Suicide bombing in Tel Aviv kills 4

At least four people were killed and 30 others wounded when a Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up in an open-air market in the heart of the Israeli commercial capital Tel Aviv yesterday.

We have identified five bodies. One of them belongs to a male suicide bomber who appears to have acted alone," Tel Aviv police chief David Tzuri fold a news conference.

Seven people were seriously wounded in the explosion, he added. The explosion ripped through the bustling Hacarmel market, its narrow alleys crammed with fruit and vegetable stands, at 11:15 (0915 GMT).

"I heard a very big bang, I saw lots of wounded people on the floor, crying and shouting," said a sandwich stand owner, giving his name only as Meir.

Most of the victims were rushed to hospital as fire engines controlled the blaze and police cordoned off the site for fear of secondary explosions.

"There were men and women shouting, in a state of hysteria. I was afraid there would be another bomber so I walked away immediately," said Eli Malka, 38, who has a pickles stand several hundred yards (metres) away on same alley.

Jin suggests

FROM PAGE 12 and Chittagong in private sector investment alongside making Dhaka-Chittagong highway a four-lane one to promote export.

The government also plans to hand oversome national highways to the private sector, the minister told

the ADB executive.

Jin told Huda that if the investment environment improves, foreign investment in the communications infrastructure will increase. The ADB vice-president suggested the govern ment ensure quality of work side by side with awarding job to the lowest bidder and put in place a transparent tender evaluation process to keep it free from corruption.

The ADB delegates encouraged

huge investment by the private sector in the development and maintenance of roads and highways. They suggested introduction of securitisation system to raise revenue earnings from important roads and bridges.

Meeting sources said the minister raised the issue of introducing magnetic train service between Dhaka and Chittagong with Jin. Jin, who is a ing problems in China aftenlaunch-ing such a train service.

NBR to issue

FROM PAGE 12 into force in all shops across the

According to NBR's primary estimates, Tk 800 crore can be realised as VAT from the wholesale and retail traders. Whereas, in the last fiscal, the VAT collected from this sector amounted to only one-tenth of the estimates or Tk 80 crore.

NBR sources said that the decisions would be communicated to the regional offices by this week and that the VAT collection drive's thrust would be on Dhaka and Chittagong

They said only a handful of some 250,000 retail and wholesale shops in Dhaka City pay VAT. However, jewellery and sweets shops, colour labs and medical laboratories pay the taxes separately.
An NBR survey recently identified

some 3,000 shops in the capital with daily sales of Tk 10,000, who would be sent notice from tomorrow. The VAT officials would sit with the owners of these shops next week to get their feedback on the measures.

It has also been decided that wholesalers and retailers of MS rods would pay Tk 100 a ton as VAT against Tk 300-500 paid presently. Traders of MS rods would be notified of the decision shortly.

The leftist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine group claimed responsibility for the blast.

Amer al-Fahr, 18, one of our men from the Askar refugee camp in Nablus, was responsible for this attack," a PFLP member told AFP.

More than an hour after the blast handfuls of people from the Zaka organisation were rummaging through the market stalls to retrieve body parts, one worker even scoured individual lettuce leaves for traces of

Draft law

FROM PAGE 12 Bangladesh Pure Food (Amendment) Act 2004.

The council of ministers also approved a proposed bilateral memo-randum of understanding (MoU) on agricultural affairs to be signed ween Bangladesh and China.

A report on the implementation previously approved decisions was submitted to the cabinet at the meeting, held at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). The cabinet was apprised of the progress in implementation of the decisions.

Cabinet members and state minister of the ministries concerned attended the meeting. Cabinet secretary, principal secretary and the secretaries concerned were

AL demands

FROM PAGE 12

law-graduation certificate. Chaired by Acting AL president Zillur Rahman, the meeting expressed its solidarity with the just demands of the lawyers for keeping the sanctity of the judiciary and its independence as well as establish-ment of rule of law in the country.

Bills to ensure

FROM PAGE 12 ensure accountability of the local and foreign NGOs, said LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

Mannan, also general secretary of ruling BNP, said 1,701 local and 185 foreign NGOs registered with the Bureau of NGO Affairs are working in the country.

The government had earlier initiated a bill to amend the Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Ordinance. But they had to withdraw the bill from the parliament secretariat in the face of opposition and criticism from the NGO sector.

