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ZILQAD 28, 1416 HIJRI

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## Article

## The 'Third Force'

Column: As I See It  
by Ikram Sehgal

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on the Move

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## International

Clinton pledges to keep  
one lakh troops in Asia-  
Pacific regionStrike protesting killing  
paralyses Kashmir

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## Business

Buy more Bangladeshi  
goods, Chief Adviser  
urges BhutanS-Asia tipped to post 6  
pc growth, 8 pc inflation  
this yr

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## DSE MARKET

DSE price Index 815.05 (-0.08%)  
Market capital Tk 5538.10 cr  
Transactions in volume 18652  
Transactions in value Tk 3.47 cr

## NEWS BRIEFS

WB mission chief  
meets Dr JamilurThe World Bank mission  
Chief in Dhaka Pierre Landell  
Mills called on Adviser for  
Energy and Mineral Resources  
and Water Resources Dr  
Jamilur Reza Chowdhury at his  
office here yesterday. During  
the meeting, they discussed  
the progress of some WB-aided  
projects in energy and water  
resources sectors. They also  
discussed the possible ways  
and means of future cooperation  
of WB in the energy and  
mineral resources sector, re-  
ports UNB.Raphael arrives  
in PakistanISLAMABAD, Apr 17: US  
Assistant Secretary of State for  
South Asian Affairs Robin  
Raphael arrived here today on a  
five-day regional tour expected  
to focus on ways of resolving  
the civil war in Afghanistan.  
Raphael goes to Afghanistan on  
Friday for two days after talks  
with government leaders here.  
Pakistani official said, reports  
APP.

