PM's remarks in JS offensive: Hasina

Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina vesterday said Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's "offensive" remarks in the JS would make her think twice about going back to the House.

"How could the PM say that she would not allow me to speak. I am the leader of the opposition and also the former prime minister. Is it the proper parliamentary language? she told reporters at the VIP lounge of the Zia International Airport prior to leaving for Saudi Arabia to perform hajj.

Hasina said she had a lot of ssues to raise in parliament on Sunday including indemnity, price hike and law and order, but was stopped abruptly. She said the prime minister comes to the parliament to "gag the opposition".

Hasina said the opposition would protest the indemnity ordinance designed to protect those responsible for custodial deaths during the Operation Clean Heart as it "goes against humanity, constitution and also against the spirit of the Geneva

She questioned why the opposition would not be allowed to talk about the indemnity ordinance and the US decision on new immigration rules imposed on Bangladeshis.

She, however, said that her party members would take part in the thanks motion on the president's address to parliament and also on budget to "unearth misdeeds" of the She said her party was observing

the political situation but an antigovernment movement at this point would not be required, as people themselves would resist the government because of its "repression".

She said during her rule Bangladesh stood out as a role model with regard to poverty alleviation, eradication of illiteracy and reducing regional conflicts, but the rule of the present government has creased people's misery.

Rejecting the government claim that negative propaganda by the AL contributed to Bangladesh being blacklisted as a terror-risk country Hasina said the remarks by the US ambassador in Dhaka in this regard contradicted the government claim.

She said an AL team would soon visit the US to lobby with the US administration to drop Bangladesh from its list of terror-risk countries.

About India's 'push-in' bids, Hasina blamed the prime minister for the situation and said it is Khaleda Zia who during her previous rule had admitted in a joint communique with the then Indian PM, Narsimha Rao, that there were illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in

Before leaving to board the aircraft, Hasina said she would pray for the people so that they could free themselves from the "misrule and misdeeds" of this government.

Awami League's Religious Affairs Secretary Sheikh Abdullah, opposition leader's private secretary Nazrul Islam and APS Awlad Hossain are accompanying Hasina the pilgrimage.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition advocate Abdul Hamid, AL leaders Zillur Rahman, Tofail Ahmed, Abdul Jalil, Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Mirza Azam MP and others were present at the airport to see off their party chief.

Post-polls clashes leave 60 hurt in Kushtia, Barisal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 60 people were injured in post-polls violence in Kushtia and . Barisal yesterday. According to our Kushtia corre-

spondent, a group of BNP activists led by Afsar Ali, a defeated chairman candidate of Dharmapur union. attacked the houses of their opponents at around 3 pm yesterday. Afsar, also a BNP leader, defeated to JSD leader Arman Ali in Dharmapur union parishad election held on Tuesday. Supporters of Arman retaliated, resulting in a fierce clash between the two sides.

The clash continued for four hours, leaving 50 people injured. On information, police rushed to the spot, fired teargas shells and brought the situation under control. Eight of the injured, identified as

Nabiran, 35, Bagha, 27, Shilpi, 18 Badal, 28, Hasina, 30, Anwar, 22, Khokan, 28, and Rahima, 16, were admitted to Kushtia hospital while the rest given first aid. Our Barisal, correspondent

reports, ten people were injured. seven of them seriously, in a postpolls violence in Laxmipasha union under Bagerganj upazila yesterday. According to local people, sup-

porters of a newly elected chairman came under attack by their opponents in the morning

They beat them mercilessly leaving the ten injured, seven of them seriously.

The seriously injured, identified as Aziz, 35, Jalil, 45, Saifur, 20, Shamim, 18, Sekender Ali, 55, Abu Taleb, 35, and Shahin, 21, were admitted to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

rounds of fire but none was

hundreds of people at Petropole,

Haridaspur, Jaintipur and Bangaon

to push them into Bangladesh.

Kolkata, New Delhi and Mumbai.

These people were brought from

Our Kushtia correspondent

reports that Bangla-speaking peo-

ple have been brought to Bestoganj,

. Hridoypur and Ruddronagar for

push-in. About 50 people are kept

on the bank of Bhairab River at

lance team and are guarding the

border at Kurigram, Lamanirhat,

Nilnhamari. Panchagarh and

Ministry spokesman yesterday said

Bangladesh has turned down its

offer for joint verification of 213

people now stranded in no-man's

people have Bangladeshi ration

cards and some have electricity bills

of Palli Vidyut Samiti as proof of their

tion follows a statement by Advani

last month that some 20 million

and Pakistan" would be deported.