The LGRD minister said the government has already initiated steps to amend the ordinances to make them more effective.

"I hope the amendment proposal will be placed before the House very soon on completion of all formali ties," said Mannan, who is also in charge of the Prime Minister's Office

On allegation of involvement in internal politics against some NGOs maker, the minister said a probe has been instituted. "Action will be taken against the NGOs if found guilty of political interference," he said.

Asked about the government's move to control the NGOs, he said, "We don't want to control activities of the NGOs as we want to see them work independently.

On high interest rate charged by the NGOs for microcredit, he said, The government has taken initiatives to balance the interest rate of the NGOs. A committee headed by the governor of the Bangladesh Bank is working to this end."

Mannan said there is no provision of 'district minister' in Bangladesh and the government only forms committees with lawmakers in every district to monitor development work and law and

FM may appeal

FROM PAGE 1 Al-Jazeera was the first to broadcast a video message picturing him and a Sri Lankan driver held by Iraqi militant outfit Islamic Army of Iraq (IAI) on October 29 Thursday, and is expected to be a useful channel of communication between the abductors and Bangladesh government.

Morshed is interested in the interview offered by Al-Jazeera because it is an Arabic channel and can be easily accessible to the abductors as it covers a wide area in Iraq, the sources added

The foreign minister had already launched an appeal through different news media. But there has not been any response from the abductors and no contact has yet been established

with the abductors. Meanwhile, sources in Kuwait said the two trucks that Kashem and the other abducted Sri Lankan driver were driving, are said to have belonged to the Corps of Engineers of

the United States Array. Three to four US Army jeeps were escorting them when the convoy was ambushed, sources added.

Bangladeshi Ambassador to Kuwait, Nazrul Islam Khan yesterday told a private TV channel here that he could not yet make any contact with the abductors. But he had met Kashem's employee and is working in conjunction with the Sri Lankan ambassador there to secure the release of the abducted truck drivers, he

Jassem Transport and Stevedore Company has assured him of every possible assistance in having Kashem

freed, sources said. Zahirul Haque, director general of foreign ministry's external publicity wing, yesterday said that the Senegalese Ambassador to Kuwait, who is the dean of the diplomatic corps there, had met

Khan to express solidarity. He said, "It is a difficult task, as no contact can be established, unless they contactus."

We are still looking for clues to the abductors," he said. Kashem's brother Sabur has already made an appeal on an Arabic newspaper in Kuwait to the abductors

to release Kashem. Children

9-12 could be given limited exemption if he or she is found insufficiently

"The government did not propose to raise the age limit from 12 to 14 since it was found that two main accused of the murder of Govt Laboratory School teacher, both aged 14, had staged the cold-blooded murder," the minister told the lawmakers.

Awami League (AL) lawmakers AKM Jahangir Hossain and Rahmat Ali moved motion for eliciting public opinion before passage of the bill. AKM Jahangir said there should be uniformity in age limit of children for exemp-

tion from criminal responsibility. The law minister said it is not possible to make a uniform age limit, because each law is made for a particular subject and it is not possible for making a uniform age of children for immunity from criminal responsibility.

However, the bill was passed by voice vote without much discussion, as most of the members who had served notices were absent.

Timber trader gunned down in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unknown assailants gunned down a timber trader at Kazipara near Purnima Cinema of Karwan Bazar in the capital last night.

A gang of four youths called 26year-old Mohammad Julhash out of his Garden Road house in Kazipara at around 7:30pm. They took him to near Purnima Cinema and shot thrice in his chest, cheek, and neck, said the victim's elder sister Bakul Begum.

Informed, the family members of Julhash rushed him to the Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, where doctors on duty declared him

Julhash, who owned a timber shop in Karwan Bazar, is the brother-in-law of listed criminal Rana, who was shot dead by infamous 'Pichchi Hannan' gang in 1996. Tejgaon police said Julhash was accused in half a dozen cases.

Family members said Julhash had recently been released from jail after a year. They suspected that previous enmity with the Pichchi Hannan gang, who once severed his three fingers, might have something to do with the killing.

In another incident, extortionists shot a tea stall owner in Tejgaon last night as he refused pay toll. Police said a gang of three extortionists entered the tea stall of Tapan Kazi near Gonobhaban High School and shothim at around 8:45pm.