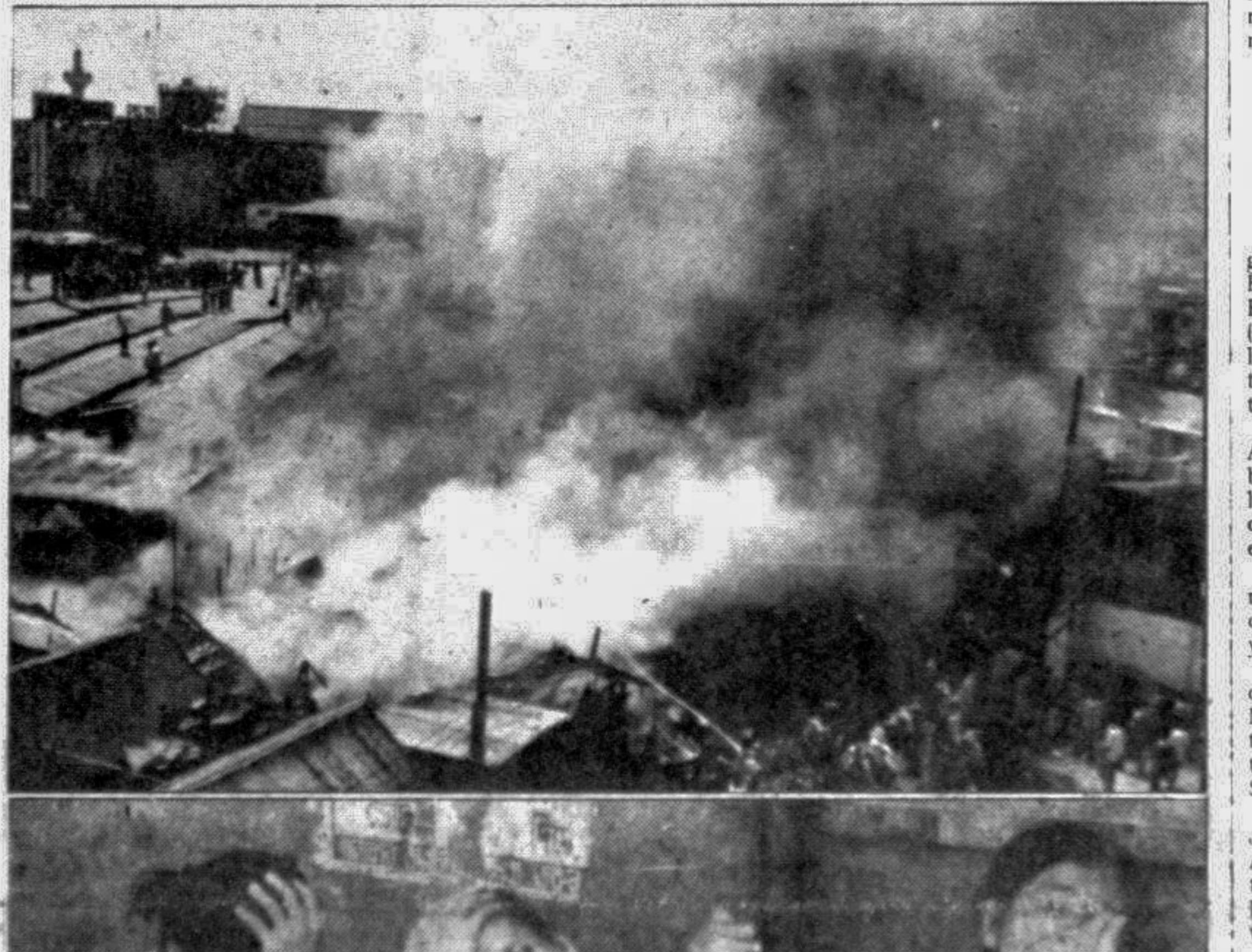
## 32 firearms seized

The law enforcing agencies,  
during the nationwide drive  
for illegal arms recovered, 32  
firearms and some ammunition  
and arrested 20 people. The  
arms and ammunition include  
three pistols, two revolvers,  
two single barrel-guns, 20  
pipe-guns, five LGs, 43 bullets  
and cartridges and 36 bombs  
and different types of explosives,  
reports UNB.Gano Forum team  
meets CECA four-member delegation  
of the Gano Forum led by  
president Major General  
(retd) Khalilur Rahman called  
on the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), Mohammad Abu  
Hena, at his office yesterday.  
During the meeting, they  
discussed matters relating to  
coming Jatiya Sangsad elections,  
reports BSS.16 killed in Indian  
bus accidentNEW DELHI, Apr 17: At  
least 16 people were killed  
and 24 injured in Maharashtra  
today when a bus plunged off a  
bridge into a dry river bed, the  
Press Trust of India said.  
Police said 10 of the injured  
had been admitted to hospital  
in serious condition. The accident  
occurred on a highway linking Bombay, the Maharashtra capital, to the western  
industrial city of Pune, reports  
APP.Dr Kamal visits  
MujibnagarA Gano Forum delegation  
led by Dr Kamal Hossain visited  
Mujibnagar in Meherpur  
district marking the Mujibnagar  
Day yesterday. The other members of the delegation are Begum Nurjahan Morshed,  
Panjab Bhattacharya, Sham-  
suddha, Mostafa Mohsin  
Montu, Jamil Chowdhury and  
Abdul Matin Chowdhury. re-  
ports UNB.2 children burnt alive  
in Babupura slum fire

By Staff Correspondent

At least two children were  
burnt alive and several persons  
injured in a devastating fire  
that gutted some 150 thatched  
houses and left more than two  
thousand people homeless at  
the Babupura slum in Nilkhel  
in the city yesterday.The cause of the fire and  
extent of damage could not be  
known immediately, fire service  
officials said.Identities of the two chil-  
dren, one aged about 6 and the  
other aged about 10, could not  
be known till last night.Dhannondi police said they  
recovered the bodies and sent  
them to the Dhaka Medical  
College Hospital for autopsy.The two children were trapped  
in a hut.Six fire fighting units  
rushed to the spot immediately  
after the fire broke out around  
12:30 pm and brought it under  
control within an hour.

Local people said the

incident and sympathised with  
the affected people. Begum Zia  
said her party would do every-  
thing possible for the succour of  
the fire-affected people.Gruel kitchen has been  
opened by the BNP to serve  
food to the affected people.UNB adds: Awami League  
President Sheikh Hasina has  
expressed her deep shock at  
the deaths and damages in the  
fire at the Babupura slum. She  
also sympathised with the af-  
fected people.In a statement, she called  
for providing adequate relief  
for the victims and urged the  
rich and the party leaders and  
workers to come forward to help  
the affected people.Hasina also prayed for the  
salvation of the departed souls  
and demanded proper treatment  
for those injured.

Fire gutted part of the Babupura slum (Top) in the city and women (Bottom) wailing over their losses yesterday.

— Star photo

Tax collection falls short  
of target by Tk 300 crCountry's tax revenue during  
the last three quarters of the  
current fiscal slipped offthe target by more than Tk  
300 crore as collection drive  
tumbled in the past two months of political turbulence, reports UNB.Total tax revenue receipt  
during July-March period of  
the 1995-96 fiscal stood at  
about Tk 7,560 crore, down  
the period's target of Tk 7,865

crore.

Sources in the Ministry of  
Finance attributed the slump  
to sharp fall in the collection  
of customs duty, particularly  
during the months of February  
and March, as well as poor re-

turn from income tax.

Customs duty collection,  
which totalled at 2630 crore  
up to March, fell short of the  
target by more than 8 per cent.Shortfall in income tax  
was yet worse as the collection  
from the head was trailing the  
projection by about 16 per cent  
or more than 150 crore.Collection of both the cus-  
toms duty and income tax  
were even lower than that of  
the corresponding months of  
the last fiscal (1994-95).

Tax revenue collection was

ahead of the target by about Tk  
87 crore till January, but the  
situation plummeted following  
severe disruptions in foreign

trade and industry in February

and particularly in March.

An official of the National  
Board of Revenue, when con-  
tacted, however, said the rev-  
enue position was not as bad as  
apprehended.

He said the Board was still

not forecasting any revenue  
shortfall at the year end. The  
official added that a vigorous  
collection drive was now on

resulting in a "very good"

collection performance in the  
current month.Another source in the rev-  
enue board, however, cau-  
tioned that good performance  
of April might not sustain

in the coming months.

