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## REFORM DEMANDS 14-party sit-in at Secretariat March 30

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL)-led 14-party opposition alliance will stage a sit-in at the Bangladesh Secretariat on March 30 as part of its movement to realise their demand for reforms in the caretaker government and Election Commission (EC).

"We will force the government to meet our reforms demand through agitation," AL General Secretary and 14-party Co-ordinator Abdul Jalil told a press conference yesterday.

Jalil demanded impeachment of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Aziz saying the CEC is unfit "mentally and physically" to perform constitutional duties and he should be impeached.

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# Cops foil 14-party bid to besiege EC

## JSD President Inu among 100 injured in pitched battle on streets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders and workers of the 14-party opposition alliance trying to lay siege to the Election Commission (EC) Secretariat in the capital yesterday clashed with the police and at least 100 were injured, 15 of them critically.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haque Inu is among the injured in serious condition.

Protesting the police attack on Inu, JSD has called a countrywide hartal for 6:00am to 2:00pm today.

The opposition workers set fire to a police minibus, and damaged at least 20 vehicles and several shops on Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi Road No 27 and in adjacent areas.

Besides charging batons, the police fired over 150 teargas shells and used water cannons during the street fighting that also left five

cops injured.

Chase and counter-chase went on for more than an hour, making it the biggest ever such clash under the coalition regime.

Leaders of the 14-party including Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Abu Sayeed, Hasan Mahmud, Habibur Rahman Siraj, Ajay Kar Khokon, Faruk Ahmed, among others, were injured in the baton charge.

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## Grameen teams up with Groupe Danone to set up food plant

REAZ AHMAD

Microcredit guru Prof Muhammad Yunus launches a joint venture food enterprise in collaboration with one of the world's major food producers -- Groupe Danone.

Yunus' Grameen Group joins hands with the France-based food producer in setting up a food-producing factory in Bangladesh, primarily to produce and market nutritionally rich dairy products, Grameen officials said yesterday.

Groupe Danone is the world's leader in marketing dairy products and bottled water with its famous brands Evian and Volvic and the second largest in biscuits.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

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## Reform skipped as PM talks to 3 top ministers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prime minister yesterday sat with her three senior ministers and discussed the latest political situation but they skipped the issue of the opposition-proposed reform and the PM's proposal to form a committee to discuss it.

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Health and Family Welfare Minister Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain attended the meeting at the Prime Minister's Office.

The meeting discussed the ongoing power crisis, the opposition movement, the capture of JMB kingpins Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai and their trial. The ministers stressed the need for arresting the JMB leaders who are still at large.

The meeting also discussed the tactics about how to face the opposition's movement.

Iqbal Hassan Mahmood, state minister for power, Kamal Siddiqui, principal secretary to the PM and ANH Akhter Hossain, secretary to the Power Division, were present in the meeting when power crisis was discussed.

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# Booming RMG cares little for workers' life

PINAKI ROY

Shima Chakma, full of teenage dreams, came a long way from her Khagrachhari home to start the first job of her life on February 17 at a garment factory in Chittagong. Six days later, the 16-year-old indigenous girl was crippled for the rest of her life.

Still, she is considered lucky to escape alive the country's worst-ever industrial fire on February 23 that roasted alive at least 59 of her colleagues at the 4-storey KTS composite garment plant of Arina Group, besides inflicting severe burn injuries to some 150 workers.

