The Baily Star



Search for 3 cars packed with explosives in Najaf

Two killed as cleric's bodyguard opens fire

AFP, Baghdad

Iraqi authorities are searching for three cars laden with explosives believed to have entered Najaf, where a double car bomb killed a top Shiite religious leader and 82 other people last week, Iraqi police said. "We received information that

three car bombs had entered Najaf and we are searching them," Major Tarig Jamel told the wire service. The search began as tens of

thousands marched through Baghdad in a funeral procession for the revered Muslim Shiite Avatollah Mohammad Bager al-Hakim. Hakim was assassinated in last

Friday's bomb massacre at Naiaf. 180 kilometres south of the capital. that also left a further 125 people wounded. Four men, two Iragis and two

Saudis, believed to have links with

3 Jama'atul members sent to jail

BSS, Khetlal, Joypurhat

of such weapons against troops or by A court here vesterday sent three terrorists against civilian targets suspected 'area chiefs' of outlawed worldwide. Jama'atul Mujahidin to jail after a 10remains Irag's development to military day interrogation by the Joint maturity of weapons of mass destruc-Interrogation Cell (JIC) in Dhaka tion -- something that only regime

Police said Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of CID Police Abdul Mannan and Special Superintendent of Police (SSP) of CID Akhter Ali from Dhaka yesterday visited Uttar Moheshpur village under Khetlal upazila of Joypurhat where a 45-minute fierce gunbattle between members of Jama'atul Mujahidin and police took place on August 15.

Six policemen were injured while three shotguns, ammunition and a wireless set belonging to police were snatched by the militants during the incident.

Police said that, 38 suspected militants were arrested, and two foreign-made revolvers, one shutter gun, eight bullets and a huge quantity of explosives seized in different places of the village. But the looted arms and ammunition are yet to be recovered

Police are yet to trace suspected Mujahidin commander Montezar Rahman and his family members who are still absconding

Three constables were suspended, and five police officials and nine constables served with showcause notices after the incident.

the regime of ousted Iraqi president Saddam Hussein and the al-Qaeda terror network are being held over the massacre

'Two are Iragis from Basra, who belonged to the former regime, while the other two are Arab Wahhabis." Naiaf Governor Haidar Mehdi Matar told AFP. "They confessed to the bombing."

Tens of thousands marched early yesterday through Baghdad in a funeral procession for Bager al-Hakim.

The procession was led by a coffin carrying the remains of his body. Hakim's body will be transported

to the Shiite holy city of Karbala today for a similar procession, before his corpse is returned to Naiaf for burial tomorrow

Meanwhile, bodyguards of firebrand Iragi cleric Mogtada Sadr

Kelly's widow

and stockpile such weapons for

both military and terrorist use," Kelly

from Iraq today comes from covert use

He added: "Perhaps the real threat

"The long-term threat, however,

Documents released by the inquiry

over the weekend revealed that

Britain's internal security service MI5

carried out a secret analysis of BBC

reports on the government's

September dossier to find out who its

source appears to be an expert on

current and recent past Iraq weapons

capability, sufficiently well informed to

give a statistical figure on the capabil-

forward to confirm to his superiors that

he had met Andrew Gilligan, a BBC

radio defence correspondent, a few

days before Gilligan first aired the

will hear this week from his daughter,

his sister, several of his friends, and

police who searched for, then found

his body July 18 with a slit wrist in

woodland near his Oxfordshire home.

Thursday, Hutton is expected to

adjourn hearings until September 15

when some witnesses will be recalled.

Observers expect his final report will

not be out before the end of October.

Once the last witness is heard

Besides Kelly's widow, the inquiry

exed up" allegations on May 29.

By that stage, Kelly had come

MI5 reported back on July 1: "The

FROM PAGE 12

change will avert.

source was

wrote.

opened fire yesterday on a car at a checkpoint in Najaf, killing two people and seriously wounding two others, according to hospital sources and relatives of the dead.

A mother and father were taking their daughter and her husband to a medical clinic near Sadr's home when they hit a checkpoint manned by Sadr's men who opened fire when the car sped forward, the sources said.

