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Inside Today

Conversation



In the second offering of the series, prominent economist and former planning adviser Rehman Sobhan, and ex-finance minister M Syeeduzzaman discuss the country's economic crisis, reports of the economic task forces, the issue of aid and the past and future of economic planning
Page 4, 5

International

Police investigating the bomb blast which killed Rajiv Gandhi are working on a new theory that a simple switching device was used to activate the bomb strapped to the suicide squad's back
Page 6

Metropolitan

Letter from Chittagong



A few more cameras slung around the neck. A little more five o'clock shadow. Dirt on T-shirt. Shoddy shoes, and the foreign correspondent has hit the ideal image
Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

Teresa to visit Baghdad

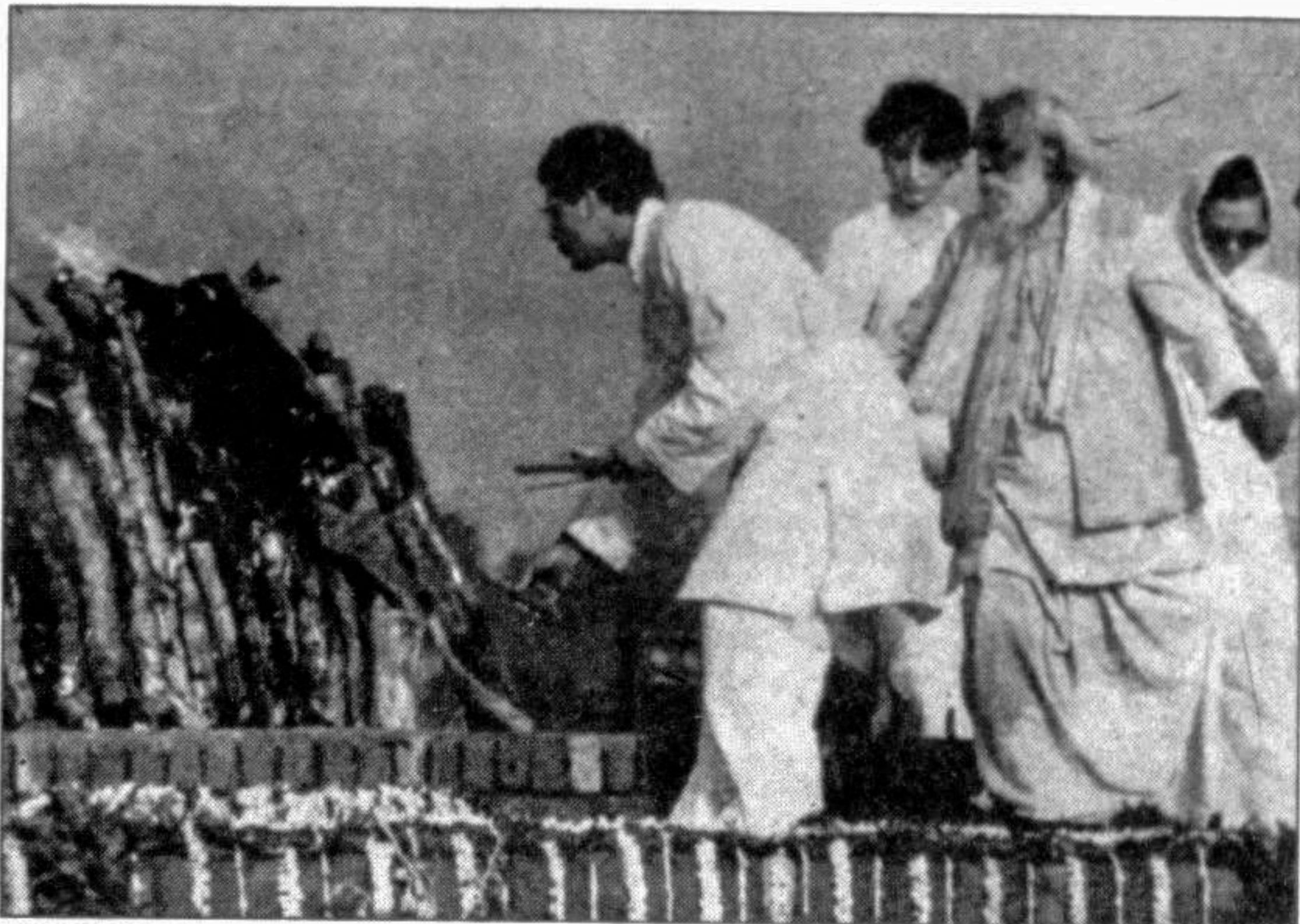
GENEVA, May 24: Mother Teresa, who won the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize for her work on behalf of the Third World's sick and poor, will fly to Baghdad next week.