"illegal immigrants from Bangladesh

pushing Bangla-speaking Muslims

into Bangladesh. Dhaka responded

called upon the members of

Bangladesh British Chamber of

Commerce (BBCC) to help refur-

"Britain could be used as a

Mahmudur Rahman, executive

springboard for building

chairman of the Board of Investment

(BOI), presented an investment

profile on the country, and Sheikh

Razzak Ali, high commissioner of

Bangladesh to the UK, Prof. David

Kirk, director of Queen Margaret

University College, FBCCI presi-

dent Yussuf Abdullah Harun, and Dr.

Wali Tasar Uddin, director general of

the BBCC were among the guests.

Bangladesh's image," he said.

bish the country's image.

by pushing them back.

Custodial

deaths

FROM PAGE 12

Within weeks, India started

He claimed that the stranded

The simmering border confronta-

An Indian External Affairs

Thakurgaon to foil push-in bids.

Local people have formed vigi-

The BSF has also assembled

Troops mass mortars

njured.

Raudbati.

citizenship.

FROM PAGE 1

ations in Jammu and Kashmir It also continued assembling Bangla-speaking people to push them into Bangladesh and evacu-

and adjoining border villages.

Our correspondent from bordering Nazir Gomani in Lalmonirhat

ated 15,000 people from Senakata

reports that the BSF has assembled several thousand people equipped with lethal weapons and stones. "It has become a prestige issue

for them (BSF)," Lieutenant Colonel Ashfagul Islam, commanding officer of 19 BDR battalion, told The Daily Star. "They have become more desperate over the last seven days

"They refused to receive our protest letter over three attacks this month that left several people injured.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) reports that nearly 8,000 Indian terrorists and cadres of the ruling BJP of India have been assisting the BSF on the border opposite to Pathgram in Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Nilphamari and Panchagarh districts.

Some victims on the zero line at Nazir Gomani told BSS that the BSF forced them to tell Indian and foreign journalists that they are Bangladeshis. Refusal to say this results in torture, according to the BSS report.

Sources said the Indian border guards tried to push in scores of people through Mistripara border, but BSF and local people foiled the bid. BSF opened several

Anticrime drive

FROM PAGE 1 ment programmes

"If you cooperate, the four-party government will lead the country towards prosperity and development." she added.

In reply to the main question of the same lawmaker, Khaleda said 443 UP complexes have so far been built across the county and construction of 4,045 more is now in

Construction of the remaining 2,500 complexes are awaiting approval of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC), she

34 more **NGOs** quit ADAB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty-four more non-government organisations (NGOs) have quit the Association of Development Agencies of Bangladesh (ADAB).

They have expressed solidarity with the National NGO Coordination Committee (NNCC) in its move to hold a convention this month. In a joint statement yesterday

chief executives of the NGOs said ADAB has failed to uphold the nterest of its members and has become an 'ineffective and nonfunctioning' organisation. They alleged that the present

leadership of ADAB is destroying unity and solidarity of the NGOs nstead of taking effective initiatives for poverty alleviation, spread of education and other activities for the welfare of the people.

Earlier, a number of other NGOs nad resigned from ADAB.

The NGOs which rersigned yesterday are DNK, UPAKAR, SSKS, CARE-Bangladesh, Sylhet, Khasbir Youth Action Group, PARAS, Institute of Development Affairs, Palli Pragoti Sangsad, Rural Development Center, Jatiya Tarun Sangha, BARSA, Palli Karma Shahayak Sangstha, Beel Chalon Development Service Centre, Sacheton Karmo Sahayok Sangstha, Uttoron Adarsha Bahumukhi Samaj Kalyan sangstha, Banga Janani, Sunity Sangha, Sight Moon Organisation ORA, Organisation for Rural Development, Manob Kalvan Parishad, Palli Mangol Kendra, Samajik Kalyan Sangstha, ESDO Chetona Unnayen Sangstha Sammilita Grameen Mohila Unnayan Sangstha, Attmonirbhorshil Samaj Kalyan Sangstha, Nari Kalyan sangstha, Jana Kalyan Sangha,MOTHER, Kanchan Samity, Palli Unnayan Sangstha, Mukti Seba Sangstha and VFDA, according to a press release of the NNCC.