"Sadr's people had set up a chekpoint on the road. When the driver saw the roadblock, he thought Family members of murdered computer engineer Srikanta Rakshit of Chittagong meet Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at the bodyguards were thieves and her Hare Road office yesterday. accelerated and the guards opened fire," said Haidar Abbas, in charge of

admissions at the city's maternity hospital The guards had set up a checkpoint since Saturday around Sadr's house in the aftermath of Friday's double car bombing in Naiaf

Another flop

sources," said a frustrated senior

police official at Chittagong

Metropolitan Police (CMP) yester-

The police official's admission is

however contrary to the claim of

that he would be rescued 'soon' by

start the investigation afresh.

Officer of the case and Officer-in-

charge of Chandgao Police Station

before his transfer from the CMP

during a recent reshuffle in the

police administration to bolster the

A team of secret agencies from

Dhaka is now in Chittagong, trying

to trace Jamal if he is still alive and

establish a connection with the

even willing to arrange payments for

the abductors against Jamal's

Sources said the government is

The abduction case was mean-

day, seeking anonymity.

the joint forces.

rescue efforts.

kidnappers.

Proshika

FROM PAGE 12

FROM PAGE 1

38 days back

"And from then on, we will start to witness complete exhaustion of reserves at the existing gas fields.

By 2020, all the proven gas reserves should be exhausted. To tackle the gas crisis.

Petrobangla sought finances on strating yet another futile exercise urgent basis for a number of prosince the rescue operation began jects, which includes a Tk 137 crore scheme for 30-inch pipeline "We really don't have any idea between Ashuganj and Manohardi. where Jamal could be kept hostage. "With this pipeline, we hope to manipulate the existing supplies and We are just carrying out the search tackle the present crisis. on the information from various

The current high demand has reduced the gas pressure significantly. Petrobangla is now supplying maximum 1265mmcfd against a demand of 1295mmcfd. The worst is however yet to come that might cripple the power and fertiliser productions.

Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, who, on August 24, told Petrobangla, which contributes journalists that the government around Tk 2,000 crore to the national exchequer annually, also sought knew the whereabouts of Jamal and finances for drilling of two gas wells in Kailastila, two in Titas, one in Narsinghdi, Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman reportwhile handed over to the Detective edly responded to these needs. Branch of the CMP on Saturday to saving he would arrange funds for all the projects. Mesbauddin was the Investigation

Khaleda yesterday also asked all the ministers to coordinate and cooperate for the speedy implementation of gas projects.

The meeting was also said Petrobangla has requested US company Unocal and Shell to augment gas supplies from the Jalalabad and Sangu fields. Jalalabad will add up 30mmcfd to its 140mmcfd from October while Sangu will supply 30mmcfd in

6 trade bodies FROM PAGE 1

Industry and Bangladesh Employers' Federation signed the joint statement.

The statement said all sections of ociety are scared and people fee to release funds for its 'Towards a trapped in the hands of criminals. Poverty Free Society' project. The situation has spiralled out of According to a government circular, control of law enforcers, it observed. decisions for such applications "We urge the government to immediately launch a special drive to protect countrymen, including businessmen, from terror and a sense of helplessness," the statement added. Meanwhile, Esko Kentrschynskyj, head of the European Commission delegation, expressed concern at the law and order slide at a meeting with Law Minister Moudud Ahmed at arrest the killers. his office yesterday.

addition to its 170mmcfd from AFP, Mumbai December. Talking to the BBC, State Minister

for Energy Mosharraf Hossain meanwhile said the issue of gas export might be discussed later. "The prime minister was con-

Govt to fight gas crisis 5 held for link to

cerned at the on-going gas crisis and power load shedding," he said. "We only discussed the present

problems. We talked about exploration of new gas fields. To deal with the gas crisis, we will be able to increase 30mmcfd gas from Sangu in December," he said

ment, if needed, will keep two fertiliser factories shut for maintenance to let the situation improve, the minister said.

approved a price policy for gas, power and petroleum. Prices of gas and petroleum will be reviewed every six months in light of international fuel price. Gas price will be adjusted if fuel price goes up by 10 per cent and petroleum prices will be modified if fuel price spirals by 5 per cent

PBCP activists shown arrested in murder case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Two alleged activists of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP), Janajuddho faction, arrested on Thursday midnight in Satkhira, have been shown arrested in the PBCP activist Dabir murder case

Mohibul and Mohammad Ali, the PBCP activists, were arrested on Thursday midnight in Satkhira along with Abdullah al-Mamun and Munir Hossani for their alleged involve-

were cast throughout the electoral

Hasina: Gas export

law and order tumble Hasina bitterly criticised the

their political beliefs.

months into power.

tion of the verdict on the Bangabandhu assassination case, government policy of closing down she said the export would lead to industries, making thousands of corruption by the ruling alliance. employees jobless.

