the Technical Education Board is 82.94 while it is 82.63 among the male students.

The board has been scoring better SSC results since 2008. The pass rate stood at 70.9 last year, higher than 62.88 percent in 2008.

Some 64,501 students passed the SSC (vocational) exams out of a total of 77,979

candidates that sat the test. In terms of GPA-5 hunt female students lagged behind the male students.

Of the 72 GPA-5 achievers under the board, there are only 13 female students and the rest 59 are male.

78pc pass SSC

FROM PAGE 1 The average pass percentage

of SSC, SSC (Vocational) and Dakhil examinations, held under 10 education boards, showed a tremendous boost with pass rate of 79.98 percent, a leap of 9.09 percent from last year's 70.89 percent.

The pass percentage was 72.18 in 2007, 58.36 in 2007, 62.22 in 2006 and 54.10 in 2005. Similarly, the results also show a significant rise in GPA-5 scorers as it shot up to 82,961 from 62,307 last year. Of the total distinction achievers, 50,624 are

male and 32,337 are female. This grading system was introduced in 2001 when only 76 examinees secured GPA-5.

A declining trend of expelled students has also been marked this year as the number of expelled students reduced to 482 from last year's 541. It was 707 in 2008 and 985 in 2007, according to statistics.

As many as 1200,975 students -- 625,553 boys and 575,422 girls -- appeared in this year's SSC and equivalent examinations and 960,492 of them passed. Pass percentage for boys and girls is 81.84 and 77.95 respectively. Some

240,483 examinees failed. For the first time, the examinees took their two exam

papers under a new question method -- creative questions. Under Dhaka Board Rajuk Uttara Model School and College in the capital secured the first position on the list of top 20 institutions this year as per the ministry's newly introduced selection system on the

basis of four academic standards. Considering discrimination in nominating cent percent

pass institution, the ministry this year set the new criteria. Dhaka Residential Model College, and Ideal School and College ranked second and third position respectively,

while Vigarunnisa Noon School became the fourth. Eleven out of the 12 cadet colleges in the country secured 100 percent pass while 566 of the total 570 students of the

colleges have scored GPA-5 this Four students from Mirzapur Cadet College

secured GPA-4, says an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) press release. Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid handed over the

results to Prime Minister

Sheikh Hasina formally around 10:00am yesterday. Announcing the official results at a press conference at the education ministry yesterday noon, he said, "This success in the country's one of the

the outcome of the efforts of all. Since most students fail in English and mathematics, we put our best efforts in these subjects by arranging extra classes in the schools," he said.

largest public examinations is

The results were also made available on the education board website and in all schools and exam centres. The results could also be received via text on cellphones.

Besides, the ministry for the first time sent the results through emails to 15,000 schools in and outside the capital, Nahid said, adding, the premier sent the results to schools through email.

TENEDUCATION BOARDS Like the past few years, students of Madrasa Board did exceptionally well compared to those of the other nine education boards with a pass rate of 86.7. About 182,431 students came out successful and of them 20,755 obtained GPA-5.

Students of Rajshahi Board did better than those of the seven other general education boards. It had 85.61 percent of their examinees passed, while Dinajpur Board had the lowest

In Rajshahi Board 114,629 students came out successful and 10,568 of them obtained GPA-5. In Dhaka Board, 77.99

71.70 percent pass record.

percent or about 211,761 students passed the exams with 21,142 securing GPA-5. About 82,694 students or

81.03 percent passed the exam in Comilla Board with 5,863 achieving the highest scores.

In Jessore Board, 97,403 students, or 79.18 percent, came out successful and 7,399 got GPA-5.

As many as 49,451 students

in Chittagong Board or 72.31 percent passed and 5,800 achieved GPA-5. In Barisal Board, 41,309

examinees passed with a success rate of 74.64 percent and 2,751 of them scored GPA-5. In Sylhet Board, 32,336 students were successful with a

pass percentage of 78.42, while 1,977 are GPA-5 achievers. The pass rate in Dinajpur Education Board is 71.7 per-

cent. Some 83,977 students passed while the number of GPA-5 securers is 6,634. Students of the SSC (vocational) also did well this year

with 82.72 percent pass. Some

64,501 students came out

successful, while 72 of them got Science group topped among the three groups under the eight general boards as the pass rate of this group has upped to 89.69 percent compared to last year's figure. In humanities group 70.42 percent students passed and 80.44

studies and commerce group. PRESS CONFERENCE The education minister said they have overcome the concern created over the newly introduced questioning sys-

percent passed in the business

tem as the results showed a grand success. 'We have introduced the method courageously as we wanted to stop students from being dependent on memorisation and none of the students

raised any question about it,' Nahid said they will intro-

duce two more subjects in each

group from next year. Asked about measures to check pressure of students aspiring to enrol in reputed colleges, especially in city institutions, he said it is true there was a pressure in the reputed colleges, but everybody necessarily doesn't come to these institutions.