Jumma refugees demand rehabilitation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jumma 'refugees' in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) have demanded immediate steps for 'proper rehabilitation' and return of their land from 'encroachers'.

They have suffered for long as refugees and still they are living in 'extreme insecurity and uncertainty,' they said and demanded an end to

The demands were made by the Chitagong Hill Tracts Repatriated Jumma Refugees' Welfare Association at a press conference at the Jativa Press Club vesterday.

"We had signed a 20-poin accord with the then government in 1997 and following this, 12,222 families returned to the country from across the border. But the government is vet to rehabilitate us propcratic," President of the association Probhakar Chakma said.

Association leaders alleged that settlers (Bangalees who had settled in the CHT after 1971) backed by a section of security personnel frequently attacked the refugees.

The government has not yet formed a task force to monitor implementation of the '20-point accord' and for this rehabilitation of Jumma refugees has come to a halt, thev said.

"We had submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on March 4 last year, demanding immediate implementation of our demands. These include adequate ration, TK 10,000 to buy bulls, loan facilities, funds for repair of temple, jobs in police force, army, ansar, VDP and appointment of a tribal as chairman of the CHT development board", one leader added.

General Secretary of the association Santoshita Chakma Bakul read out a statement at the press conference while Vice Chairman Hemendra Tripura, Prafulla Kumar Chakma and Safru Marma were

AL walks out FROM PAGE 12

ing the local government, brain drain, female education, communications and medicare.

Abu Yusuf Mohammad Khalilur Rahman of the Treasury Bench in his supplementary question asked the PM about the country's total fisheries production and what it was during the previous AL regime. The prime minister said the amount stands at 18.70 metric tonnes, a 7.55 per cent increase from that of the AL government.

She said the four-colour school textbook would attract the school children. Quotes on ethics were also incorporated in the books, she said, while replying to a question on the new textbooks

To a query on the proposed Padma Bridge, she said only after the completion of feasibility study would the government know about the width and length and the approximate time for the bridge to com-

Fazlul Haq Milon and Sultan Mohammad Babu raised almost identical questions related to costs to build up Union Parishad buildngs. Among others, Golam Mohammad Qader, Gazi Mohammad Shahjahan, Ali Asgar Lobby and Mufti Abdus Sattar asked



Hundreds of homebound passengers queue up for tickets at the Kamalapur Railway Station in the city yesterday on the eye of the Fid-ul-Azha

Speakers warn against arsenic in food chain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Widespread use of groundwater for irrigation suggests that ingestion of crops so produced could be a major

Besides, "phyto-toxicity" due to increased arsenic in soil/water and its long-term impact on agricultural yield is an area of concern, said speakers at a seminar in the city. And naturally occurring arsenic

and arsenic-rich wastes, generated from a wide range of arsenic removal systems, also pose a threat "In the absence of any clear guideline for safe disposal, such wastes are often disposed in a very unsafe way", they added. The seminar on the" Fate of

Arsenic in the Environment," jointly organised by Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), International Training Netwrok (ITN), Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (ESD) Programme and the United Nations University (UNU), was held at the BUET Council Bhaban. Experts from India, Japan,

Britain, Pakistan and Bangladesh participated at the seminar. The discussion session was

divided into two parts. In the first session, experts presented technical papers on the fate of arsenic extracted with groundwater, influence of upstream sediment on arsenic contamination of groundwater in Bangladesh, the cancer risk of drinking arsenic -contaminated water and a pilot study in

M Ashraf Ali presented the paper on the 'fate of arsenic extracted with groundwater.' He said although considerable work had been done on arsenic removal from contaminated groundwater and alternate water supply options, the presence of arsenic in irrigation water did not receive due attention. And the dependency on ground-

water for public water supply and irrigation results in a huge quantity of arsenic being cycled through the environment each year with major

environment, Ashraf Ali concluded. In the second session, experts

implications on public health and the

presented papers on arsenic in plant-soil environment in Bangladesh, extent and severity of arsenic contamination in soils of Bangladesh, a study of arsenic contaminated irrigation water and its carried-over effect on vegetables, accumulation of arsenic in rice plants from arsenic contaminated irrigation water and its effect on nutrient contents, arsenic contamination of soil and water and related bio-hazards in Bangladesh and the fate of arsenic in wastes generated from arsenic removal units.

