Most JP lawmakers

nied him while leaders of JP includ-

ing Raushan Ershad, Kazi Firoj

Rashid, and ABM Ruhul Amin

Hawlader were present at the

suggested that Frshad ensure all

the cases filed against him are

disposed of and seal the seat shar-

ing before joining the ruling alliance.

He also warned him about ruling

Naziur met Ershad following a

direction from the BNP high com-

mand to counteract Jamaat's oppo-

sition to the plan for JP coming into

to join us. I welcome your decision

because it will ensure our victory in

the next election," a meeting source

quoted Naziur as saying to Ershad.

the edge over others if JP joins us,

and I hope you will keep staying with

finalised the decision yet. "I am very

happy to see you here," he told

Naziur and said,"I have placed

some conditions to the government

and we will continue discussion on

Later Ershad and Naziur had an

Dismissing the possibility of re-

organising Jatiya Party, Naziur

Rahman told reporters that they will

not get back to JP. "We have only

discussed his move to ally with the

ruling coalition, and I think it will be a

good decision if he joins hands with

Ruhul Amin Hawlader, secretary

general of JP, told The Daily Star

that it was just a courtesy call where

the BJP chairman has welcomed

Ershad on his possible return to the

Contempt rule

and lawyers to the Supreme Court on

on May 23, 2005 banned agitation on

the premises of the Supreme Court or

of any other court, and boycott of

The eleven lawyers facing the

contempt rule are -- former Supreme

Court Bar Association (SCBA) presi-

dent Abdul Baset Mojumdar, Ozair

Farooq, Mahbubey Alam, SCBA

secretary Enayetur Rahim, Bashir

Ahmed, SCBA Vice-president Abdul

Mannan Khan, KM Saifuddin,

Khandokar Mahbub Hossain, Subrata

the eleven lawyers to submit their reply

Abu Bakar Siddique said the HC on

May 23, 2005 issued a suo moto ruling

prohibiting gathering, congregation,

picketing and laying siege to the

entrance to any court. It also slapped a

ban on boycotting or abstaining from

attending any court on the basis of any

decision of any bar association or

out processions, held rallies,

obstructed judges' and lawyers' entry

to the SC and boycotted the court,

violating the HC's last year's suo moto

almost paralysed on June 11 as anti-

government lawyers, angered by the

HC's June 10 ban on 14-party opposi-

tion coalition's Dhaka-siege

programme, boycotted the court

under the banner of Supreme Court

Bar Association (SCBA), and carried

out sit-in demonstrations at all court

and lawyers' entry to the court includ-

ing the chief justice and the attorney

contempt petition also was the peti-

tioner against the opposition's Dhaka-

siege programme and advocate Abu

Bakar Siddique moved for that petition

general.

The agitators obstructed judges'

Advocate Shagor who filed the

The Supreme Court became

He said the eleven lawyers brought

Bangladesh Bar Council.

A division bench of the HC asked

Counsel for the petitioner advocate

Chowdhury and Nurul Islam Sujon.

to the rule within three weeks.

Secretary AM Amin Uddin, its former

The HC in an unprecedented ruling

"The four-party alliance will have

In reply, Ershad said he has not

"I have heard that you are going

the ruling alliance fold.

the alliance," he said.

exclusive meeting.

four-party alliance.

FROM PAGE 16

June 11.

However, a party insider said that

coalition partner Jamaat-e-Islami.

The meeting sources said Naziur

whatever decision Ershad might

have to take, added the sources. JP Deputy Leader in Parliament TIM Fazle Rabbi and two other lawmakers objected to JP teaming up with the ruling alliance as they said they believe the BNP-Jamaat

They said why JP should share the blame for the failures of the present government.

will surely get a drubbing in the next

election for their "misrule, corruption

and price hike of essentials".

The party should not join any alliance now to keep intact its chance to bargain with the ones who will win the next election, they observed.

At the meeting, senior leader Tajul Islam MP and some other members called for disciplinary action against GM Quader for his "anti-party activities"

In reply, Ershad said he will not tolerate anyone opposing him, no matter who he is, sources said. **ERSHAD-NAZIUR MEET**

Naziur Rahman Manzur went to President Park, JP chairman's Baridhara residence, at around 1:00pm and stayed there for an

E Ahamed

FROM PAGE 1

Ahamed however said, "We look forward to working with whichever government the people of Bangladesh decide to elect."