He was admitted to Orthopaedics Hospital with bullet injuries to his leg.

RABBANI MURDER Charges framed against 8

UNB, Chittagong

The Speedy Trial Tribunal, Chittagong, yesterday framed charges against eight accused in Commodore Golam Rabbani murder

They are former managing director of the Korean Export Processing Zone (KEPZ) Abu Naser, former chief security officer of the KEPZ Mohammad Humayun Kabir, Mohammad Hashem, Abdul Malek alias Sohel, Noor Hossain, Mohammad Selim, Munsur Ahmed, and Saiful Islam alias Bilai Saiful.

Judge M Hassan Imam framed the charges against the accused. Six of them were in the dock, while two others--Humayun Kabir and Saifulhave been absconding.

Statement of 29 witnesses will be recorded from November 10 in the

Commodore Golam Rabbani, managing director of the Korean Export Processing Zone (KEPZ), was critically injured in an armed attack in Muradpur area of the port city on April 11 and died at a hospital in Bangkok on April 24.

No trading

FROM PAGE 1 engineer of the company and other technical officers started frantic efforts to restore the system but failed to put it up again during the trading hours," he said.

"So we abandon trading. After online consultation with the maintenance company we could restore the system in the evening and trading will resume tomorrow," he said.

A high official of the Securities and Exchange Commission said the premier bourse should have backup arrangements in case of any technical trouble in the trading engine.

"Usually people tend to liquidate shares ahead of the Eid. But if trading stops in such a way, it will dishearten investors," he told The Daily Star.

Since introduction of automated trading in 1998, US company Tandem Computers Ltd provided maintenance service. But the service deal expired on Sunday (October 31 this year).

Some DSE insiders, however, said some high officials of the bourse in collaboration with previous mainte-nance service providers had manipulated the system so that it collapses following the expiry of the mainte-

nance contract. They said it was done in order to ensure continuation of the contract with the previous vendors in exchange for handsome kickbacks to the stal-

(Details on page 6)

Bar sends

leaders and senior lawyers Saturday said he would ask Chittagong University for exam documents of SCBA President Rokanuddin

Mahmud told the chief justice that he already has the documents and that he would send them over. The documents sent yesterday

to the chief justice include a report of an inquiry committee of the university on the corruption in the law examinations results of 111 students including that of Faizee. A university syndicate decision

to withhold Faizee's result and documents of allegations brought against Faizee by the Chittagong Lawyers Association were also sent. Faizee did not go to the High Court yesterday, a day after he was

withdrawn from a bench in the face

of allegations of his tampering with the examination results and lawyers' threat to boycott his court. Sources said Faizee went on leave. He submitted a seven-day leave application to the chief justice Sunday.

Deputy governor

FROM PAGE 1 immediately clear, but rebel fighters and US troops clashed in the city over the weekend which saw at least 10 Iraqis killed and 15 people wounded, including three

A deputy governor of Baghdad, Hassam Kamel Abdel Fattah, was shot dead by unknown assailants in the southern district of Dora on Monday, a spokesman at Iraq's interior ministry said. "He was travelling to work by

car at about 7:47 (0445 GMT) when unknown assailants gunned him down," said Colonel Adnan Abdul Rahman. Two of the deputy governor's

bodyguards were also injured in the attack, he said. A US marine was killed and four others wounded during a day of

clashes around the flashpoint city of Ramadi on Sunday, the military said yesterday. 'A marine was killed in action and four others wounded in the

area around Ramadi," a US military official told AFP. The precise cause of the death was not given, but three US marines were injured in a roadside bomb blast as their convoy passed through the Sunni Muslim bastion

early on Sunday. The day witnessed a barrage of mortars, rockets and gunfire as insurgents and US troops skir-

In one of the heaviest singleday casualty tolls in the violent province of al-Anbar, eight US marines were killed and 10 others injured when a car bomb exploded on Saturday near Ramadi's sister town of Fallujah.

The latest death brought to 1,113 the number of US military personnel killed in Iraq since the US-led invasion in March 2003,

according to a Pentagon tally. In Basra a British soldier has been found dead at a military base in the southern Iraqi city of Basra, a military spokesman said Sunday, adding that the cause of death was not immediately known.

We regret to announce that the body of a British soldier was discovered at a British military base in Basra," Lieutenant Commander Richard Walters said.