A lot of seats remain vacant in many colleges," he said, adding, "We will discuss the issue with the heads of the colleges soon and amend the admission policy, if needed."

On schools that have zero pass rate, he said they will make a probe into their failure to find out the reasons.

Diabetic

FROM PAGE 16

hospital properties and injured more Birdem employees in the process. The staff retaliated by spraying fire-extinguishing gas at the students.

The agitated students barricaded the road opposite to the hospital hindering the flow of traffic for more than an hour.

Director General of Birdem Hospital Major Gen (retd) Prof Ziauddin Ahmed said the matter would be investigated and the ones guilty of causing the unpleasantness would be punished.

A three-member committee was formed with Prof Abdus Salam Khan as its head

to probe the matter, he added. Syed Nurul Islam, additional deputy commissioner of Ramna Police Station, said no case was filed in this regard.

PM leaves

FROM PAGE 1

Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, yesterday afternoon on way to South Korea.

High officials of the Thai government and Bangladesh's Ambassador to Thailand Qazi Imitiaz Hossain received the PM at Suvarnabhumi International Airport at about 4:00pm.

Hasina will reach Seoul tomorrow morning to begin her 3-day state visit to South Korea.

In Seoul, Hasina will hold bilateral talk with South Korean President Lee Myungbak on May 18. The two leaders will discuss cooperation on trade, energy and development during the talk, officials

Several MoUs will be signed between the two countries on Infrastructure development, economic assistance, environment and cultural exchange. The bilateral trade between

the two countries amounted to US\$ 1.1 billion in 2009.

On May 17, Hasina will deliver keynote address at the opening ceremony of Commission Session of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Besides, the Korean theairport to see off the PM.

Chamber of Commerce and Industry will arrange a luncheon meeting in honour of the premier.

The PM is also scheduled to have bilateral talks with Maanee Lee, Minister of Environment, and Choi Kyung-Hwan, Minister of Knowledge Economy, at the Presidential suite.

Hasina will visit the Hanging project of Seoul Metropolitan Government on the River Han. She will leave Seoul on May 18 afternoon for Kuala

Lumpur where she will hold Bangladesh Embassy School, talks with her Malaysian coun-Riyadh. Twenty-seven of them terpart Najib bin Razak focussecured GPA 5. ing on recruitment of Of the total 32 examinees, 28 passed from Bangladesh Bangladeshi workers and expansion of bilateral trade Mashoor-ul-Haque Memorial and investment. High School, Doha. Seven of In Kuala Lumpur, Hasina them achieved GPA 5. will also address the inaugural

Deputy Leader of

Parliament Syeda Sajeda

Chowdhury, Agriculture

Minister Motia Chowdhury,

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni

and the three services chiefs,

among others, were present at

As many as 32 students out session of the three-day 6th of a total 35 passed from World Islamic Economic Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Forum, which will begin on Bangladesh Islamia School, May 18. Abu Dhabi with 11 students The PM is scheduled to securing GPA 5. return home on May 21.

Seventeen students of Bangladesh Islamia School in Abu Dhabi have passed out of a total 18. Two of them scored

GPA 5. All the ten students of Bangladesh School, Bahrain, Manama passed with two of them securing GPA 5.

Rajuk school

FROM PAGE 16 The four criteria were the

Warning of

ash flight

BBC ONLINE

Transport has said.

disruption

Parts of the UK's airspace are

at risk of closure from Sunday

because of volcanic activity in

Iceland, the Department for

ports in south-east England

Hammond said the situation

was "fluid" but that passenger

the likely impact with air

traffic control body, Nats.