BUET Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Alee Murtuza attended the discussion as the chief guest, while Dr. Zafar Adeel addressed the seminar as the representative of UNU. Prof. M Abdur Rauf, head of the department of civil engineering, BUET chaired the seminar and Prof. Dr. M Feroze Ahmed delivered the introductory speech

done, cannot be done by pushing

them into Bangladesh," he said in

spent till the third quarter of the fiscal year. Usually, about half the allo-

ministries and divisions that have

fallen behind in the implementation

of projects - including the education,

science and information technology

ministry, public administration and

on roads, local government engi-

neering works, and rural electrifica-

about whether to cut the education

budget, however, because it could

component. as food grains will be

converted into cash and used as

ments made at the directive of

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia," State

Minister for Civil Aviation Mir

Mohammad Nasiruddin told the

parliament yesterday after the

that the swindlers would face tough

House that for the first time this year,

the national flag carrier Biman ferried 25,000 Hajj pilgrims from

Dhaka and Chittagong on time. The

pilgrims will start returning home

from February 14 according to

ised to be a spectacular showcase

"I think the watershed for this

Nasiruddin assured the House

The minister also informed the

be politically damaging.

funding cuts.

local currency.

Pilgrims

FROM PAGE 12

question hour

physical infrastructure - have had

The money saved will be spent

The government is in a dilemma

The new budget has no food aid

cated money is spent by this time.

ADP trimmed

out of control and in this particular case, things have unfortunately gone beyond control," Fernandes told reporters in Bangalore. "There is tension at the border. It

is unfortunate and additional BSF personnel have been deployed near the no-man's land where the migrants are stranded." he said. Nevertheless, India hopes the

issue will be sorted out soon, he added. Regarding the possibility of

another round of talks with the Bangladesh authorities, he said the issue was being handled by the home ministry and he would not comment on it.

Fernandes said India never shied away from humanitarian aid and even now BSF personnel were in contact with the Red Cross Society to ensure that the people in the no man's land are not deprived of the basic necessities.

UNB adds: Indian External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha said, Delhi does not wish to quarrel with Dhaka and will not allow the present problem of illegal immigration to get "out of hand"

"We don't want the situation to blow up, to get out of hand. We have always looked at Bangladesh as a very friendly neighbour," Sinha told Indo Asia News Service (IANS) in New Delhi in an interview made available in Dhaka yesterday.

"The people of India have a soft corner for Bangladesh and the people of Bangladesh. We don't want any quarrel with them. We want the friendliest of relations with them. But, then, you always clap

BIWTC to implement 10 pc fare hike

after Eid UNB, Dhaka

The 10 per cent fare-hike for travel by government river vessels will not implemented before the Eid, officials at the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) said here yesterday.

"We have decided to implement the fare-hike after the holy Eid-ul-Azha." Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas, Chairman of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) told UNB yesterday.

He said although the gazette notification regarding the 10 per cent fare-hike for river vessels from February 1 has already been issued, its implementation in the government sector would remain suspended until after the Eid holi-

"In spite of a potential revenue loss of Tk 40 lakh, we deferred the fare-hike for two weeks following a suggestion by Shipping Minister Col (retd) Akbar Hossain so that people do not have to spend extra money for their journey home to celebrate

The group has been holding noisy protests amid growing tension

Fernandes, Sinha

between the villagers on either side Sinha said in India there were a "lot of sentiments" for Bangladesh because "we had a role in their

independence struggle." "I don't know if these sentiments are shared by Bangladeshis. They may or may not admit it today. But the fact is that Indian blood flowed alongside Bangladeshi blood in their liberation struggle, and we

can't forget that." He dismissed Dhaka's charge that India was pushing its nationals into Bangladesh and said it had been a "one-sided migration" for a long time. "They are coming to India in search of livelihood. They come and settle here."

"Economic conditions in Bangladesh are not as good as they are in India. So migration will take place from there, from a place where economic conditions are not very good to a place where economic conditions are considered to be better," he said.

Sinha said the 4,000-km India-Bangladesh border was so artificial and porous that it was not possible to enforce a "clear-cut boundary norm". Villagers from each side crossed over to the other side.

"In such a porous border, clearly is very difficult to effectively enforce a check that the border will not be crossed." he said.

He said India was not trying to deport the illegal immigrants despite a High Court order to the effect. "India is only preventing illegal

immigrants from crossing into Indian territory. That is the bottom line. But deportation will not be

Muhuri murder Carnival FROMPAGE 12

FROM PAGE 1 The Detective Branch (DB) of Police

inconsistent and embarrassing

depositions. Two witnesses did not

appear before the court and one

Islam Chowdhury Sajjad, Shambhu

Prasad Bishwas and Sadhanmoy

Bhattyacharyia appeared before the

court on behalf of the state. Ahsanul

sented the accused.