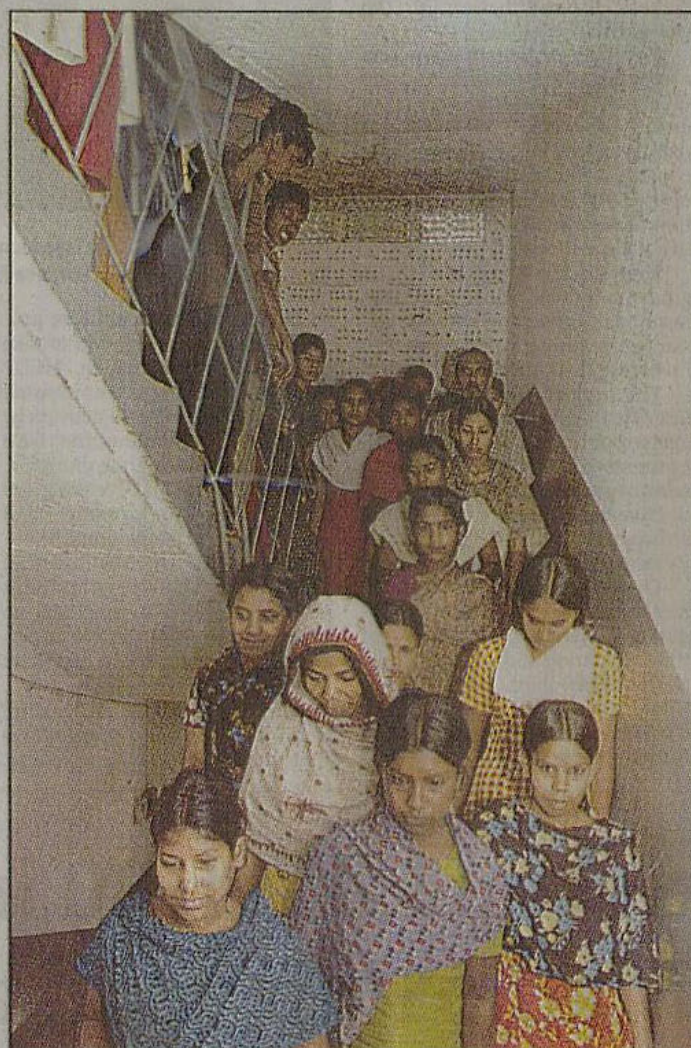
The heavy casualties were mainly blamed on one of the two collapsible gates on every floor being shut, besides the two main gates, with only a small entryway open in each of them, and the narrow spiral emergency exit stairs. Lack of fire-fighting facilities and training played no less a role in letting the flame originated on the first floor to swell into an inferno engulfing the entire factory.

Shima did come out of the hell, but not before her legs, arms and several patches in the rest of her body had burnt to the bone. The muscles of her legs and arms are now so twisted and stiff that she may never recover from the handicaps.

She was brought to the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with a number of other critically injured workers on February 26.