He said the people in India attach the highest importance to India-Bangladesh relations. "This sentiment is shared by all, cutting across party lines.'

On terrorism, Ahamed said it poses the greatest danger to the peaceful and stable existence of nation-states in today's world. It is the open and democratic societies that are most vulnerable to the threat posed by extremism and terrorism.

He said the recent blasts in Mumbai and Srinagar have once again shown the kind of destruction such elements can cause and the extent to which these elements can go to impose their views and beliefs.

"We believe Bangladesh should and can set an example to others. It is in our mutual interest to cooperate and work to curb the rise of fundamentalist and extremist beliefs," he noted.

On disputes over various outstanding issues, he said as neighbours it is natural that differences will arise but these can be resolved only through dialogue and understanding.

"Once we are committed to meaninafully working together we can hope to work for resolution of complex

issues." he said. Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, president of Bangladesh Bharat Maitri Samiti, Justice KM Sobhan, president of Bangladesh Bharat Sampriti Parishad, Mai Gen (Retd) KM Shafiullah, convenor of Bangladesh Muktijoddha Kalyan Foundation and Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri were, among others, present.

Voter list

FROM PAGE 16 Abdur Rashid Sarkar told reporters

The EC Secretariat on July 17

proposed allocation of Tk 40.86 crore for updating the voter list.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman initially refused to allocate fresh funds for the job. He later asked the EC to submit accounts of the previous expenditure of Tk 43 crore for preparing a controversial fresh voter list. The EC submitted the accounts

The minister then said he would allocate funds.

The process of voter list updating began on July 1 with the job being done at the offices concerned. And finally, door to door visits for doing the job started on July 21. But the staffs temporarily recruited for the task are reluctant to do this from the very beginning due to uncertainty

Third ODI today

FROM PAGE 1 The visitors however suffered a big blow before the match as captain Habibul Bashar has been ruled out for the rest of the matches of the Africa tour due to a fracture on his left fifth metacarpal.

Wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud will lead the team in the rest of the matches in Zimbabwe and for the

three-match series in Kenya. Bangladesh think-tank named almost an unchanged eleven for the third match yesterday with batsman Rajin Saleh coming in for the injured

Bashar. This will be Saleh's first game in the series. The Tigers had a two and a half

hour's practice session yesterday and there was compulsory fielding for all the members in between the nets session and afterwards, as the visitors are yet to find their rhythm in this department.

Zimbabwe, meanwhile, are expected to bring in Terrence Duffin, the immediate past captain, in place of opener Justice Chibhabha who has not been anywhere near the form he had shown in the West

TEAM

Khaled Mashud (Captain), Javed Omar. Shahriar Nafees Ahmed. Aftab Ahmed, Mohammad Ashraful, Rajin Saleh, Farhad Reza, Mohammad Rafique, Mashrafee Bin Mortuza, Abdur Razzak and

2 killed in

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Sirajganj yesterday.

release, Shafigul Islam, 45, had two cases filed against him with a Khulna metropolitan police station and he was arrested at his home in Nirala residential area of Khulna city on Monday morning.

ment, Rab claimed they took him to Pabla Karikarpara Bridge area at Daulatpur in Khulna around 1:55am to arrest his accomplices and retrieve hidden arms. When Rab men along with Shafigul reached the area Shafiqul's cohorts opened fire on them forcing Rab to retaliate

During the exchange of fire Shafigul tried to escape Rab custody but he was caught in the line of fire. He died on the spot. Two Rab men also sustained bullet injuries

Rab recovered two pipe guns and three shotgun shells which were abandoned by Shafiqul's

Rab claimed in the press release that slain Shafiqul was a close aide to Asaduzzaman Litu who is the principal accused in the Dainik . Janakantha journalist Shamsur Rahman murder case. He was also killed in 'crossfire' in Khulna city in October last year.

Meanwhile, another criminal was killed in 'crossfire' between Rab and his accomplices at Maliker Morh in Kamarkhanda upazila of Sirajganj early yesterday, a correspondent in Siraigani reports.

