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# The Daily Star

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## 36 Manipuris arrested near Sylhet border

From Staff Correspondent SYLHET, Apr 21: The BDR arrested 36 Indian nationals from Manipur and two Bangladeshis, suspected to be involved in insurgency, from the Ballaghat border areas of Jaintapur thana last night.

Official sources said, all the arrested Indians hail from Imphal, the capital of the state of Manipur, while the Bangladeshis are the residents of the Shibganj area of Sylhet town.

The Bangladeshis were identified as Obsen Singh and Ratan Mani Singh, belonging to the Manipuri tribe.

The arrested Indians are: Inava, Mosen, Akshai, Tumpa, Akuto, Shyamoi, Hukto, Lithin, Mara, Ashang, Thomba, Labsoi, David, Ahari, Tamu, Pantry, Jawa, Ashang, Heno, Kau, Thobi, Tumong, Karniam, Jack, Akow, Usab, Minhow, Champa, Atakhu, Kanjo, Pendum, Anu, Tomi, Joba and Merry.

They were handed over to the Jaintapur police station.

The BDR said, the arrested might be connected with insurgency groups operating in the Indian state of Manipur. The would be produced before the court tomorrow.

## Two killed as nor'wester hits Sylhet

SYLHET, Apr 21: At least two persons were killed and several hundred others injured in a severe nor'wester which hit the grater Sylhet area last night, reports BSS.

Nearly 200 houses were damaged due to the storm.

The storm with a speed of 60 to 65 km per hour accompanied by hail storm swept Sylhet area and lasted for about 25 minutes causing extensive damage to houses and trees and crops, divisional office sources said. The storm that started at 11 pm also snapped power supply due to uprooting of trees and electric poles.

The death of two persons was caused by electrocution. The victims were identified as Hares Ali, 29, of the village Gobindanagar and Siraj Miah, 35, of the village Salla Afsalabad of Chhatrak thana under Sunamganj district.

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## Rival gangs trade gunfire in N'ganj: 10 hurt

By Staff Correspondent NARAYANGANJ, Apr 21: At least 10 people were injured, four of them bullet hit, in a firefight between two rival gangs here this afternoon.

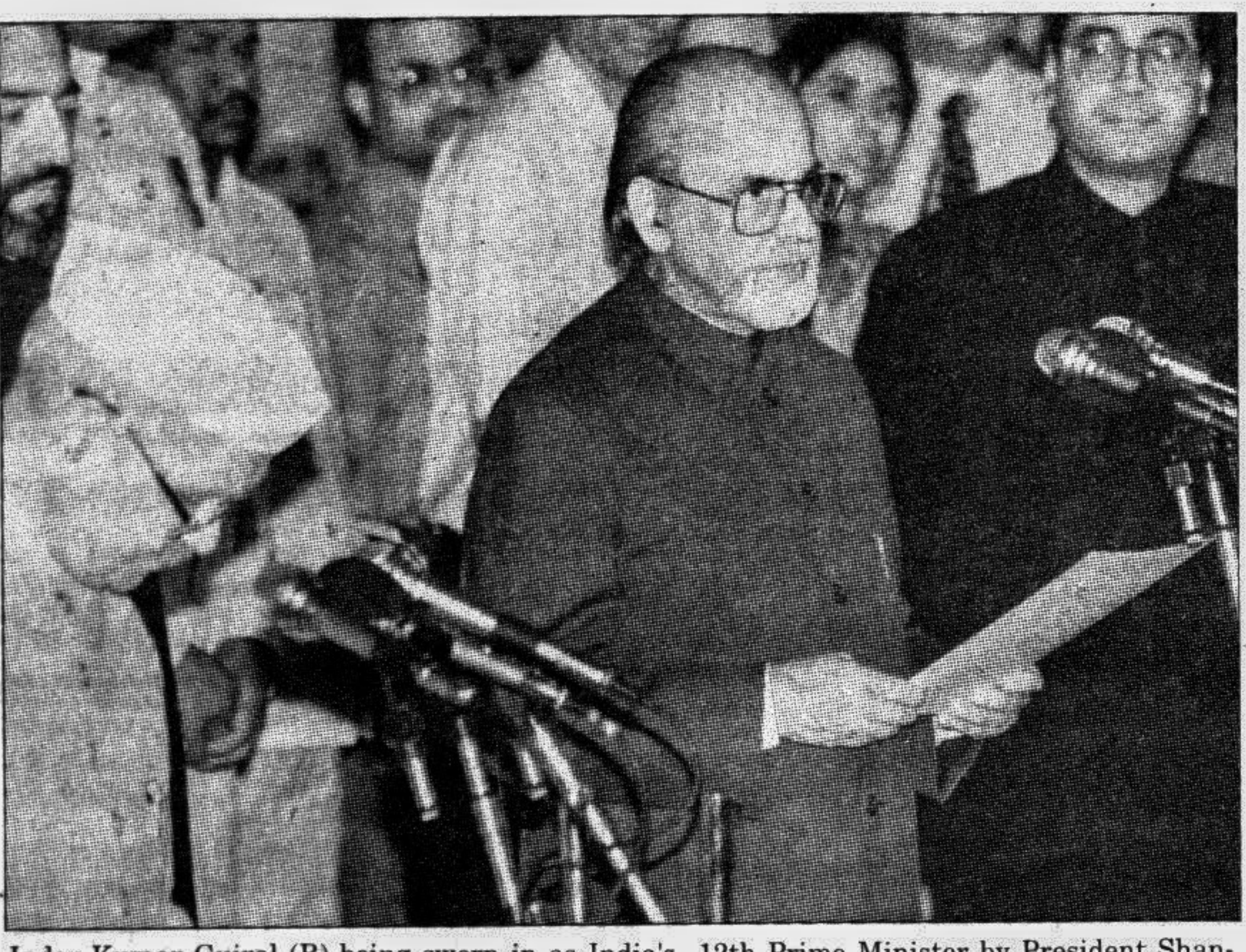
Of the four injured with bullets — Nahid, 3, Regan, 13, Sagar, 16, and Saleha, 24 — were rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). The rest were released after first aid at local clinics.