"Investigations are ongoing but it is not believed to be the result of a hostile act," he said. Walters declined to speculate

about the cause of death, adding that hopefully the investigation would determine this.

3 dead

FROM PAGE 12 Japan Garden City in

Mohammadpur.
"Suddenly Bhutto slipped and with him Manjur and another employee Khokon fell from the stage at 4:00pm," said eyewitness Abdur

Khokon's body bumped at the cornices of several floors, while the other two fell directly to the ground. Colleagues rushed the three to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared

Bhutto and Manjur dead. Khokon is undergoing treatment at the DMCH in critical condition. In another incident, the body of an unidentified man of around 50, in black trousers and white shirt, was found on the cornice of the first floor of Shilpa Bank Bhaban in Motijheel

Witnesses said they saw him falling at around 1:30am, but could not confirm the floor from which he fell. Police recovered his body and

sent to the DMCH morgue for

Millions face months

vesterday.

Consultative Group (LCG) released a post-flood need assessment report, saying that three months after the July floods, many affected communities were still waiting for basic food

and livelihoods support to arrive. "The report confirms our initial fears about millions requiring basic food and livelihoods support for many months to come," the statement quoted Douglas Casson Coutts, WFP representative in Bangladesh, as

"With the onset of Monga these needs have been greatly exacerbated. It is important for the international community to reassess their level of commitment to this emergency and do the needful before it is too late," he The WFP launched \$74 million

million flood-hit people for a year. A separate urgent UN appeal sought to raise \$210 million for food aid. The WFP officials said the donor response Bangladesh produced more than 26 million tonnes of foodgrains last year, but poverty due to rising unemployment cut purchasing capacity, officials of the Bangladesh Bureau of

operations on August 12 to feed five

Statistics said The floods, the most severe in a decade, left more than 760 dead, damaged an estimated four million homes and destroyed over a million hectares of crops, it added.

The report further said while the immediate relief response was fair, the overall response is still not enough to meet the medium- and long-term recovery needs in any

It stressed Bangladesh needs to improve disaster response and preparedness at local level through more timely response measures, more reliable emergency funding mechanisms, and better information management and contingency planning. Food availability at the national

level is not as critical as food accessibility at the local level, added the Food shortages and increased levels of malnutrition among poor flood-affected households have

already been observed and the cur-

rent lean season will further increase the hardship caused by the floods. Until the harvest of foodgrains in May 2006, the overall food security situation in Bangladesh will continue to remain uncertain, said the DER

Eight multi-agency teams, comprising about 80 field staff from 17 different agencies of the DER Group, were tasked to assess the 27 worstaffected districts across the country. The WFP co-ordinated the entire assessment report.

JS witnesses debate

kill Sheikh Hasina either in the US or in the country.

Demanding adequate security arrangement for the opposition leader, Sheikh Selim said the government would be responsible if

Hasina faced further attacks. LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan however said security for Hasina is adequate and it has been geared up after the August 21 grenade attacks. The perpetrators of the grenade attacks must be caught and

brought to justice, he said. Bhuiyan said, "We have also deployed plainclothes police at the residence of the opposition leader and she is escorted by the police whenever she goes out.

On the latest death threat to Hasina, the BNP secretary general said the government would look into the matter. He sought AL's cooperation in this regard. ARMED FORCES Water Resources Minister Hafiz Uddin Ahmed initiated the debate

on armed forces saying the main opposition had tried to tarnish the image of the army linking it to the August 21 grenade attacks on an AL His comment came after Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid criticised the treasury bench members for making 'objection-able' statements in the House on

wounded in the grenade attacks. Hafiz, also in charge of defence ministry in parliamentary affairs, said the armed forces of Bangladesh were formed spontaneously during the Liberation War.

Sunday on the AL lawmakers

"Awami League did not establish the armed forces, rather it wanted to abolish the army introducing parallel force named Rakkhi Bahini," he alleged amid noisy protest by the AL lawmakers who sprang on their feet demanding expunction of Hafiz's comment. Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar

KM Jahangir Hossain of AL con-

assured the opposition of expung-

ing irrelevant remarks of the minis-

ter and gave floor to senior AL lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta. Suranjit said the armed forces were formed in April, 1971 under the interim government of Mujibnagar and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the president of that government. He accused Hafizuddin Ahmed of giving provoc-

ative speeches. CERTIFICATETAMPERING On another point of order, Suranjit said the coalition government has appointed 19 additional judges in the High Court on political consideration and one of them has been accused of tampering with LLB certificate.