Yakub Ali, 40, of Baqbari in Kamarkhanda upazila was accused in several criminal cases including nine murder cases and two rape cases filed with different police stations. A court had sentenced him to prison for 10 years but he was

Following information a Rab team raided Kandapara Bazar of Sadar upazila and arrested him along with his cohort Azam Ali, 35, on Monday noon.

Following Yakub's confessional statement, Rab members took him to Maliker Morh area to recover firearms and arrest his other accom-

When they reached the spot, Yakub's accomplices opened fired on Rab men in a bid to snatch him from the Rab custody.

Rab retaliated and during the gun battle, Yakub received bullet

during the encounter. Rab recovered a pistol and two bullets from the spot. The gang members however managed to escape.

Richard Boucher

FROM PAGE 16 Washington recently

Boucher said the US also likes to find new avenues for economic prosperity of Bangladesh and effective fight against terrorism and keeping it from taking root in their

79 more back

Charity donated Tk 3250 to each returnee while the expatriates' welfare ministry donated Tk 500 on

ministry sources could confirm if any other Bangladeshis in Lebanon registered to return home.

the AL, said they would jointly hold a discussion on Bangabandhu on August 14 and observe grenadeattack-day on August 21. Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina came under grenade attack on August 21 in 2004, which left 24 AL leaders and

AL presidium members at a meeting prepared the programmes on July 30.

Jalil said they have discussed the latest political scenario at the meeting and the next course of antigovernment agitation programmes to force the government accept the reforms in the caretaker government and the Election Commission

He said they would announce their decisions today after a 14party meeting at AL's central office

However, meeting sources said they also decided to start road march at different districts after August 15 where the ruling BNP is influential and hold a grand rally in the capital in the first week of the next month.

Jalil said they are at the peak of their anti-government movement "We will announce fresh antigovernment agitations which will involve thousands of people and will force the coalition government to accept electoral reforms," Jalil said without disclosing the programmes.

Member Abdur Razzak, the meeting was also attended by Tofail Ahmed. Obaidul Quader, Rashed Khan Menon, Hasanul Haque Inu, Mainuddin Khan Badal, Hazi Abdus Samad, Nurul Islam, Pankaj

Opposition coalition

the leader of the opposition in parlia-

ment, instructed senior opposition leaders to find out all possible expressions of democratic movements, which might involve larger participation to create pressure on the BNP-Jamaat-led four-party alliance government to accept their proposed electoral reforms.

> been working to chalk out the next course of opposition action programmes at the very end of the four-party alliance regime. After finalising the anti-government agitation by the AL leaders with a view to involving larger peoples' participation, Hasina will sit with senior 14-party leaders within the first week of the next month to finalise the strategy for the final round of the movement before the alliance government hands over power to the caretaker government. Workers Party General Secretary Bimal Biswas said, "People are the motive force of all move-

ments and we are planning to mobi-

A team of senior AL leaders has

lise a huge number of people through our ongoing movement to create pressure on the alliance government to accept our demand for reforms.'

He told The Daily Star that they might also hold a grand rally and an indefinite sit-in in the capital, and big rallies in different districts and upazila headquarters involving tens of thousands of people before October. The opposition coalition has

been demonstrating demanding reforms in the system of caretaker government and the Election Commission (EC) since last year They held a number of agitation programmes on the streets to press home the demand.

But the government remains indifferent despite programmes like Dhaka siege, grand rallies, road, rail and river transport blockades. hartals, and laying of sieges to the EC, Prime Minister's Office and the

Saarc integration

Asia. she noted.

"Globalisation is forcing nations to face multifaceted challenges individually and collectively. These require us to take hard and swift decisions and also to ensure their early implementation." the Saarc

chair told the Council of Ministers. She urged the foreign ministers to get down to finalising the document on Saarc Vision for the Third Decade for adoption at the next summit.

The prime minister requested the Saarc foreign ministers to accord the highest priority to this matter and to place their considered recommendations at the next summit. scheduled to be held in New Delhi.

She urged them to look for ways and means for addressing sustainable development to alleviate poverty in South Asia. In this context, it is also necessary for all Saarc member-states to achieve the goals laid down in the "Saarc Decade for Poverty Alleviation (2006-2015)".

