

## Dhaka asks Delhi to stop push-ins

Diplomats told it might lead to human disaster

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Even as Dhaka called on New Delhi to stop push-ins yesterday, an estimated 4,000 Bangla-speaking Indian Muslims were being assembled on the border by the Indian Border Security Forces (BSF).

The foreign office summoned Indian Deputy High Commissioner Dilip Sinha yesterday afternoon and told him that push-ins should be

stopped in the interest of closer ties between the two neighbours.

The foreign office also briefed foreign diplomats on the push-ins and said India made at least six such attempts.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Reaz Rahman told diplomats that if the attempts continue, it might lead to a 'human disaster'.

Reaz said the BSF tried to push

400 people into Bangladesh Saturday night.

He noted that the timing of such push-in attempts is a particular matter of concern for Bangladesh because it happened when home secretary level talks between the two countries were underway in Dhaka.

He hoped that the situation would not be allowed to deteriorate

further in view of the 'humanitarian ramifications of the evolving situation.'

Diplomats barring those of the South Asian countries attended the hurriedly called briefing at the state guesthouse, Padma.

Earlier, Liakat Ali Khan, director general (South Asia) of the foreign ministry, told the Indian deputy

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Hasina accuses president of violating constitution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League yesterday said it boycotted the opening of the Jatiya Sangsad's maiden session of the year, protesting placement of the controversial indemnity ordinance and the presidential speech in the House.

"We didn't attend the House as the infamous indemnity ordinance was placed and the president, its promulgator, addressed the House," said Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina.

Addressing a press conference at the opposition conference room, Hasina accused President Iajuddin Ahmed of violating the constitution through his approval to the ordinance that indemnified all responsible for "53 custodial deaths" in the army-led anticrime crackdown.

"We cannot witness the deliberation of a president who had promulgated the ordinance in violation of the constitution. The president is oath-bound to protect the constitution, but he violated basic human rights guaranteed by the constitution," she said explaining reasons for the boycott.

However, the opposition leader said her party will join the session

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

AL boycotts session  
**Indemnity ordn placed in JS**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday went into New Year's session amid an opposition boycott while the President called for action from both ends of the bench to build up democracy.

The home minister placed the controversial Joint Drive Indemnity Ordinance 2003 before the House. None from the opposition composed of both Jatiya Party factions and Bangladesh Krishak-Sramik Janata League protested the placing of the ordinance.

In his first address of the parliament after coming to office on September 6, 2002, President Iajuddin Ahmed emphasised partnership between the government and opposition.

"If people's welfare be the main objective of all, irrespective of party affiliation, then with mutual understanding, partnership and concerted efforts the foundation of democracy in this country could be strengthened and consolidated," he said.

The President urged the lawmakers to get across the political divide and thrash out the issues at hand.

"It is my firm belief that in future

appropriate solution to national issues will be worked out through consensus built on mutual trust."

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The presidential speech over, the session was adjourned till 4:00pm February 2.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

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