Pointing finger at Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed, Suranjit said the appointment on political consideration of "fraud and corrupt" people as High Court judges has triggered unrest in the court arena. The incident of tampering with

judge is a black chapter in the history of country's judiciary," he said. The law minister, however, did not respond to Suranjit's criticism. LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan took floor twice in reply to the opposition lawmakers' allegations but he avoided making any

the LLB certificate by an additional

comment on the sensitive issue. RAB, RUISSUES AL lawmaker Mohammad Nasim demanded investigation into the killings under the Rab custody and urged the speaker to hold a discussion on the issue while ruling BNP lawmaker SA Khaleq appreciated the Rab activities.

demned the recent atrocities by the police and ruling party cadres' on the general students of Rajshahi University. He said the female students at RU dormitories are feeling

Eid tickets

yesterday to protest the directive, said some transport operators.

They explained they sell tickets at a

discount rate during the off-season expected to decide the race. and withdraw the reduction ahead of Bush barnstormed six states Eid and charge the actual price fixed by the government.

As there is a rush of outgoing passengers before the Eid, buses to the capital hardly get passengers, causing huge financial loss, they argued. presidency and control of Congress.

"It's a global practice that travellers get discount in the off-season and have to pay more during the peak season. But here the government has made a decision without considering its impact on the passengers," said a leader of Bangladesh Bus-truck where the result could be disputed. Owners Association, asking not to be

If the decision is not withdrawn, very few will be able to buy tickets from the counters and most will be forced to pay a much higher price for tickets on the black market, he added.

He said transport owners are forced to pay huge amount of money to law enforcers and different toll collecting organisations. But the government does not take any action to stop extortion, forcing them to bear

high transport operating cost. BNP lawmaker GM Seraj, president of Bangladesh Bus-truck Owners Association, alleged at the Thursday meeting that he runs 48 buses and his

employees have to pay at least Tk 1.5 lakh a month as toll to police. "If we have to obey the ministry's directive, bus owners will reduce number of trips that will cause more suffering to the passengers," Seraj, also owner of SR Travel operating in the north Bengal, told The Daily Star

The SR Travel started selling Eid tickets yesterday. But Diganta Paribahan, Hanif Enterprises, Eagle Paribahan, Shoukhin Paribahan and some other companies on Dhaka-Khulna and National, Modern, NF Elegance and some other companies on Dhaka-Rajshahi routes have

refrained from selling tickets. Their salespersons told The Daily Star that they will start selling tickets from November 5 but the fares are yet

Some small transport companies are cashing in on the situation, selling tickets at premium rates. Acompany of Dhaka-Chuadanga-Darshana route has upped the price of each ticket to Tk 250 from Tk 200.

"Our tickets sold out in one day, as some of the big companies refrain from sale," said an employee of the When asked about premium price

it charged despite the ministry's decision, he said if the association

decides to sell tickets at a lower price, the company will return the additional money.

Meantime, fairness owned at another meeting Sunday did not accept the shipping ministry's pro-posal not to increase fares before Eid. They said capital-bound launches get

that forces them to charge extra. However, they admitted most of the launches take more passengers than their capacity before Eid which is

least number of passengers before Eid

Direct funding

financial management. The release of funds from upazila to UPs is a difficult task and the UP chairmen have to spend much time to convince upazila officials and bribe them for the approval of projects and release of funds, ministry officials

The officials are now working to prepare a "fund utilisation policy" for the UPs and it would be announced by next two weeks. The policy would facilitate the UPs to utilise the funds Mannan Bhuiyan believes the

properly and in a transparent way. initiative to create "Union Parishad Development Assistance Fund" and direct funding will bring further dynamism at union level development work and the UPs would be able

to serve people more. Transport strike

government bans the plying of 10-year-old buses in the city as trans-port owners need about 10 years to

repay the bus-loan," said Maharaj

He alleged some unscrupulous traders are prompting the government to take the decision so that they get opportunity to import low quality buses.

Transport owners also demanded to stop all kinds of harassment to private bus workers by mobile courts and at check posts.