Khaleda said a number of important decisions were taken at the Dhaka summit aiming to position Saarc on a robust platform. These are essential for moving South Asia towards swift socioeconomic growth and making the region a vibrant, dynamic and secure place

The current chair of the SAARC Council of Ministers and Bangladesh Foreign Minister, M Morshed Khan, Indian State Minister for External Affairs E Ahamed and Saarc Secretary General Lympo Chenkyab Dorjee also spoke at the inaugural session.

"We resolved to create a firm basis for the economic prosperity of 1.4 billion South Asians and to make Saarc an effective instrument in achieving that objective. We have collectively demonstrated to our peoples and the international community that Saarc is increasingly poised towards more focused, action-oriented and time-bound activities than ever before." Khaleda

An important reflection of this positive trend is the interest expressed by major international players like China, Japan, Republic of Korea, the United States and the European Union to associate them selves with Saarc as observers, she pointed out to underpin her optimism about advances of the nations under this forum.

The prime minister welcomed the foreign minister of Afghanistan, representing Saarc newest member, and hoped that Afghanistan's formal inclusion in the Saarc family at the next summit would add a new dimension and substances to South Asian cooperation.

Foreign Ministers of Saarc countries were on the dais. Afghan Foreign Minister Rangin Dadfar Spanta was also on the dais as a special invitee.

Ministers, MPs, diplomats, high officials and members of the delegations attended the inaugural cere-

US, ROK,

Minister KP Sharma Oli, Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid M Kasuri, Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera and Afghan Foreign Minister Rangin Dadfar Spanta attended the informal meeting held at

the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. The Council of Ministers, which will sit formally today, also considered various recommendations made by the Saarc Standing Committee that

concluded its meeting yesterday. Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Hemavetuddin, who chaired the twoday Standing Committee meeting, told reporters they endorsed the Saarc budget for \$1.90 million and the Saarc

secretary general's report. He said the Standing Committee stressed the need for ratification and implementation of three trade related agreements - customs cooperation, arbitration and avoidance of double taxation -- signed at the Dhaka sum-

The foreign secretary said the Standing Committee considered to hold Saarc Trade Fair and publish the reports on Saarc Social Charter and Multi-modal Transport Study.

The Standing Committee, comprising the foreign secretaries of Saarc member states, also considered the Conventions of Suppression of Terrorism and Additional Protocol and Narcotic Drugs.

It stressed the need for enacting necessary legislation by member states to implement these conven-

Hemayetuddin said the committee spent a lot of time to prepare its report over the dispute of India and Pakistan on Safta being operational. However, the report was prepared by containing separate observations of India and Pakistan on Safta

The committee also considered the holding of Saarc Car Rally and decided to form an organising committee for coordination of the event to be held before the 14th summit in India likely next year. The first meeting of the organising committee will be hosted

by India. On issuance of Saarc visa. Hemavetuddin said the Standing Committee decided to hold a meeting of the Immigration Officials immediately to resolve certain problems in issuing Saarc stickers to certain category of people travelling the

member states. The meeting was attended by Bhutan's Foreign Secretary Yeshev Dorji, Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran, the Maldives Deputy Minister Ms Aminath Mohammed Didi, Nepal's Foreign Secretary Bhagirath Basnet, Pakistani Foreign secretary Riaz Mohammad Khan, Sri Lankan Foreign Secretary HMGS Palihakkara and Afghanistan's Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmoud Saikal

Death reference

book before a death reference

bench of the HC yesterday. Although over 500 death reference cases still await paper book preparation and death reference hearing in the HC, the paper book of the seven JMB militants' death reference case has been prepared

on priority basis for hearing. A Barisal court on May 29 this vear awarded death sentence to JMB chief Abdur Rahman, his deputy Bangla Bhai and five other militants in sensational Jhalakathi iudges' killing case.

The others to walk the gallows are JMB Mailish-e-Shura members Ataur Rahman Sunny, Abdul Awal and Khaled Saifullah, suicide bomber Iftekhar Hasan Al Mamun and Asadur Rahman Arif. Of them.

Arif is still at large.

None of the seven militants has appealed in the HC against the death sentence.

