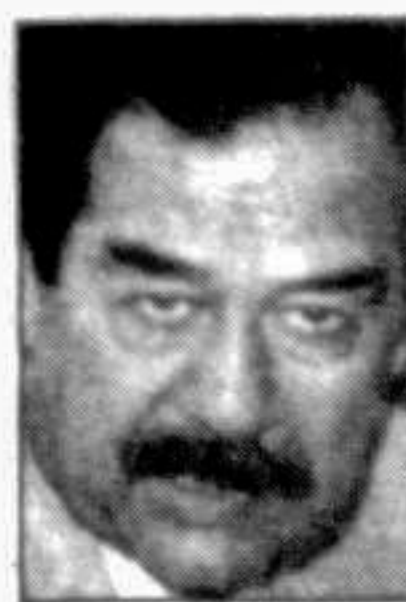


## Inside today

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**Iraq's seniormost Shi'ite scholar Grand Ayatollah Abolqassem Al-Khoei who appeared with Saddam on television last week has been kept under house arrest in Kufa.**  
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### NEWS BRIEFS

**3 held with Tk 1 cr gold**

**By Staff Correspondent**  
CHITTAGONG, Mar 29: Three Filipinos have been arrested here today on the charge of gold smuggling. Sea Customs officials recovered 1300 tolas of gold worth about Taka one crore and an amount of cash Tk. 1300 from them.

**1 arrested from DU hall**

Police raided four residential halls of Dhaka University and arrested one person from Surjo Sen Hall in the early hours on Friday. The arrested is learnt to be an outsider, reports UNB.

**'Mujahideen beaten back'**

KABUL, Mar 29: The Afghan Mujahideen offensive against Khost has been beaten back after two weeks of fierce fighting, according to officials and foreign observers in the capital Kabul, reports AFP.

**Beirut bomb blast kills 3**

BEIRUT, Mar. 29: A car bomb blast killed three people and wounded eight in Beirut today hours after the Syrian backed government ordered all militias to surrender their weapons, reports Reuters.

**Schri and Ifar timings**

Ramzan Day	Last time for Schri	Ifar
13 Saturday	4.32 am	6.20 pm
14 Sunday	4.31 am	6.20 pm

10 hurt in renewed clashes : Students asked to leave hostels

## Medical College closed sine die

By DMCH Correspondent

Dhaka Medical College (DMC) was closed indefinitely on Friday as Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists of the college were locked in fresh clashes in which at least 10 students were injured.

Of the injured, three JCD workers were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

On Thursday, the rival student groups entered into clash over selection of the new Health Minister. Choudhury Kamal ibne Yousuf, as the chief guest at the prize giving ceremony of the college's annual sports competition. In the clash two JCD supporters were hurt.

The disciplinary board of the college on Friday morning took the closure decision as its efforts to bring the two conflicting groups at the negotiation table failed. The resident students were ordered to vacate the college's two hostels by 12 noon.

But a number of the JCD workers returned to their hostels after they had been attacked by their rivals near Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University on their way. Monirur Rahman Choudhury, Masum and Manju of JCD were wounded in the attack. They were undergoing treatment at the DMCH.

The college authorities held a meeting with the leaders of JCD and BCL immediately after Thursday's untoward incidents on arrival of the Health Minister. The meeting agreed to maintain peace on the campus. At the meeting BCL leader Abul Hasnat regretted the incidents. Police forces were also withdrawn from the college area following the meeting.

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Students leaving hostels following closure of Dhaka Medical College for an indefinite period after renewed clashes between rival student groups on Friday. — Star photo.

## Iraqi troops retake Kirkuk: rebels plan retaliation

DAMASCUS, Mar 29: Kurds fighting to topple Iraqi President Saddam Hussein said today they had retreated from the northern oil city of Kirkuk after fierce battles with government troops.

Our forces retreated from Kirkuk. They are about two km (one mile) outside the city," a spokesman for the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), one of several anti-Saddam groups, told Reuters in Damascus.

He said the rebels had launched a new drive to regain Kirkuk at 6 pm (1600 GMT).

The city, with a population of about 270,000, had been in Kurdish hands since last week. The official Iraqi News Agency said on Thursday government troops had recaptured the city in a swift offensive.

Kurdish spokesman said earlier on Friday that their forces still controlled most of the city which was under heavy bombardment by artillery, missiles and tanks.

In Cairo an Iraqi envoy said on Friday the post-Gulf war rebellion against his government was nearly under control.

"The situation has stabilised after the Iraqi armed forces were able to gain control over most areas in the south and (the northern towns of) Kirkuk and Daquq were cleared of rebel forces," said Kassem Al-Hammoudi told reporters.