Airport operator BAA said the

situation would be clearer by

caused disruption to thou-

"It's good to have informa-

Meanwhile, Italy has fined

Irish low-cost airline Ryanair

3m euros (£2.5m) for failing to

help some passengers after

cancelling their flights during

Saturday that five-day ash

prediction charts would be

made available on the Met

different parts of UK airspace

including airspace in the

south east - are likely to be

closed at different times," the

Department for Transport said

only given for the following 18

Hammond said the five-day

forecasts would ensure "air-

lines, other transport provid-

ers and the public [had] the

In Kushtia, a team of Rab,

acting on information, raided

a brick field at Atigram in

Mirpur upazila shortly after

midnight when members of

"Gono Bahini" were holding a

Rab personnel, the outlaws

fired shots, prompting them to

retaliate which triggered a

gunfight, Major Zakir Hossain

shootout while his accompli-

ces managed to flee the scene.

Later, the elite force members

recovered two light guns,

seven bullets, one explosive

Sayeed was accused in at

least eight cases, including

two for murder and four for

extortion, the Rab official said.

acting on a tip-off, raided Faila

village at about 2:30am where

the operatives of the outlawed

organisation, "Bahini" was

holding a meeting, reports our

opened fire as they sensed

their presence. Abdul Malek

was caught in the line of fire of

the resulting battle, while his

cohorts managed to flee. His

body was later recovered from

Malek, son of Habibur

Rahman of Shibpur village in

Atghoria upazila was accused

in 10 cases, including six for

foreign manufacture and a

shutter gun from the scene.

Better GPA

FROM PAGE 1

the school.

achieved GPA 5.

Rab also retrieved a rifle of

Out of a total 30 students 29

have passed from Talee Al-

Fekr Bangladesh International

School Makkah, Jeddah. Two

students secured GPA 5 from

Bangladesh Community

School in Tripoli passed the

examinations. None of them,

however, could obtain GPA 5.

passed out of 88 from

A total of 78 students

All nine examinees of

murder, added Rab.

Rab said the outlaws

correspondent.

the spot.

In Pabna, a team of Rab,

and a knife from the spot.

Sayeed got killed in the

of Rab-12 told The Daily Star.

Sensing presence of the

clandestine meeting there.

best possible information".

2 outlaws

FROM PAGE 16

Previous forecasts were

Transport Secretary Mr

"Within this timeframe,

Ministers agreed on

tion in advance but we are

acutely aware that things can

sands of flights since April.

change quickly"

the crisis.

Office website.

in a statement.

BAA spokesman

Sunday.

safety was the top priority.

until Tuesday, it warned.

Disruption could hit air-

Transport Secretary Philip

number of students registered with a school, percentage of regular students among those registered, percentage of successful students, the number of students getting GPA-5 and the number of examinees. The ministry set 100 rank

Rajuk school obtained 94.29 points and Viqarunnisa 92.07.

points for the four scales.

The number of students of Vigarunnisa who secured GPA-5 is higher than that of Rajuk school. A total of 926 British Airways will discuss students out of 1,151 of Viqarunnisa got the highest score while 344 Rajuk students

ASM Mushfigur Rahman, principal of Rajuk School and Ash from the College, told The Daily Star the Eyjafjallajokull volcano has new set of criteria has brought his school to the top of the list. "The criteria in previous

out of 366 got the score.

years were not logical. They had created an unhealthy competition among the schools," he added.

Meanwhile, Viqarunnisa school's principal Rokeya Akhter told The Daily Star, "Our school's results are good.

As per the old criteria, we are still the best." She said though the newest of criteria has changed the

orders of best schools, she welcomes it. Ideal School and College which secured second position last year, has dropped to third on the list. Monipur High School, which was in third

place last year, has slipped to eighth this year. Motijheel Model High School, which was ranked fourth among the schools across the country, is not even

on the list of 20 best schools

under Dhaka board. Meanwhile, Selim Bhuiyan, principal of Dania AK School and College, in a press release yesterday opposed the new criteria and said they have been introduced to make

some schools happy.

Under Dhaka Board, top 10 institutions as per new ranking are: Rajuk College Residential Model College, Ideal School and College, Vigarunnisa Noon School Mymensingh Girls' Cadet College, St. Joseph High School, Mirzapur Cadet College, Tangail, Monipur High School, Holy Cross Girls High School and Govt Labrotary High School.