However, the government has appointed two state defence lawvers to move the death reference case for the seven convicts. The two defence lawyers, Khalilur Rahman Bhuiyan and Salehuddin, were present during the hearing yester-

Currently, paper books are being prepared for the death reference cases of 2003. If the paper book for the Jhalakathi case were prepared in the usual manner, HC hearing on the death sentences of the militants would not be held before 2009

13 cases

FROM PAGE 1

makes the legal provisions for remedy of such irregularities ineffective, election experts observed.

The system encourages the candidates to ensure their victory by any means and they believe that they will remain as lawmakers once the election result is declared, the

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday former adviser to a caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan termed the existing legal provision for adjudicating election disputes as incorrect and said it does not serve the purpose.

"If a person manages to get elected by malpractice, or by force or coercion or by any other unfair means, he cannot be unseated from the parliament due to loopholes in the legal system," he said adding that the weak system encourages malpractice in elections. "There is no record of unseating a lawmaker for malpractice in elections," he added.

He suggested adjudication of election disputes within 12 months of filing through amending the legal provision. "Massive reform is required in the election laws for holding elections in a free and fair manner," he said adding, "But neither the government nor the Election Commission has made any move to bring reforms.

Former election commissioner M Munsef Ali echoed the same view "The slow pace of adjudication of election cases has made the legal provision ineffective. If the legal provision is not made effective, there is no meaning of continuing to have the provision." he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The former election commis sioner who opposed the move to repeal the election tribunals in 2001 said, "We should not have introduced the system of lodging election disputes with the High Court as it is usually overloaded with cases."

Castro

FROM PAGE 16

not appear on the live television broadcast Monday night in which his secretary read a letter from the Cuban leader. Castro's message said he underwent surgery for gastrointestinal bleeding, apparently due to stress from a heavy travel and work schedule related to recent trips to Argentina and eastern

Castro, who took control of Cuba in 1959, resisted repeated US attempts to oust him and survived communism's demise elsewhere, said he was temporarily handing over the presidency and the leadership of Cuba's Communist Party to his brother, Raul.

Raul Castro, Cuba's defence minister who turned 75 in June, also did not appear on television and made no statement on his own. For decades the constitutional successor to his brother. Raul Castro has assumed a more public profile in

recent weeks Fidel Castro last appeared in public Wednesday as he marked the 53rd anniversary of his July 26 barracks assault that launched the revolution. The Cuban leader seemed thinner than usual and somewhat weary during a pair of

long speeches in eastern Cuba. "The operation obligates me to undertake several weeks of rest," Castro's letter read. Extreme stress "had provoked in me a sharp intestinal crisis with sustained bleeding that obligated me to undergo a

The calm delivery of the announcement appeared to signal that there would be an orderly succession should Fidel become permanently incapacitated. Cuban exiles celebrated in the

complicated surgical procedure."

streets of Miami, but Havana's streets were quiet overnight as Cubans awaited further word on Castro's condition.

It was unknown when or where the surgery took place, or where Castro was recovering.

Ongoing intestinal bleeding can be serious and potentially lifethreatening, said Dr. Stephen Hanauer, gastroenerology chief at the University of Chicago hospitals. He said it was difficult to deduce the cause of Castro's bleeding without knowing what part of the digestive

Dhaka in WTO

FROM PAGE 16 the ministry with suggestions on how the country can gain after given

policy changes in the WTO. The meeting will also review the draft report on WTO trade policy, sources said.

Tariff barriers to trade (TBT),

cash incentive and tax rebate in

export are among the issues to be

included in the country's trade policy, which is slated for review at WTO on September 13-15. Meanwhile, business community and leaders of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)

welcomed the change in LDC They said the country's negotiation team will now have priority to table its agenda in the upcoming

world trade negotiations. All members in rotation usually lead the LDC group that comprises the countries designated as least developed by the United Nations.

Israel offensive

EU foreign ministers were also meeting to hammer out a common stance but the bloc is divided over whether to call for an immediate ceasefire in a conflict that has killed hundreds of people, and created a humanitarian crisis with hundreds of thousands displaced and much of Lebanon's infrastructure in ruins.

An Israeli official said troops were authorised to push up to 30 kilometres (19 miles) into Lebanon, an operation Defence Minister Amir Peretz said was aimed at creating "conditions on the ground for an international force.'