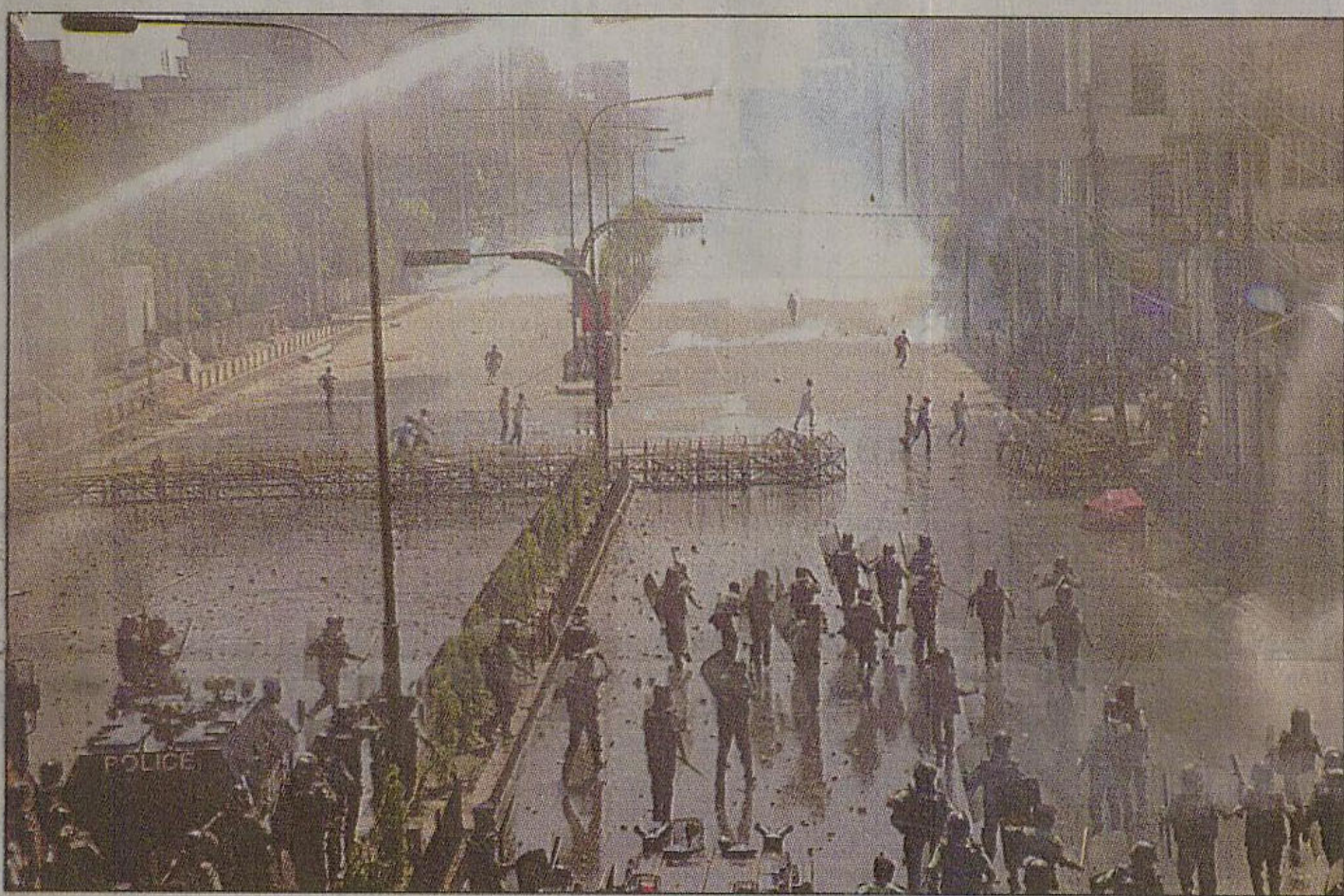
One of her co-victims, Morzina Akter, was shifted again to the

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Workers of a garment factory in the city herd into the narrow exit staircase during the lunch break yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



Police lob teargas shells and spray water to disperse a 14-party procession on Mirpur Road in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## JUBO LEAGUE LEADER'S DEATH Intact shirt saps crossfire claim

SHARIFUL ISLAM back from Savar

The Rapid Action Battalion's claim that Iman Ali, a Jubo League leader of Savar, died Wednesday in "crossfire" comes under question as locals and family members say they found the bullet-hit body in a shirt that had absolutely no bullet holes.

The family members suspect Iman was tortured to death and then the body was shot at and dumped near Panna Textile Mill in Khagan Village.

Neighbours and family members allege a certain influential quarter used Rab-4 to kill Iman in reprisal for his leading role against its attempt to occupy 10 acres of land in Miton Village last month.

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## Jubo League calls 8-hour hartal today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jubo League, youth front of main opposition Awami League (AL), enforces a countrywide hartal from 6:00am to 2:00pm today protesting the death of Masudur Rahman Imam Ali in "crossfire."

Imam Ali was a Jubo League leader of Dhaka district unit. Meanwhile, Jatiya Samjtantrik Dal (JSD) also enforces a hartal today till 2:00pm protesting the brutal clubbing of JSD president Hasanul Haque Inu as they were laying siege to the Election Commission secretariat yesterday.

The hartal will also coincide the oppositions' demand for arrest and punishment of "militant patrons," protest the high price of essentials, and the crises of power, fuel and fertiliser.

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## PM talks India trip with policymakers

REZAU KARIM

Ahead of her official visit to India, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday had an exclusive meeting with her party policymakers and was also briefed by the top foreign ministry officials about the issues to be discussed with the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

The 3-day visit beginning on March 20 is expected to give both the countries a chance to repair a relationship that has gone sour in recent years.