Public prosecutor (PP) Quamrul

had submitted charge-sheet in the tournament will be this weekend. case to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court one year The opening ceremony ... people who watched the dress rehearsal after the incident. said it was stunning and the follow-The 12 chargesheeted accused ing day there will be a magnificent include five cadres of Islami Chhatra

cricket match at Newlands (in Cape Shibir, student wing of the Jamaate-Islami, and three teachers of "I think those two exiting events Nazirhat College. will set the tone for a wonderful World Cup," the tournament's Five of the accused are now in jail custody, two are on bail and the

executive director Ali Bacher said others are absconding. Thursday. Of the 26 prosecution witnesses The Cape Town city council said the tribunal heard 23. Five of them it had spent millions of rands to were declared 'hostile' for their upgrade two cricket stadiums and

> deploy additional police, traffic and emergency officials. Disaster management manager Greg Pillay said: "We have proactively assessed all risks and drafted appropriate emergency olans for all venues, especially Newlands stadium, various City hotels and other special events

Haq Hena, Premankur Barua, "The Cape Town Disaster Badiul Alam, Manzur Ahmad Ansari Management Centre is geared to handle any eventuality," he said. and Nurussafa Talukder repre-

Case for Iraq war

risked irrelevance if it did not now consider the "serious consequences" contemplated for noncompliance.

He also presented what he said were eyewitness accounts of Iraq's ongoing biological weapons programmes. Saddam has investigated "doz-

has the wherewithal to produce In a dramatic gesture, Powell held up a small phial, saying it could hold enough anthrax to shut down

the US Senate While Iraq has declared the past production of 8,500 litres of anthrax, Powell said UN inspectors had previously estimated the total at

Such an amount added up to "tens upon tens upon tens of thou-

sands of teaspoonfuls," Powell said.

"And Saddam Hussein has not accounted for even one teaspoonful of this deadly material." Iraq will have the right of reply following the presentation, which Baghdad's official press

Wednesday denounced in advance, dismissing it as a deeply flawed bid to justify a US attack. "All that Powell will present in terms of alleged satellite pictures and some obscure recordings will be no more than fabrications," wrote

Al-Jumhuriya in a front-page editorial headlined "Powell's contrived Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz said the US top diplomat would fail to provide convincing

evidence against Baghdad because none exists. "Ninety-five per cent of (Iraq's) missiles were already destroyed" when UN inspectors left the country n 1998, Aziz told France's Le Figaro

newspaper. Doves in the crisis also took up advance positions, led by Security Council member Germany, with Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's spokesman Bela Anda saying Berlin would not be swayed by Powell's new evidence.

The European Union made a formal appeal to Iraq to give up any weapons programmes it may be developing Possible US coalition partners

are finding scant public backing for war, including Britain, where polls ndicate that only 10 percent would back action without a UN mandate. Even in the United States, nearly

Saifur

FROM PAGE 12 is not arrested right now, cautioned the World Bank (WB).

In its latest economic update, the WB also said inflation appears on The overall inflation rate through

October 2002 increased to 4.5 per cent from 2.4 per cent in FY02.

During the first quarter of FY03.

the WB said inflation increased further to 4.6 per cent. Inflation is set to rise in the coming months on the back of fuel price and water tariff hikes, says the Asian

Development Bank (ADB) in its

latest Quarterly Economic Update. Prices of non-food items have climbed up to 6.8 per cent in November from 6.4 per cent in September due to higher utility

relatively high but stable, prices of vegetables came down due to the increased availability of winter crops, the ADB said.

two-thirds of the populace oppose military action without a green light

from the world body.

Meanwhile a NATO official said the body's ruling council will meet today to discuss a formal US request to support military action

NATO member Turkey, which the United States wants to use as a staging area for an initial onslaught against neighbouring Iraq, on Wednesday called on France, Germany and Belgium to drop their nsistence that diplomatic options be exhausted before the Alliance began any military planning.

President returns to Dhaka by road as chopper wouldn't start

UNB, Mymensingh

lajuddin Ahmed went out of order here yesterday afternoon and the president had to return to Dhaka by

the president boarded it at about 2:30pm in the Mymensingh Circuit House premises, witnesses and official sources said One hour later, the president left

Mymensingh by a jeep of the district

as chief quest.