Lebanese television showed pictures of soldiers and tanks massed at the border, where Israeli bulldozers have already started flattening Hezbollah positions to create a buffer zone.

But an Israeli cabinet minister conceded that the military, easily the strongest force in the Middle East. would no be able to completely wipe out Hezbollah's rocket capabilities.

"This option does not exist. Neither by air strikes, nor by a military ground operation," said Meir Sheetrit. "We can't entirely destroy their capability to fire rockets. And Hezbollah fired two salvos of

rockets at northern Israel on

Tuesday, causing no casualties but breaking a 36-hour lull, the army said. Israel said the aim of its operation was to drive Hezbollah fighters out of territory south of the Litani River, which had roughly formed the border of a "security zone" that became a deadly quagmire for Israeli forces

pation of Lebanon in 2000. On Tuesday, ground troops punched across the border in four separate incursions, according to Lebanese police and the United Nations, which maintains a peackeeping force in the area.

Arabic television station Al-

until they ended their 22-year occu-

Arabiya said three soldiers were killed fighting around the central border village of Aita ash-Shaab, where Milos Strugar, spokesman for the UN force reported heavy fighting.

Israel has not confirmed the deaths but claimed it had killed 20 Hezobllah fighters over the past two

the former Hezbollah military stronghold of Bint Jbeil, scene of the deadliest ground combat since Israel's offensive started, as well as the village of Taibe, where one soldier was reported wounded. Syrian President Bashar al-

Fighting was also reported around

Assad, whos regime is one of Hezbollah's main backers along with Iran, has ordered his forces to step up their state of alert. "We must understand that every effort and each drop of sweat put into

training now will save a drop of blood when the hour comes," Assad said in remarks reported in the Syrian press. "The fight will continue as long as our land is occupied and our rights

are violated," he added. "Victory will be ours, with the help of God." Syria, the former power broker in Lebanon, has come under fire from both Israel and the United States over its support for Hezbollah although Israel has said it does not

want to widen the conflict. Lebanon says 750 people, most of them civilians, have been killed in the Israeli onslaught which was

launched after Hezbollah seized two

on July 12. An AFP count has put the death toll at 548, while the United Nations has said around one-third of the casualties were children. A total of 51 Israelis have been confirmed killed,

soldiers in a deadly cross-border raid

the majority of them soldiers. Rescue workers also say dozens more civilians are still buried underneath the rubble of houses destroyed in Israeli air strikes, while aid groups have complained about the continued difficulty of reaching the most afflicted areas.

Despite a promised 48-hour halt in air raids which allowed thousands of southern Lebanese to flee the war zone, warplanes also struck roads leading to Syria in the early hours of Tuesday, police said.

Facing international outrage over the killings in Qana. Olmert defiantly declared Monday that "there is no ceasefire and there will be no ceasefire in the coming days."

Hostilities would end only "when the threat over our heads is removed. when our kidnapped soldiers return to their homes and when we can live in security," he added. As the fighting looked set to

intensify, ambassadors of the five permanent UN Security Council members -- Britain. China. France. Russia and the United States -- held their first official consultations Monday to prepare a resolution. The diplomats were to meet again

Tuesday with Annan, who has issued a number of calls for an immediate ceasefire to end the worst crossborder fighting in a quarter century. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has said she was

convinced that "an urgent ceasefire and a lasting settlement" could be achieved this week. France has already distributed a draft UN resolution, which calls for a ceasefire and political settlement while the United States is working on

others are possible. EU foreign ministers were due to hold talks to draw up a common position on a ceasefire and take stock of humanitarian efforts in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, where Israel is

its own proposal and diplomats said

also continuing a deadly offensive. In Tehran, a senior figure in Iran's Islamic regime, Avatollah Ahmad Jannati, called on Muslim countries to arm Hezbollah, the ISNA news agency reported.

"Muslim countries are expected not to deny Hezbollah and the Lebanese any kind of help, especially weapons, medicine and food," said Jannati, who heads the Guardian Council -- a powerful political watch-

dog in Iran. The comments mark a break with Iran's usual position, which emphasises "moral support" only for

the Shia movement.

PM flies

night of August 3.