Members of Bus Minibus Malik Sramik Sangram Parishad Abul Mansur, Advocate Mahbubur Rahman, Kamrul Islam, M A Aziz Hiru and Mansur Alam were present at the press conference.

UN restricts staff

FROM PAGE 12

Superintendent of Police (SP) of Cox's Bazaar Syed Towfique Uddin Ahmed told The Daily Star that criminals at Kutupalong camp are creating trouble and raids would be carried out soon to arrest them. Since the first attack on

September 23, a group of refugees

still staying back.

enforced strikes in eight schools and closed down a sewing camp for women refugees at the camp. About 2,5 lakh Rohingya refugees took shelter in Bangladesh in 1991 following a crackdown on them by the Myanmar military junta. Many in December 2006. of them repatriated after an accord

US polls go down

FROM PAGE 1 seeking to sway the undecided voters

yesterday before returning to his Texas ranch. Kerry charged through four states in less than 24 hours.

A high turnout has been predicted for the election, which will decide the

Late polls gave Bush, 58, a razorthin nationwide lead but indicated the result in key swing states remained anyone's guess. Both parties are poised for a repeat of the intense legal battle that overshadowed the 2000 election in states

Four of the latest polls suggest a down-to-the-wire photo finish in today's ballot and four others gave the president a statistically insignificantlead of one to three points. The victor requires a majority of the 538 Electoral College votes that

decide the presidency and are awarded in separate, mostly winnertake-all races. The verdict appeared to hinge on the results in Florida and a handful of

northern states such as Pennsylvania and Ohio. Polls showed Kerry with a slight advantage in Pennsylvania and Bush with a small edge in Ohio, which no

Republican has ever lost and still gone on to win the White House, Florida was a complete toss-up.

Voter turnout today could be the key factor, with signs that it may be significantly higher than the 106 mil-

lion who voted in 2000. The weather also traditionally plays a role. Analysts have not ruled out a candidate winning the popular vote and losing the election -- as Democrat Al Gore did in 2000 -- or a 269-269 tie in the electoral vote that could force Congress to decide the

"Texpect this election is going to be decided Tuesday night," Kerry told The Associated Press on Sunday, "but, given experience, I would be irresponsible if I wasn't prepared to be able to

protect every person's right to vote."
In an interview broadcast yesterday on ABC's "Good Morning America," Kerry predicted "a record turnout" and said he believed "Americans are determined not to see a repeat of 2000." Bush won the presidency in 2000 in a postelection tangle

broken when the Supreme Court stopped a Florida recount. Bush said it was vital to see a clear winner emerge election night, espe-cially considering how closely the process is being watched around the

"We'll see how it goes Tuesday night but I really think it's important not to have a world of lawsuits that stop the will of the people from going forward," the president told "Dateline Nucl." The long, bruising campaign was finally ending, surely not a moment too soon for the combatants. Kerry occasionally coughed during his speech at a Tampa rally and Bush

stocked up on lozenges and cut down or eliminated caffeine, which constricts the vocal cords. While the presidential race will be the headline event today, some 156 million registered voters will also decide the composition of Congress, where the Republicans control both

houses, 11 governorships and a series of state referenda initiatives. Meanwhile, thousands of Democratic and Republican party lawyers have already been deployed around the country as charges and allegations fly and vote-related law-

"The likelihood is that if it's close it

only one or two states where it's close," said Kevin McMahon, a political science professor at New York University-Fredonia. Howard Gillman, a specialist on constitutional law and author of a

book on the controversial 2000 presi-

will go to the courts, even if there are

dential race between Bush and

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 1 Bangladesh assured us of its commitment not to allow the use of its territory for activities prejudicial to India's interests," Indian external affairs ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna told reporters after the 45-minute meeting

between Morshed and Natwar Singh.

