

## Dr Kamal asks govt to sack JMB-linked ministers

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Dr Kamal Hossain has demanded the dismissal of ministers, including the Post and Telecommunications Minister Aminul Haque, who are accused of providing shelter to JMB militants and instigating militancy. "Suspend and hand over the identified ministers to the police immediately," the Gono Forum and Jatiya Oikya Mancha president asked the prime minister in a written statement at a press conference on "Terrorism, National Security: What needs to be done" at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

Citing statistics and information on militant activities of Bangla Bhai, he said the tyrant leader and

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## MILITANCY Bar for arrest of patrons in ruling coalition

UNB, Dhaka

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) yesterday demanded arrest of those ruling-coalition men who are believed to be responsible for the rise of the dreaded militants in the country.

Reacting to the government action after capturing the most wanted outlawed JMB kingpins, Shaekh Abdur Rahman and Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai, SCBA President Mahbubey Alam made the demand at a press briefing.

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## Nizami now backtracks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat Ameer and Industries Minister Motiur Rahman Nizami yesterday denied that he had ever said Bangla Bhai was a creation of the media.

In an interview with ATN television Nizami claimed that he had never said anything like that. He added, "Rather, I lamented that a terrorist gets 8-column headlines in the press while we don't get

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# World wants strong probe, open trial

## Hails capture of prized militants; envoys urge govt to strike accord with opposition for democracy

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign diplomats in Dhaka at a meeting with Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday strongly advocated vigorous investigation and trial of Islamist militants in a "transparent and open" manner.

The US envoy yesterday also

expressed Washington's willingness to assist Dhaka in investigating the cases involving the recently captured top two JMB masterminds-- Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai.

The foreign diplomats highly appreciated the government and the law enforcement agencies for their efforts in capturing the most-

wanted militant leaders and called for bringing the perpetrators to justice so that the crimes are not repeated.

Terrorism is never defeated; it needs continued efforts to combat terrorists and religious extremists, the diplomats told the media, after an

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Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, second from left, brief diplomats, at the state guesthouse Padma, on the progress of investigation following the arrest of militant kingpins.

PHOTO: STAR

## RAHMAN, BANGLA BHAI

# State system openly challenged years ago

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

The government at last awoke to the threats of militancy menace and captured militant kingpins Bangla Bhai and Abdur Rahman but by this time at least 52 people were killed and scores maimed at the hands of the militants.

Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and Bangla Bhai and his men have been active since 1998. Their interviews in various

national dailies made it clear that they were hell-bent on destroying the very foundation of democracy and the state system. Besides, in those interviews they called for the establishment of a Taliban-like rule in the country.

The government in February 2005 banned JMB and JMB but opted to gloss over the existence and activities of the outfit despite widespread concerns expressed by national and international security

experts and the media. It started to deal vigorously with the militant operatives only after the serial blasts throughout the country.

"Had the government conducted investigation and took appropriate measures when the newspapers exposed the activities of Bangla Bhai and his gang in 2004, so many casualties and damage to property could have been averted," security analyst Brig Gen (ret'd) M

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## Meeting works out sedition case details

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Top officials of police, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and different intelligence agencies held a prolonged meeting at the police headquarters last night to finalise filing of sedition case against the top Islamist militant leaders.

Meeting sources said the officials discussed elaborately the

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## Bangla Bhai escaped jail on weak charge sheet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Militant kingpin Bangla Bhai first came under the spotlight after being arrested by police on August 17, 2002 with arms and bombs at Mollahat upazila in Bagerhat.

Armed with axes, Bangla Bhai and his gang stormed into the

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# Investigators wait for Bangla Bhai's recovery

## Quizzing to start soon as his condition improves; he trained up militants in Muktagachha before capture

STAR REPORT

Interrogation into the militant network and activities is awaiting recovery of Bangla Bhai, who is now undergoing treatment at Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) hospital amidst tight security. He was learnt yesterday to be recovering and out of danger.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) men are guarding the cabin round the clock, often keeping it under lock and key, sources said.

Masud, bodyguard of Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai, yesterday told interrogators that he arranged the Muktagachha house for Bangla Bhai who went there on Friday night after the arrest of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Abdur Rahman in Sylhet.

Meanwhile, hearing the news of

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Bangla Bhai at the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital after undergoing a minor surgery there.

PHOTO: TV GRAB

## Resume supply within 24 hrs or face legal action

Energy adviser warns Niko about Feni gas field

UNB, Dhaka

Taking a tough stance against Niko, Energy Ministry Adviser Mahmudur Rahman yesterday asked the Canadian operator to resume gas production at Feni gas field within next 24 hours or face legal action.