The Bangladesh delegation will include Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, Prime Minister's Secretary Khandaker Shahidul Islam, Foreign

Secretary Hemavetuddin and Prime Minister's Press secretary Tajul Islam. The prime minister Zia is expected to return home on the

52 killed

FROM PAGE 16 The target was well chosen because Iragi security forces draw their salaries from the bank on the first day of every month. The blast set several cars on fire in the leafy Shia neighbourhood, Dismembered

bodies were strewn on the sidewalk. Abdul Hassan Mohammed, a 62year-old teacher, said he was walking to the bank to draw his pension when the bomb exploded. "A big explosion slammed me 4 meters (12 feet) into a wall. My friends took me to one of their stores, gave me water and asked me to relax ... I didn't get my pension," he told The Associated

Karradah has seen increasing violence in the sectarian fighting between Shias and Sunnis in recent months. Last Thursday, rockets and mortars rained down in the neighbourhood, collapsing an apartment house, shattering shops and killing 31 people. A car bomb also

exploded at the same time Elsewhere, a car bomb targeting a police patrol killed one policeman and six civilians in Muqdadiyah about 60 miles north of Baghdad said an official of a joint Iraqi-US security force centre. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to release

details. A roadside bomb narrowly missed a car belonging to the Ministry of Electricity, killing one civilian and wounding another in eastern Baghdad, police said. Gunmen in two cars raided a mosque west of Baghdad, killing a

cleric and his brother. A suicide attack was foiled when soldiers fired at a car trying to slam into an army convoy in Baghdad The car exploded, killing the driver

but nobody else, police said. And two insurgents were killed when a roadside bomb they were

planting on a highway detonated prematurely in Karma, 25 miles west of Baghdad, police said. In the northern town of Mosul, a drive-by

shooting killed one civilian. On Monday, gunmen dressed in military fatigues burst into the offices of the Iragi-American Chamber of Commerce and a nearby mobile phone company, seizing 26 people in a daylight raid in a mostly Shia area of the capital. The same day, a millionaire businessman and his two sons were abducted from their car in

Baghdad. All the victims were believed to be Iragis. The Iragi-American Chamber is an independent organisation not affiliated with the US government, and maintains branches throughout Iraq and in

Amman, Jordan The Interior Ministry denied that the kidnappers were police despite the uniforms and blamed the attack on "terrorists," Iraqi state television

US officials estimate an average of 30-40 people are kidnapped each day in Iraq, although the real figure may be higher because few families contact the police. Security officials believe most of the ransoms end up in the hands of insurgent and militia

Many abductions are believed to be tied to the ongoing violence between Sunni and Shia extremists who target civilians of the rival Muslim communities. On Monday, the government

groups

said that since February, 30,359 families or about 182,000 people had fled their homes due to sectarian violence and intimidation. That represented an increase of about 20,000 people from the number

Striking teachers FROM PAGE 16 in the streets demanding cent percent basic salary from the gov-

Expressing solidarity with the striking teachers, Shikkha Andolan Mancha will hold a rally at the Muktangon in the capital today at 4:00pm where academicians will be present. A procession will be brought out following the rally. However, Shikkhak Karmachari

ernment exchequer.

Oikya Jote, led by Shariful Islam, will hold a grand sit-in at Central Shaheed Minar and another faction of the Jote, led by Selim Bhuiyan, will hold a grand rally at the same place on August 6 protesting the government's delay in meeting their demands in the name of dialogues. Meanwhile, community primary

teachers under the banner of

Bangladesh Community Primary

Teachers' Association have started

an indefinite strike keeping the schools closed from vesterday. Leaders of the association said they would go for hunger strike until death at the Central Shaheed Minar from August 6 in support of their

'crossfire'

Two criminals were killed in 'crossfire' during shootouts between their accomplices and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) men in Khulna and

According to a Rab press

Following his confessional state-

during the encounter.

cohorts as they fled.

absconding.

plices around 2:30am

injuries and died on the spot. Two Rab men were also injured

FROM PAGE 16 were present at Zia International Airport (ZIA). Etihad Airways and Qatar

their arrival at ZIA. Neither IOM nor the expatriates

14-party opposition combine. Jalil, also general secretary of

workers dead

at 4:00pm.

Chaired by AL Presidium