Pabna Cadet College ranked the list of top institutions under Rajshahi Board followed by Rajshahi Cadet College and Joypurhat Girls' Cadet College. Under Comilla Board, Feni

Girls' Cadet College topped the list while Comilla Cadet College and Comilla Zilla School came second and third respectively. Jhenidah Cadet College

ranked first under Jessore

Board while Military

Collegiate School Phultala,

Khulna and Govt Coronation

Under Chittagong Board,

Collegiate School topped the list followed by Fauzdarhat Cadet College and Ispahani Public School and College

Barisal Cadet College topped the list in Barisal Board while Barisal Zilla School and Barisal Govt Girls' High School secured second and third

Sylhet Cadet College ranked top under Sylhet Board followed by Sylhet Govt Pilot High School and Blue Bird

High School. Under Dinajpur Board, Rangpur Cadet College topped the list and Syedpur

and College and Amena-baki Residential Model School came second and third respectively.

BP's chief executive has said

of deep-water exploration. But Tony Hayward told

forming event". Thousands of barrels of oil a day have been gushing

President Barack Obama says there will no longer be a

He has also hit out at the executives of the oil companies involved for seeking to pass on blame for the disas-

Radio 4's Today programme: "I don't believe it should [result in a ban], in the same way as Apollo 13 did not stop the space programme nor have serious airline accidents from time to time

But he said changes would have to be made to address the risk of such

"I think undoubtedly that this will be a transforming event for exploration and production activities in the deep water of the world, in particular the deep water of

"You can't have an incident of this seriousness and not expect significant changes as a consequence. What we need to do is ensure that the changes we make

8 more die

But authorities will not set a deadline because without effective planning there will be more loss of life."

For two months thousands of protesters have turned a large area of Bangkok into a virtual state within a state, crippling a retail and hotel district and disrupting daily life for residents in the city of

The United States warned embassy staff and families.

In the Silom business and tourism hub, close to the main rally base, two men armed with a small handgun, photographer said.

tails when the shooting occurred.

forces in various areas on the edges of the protest site overnight, a government spokesman said, and there were reports of more grenades exploding yesterday. The kingdom has been

riven by years of political turmoil since the Reds' hero, former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, was ousted in a bloodless coup in 2006. Its society is deeply divided between the urban elite and rural poor. The rally site, where dem-

Secondary School came second and third.

respectively.

positions.

Govt Technical High School

BP chief backs future of drilling

BBC ONLINE

the Gulf of Mexico oil disaster should not mean the end

the BBC's Today programme that significant changes to the oil industry should arise from what he called a "trans-

from a seabed well since a drilling rig exploded on 20

"cosy relationship" between oil firms and US regulators.

'Significant changes' Mr Hayward told BBC

stopped people flying."

drilling.

the United States," he said. address the risk that has

occurred here.'

FROM PAGE 16

12 million people.

yesterday against all travel to Bangkok and authorised the evacuation of non-essential

were shot and left badly wounded yesterday after about 30 protesters, one clashed with troops, an AFP The Red Shirts were throwing stones and Molotov cock-

Numerous M-79 grenades had been fired at security

onstrators sleep on mats on the ground and listen to speeches and music blasted from giant speakers, stretches

for several square kilometres

and is fortified with razor

wire, bamboo stakes and piles of tyres. The mostly poor and working class Reds say the government is elitist and undemocratic because it came to power in a 2008 parliamentary vote after a

court ruling ousted elected allies of Thaksin. A Thai court handed sixmonth jail sentences to 27 protesters arrested during

Friday's clashes. A journalist, a photographer for The Nation newspaper, was injured and in a serious condition after a bullet shattered a bone in his leg while covering Saturday's clashes, further underlining the risks facing media in Bangkok.

just two days in the capital, where a Japanese cameraman was killed last month during On Thursday night renegade general Khattiya

Sawasdipol, a key Red Shirt

supporter, was shot in the

He was the fourth journal-

ist to be shot and injured in

head near the rally site. His condition had slightly improved Saturday but he was still in a critical state, said Chaiwan Charoenchokethavee, director of the Vachira

hospital.

Protest leaders have called for the intervention of revered King Bhumibol Adulyadej, 82. But the monarch, seen as a unifying force, has been hospitalised since September and has avoided commenting directly in pub-

lic on the crisis.