Resume production (at Feni field) within next 24 hours, or else, state-owned Bapex will take over the field and take legal action. Pressure tactics are not acceptable to the government," he told Niko officials at a meeting here.

On February 26, Niko Resources halted its gas production and supply from Feni field demanding immediate settlement of the gas price issue and payment to the company for gas purchase.

Petrobangla, the state-owned hydrocarbon corporation, viewed the Niko's action as a breach of

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# BPC to import harmful diesel from Kuwait

## Better deal shelved to go for unsolicited negotiation

SHARIEF KHAN

Shelving a better deal, Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) is purchasing 30,000 tonnes of environmentally harmful diesel from the Kuwait government on the basis of unsolicited negotiation.

The BPC on March 3 accepted an offer of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) to buy diesel with a sulphur content of 0.5 percent. Considering its harmful impact on environment, Bangladesh imports diesel with a sulphur content of less than 0.25 percent, sources said.

Burning petroleum releases huge amounts of sulphur dioxide that reacts with atmospheric water and oxygen to produce sulphuric acid. This sulphuric acid causes acid rain that affects soil and fresh water bodies. This is why most

countries do not use petroleum that contains more than a tolerable level of 0.25 percent sulphur, the sources pointed out.

The KPC is scheduled to ship this diesel to Bangladesh on March 10 and 11.

On March 2, in the absence of the energy adviser and the BPC chairman, who were on leave, a BPC high official withdrew a proposal sent to the cabinet purchase committee for approval to buy 60,000 tonnes of standard diesel at slightly lower price from Mesfield-- a Singapore-based private company.

Mesfield's price offer for purchase of 60,000 tonnes of diesel was Tk 2.5 crore lower compared to that of the KPC. And it is also offering the cash-strapped BPC a 180 days' delayed payment. In contrast, the KPC demands instant payment.

Mesfield was picked as the best and lowest bidder in a spot tender.

As the BPC has an outstanding loan of over Tk 9,000 crore with different nationalised commercial banks (NCBs), it is facing severe liquidity crisis for the last two years. But the situation turned worst last year when the NCBs refused to give it fresh loans with low interest rates.

Last month, the BPC finally turned to foreign banks. It is currently purchasing oil with \$250 million loan from the Standard Chartered Bank that charges 14.73 percent interest rate.

Meanwhile, cash crunch and lack of planning led the country to a serious diesel crisis for the first time. The energy ministry then asked the BPC to ensure a diesel inventory with at least 35 days' supply.

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## Two more KTS fire victims die

CU CORRESPONDENT

Two more workers of KTS textile and garment factory, who sustained severe burns in the February 23 fire, died at hospitals in Chittagong and Dhaka on Monday night and yesterday.

Jhumki Das, daughter of Dulal Das of Dohazari in Chittagong died at the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) on Monday night.

She was undergoing treatment at the Surgery Ward of CMCH before being shifted to the ICU on

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## FIRE SERVICE ACT Babar orders action against lawbreaking factories

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lutfuzzaman Babar, state minister for home, has directed the director general (DG) of Fire Service and Civil Defence to take steps against the factories that are not following the code of conduct of Fire Service Act.