New ROK PM

SEOUL, May 24: South Korean President Roh Tae-Woo has decided to name former Education Minister Chung Won-Shik as the country's new Prime Minister, state radio said today, reports Reuter.

Khaleda, Quayle, other world leaders attend funeral: 20 killed in violence

Rajiv cremated amid tight security



NEW DELHI: Rahul Gandhi lights funeral pyre of his slain father and former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on Friday at Shakti Sthal. Daughter Priyanka and wife Sonia (R) attend the cremation with Hindu priest.

NEW DELHI, May 24: Emotionally stunned and politically adrift, the world's largest democracy said farewell Friday to assassinated former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, reports agencies.

To the chanting of sacred Hindu hymns and in the presence of thousands of mourners Gandhi was consigned to the flames here with full state honours.

Army buglers sounded the last post as Gandhi's body was consumed by flames on the sprawling grounds of Shakti Sthal (Place of Power), watched by an array of foreign dignitaries.

At 5.25 pm (1155 GMT), Gandhi's teenage son Rahul lit the sandalwood pyre on which his father's mutilated body lay, wrapped in linen and covered with rose petals, as the chanting of ancient Vedic hymns rose to a crescendo.

Flames leapt high within 10 minutes, and surging crowds raised slogans hailing Gandhi.

Dressed in mourning white and assisted by a battery of chanting priests, the 17-year-

See Page 10 Col. 7

Paris meet will be asked for \$2.4b aid pledge: Saifur Additional help for post-cyclone rehabilitation to be sought

Star Economic Report

The Government will apprise the Aid Club members in the May 29-30 Paris meeting of the needs for external resources support for an elaborate post cyclone reconstruction and rehabilitation programme. The request for additional support will be in general terms without any concrete and specific amount mentioned.

This was stated by Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman at a press conference on Friday at National Economic Council building at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city.

He told the newsmen that the Government would seek fresh aid pledges for 2.4 billion dollars for 1991-92 at the Aid Club meeting. This amount will include 1550 million dollars in project aid, 520 million dollars in commodity aid and 330 million dollars in food aid, he added.

Asked about aid already in the pipeline, he said that the pipeline at the end of FY 1990-

91, comprising earlier commitments, would include 5156 million dollars as project aid, 490.9 million dollars as food aid and 152.5 million dollars as food aid.

Saifur Rahman told a questioner that the fresh aid pledges for 1991-92 would be sought keeping in view the aid disbursement target of 1885 million dollars for the year. The aid disbursement target for 1991-92 includes 1200 million dollars as project aid, 500 million dollars as commodity aid and 185 million dollars as food aid. This target was set before the cyclone and does not include needs for additional donor support for cyclone rehabilitation and reconstruction," he added.

The Minister said a joint Task Force, comprising representatives of the government, the World Bank and the United Nations agencies, would require more three weeks' time to complete a detailed assessment about the extent of loss

caused by the century's worst cyclone and tidal surge of April 29. Any specific requests will have to wait until the assessment is complete, he observed.

Saifur Rahman leaves Dhaka for Paris today as the head of a six-member team to the annual Aid Club meeting, being held in about two months' time after a representative government has been installed in power following the free and fair elections in February last.

The other members of the Bangladesh team include Principal Finance Secretary Khaleda Zia, Economic Relations Division (ERD) Secretary Enam Ahmed Chowdhury, Planning Commission members Dr Sheikh Maksud Ali and Dr Ekram Hossain and Internal Resources Division (IRD) Secretary N H Khan who is also the chairman of National Board of Revenue.

At the press conference on the eve of the Aid Club meeting
See Page 10 Col. 3

Nor'wester hits Chittagong, hampers relief operations

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 24: A nor'wester coupled with heavy downpour hampered relief operations for cyclone victims today. Ferrying of relief goods slowed down since required number of sorties by helicopters could not be made due to rough weather.

The nor'wester had a wind-speed upto 55 kilometer per hour. The downpour, that started last night, continued

till 2 pm today. The Met Office recorded 43 millimeter rainfall in three hours till 9 am this morning.

The lowlying areas of the post city and areas surrounding it have been inundated by rain waters causing sufferings to the dwellers. The nor'wester damaged hundreds of kutchas and thatched houses and hampered rebuilding and rehabilitation work in cyclone

affected areas.

Mukammel Haq, the Zonal Relief Coordinator told The Daily Star the relief operations in the offshore islands suffered a set back today. The Task Force sources said they could not operate required number of sorties due to nor'wester and rain.

Our Staff Correspondent Nazmul Ashraf Reports: See Page 10 Col. 6

Khaleda meets Sonia

NEW DELHI, May 24: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia attended the state funeral of India's former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi near the 'Shakti Sthal' (funeral site of his mother Indira Gandhi) on the bank of the Jamuna river this afternoon, reports BSS.