FROM PAGE 1

The AL called a country-wide dawn-to-dusk hartal for September of industries." she said. 25 for the ouster of the government for what it said its failure to run the politicising the administration, she government. The AL will also march said government employees are in the city on September 15. now being promoted on the basis of

"When the country's industries are suffering from acute gas crisis. the present government is conspiring to sell gas abroad as it came to power signing a bond to this end, she alleged.

"Through proper utilisation of natural das resources, we can eradicate poverty.

Hasina urged all pro-liberation forces to join hands against the 'misrule and misdeeds' of the government and build a strong movement for its immediate ouster.

PHOTO: PID

The former prime minister accused the government of patronising communal militants to eliminate the forces who believe in Bangladesh's independence, especially the AL leaders and adherents.

Hasina was critical of the role of Jamaat-e-Islami ministers in the cabinet, saying: "A Jamaat minister, who had ruined the country's agriculture sector, now heads the industries ministry to destroy it."

Life under the coalition rule has become miserable because of widespread corruption and violence sponsored by the ruling party men, she alleged.

harassment'.

Referring to the recent killings of FROM PAGE 1 Khulna city AL chief Monzurul Imam and grilled him about the purpose of his visit. But he failed to reply satisand some other opposition leaders, factorily and students who had Hasina asked the government to stop such 'killings, persecution and already gathered at the spot started beating him mercilessly. "We were really very angry over

"About 24,000 leaders and workers of the Awami League have the repeated incidents of thefts in so far been killed under the alliance the dormitory," said a student who rule." lost his cell phone set a few days

She said abduction of businessback. men and schoolchildren emerged as Hall Provost Dr Mohammad a regular feature, exposing a serious Akther Hossain Khan said he rushed to the spot as soon as he

53 abducted FROM PAGE 12

university medical centre and sent across the country last month. the youth to the DMCH," he said. Forty-two girls were raped, four of Some students said Sohel had whom were killed afterwards. confessed to stealing a cell phone set and a purse from the hall about

The monthly survey report of Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BESHR) revealed that 27 people were lynched in August.

Bangladesh Jatiya Mahila Ainjibi Samity in their survey reports said 706 incidents of women's rights violation took place in August. They said 176 women were raped of whom 17 of them were killed and three committed suicide. At least 70 women committed suicide in the

their votes due to fake voting.

Colony under ward No. 7, adding that many other women of her ward had the same experience.

Even when the party was in opposition in the seventh Jativa Sangsad as the larges ingle-party opposition with 116 seats. The BNP and its front organisations have chalked out four-day elaborate silver iubilee celebrations Party flags will be hoisted at its central office in Naya Paltan and at the offices of its front organisations. Khaleda, together with leaders and workers of BNP and its front organisations, will offer Fateha and place wreath at the mazar of Ziaur Rahman at 10:00am today. Later, the prime minister will lead a colourful procession from city's

Secretary General Goyeswar Chandra Roy distributed gold medals. Shipping Minister Akbar

During this period the govern-

He also said the meeting

Indian police have arrested five people and questioned many more in their probe of twin car bombings in Mumbai that killed 52 and injured more than 150, a minister said vesterday

"Five people whom we believe are involved in the bomb attacks have been arrested from various parts of the state and even outside Maharashtra," said Kripashankar Singh, home minister of Maharashtra province of which

Mumbai blasts

Mumbai is the capital.

Savar polls

FROM PAGE 12 officer. But the four-party alliance cadres also forced Imu to leave the centre. Later, the presiding officer took control of the situation.

AL supporters also alleged that on Saturday night, supporters of the fourparty alliance threatened voters including minorities of Badda, Jamshing Rajashon and Karnapada villages with revenge unless they voted for the four-party alliance candidate

Aminur Rahman, newly elected ward commissioner of ward No. 6, alleged that a large number of fake votes were cast in the Karnapada centre, confirming the AL allegation about the centre

Meanwhile, about 40 fake voters were reportedly arrested from different polling centres including Islamia Senior Madrassah, Savar Residential School, Rajashon Government Primary School and Imandipur Government Primary School.