A highly placed source at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) told The Daily Star that the prime minister had talks with Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Health Minister Khandakar

Mosharraf Hossain.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, Foreign Affairs Adviser Reaz Rahman and Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin also met with the prime minister and briefed her about the entire range of bilateral issues.

These included trade, long-standing unresolved matters like enclaves in adverse possession, unmarked border, Indian proposal to introduce a direct bus service between Kolkata and Agartala via Bangladesh, using of Chittagong Port, signing of extradition treaty etc.

The issues to be raised during the delegation level talks were also discussed at the meetings.

Bangladesh will pursue the enclave issue with due seriousness

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## Rocket shells, ammo found in Bandarban

UNB, Bandarban

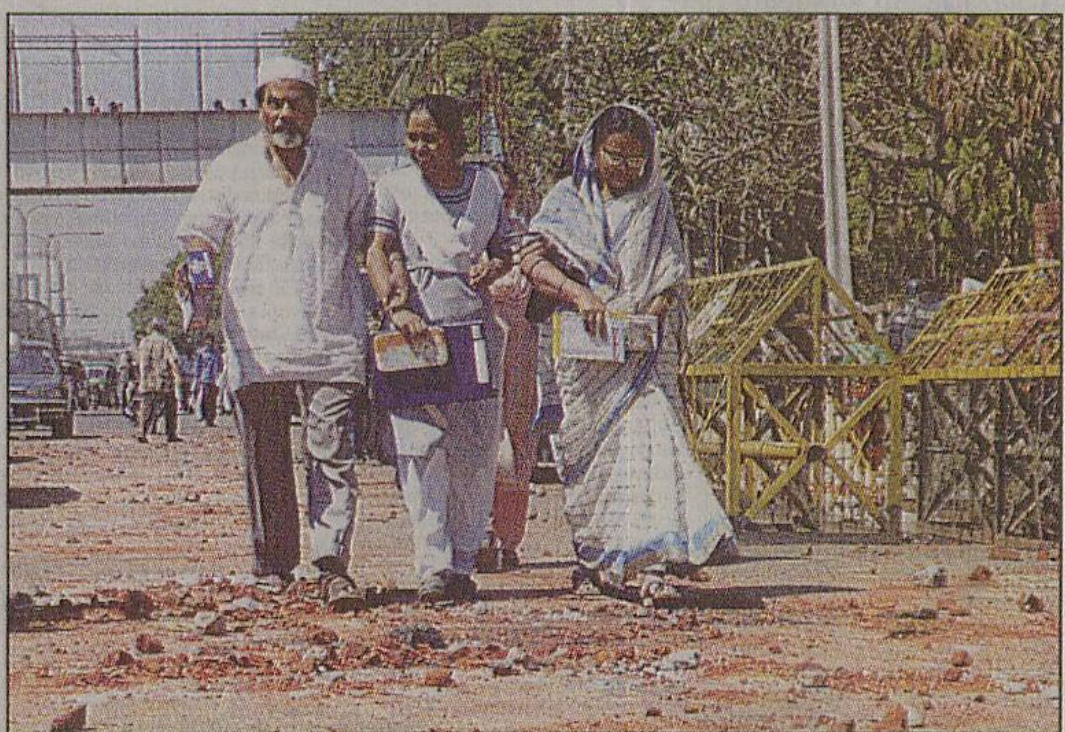
A joint force of army and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) recovered another cache of sophisticated weapons and ammunition from a den of gunrunners in Naikhongchhari upazila of the district yesterday morning.

The team, led by 40 Rifles Battalion commander Lt Col Abdul Awal, dug out the weapons including rocket shells in Dolujhiri area, army sources said.

The seized weapons and ammunition include 8,000 bullets of AK47 rifle, ten 40mm rockets, one antipersonnel mine, one hand grenade, three detonator housings and 100 detonator devices, two 40mm rocket kits, six SMG-cleaning kits, two revolvers, eight 9mm SMG magazines, one LMG and two machinegun barrels.