Accompanied by Foreign Minister A S M Mustafizur Rahman and State Minister for Tele-communication Shamsul Islam, Begum Zia was among the world leaders present at the funeral.

See Page 10 Col. 8

Residents of Sonia's hometown breath sigh of relief

ORBASSANO (Italy), May 24: The people of Sonia Gandhi's sleepy Italian hometown were relieved on Thursday when she refused to succeed her assassinated husband as head of India's dominant Congress party, reports Reuter.

I am happy that she said no and the whole town is happy it would have been a very difficult situation, said Carolina Santinelli, 22, a friend of Sonia's family.

Sonia is a very strong, very courageous woman, but let's not forget that she is now without a husband and with two children in a country which is not her, Santinelli said.

Like many residents of Orbassano a town of 20,000 people just outside northern Turin, Santinelli feared that Sonia Matno Gandhi, 44, could See Page 10 Col. 3

Polls won't be deferred further: CEC Cong split over bringing Sonia into politics

By Reazuddin Ahmed

Sonia Gandhi, widow of the slain Indian leader Rajiv Gandhi, is unlikely to reverse her decision despite pressure from some leaders to become president of Congress(I). Reports from Indian capital revealed on Friday that the Congress leaders were divided on bringing Italian born Sonia Gandhi to Indian politics.

Former union minister and a senior Congress(I) leader Yashwantrao Chavan said if Sonia was not willing to enter politics, the party should show collective wisdom to find an alternative. Sources in Indian capital said that the Congress leaders close to Nehru family were trying to persuade Sonia to accept the Congress leadership to keep the opportunity open for them to dominate Indian politics even without having any political roots in their respective locality. Among the close associates of Nehru family are Pronab Mukharjee who is not contesting the Lok Sabha elections. Besides, R K Dhawan is also for drafting

But the regional leaders N D Tewari and Sharad pawar are in favour of finding an alternative leader to lead the Congress to victory in the elections. They hold the view that any delay in filling leadership void in the Congress will damage the party's electoral prospect in deferred Lok Sabha Elections on June 12 and 15. The persistence of a chaotic situation in Congress, they feel, will benefit other contenders for power who may exploit the situation in their favour.

The political analysis see the coming week very sensitive for all the major political parties in India. During this time the Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Janata Dal-left combine will try to gain strong ground in the backdrop of the changed scenario. The political observers in Indian capital feel that the Congress might get sympathy votes provided the party can choose a leader quickly and See Page 10 Col. 4

Khaleda leaves for S Arabia today

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia leaves Dhaka today (Saturday) morning on a four-day official visit to three Gulf states, reports UNB.

The countries are Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. Her entourage includes Foreign Minister ASM Mustafizur Rahman, State Minister for Labour and Manpower Barister Rafiqul Islam Mian, Foreign Secretary Abul Ahsan.

See Page 10 Col. 1

Bush says he is now sharp as a tack

WASHINGTON, May 24: President George Bush acknowledged Thursday that his mental faculties had been somewhat slowed by medical treatment for his irregular heart beat and thyroid gland but insisted he was now "sharp as a tack," reports AFP.

"Yes, I've been tired and that medicine is known to do that to people, but now I'm See Page 10 Col. 2

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Rains aggravate flood situation in Sylhet, Moulvibazar

By Staff Correspondent

The flood situation in Moulvibazar and Sylhet deteriorated Friday and more areas in this two districts were inundated with the rise of water level of Manu and Kushiara. Diarrhoea and dysentery are spreading in the flood affected areas.

According to latest reports, Manu at Moulvibazar and Kushiara at Sheola are flowing above danger level. The flood situation in Habiganj improved slightly, but Khowai is still flowing above the danger mark.

Meanwhile, Flood Forecasting and Warning Division of Water Development Board said

the Surma at Sylhet and Sunamganj, the Manu at Moulvibazar and the Khowai at Habiganj may rise further.

Moulvibazar

In Moulvibazar, flood situation aggravated with the river Manu registering a rise of 12 cm affecting 637 square kilometre area in six upazilas of the district.

According to district administration sources, 7,23,595 people were affected in Moulvibazar. About 17,500 houses were damaged fully and over 33,000 partly in the district. Waterborne diseases like

diarrhoea and dysentery are still spreading. However, number of deaths could not be gathered fifty medical teams are working in all the six affected upazilas. Relief operation have been geared up.

Sylhet

The flood situation in Balaganj upazila of Sylhet deteriorated and more areas were inundated Friday. However, Sylhet District Flood Control Room said the situation in other upazilas started improving.

Kushiara at Sheola was See Page 10 Col. 3

Riyadh warns Iran against protest during Hajj

RIYADH, May 24: Saudi Arabia on Thursday warned Iran against organising protests during next month's pilgrimage to Mecca, or hajj, the Saudi News Agency SPA said, reports AFP.