Bangladesh government on these

"We will continue to engage the

ssues in order to resolve the problem," he said adding trade-related issues were also discussed in the meeting between the two foreign ministers. The two ministers discussed the preparations for the Dhaka Summit. During his meeting with the prime minister, Morshed conveyed Begun Zia's appreciation of the Indian offer of

tance for flood relief of Rs 100 crore. Khan also had a meeting with leaders of CPI and CPI (M) who conveyed to him India's concerns over northeastern Indian insurgents "taking shelter in Bangladesh and the need

Democrat Al Gore, agrees.
"Two things make it likely," he told
AFP. "The election is still very, very
close" and there is "a huge legal infrastructure that the parties have put into place."
(AFP/AP/REUTERS/WASHINGTON

Work for better

We (BNP) have always fulfilled our commitments to the people," the prime minister said and asked the leaders and workers to stand united and accept all the decisions of the party and the government to strengthen the organisation

for future success The BNP chairperson forewarned that Awami League would be "more oppressive" if they returned to power. referred to thousands of cases filed against the BNP activists during the past

Khaleda also warned that some people were trying to create artificial crisis of essential commodities in the market. She assured that there was enough stock of food in the country and

more in the pipeline.

She reminded that the present government rebuilt the country's economy left in a shambles by the past Awami League government. Referring to the oppression perpetrated by the past Awami League regime, she said, "We have always

assured of stopping terrorism and you have seen what we have done." A total of 28 upazila level leaders from 14 districts of Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions addressed the meeting where they suggested more access of the grassroots leaders to the ministers and local members of parliament of the

The speakers demanded immediate solution to intra-party conflicts in some places, preventive measures to check price hike of essentials and development and maintenance of roads in different BNP standing committee member

KM Obaidur Rahman also spoke at the function conducted by Prime Mnister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury. Ministers and members of parliament from Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions were

Sloth cop

BSTI license is mandatory for 142 imported and homemade goods including pineapple juice, toilet soap, coconut oil, white bread, biscuits, soyabean oil, flour, iodized salt, lachcha shemai (vermicelli), toothpaste, noodles, shaving cream,

natural mineral water, etc.

The new Act authorises the BSTI to fine Tk 7,000 in the staimum and to a maximum of Tk one lakh and award four years' imprisonment for selling substandard and fake goods. It was found that some posh

selling imported goods without taking permission from the BSTI. It was also found that some shop owners were selling different consumer goods without any label on

According to the BSTI rule,

packet of any product must contain

department stores in the city are

the dates of production and expiry, and product code number. In a recent drive, the BSTI fined Tk 7,000--20,000 to some department stores located in the city's

The law enforcing agencies have been cooperative with the BSTI in the month of Ramadan but the rest of the year the BSTI hardly gets any cooperation from the law enforcing agencies, said BSTI sources. The BSTI sent a proposal to the

establishment ministry seeking

Dhanmondi area.

eight magistrates on a regular basis to continue its drive against substandard and fake goods all the year round, said a BSTI official. Ashraful Huda, Police Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) denied

the allegation of BSTI and said, "We

have deployed sufficient police force

with every mobile court of the BSTI."

'We are always cooperating with the BSTI and ready to deploy police force whenever they seek help," he Admitting the presence of sub-standard goods in the markets, Director General of BSTI A B M Abdul Haque Chowdhury said, "It is true that the BSTI has some limita-

tions but currently we are getting benefits of newly promulgated amendment act." "We are running three projects for strengthening testing facilities of the BSTI and have procured some equip-ment under those project," he added. He also said the BSTI needs help

of all including the law enforcing agencies in the drive against sub-

SL Muslims declare

warned that the country could head for more instability and unrest if Kumaratunga pressed ahead with changing the statute. The government announced last week that Kumaratunga would

remain in office until December

2006, a year longer than expected since she was sworn in for a six-year term in December 1999. Government spokesman Mangala Samaraweera said Thursday that Kumaratunga's term would end not in December 2005,

Hakeem said the political crisis

maximum of two six-year terms. Attempts to revive talks with Tiger rebels have failed and

Any political settlement with the Tamil Tigers would require rewriting of the constitution, a move

after narrowly winning the April

was in power during talks with the

The United National Party, which

about forming a "constituent assembly" outside the present legal system and adopting a new statute under a "constitutional revolution.

refugees," said Lissner.

six years after she was sworn in, but

signed between the two countries in in the country was due to 1992. But a good number of them are Kumaratunga's desire to continue after her current term ends. The

Kumaratunga has been struggling to boost her support in parliament

parliamentary elections.

Tamil Tigers and today heads the opposition, has also stayed away from the panel. Tamil Tiger proxies too boycottit.

that needs the support of two-thirds of the legislature. Kumaratunga's party has talked

constitution allows a president a Hakeem, a member of the previous government's peace negotiating team with Tamil Tiger rebels, our staff can go back and assist the