Most of the female voters registered with these centres could not cast

"My vote had already been cast," said Nazma Akhtar, a voter of Radio

Al candidate Imu said fake votes

FROM PAGE 1

Ramna police said. Resident DU students have reported that incidents of theft in face of severe torture. their dormitories are on the rise.

Silver jubilee

was a drug addict. A case has been lodged

The AL chief said the government did not want execution of the verdict on the assassination of Bangabandhu, as its leaders were beneficiaries of the August 15, 1975 bloodbath.

"We don't want any more lay-of

Accusing the government of

The leader of the opposition

accused the prime minister of cor-

ruption, saying she and her sons

amassed crores of taka in only 22

Chaired by Dhaka city AL President Mohammad Hanif, the rally was also addressed by party leaders Mohammad Nasim, Obaidu Kader, Mukul Bose, Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan. Abdur Rahman. Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin and Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhurv Maya. Senior party leaders were

present at the rally. Earlier, leaders of the AL and its

front organisations converged on the Paltan Maidan in processions from different parts of the city.

Suspected thief

learnt about the incident and res-

a month and a half ago, adding that

he had also confessed that he

came from Jatrabari to steal from

Police said Sohel, son of Amjad

Hossain of village Brahmanbadsha

of Srinagar thana in Munshiganj

"I called in an ambulance of the

cued the man.

the dormitory.

Shazneen case

FROM PAGE 1

the Gulshan Police Station the following day accusing Shahidul alias Shahid, a domestic help at his house.

Mojibur Rahman, assistant superintendent of CID (Criminal Investigation Department), filed a rape case with the Gulshan Police Station on September 4, 1998. accusing Shahid, Hasan, Badal, Shaniram, Humayun (now dead), Minu and Parvin.

Mojibur, who was also investigation officer of the rape case, submitted a chargesheet against Shahid and five others on December 12. 1998, showing 74 people as prosecution witnesses

The tribunal framed charges Dailv Star. against the six chargesheeted accused on April 13, 1999. After the charges were framed.

defence lawyers filed a criminal appeal with the High Court (HC) Division seeking stay on charge framing

After hearing, the HC Division stayed proceedings of the case on August 25, 1999. Later, the HC Division vacated the stay order on November 1, 1999, and directed the tribunal to frame charges against the accused.



FROM PAGE 12 a check, the officials found 400 of the 2.000 tickets fake.

The director in an instant order suspended ticket sellers Abdul Mannan and Mofazzal Hossain Khan and Office Assistant Nuruzzaman, who supply the tickets every morning to the ticket counter. A general diary (GD) was also lodged with Ramna Police Station against them.

Meanwhile, a four-member committee with Prof. FM Siddigue of the Department of Medicine as its head was formed to probe the incident. Other members of the committee are Dr Saifullah. Dr Khwaia Habib and Dr Mazhar Shaheen.

Sources said the sale of counterfeit tickets from the OPD ticket counter has been going on for a long time. "Some dishonest DMCH employees are carrying out the act in connivance with top officials for over ten years," said a senior DMCH

Subsequently, charges were framed on May 28, 2000.

The HC Division also staved the proceedings of the Shazneen murder case, pending with the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, till disposal of the Shazneen rape case.

wave of shocks across the country. Various human rights groups and civil society members are eagerly awaiting the verdict of the case.

NGO director FROMPAGE 12

his ignorance of the incident to The

But Executive Director Nazrul Islam in a statement said the NGO authorities were trying to pay back its clients as soon as possible.

About the dishonoured cheques

The statement also claimed that rarv'.

doctor, seeking anonymity After printing at the BG Press at

Tejgaon, the tickets are kept at the DMCH store and later at the deputy director's room from where an office assistant takes them to the counter every morning.

DMCH sources said the people involved in the exercise are themselves responsible for the counterfeiting. While selling the tickets, they mix up the counterfeit tickets with the real ones.

More than 1.400 tickets are sold at the OPD counter from 8:00am to 2:30pm a day, and the DMCH gets proceeds from the sale of 800 to 1.200 tickets. The rest of the tickets are fake and the proceeds from their sale do not go to the coffers.