"We have signed an agreement with Iran based on clear and well defined principles," an official communique said.

JTF, army continue relief work

CHITTAGONG, May 24: The Joint Task Force (JTF) continued sending relief and rehabilitation materials to remote coastal islands in spite of inclement weather here today, reports BSS.

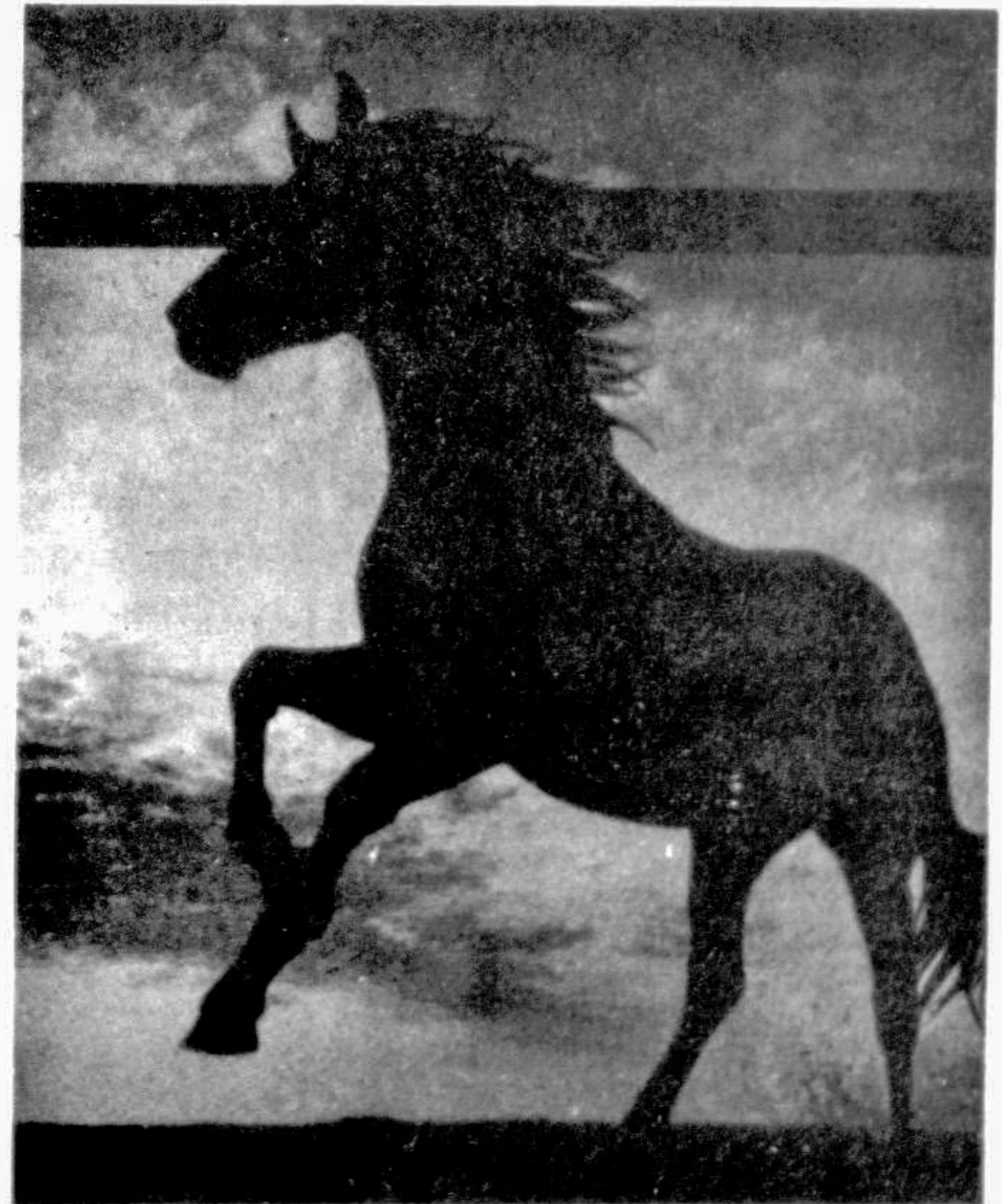
Official sources said JTF helicopters and naval ships carried 188 tons of materials to Sandwip, Kutubdia, Moheshkhali and Qrir Char. Potato. See Page 10 Col. 6

UN-Iraq accord Security forces to be deployed

NEW YORK, (United Nations), May 24: The United Nations and Iraq signed an agreement Thursday authorizing the deployment of lightly armed security forces to northern Iraq to protect Kurdish refugees, the United Nations announced, reports AFP.

UN envoy Berner Bernander signed the agreement in See Page 10 Col. 8

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