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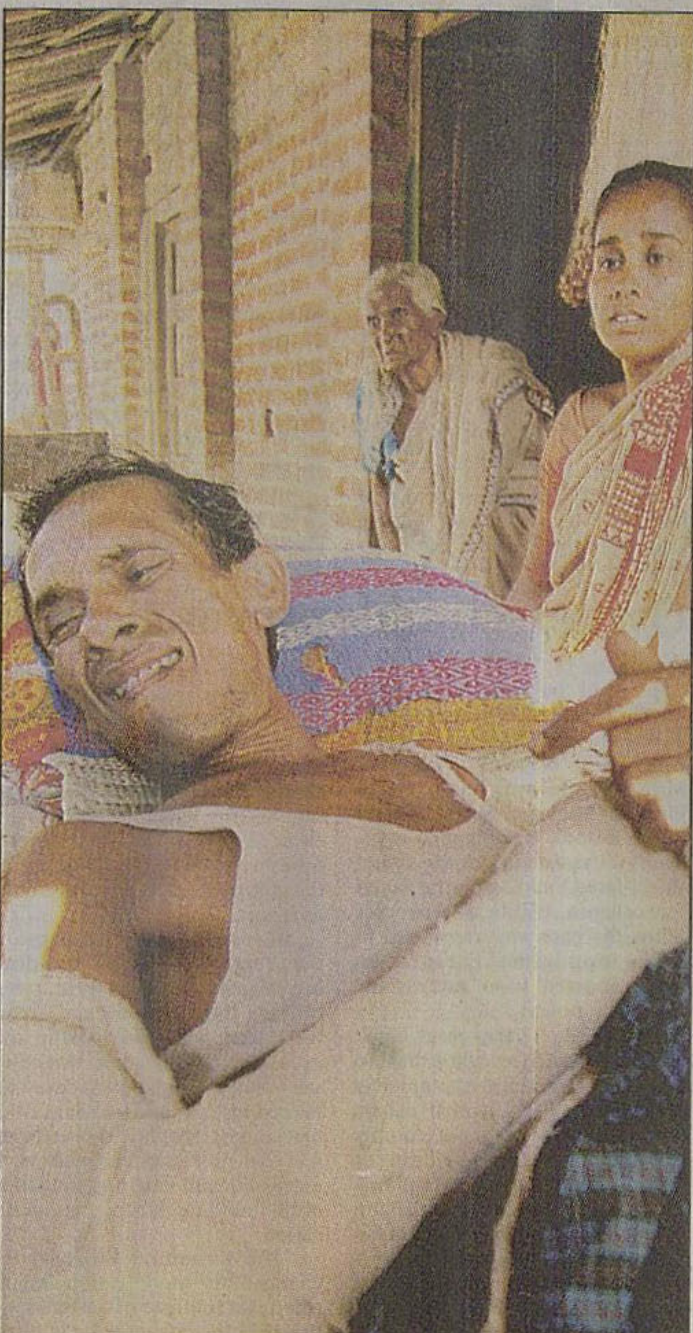
## 6 hurt in Jhenidah blasts

UNB, Jhenidah

Six people were injured in bomb explosions at Pagla Kanai crossing in the town last night.

Witnesses and police said unidentified miscreants hurled three bombs, targeting Sikder Construction Firm at about 7:45pm.

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This file photo shows Sajedur Rahman, a jatra artiste of Bagmara upazila in Rajshahi, groaning with pain after the Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) operatives tortured him brutally in November 2004. Tyrant Bangla Bhai's accomplices smashed Sajedur's both hands and legs with hockey sticks for performing in and organising the traditional theatre at his village. The militants also torched a podium of jatra.

PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

# 3 killed in garment factory stampede

## 22 also hurt in Gazipur incident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Three women workers were killed and at least 22 others injured, including one critically, in a stampede from a fire panic at a Gazipur garment factory on Monday night.

Injured workers of Radiant Sweater Factory at Board Bazar in Gazipur Sadar Upazila said the panic was triggered by a sudden blast of an electric light bulb at around 8:00pm on the seventh floor of the eight-storey factory building.

The casualties were due to the sudden onrush of some 2,000 workers on the seventh floor to come down a narrow staircase, they said.

According to local police, the dead are Rafiza Khatun, 35, wife of Abdul Zallil of Chandpur village under Phulpur Upazila of Mymensingh, Lucky Akhtar, 25, daughter of Alamgir Hossain of Dewanganj Upazila of Jamalpur, and Rahima Khatun, 20, daughter of Abdul Mannan of Ghatail of Tangail.

Lucky and Rahima died on way to hospital and Rafiza died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Locals rescued the injured, majority of them women. Of them, six were admitted to the DMCH and the rest to various local hospitals and clinics.

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## ACUTE OUTAGE IN CITY No respite before next month

### Foreign experts, tools to arrive to fix burnt cables in Ulan

REAZ AHMAD

There seems no immediate relief for Dhaka residents reeling under unprecedented power outage in the pre-summer season, as the authorities are unable to fix some burnt-out major power supply cables in the capital before early next month.

People in the city neighbourhoods of Azimpur, Dhanmondi, Elephant Road, Kakrail, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, and Dhaka University are passing hours together without electricity as both

circuits of the Ulan 1,32,000 volt power line were burnt on January 5 and March 6.

Chairman of Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (Desa) Tawhidul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday, "Burnt-out cable mending kits are not available in the country. Those will be made available from Tirelli Company of Britain and foreign technicians from Dubai and Singapore will reach Dhaka on April 3 to repair the circuits."

With a deep sense of worry and helplessness, the Desa boss said,

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