In 2000, five DMCH employees were caught selling counterfeit tickets and a committee was formed to investigate the matter. However, no action was taken against the accused.

should be cleared within 14 days, but the bureau did not reply as yet. The bench comprising Justice

Amirul Kabir Chowdhury and Justice Syed AB Mahmudul Haque issued the notice. Dr Kamal Hossain, Dr Shirin The death of Shazneen sent a

Sharmin and Barrister Tania Amir moved the petition, while Deputy Attorney General Adilur Rahman appeared for the state

he said the situation arose when all clients, pressed by a certain circle, demanded their money back at a

the other branches of the NGO were running smoothly and termed the problem of the head office 'tempo-

in Khulna Awami League leader Monzurul Imam murder

The PBCP (Rashid) armed cadre, Dabirul Islam, was gunned down on August 23 at Sonadanga. Police took the four to court and asked for their remand. The court

granted a two-day remand. Meanwhile, the investigation of the Imam murder case is reportedly on. Police said they formed seven special teams to carry out combing operations in greater Khulna to

Least interest in less interest

FROM PAGE 1

was the Pakistan experience where monetary vigil has pushed down the interest rate to as low as 1.5 per cent. even under inflation rate.

But this apparently did not work because of weak market forces and high spread the banks keep between deposit and lending rates. Bankers now feel that with the

new move to allow private banks to have deposits of government funds. the banks will have access to cheap cash and so, their lending rates will tumble

Moreover, the BB has planned to make the interest rate on savings instruments tagged to treasury bill rates from December. This will further allow banks to offer lower the deposit rates.

At the end of the day, bankers feel they will be able to cut rates at least by 1 to 1.5 per cent.

With the current spread, banks are making huge profits every year with their cumulative profits in the last six months standing at about Tk 800 crore.

Some commercial banks are making high profits in the form of as much as 50 to 100 per cent return on their capital and with the current market value of shares, most sponsors get about 100 per cent returns a year

The banks now maintain about 5-6 per cent spread, which many bankers feel should be at around 3-4 per cent in an ideal situation. For example, in the US, the Fed rate is now 1 per cent and the prime lending rate is 4 per cent.

According to a central bank study, the average cost of funds of the nationalised as well as private and foreign banks operating in Bangladesh is 9 per cent, while the average interest rate on advances is 13.10 per cent.

The cost of funds is calculated on the basis of administrative costs (2.5 per cent) and average interest rate on deposits (6.5 per cent).

The nationalised banks' average cost of funds is 8.59 per cent, within which the interest rate on deposits is 6.31 per cent and administrative cost 2.28 per cent. Their average interest rate on advances is 12.35 per cent that creates a spread of 3.76 per cent.

However, having a high rate of loan defaults, provision deficit and capital shortfall, the nationalised banks have to incorporate these costs into their account and maintain high interest rates on advances.

On the other hand, the private banks' average cost of fund is 9.85. within which interest rate on deposits is 7.2 per cent and administrative costs is 2.65 per cent. And their average interest rate on advances is 14.2 per cent.

Experts said as the private banks do not have huge burdens of loan default or provision deficit, they have no reason to maintain this profiteering trend. Moreover, they have some other extra-loan sources of income.

The foreign banks' average cost of funds is 7.09 per cent, within which interest rate on deposits is 4.39 per cent, and their administrative cost is 2.9 per cent. while their average interest rate on advances is 11.97 per cent.

Even a private bank maintains as high as a 15.46 per cent weighted average interest rate on advances. This however does not apply to prime clients who get one-year

loans for as low as 10 per cent. offering higher interest rates, he "Due to higher costs of fund, we said

are incapable of reducing the interest rate on advances," a private bank official told The Daily Star when asked about the high lending rate. between cost of funds and average Out of the 30 private banks, 18

interest on advances should be kept have an administrative cost below 3 around three per cent." per cent, while the remaining 12 banks' administrative costs range from three to four per cent. Among the interest rates is completely a these, the newer banks have a matter of the individual banks. "The higher (10 per cent) weighted aver-BAB cannot impose anything upon age interest rate on deposits. them, but we would discuss with the

Former finance and planning banks' directors about the interest adviser to the caretaker government reduction." Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud thinks the lending rates in real terms Bank Khandakar Ibrahim Khaled are currently too high and they attributed "the lack of professionaladversely affect investment and other economic activities.

of corporate culture in the banking "The lending rates in nominal terms have not changed much since sector and lack of customer awarethe 1980s, although the inflation ness" to the absence of competition rate in the economy has been on interest rates. significantly reduced," he told The