"The armed forces are on the way to gaining control of all areas in northern Iraq," he added.

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Amparo Bautista is nailed to the cross for 30 minutes during a re-enactment of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ on Good Friday on March 29 in the province of Bulacan north of Manila. — AFP photo.

## Act under review to reintroduce 'gram sarkar'

Mostafa Kamal Majumder

The Panchayat Act of 1989 is being reviewed to pave the way for reintroduction of 'gram sarkar' which was abolished by ousted President Ershad in 1982.

The Panchayat Act was passed in June 1989 by the fourth parliament for introduction of village governments essentially of the 'gram sarkar' type.

The law provided for the election of a 'panchayat' (rural council) in all recognised villages. Each 'panchayat' was to comprise a 'panchayat pradhan' (council head).  
See Page 10 Col 6

## Probe into Comilla jail firing continues

**From Our Correspondent**  
COMILLA, Mar 29: The one-man enquiry committee continued its investigation into Wednesday's firing at the Comilla Central Jail, in which eight prisoners were killed.

The committee formed with the District and Sessions Judge Mohammad Hamidul Huq will submit its report to the government within 15 days.

The jail authorities have started repair works. The jail buildings and a handloom factory inside the jail were damaged in the clash between the prisoners and the guards.

Jail sources said Tajul Islam, convicted in the case, was killed.  
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## Sirajul Haque quits AL to defend Ershad

Star Report

Awami League leader Advocate Sirajul Haque resigned from the party presidency on Friday and remained firm on his decision to defend deposed President HM Ershad in the arms case.

Ershad is facing trial for possessing illegal arms and funds at his official residence.

In a letter to the AL General Secretary Begum Sajeda Choudhury, Sirajul Haque offered his resignation from the party presidency showing "moral ground". He requested the party chief to treat the letter as resignation from primary membership as well, if the party feels embarrassed for his decision to defend Ershad.

In the letter, he expressed his determination to defend the former President in the arms case, it is learnt.

When contacted, Sirajul Haque confirmed his resignation.

Awami League Publicity Secretary Mohammad Nasim told The Daily Star that the party would expel Sirajul Haque for defending an autocrat like Ershad. He said when the party chief would return to the capital, the issue would be discussed. He confirmed that Sirajul Haque would not get the chance of resigning from the party. He will have to face punishment for embarrassing the party by defending Ershad, he said.

Advocate Sirajul Haque along with former Attorney General Barrister Rafiqul Haque met the deposed President on Tuesday last at the Oulshan sub-jail to discuss the case.

Ershad requested Sirajul Haque to defend him in the arms case. Sirajul Haque, who

declined to appear before the court to defend Ershad is learnt to have been giving brief to Barrister Kazi Shohidul Hussain. Kazi Shohidul and three other lawyers have been appointed by the relatives of Ershad to defend him in the arms case.

Sirajul Haque first tried to keep himself behind the scene due to political reason. But later Ershad proposed that if Sirajul Haque agrees to defend him he will request his party to support the Awami League demand to revert to parliamentary form of government. The proposal was communicated to the Awami League leaders. But the Awami League leaders opined that the support of Jatiya Party MPs would not make two-third majority in parliament required for amending the Constitution.

On the other hand, the acting chairman of Jatiya Party Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury in a statement on Thursday denied that Ershad had said anything like that. Since its inception Jatiya Party stands for presidential form of government and any change in the stand should be endorsed by a council of the party, he said.

Sirajul Haque told The Daily Star that he is expecting to appear for Ershad on April 2 when the tribunal resumes its hearing. He further said he is negotiating terms and conditions for defending Ershad. Ershad's brother-in-law Mustafizur Rahman is negotiating with him.

The decision of Advocate Sirajul Haque, who is a presidential member of Awami League has created an embarrassing situation for the party, which  
See Page 10 Col 1

## BNP bags another JS seat

Mr Abdur Rouf Chowdhury, a nominee of Bangladesh Nationalist Party, was unofficially declared elected Friday in the Kushtia-2 constituency where election was held Thursday.

Election Commission sources told BSS that Mr Chowdhury got 50,193 votes in 113 centres. His nearest rival was Jamaat's Abdul Wahed who got 29,868.

With the polling in Kushtia-2 constituency, election to the 300-member parliament is now complete. The election to this constituency was countermanded due to the death of a candidate on February 27.

In all seven candidates contested the election. Third, Fourth and Fifth positions were secured by Jatiya Party (Ahsan Habib Lincoln-24,615), JSD (Hasanul Haq Inu-21,411) and Awami League (Md Shaiful Islam 17,553) nominees respectively.

Mr Saidur Rahman Biswas Shantu of Zaker Party got 907 votes, while Mr Shawkat Ibn Moyn Chowdhury of Freedom Party got 130 votes.