See Page 12 Col 4

JP threatens polls boycott  
unless Ershad is freedThe Jatiya Party might opt  
out of the electoral race if  
its jailed chairman, former presi-  
dent H M Ershad, is not released  
before the coming elections, reports UNB.A final decision on its par-  
ticipation in the coming election  
would be announced on April 28 at the party's grand  
rally at the Manik Mia Avenue,  
JP presidium member Begum  
Roushan Ershad said.Exchanging views with  
some senior journalists at the  
Jatiya Press Club yesterday  
morning, she suggested that  
the election would not be fair  
and neutral if her husband was  
kept in jail."We want to judge the  
neutrality of the caretaker gov-  
ernment," she said, adding "Itwill be undemocratic." She  
observed that it would be un-  
fortunate for the nation if the  
coming election is not held in a  
free and fair atmosphere.Referring to the cases filed  
against Ershad, she said the  
former president had been  
framed out of grudge and vindi-  
cative. She pointed out that  
Ershad had not been allowed  
to be released on bail when his  
other co-accused in the  
same case had been given  
bail.She mentioned the arms  
case against Ershad in which  
he had been given 10 years  
sentence by the lower court,  
but subsequently released by  
the highest court.Replies to a question as to  
whether Ershad is not released

See Page 12 Col 6

## Defence Ministry:

President sees  
nothing wrongPresident Abdur Rahman  
Biswas yesterday said the Defence  
Ministry and the Armed  
Forces Division are placed under  
him in accordance with the  
13th amendment of the  
Constitution, reports UNB."There is nothing wrong in  
it and nobody should confuse  
public mind about it," he said  
referring to the statements  
made by certain political parties  
regarding the allocation of the  
Defence Ministry under the  
President.He said the government  
has already clarified the position  
in this respect.President Biswas was talk-  
ing with a 10-member delegation  
of Islami Shashanka Andolon  
when it called on him at  
Bangabhaban. Its Chairman  
Barrister Moulana Korban Ali  
led the delegation.Earlier, members of the  
delegation thanked the President  
for appointing the caretaker  
government within a very short  
time and stressed the importance  
of recovery of illegal arms for  
holding the next election in a free  
and fair manner.Hajj delegation  
leaves  
tomorrowA three-member Hajj delegation  
headed by Adviser for Health and Family Welfare and Religious Affairs Major General (retd) Abdur Rahman Khan leaves here for Saudi Arabia tomorrow on a 15-day official tour, reports UNB.During their stay in Saudi  
Arabia, the delegation members  
will meet with the high-level  
Saudi authorities and discuss  
matters of bilateral interest.They will also attend other  
related state functions in the  
country, said a PID handout  
yesterday.The other members of the  
delegation are Justice A M  
Mahmudur Rahman and Director  
General of Health Directorate Prof A K Shamsuddin Siddiqui.They will visit Makkah,  
Jeddah, Madina, Mina and  
Arafat to see for themselves  
the conditions of Bangladeshi  
Hajj pilgrims and ensure their  
welfare.AL extended  
meet today

By Staff Correspondent

Around 1,500 Awami League  
delegates from across the  
country would get together  
to discuss and exchange views on  
crucial issues of national and  
political importance at an  
extended meeting of the party  
in the city today, according to  
party sources.With AL president Sheikh  
Hasina in the chair, today's  
meeting is scheduled to be  
attended by all members of the  
presidium, central working  
committee and advisory  
committee of the party and  
presidents and general secretaries  
of the party's district and thana  
units. Former parliament  
members of the party are also  
likely to be present at the  
meeting that begins at 10

See Page 12 Col 2

Khaleda goes to  
Khulna Apr 23

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Apr 17: BNP  
Chairperson Begum Khaleda  
Zia is expected to address a  
public meeting at the Circuit  
House ground here on April  
23, said a party press release.  
It will be her first visit to  
Khulna after resignation as  
prime minister.Meanwhile, Jamaat chief  
Professor Golam Azam will be  
accorded reception by local  
units of the party on April 20.  
He will also address a public  
meeting at the Circuit House  
Ground on the same day.SSC examinee  
stabbed to  
death

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Apr 17: An SSC  
examinee was stabbed to death  
allegedly by a group of young-  
men today.Syed Ahmed Dildar, 16, of  
village Syedpur in Jagannathpur  
thana of Sunamganj district,  
succumbed to stab injuries at  
the MAG Osmani Medical  
College Hospital here today.Family members of the victim  
alleged that a group of five  
youngmen of the neighbouring  
village Habibpur called him out  
of his village home to accompany  
them on way to the thana  
headquarters. They took him to  
the nearby field of old court  
and stabbed him severely, the  
family members said.Claiming the victim to be a  
Shibir activist, the Jagannath-  
pur thana unit of Islami  
Chhatra Shibir blamed the  
Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal activi-  
sts for the killing.However, the cause of the  
murder could not be ascer-  
tained yet, police said.

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