Daily Star He observed that more competition in the banking sector has not led to a squeezing of the very high spread between the deposit and the lending rates. Instead, the relatively efficient private banks, including the foreign banks, are reaping excess

profits. Prof. Mahmud said the interest rates at present are rigidly determined and are not very responsive to the central bank's market-

oriented interventions. Some private banks are offering higher interest rates to attract deposits, which may hurt their longer-term financial health. The banks should be able to attract deposit by their goodwill, and not by

area, adding that the situation could have been prevented had the authorities deployed the army as requested by the Election Commission

However, Mahfuza Akhter, election officer of Dhaka district, said, "The election was held in a free and fair manner without any untoward situation.

Members of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), police and ansars, and 70 magistrates patrolled the area during the polls.

Most offices, establishments, shops and farms in Savar remained closed throughout the day while cell phones were disconnected

He however said a reduction in

ism among bank officials, absence

Advisor to Premier Bank Limited

Kazi Abdul Mazid said in a low

inflation rate (5 per cent) regime, the

banks should not pay such a high

rate (12 per cent) on deposits and so

be forced to charge higher rates on

rates if they are sincere, he said.

banks. The sooner they realise this

the better for all."

loans.

Paltan Maidan at 3:00pm. The BNP vesterday arranged a photo and poster exhibition at National Museum titled "25 years of BNP". Party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan inaugurated the exhibition.

The BNP will arrange a discussion meeting tomorrow at Talking to The Daily Star. Mahanagar Nattavamancha and will hold an open concert, Chairman of Bangladesh Bangladeshi Cultural Festival, on Association of Banks (BAB) Syed September 3. Manzur Elahi said, "The spread

The BNP vesterday also awarded 10 elderly activists of Comilla district for their contribution to the party. Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka and party Joint

CHT volatile

Managing Director of Pubali retaliate

> After the fight, the army searched the area and recovered, among other things, six pairs of combat uniforms, six pieces of haversacks, one blanket, tents and cheque books

The arrestee claimed himself to be a member of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), an antipeace accord organisation in the hill region.

In another development, the army in a lightening pre-dawn raid yesterday on a village, Lulaing Para, some 11-km from Bandarban town, arrested four persons.

The BAB and Bankers Club can help develop cooperation among Upon their confessions, the army banks and bring down the interest later recovered the body of an indigenous youth, Kina Ram, who was abducted on August 23.

Meantime, several hundred "The bankers must realise that indigenous people vesterday propaying a high rate of interest on tested in Khagrachhari and Dhaka deposits and correspondingly after violent clashes with plains charging higher rates on loans are people not helping anybody, not even the

into the Mahalchhari incidents, The demonstrators blocked the dismissal of the security personnel Khagrachhari-Chittagong road as involved in the attacks and beginpolice and troops were on high alert ning of talks on autonomy.

Hossain was also present as the chiefguest. Elaborate programmes have also been undertaken at divisional

district and thana headquarters across the country to celebrate the silver jubilee. JS body

FROM PAGE 1

The committee earlier planned to visit the CHT. It will also prepare a report on the CHT and submit it to the government with its recommendations. Mohammad Mosharraf Hossain, chairman of the committee, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, a member of the committee, directed it to work on improving the law and order in the area when Hossain met her Saturday at the Prime Minister's Office.

Hossain presided over the meeting while committee members Moni Śwapan Dewan, Shajahan chowdhury, Gazi Mohammad Shajahan, Syed Moazzem Hossain Alal, Mostafa Kamal Pasha, Abdul Wadud Bhuivan and other officials attended the meeting. However, the prime minister could not attend the meeting.

as part of a 72-hour strike called by the UPDF to protest at the attacks on

the indigenous people at Mahalchhari which left one person killed In Dhaka, some 100 indigenous men and women staged a brief rally

at Dhaka University before being stopped by police from marching towards the Prime Minister's Office.

"The attacks in Mahalchhari has added yet another black chapter to the history of the Chittagong Hill Tracts." Mithun Chakma, president of the CHT Hill Student's Council. told the rally.

The protestors carried placards and banners which read: "No full autonomy, no rest".

They submitted a memorandum to the prime minister, alleging that plains people looted and set afire 348 houses and ransacked a Buddhist temple. They demanded a judicial probe