"A huge quantity of military hardware and uniforms were also

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Parents escort an SSC examinee through the heavily-guarded streets of Dhanmondi in the capital yesterday as police action on opposition procession near road 27 created panic in the area.

PHOTO: STAR

## SA break mighty world record to beat Australia

SPORTS REPORTER

In what was the greatest ever ODI match in living memory, South Africa pulled off a nail-biting one-wicket victory over Australia amidst scenes of pandemonium at the Wanderers in Johannesburg last night.

The unbelievable victory in the fifth and final one-day meant South Africa came back after losing the last two games to clinch the series 3-2.

After Australia had scored a world record total of 434-4 surpassing the best of 398 by Sri Lanka against Kenya in 1996, their victory seemed almost a formality.

But South Africa put on a stunning display of stroke play to reach 438-9 with one ball to spare.

Herschelle Gibbs scored a monumental 175 from 111 balls with seven sixes while captain Graeme Smith weighed in with 90 to set the

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## Ahab helped JMB build int'l links

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Militant supremo Abdur Rahman established international links of his militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) with the help of Ahab Hadith Andolan, Bangladesh (Ahab) chief Asadullah al Galib, sources said.

Evidence collected so far is so concrete that both Galib and Rahman must admit their links with two foreign militant trainers, Khaled and Javed, a reliable source told The Daily Star without elaborating.

The duo came to Bangladesh to train up Rohingya rebels in 1995 and stayed at Galib's Nawdapara den in Rajshahi.

They were taken to a house in Arambagh in Dhaka on their way to Chittagong under Galib's supervision, sources said.

The foreign militants first trained up Rohingyas and then

## BANGLA BHAI'S TYRANNY Case recorded 2 yrs after kidnap, torture Rahman remanded at Dhaka court No lawyer defends JMB chief; he too remains silent

STAR REPORT

Law enforcers took Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Abdur Rahman on another 10-day fresh remand instead of producing him before a Sylhet court yesterday, showing him arrested in an August 17 bomb blast case in the capital.

Rahman was supposed to be produced before the Sylhet court that sent him on the earlier 10-day remand after his arrest but was shown arrested in a case filed for an explosion near Dhaka Sheraton Hotel on August 17 last year.

A Sylhet court, meantime, sent two JMB cadres and Rahman's family members on another 10-day fresh remand while a Mymensingh court sent Chan Miah and his wife Rina Akhter, the hosts of Bangla Bhai, on a 10-day remand.

The members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) took Rahman to the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM), Dhaka amid tight security, reports our court correspondent.

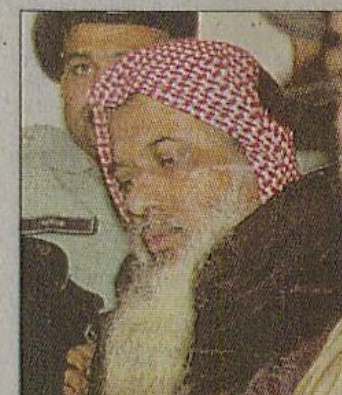
The Rab searched each room of the CMM court with metal detec-

tors and dog squad before the Detective Branch (DB) of police produced the militant kingpin before Magistrate Shafique Anwar's court at 4:30pm.

Apart from lawyers and litigants, hundreds of commoners gathered on the court premises to see the militant leader.

DB Inspector Shah Mohammad Moshir Rahman in his appeal termed Rahman "the mastermind"

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Abdur Rahman

## BANGLA BHAI TORTURE 2 Hindu youths never returned after abduction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

"We will convert to Islam and do whatever you say. Please just spare us," a Hindu youth was pleading for life. Rahimul Bashar, a tortured victim of Bangla Bhai, yesterday said he survived Bangla Bhai's wrath but the two Hindus never returned home.

Bashar of Belgharia village at Raninagar upazila in Naogaon believes the two youths are Sushanta and Sufal of Chamta village of the same upazila.

The 20th May in 2004 was really a dreadful day for Bashar. He was abducted along with Abdul Quayyum Badsha and Idris Ali Khajur by militants of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) the previous day.

"At around 5:00am I almost fainted after overnight torture

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