Circuit House and exchanged views with local leaders of the ruling fourparty alliance.

At 1:00pm, he returned to the

should be resolved through negotiations, not confrontation. "They (India) have the right to

However, the foreign minister made clear that the country would

Bangladeshi fishermen, who crossed over to India in inclement

weather, Morshed said. "If there are any documents that prove the 213 people stranded in he no-man's land are

However, the foreign minister does not believe there are any such documents, legal or illegal. "It is not important what religion they practise. Rather, it is important whether

Meanwhile, India's External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha phoned Morshed Khan last night and invited him to visit New Delh 'soon', according to a late night UNB

But due to lack of co-ordination between the BRTA and the equipment provider, Vicom of Singapore the computer programming could not be modified and VIC projects

equipment did not fulfil the requirements. So we have not paid them in full. A bill worth Tk 2.48 crore was forfeited on December 31 last," MA Moataleb, deputy director (Engineering) of the BRTA, said.

BRTA now plans to hand over the VIC to the private sector. It has already proposed to the ADB for further funds to activate the centre. The operator of the VIC in Mirpur

cles a day as the battery is down. "We sometimes check vehicles of different embassies and minis-

tries, but not public vehicles" he

In the manual testing system,

Mohammed Jalal, said they now cannot inspect more than 10 vehi-

vehicles which appear to be unfit are

leading to the respiratory tract infections (RTIs) including asthma and bronchitis among the city com-"The fitness certificate has virtually become a purchasable commodity," says a middleman,

requesting anonymity. He says they

can have the BRTA inspectors issue

fitness stickers for any vehicle in

passing the fitness test, according

to sources. The unfit vehicles are

contributing to air pollution in the city

exchange for a certain amount of money. "Or you can approach the inspector yourself." It was found on last Thursday that BRTA inspectors are providing fitness stickers for vehicles without any test. An inspector was found asking drivers to pay the government-fixed fitness test fees of Tk 645 for small vehicle and Tk 945 for the big ones. In turn, they were

A microbus driver said he received the fitness certificate last Thursday by paying the inspector Tk 150 in bribe in addition to the fee. A government Jeep also got the fitness certificate without any check-

providing fitness stickers which

remain in force 2004.

Watchdog for crops

FROM PAGE 12 behind schedule, will help land-

scare Bangladesh catch up with India and Pakistan on the biotechnology front. Official sources put down the

bureaucratic tangles and negligence by the authorities concerned. Prof. Zeba Islam Seraj, who teaches molecular biology and

delay to institute the committee to

biochemistry at Dhaka University, feared further delay in its formation would dampen the prospect for enhancing crop productions as soon as the nation requires.

India has the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) to govern production, sale and use of genetically modified crops (GMOs). Pakistan also formed National Biosafety Expert Committee to update biosafety laws on use of GMOs and recommend

measures for their management and safe transfer. Pro-environmental lobbies have

expressed their reservations about genetically modified crops. But protagonists of bio-food argue the launch of the committee does not necessarily mean growing of al genetically engineered crops will start right away. Instead, it would eliminate the risk of use of GMOs hazardous to Bangladesh's soil and ecology. Many view bio-food technology

as the only way of feeding around 800 million people across the globe who face chronic hunger. International anti-GMO groups like Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, however, maintain the world produces enough food to feed its entire population plus another three

ens" of diseases, including cholera and typhus, Powell said. "He also

against Irag.

A helicopter carrying President

The pilots failed to start the chopper for mechanical faults when

administration, as the chopper could not be repaired although sources said it was "a minor techni-At about 4:30pm, another helicopter came from Dhaka along with technicians who repaired the other

chopper. Afterwards, both choppers

headed back for the capital at

Earlier, President lajuddin Ahmed came here in the morning to attend the 5th Convocation of Bangladesh Agricultural University

FM dismisses FROM PAGE 1 ence between the two countries

send troops to the border. But I think Bangladesh is a friendly neighbour

do everything to protect the border. The government has initiated a move to take back some

Bangladeshis, we would take them back, too,"

they are Bangladeshis or nor."

Digital fitness

certify smoke emission, alignment, brakes, opacity, headlights, under-carriage, etc. The machines were not equipped to check tyres.

never saw the light of the day. The company that provided the

Now most of the equipment of the VIC has gone out of order. The