Chief Election Commissioner Justice Mohammad Abdur Rauf was in Kushtia during election which was held in a peaceful manner, sources added.

## JP MPs will not take oath today

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Party MPs will not take oath today. The Parliamentary Secretariat had fixed March 30 as the date of those MPs who failed to take oath on March 17, 18 and 19.

The Jatiya Party Parliamentary Party (JPPP) at a meeting Friday afternoon with Deputy  
See Page 10 Col 1

## JS polls were free but not fair: Hasina

From Our Correspondent

KOTALIPARA (Gopalganj), Mar 29: Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina has said that February 27 parliamentary polls were free but not fair.

She claimed that the evil forces had influenced the results of the voting by resorting to subtle unfair line.

Addressing a meeting of the leading persons arranged by the Kotalipara upazila Awami League at the Upazila Parishad ground today Hasina said that she would try her best for the development of Kotalipara.

Thanking the local people for electing her, Hasina said her party wanted to establish a sovereign parliament.

## Shamsul Huda has no moral right to chair Sangsad session: Suranjit

Suranjit Sengupta MP, a leader of the Ganatantri Party, Friday said the outgoing Speaker has lost the moral right to chair the opening sitting of parliament after his recent threat to adjourn the house.

"No parliament members feel safe in his hand after this statement threatening to adjourn the House", Sengupta told UNB.

Outgoing Speaker Shamsul Huda Chowdhury in an interview with the Morning Sun said last Monday that if the members of parliament refuse  
See Page 10 Col 2

## Former DU VC 'forced to sign a note of regret'

Former Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University Prof M.A. Mannan was allegedly forced to write a note yesterday (Friday), regretting the expulsion of 11 students from the University during his tenure, reports UNB.

"I regret the expulsion and seek apology for the action," said the note written on a piece of white paper and signed by Prof Mannan. Photocopy of the note was later distributed to University correspondents by some JCD workers.  
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## Hardline communists push Yeltsin into a corner

MOSCOW, Mar 29: Hardline communists pushed Russian federation leader Boris Yeltsin into a political corner today by demanding a proposal to create an executive presidency for his republic from the agenda of a key parliamentary session, reports Reuters.

The communist party daily Pravda unleashed a torrent of criticism against Yeltsin, accusing him of trying to impose mob rule, and denounced protesters who braved police cordons at a banned rally on Thursday to demand that Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev step down.

Tens of thousands of troops

and military equipment have been withdrawn from Moscow in accordance with an undertaking made by Gorbachev.

The Communists, who openly show their distaste for Yeltsin's anti-Kremlin stand won a series of votes which effectively buried proposals to create an executive presidency elected by popular vote.

"It was a very big loss for Yeltsin and for the democrats, prominent liberal parliamentarian Colonel-General Dmitry Volkogonov told reporters.

Yeltsin, now Chairman of the Russian Federation's Parliament, would have a much more powerful base as execu-

tive president to oppose what he sees as Gorbachev's swing away from reforms. Yeltsin's wide popularity would virtually guarantee him election.

Yeltsin, won a key vote on Thursday, when Deputies approved a resolution asking Gorbachev to rescind a three-week ban on demonstrations in the capital.

But many reformists in the republic's supreme legislature, the Congress of People's Deputies, said it would have been too much to expect the broadly conservative majority in the 1,068-seat chamber to back such a sweeping constitutional change as the execu-

tive presidency proposal.

With such a gathering of Deputies, you could not expect anything else, radical Leningrad television presenter Bella Kurkova told reporters.

"But all is not lost. We still make several attempts to put forward the question of the presidency and resolve it."

Some suggested that it would be enough for Yeltsin merely to retain his current position in view of suggestions that some communists would try to unseat him.

Yeltsin is due to make a report on his activity to the Congress. An alternative report likely to be critical of his lead-

ership, will also be presented.

In the votes on the agenda, the Congress agreed to discuss this month's referendum on a Russian presidency, in which 70 per cent of voters backed the idea of an elected executive head of state. But it rejected all discussion on implementing the outcome meaning constitutional changes and an election.

Yeltsin has been building up his campaign against Gorbachev, calling last month for the President's resignation and insisting his republic will press ahead with its won reforms.

Communists have been particularly incensed by his support for the separatist breakaway Baltic republics after violence there in January in which at least 22 people were killed and his calls for the creation of a separate Russian army.

Pravda recalled Yeltsin's recent attacks on Gorbachev and suggestions that reformers would appeal directly to the people in the event of a constitutional coup.

In other words, Boris Yeltsin and his backers will be relying not on the force of law but on the force of the mob, on mob rule, it said.