Witnesses said, the two gangs — 'Sohal group' and 'Shahid group' — traded gunfire for over an hour at Shiharchar under Fatulla thana at around 12:30 pm. The fight started over teasing a female employee of a garments factory.

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# Gujral sworn in, faces confidence vote today



Inder Kumar Gujral (R) being sworn in as India's 12th Prime Minister by President Shankar Dayal Sharma (L) at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi yesterday. —AFP/UNB photo

NEW DELHI, Apr 21: Inder Kumar Gujral was sworn in as India's 12th prime minister here today, report agencies.

The former foreign minister, who took the oath from President Shankar Dayal Sharma, will head a new United Front coalition government.

The government will face a vote of confidence tomorrow (Tuesday).

"I feel burdened with the responsibility of the nation," said Prime Minister I.K. Gujral in his immediate reaction after the swearing in.

President Sharma administered the oath of office and secrecy to the 35-member council to ministers headed by Gujral at a 45-minute ceremony in the Ashoka Hall of Rashtrapati Bhavan.

The new council of ministers include all the ministers of the Deve Gowda government except four of the Tamil Manila Congress (TMC) and one from Janata Dal.

While P. Chidambaram, the architect of the widely-acclaimed 1997-98 budget, and three others belonging to the TMC did not figure in the new council of ministers because their party decided to keep out of the government, the omission of a Janata Dal Minister, See Page 12 Col 2

## Proposal to enhance punishment for crimes LC suggests consistency with other Penal Code provisions

By Mizan Ali

The Law Commission (LC), in its observations on Home Ministry's proposal for amendment to Criminal Laws has said that enhancement of punishment has to be consistent with other provisions of the Penal Code, according to officials here.

The Home Ministry in its proposal to the Law Ministry on March 10 suggested amendments to the Penal Code, 1860; the Explosive Act, 1908; the Arms Act, 1878; the Motor Vehicles Ordinance, 1983 and the Women and Children Repression Act, 1995 for enhancement of punishment. The proposals were sent to the LC for its observation and suggestion.

The LC sent its report to the Law Ministry on April 5, the sources said. A copy of the LC's observations and suggestions was obtained by The Daily Star.

A committee of the Home Ministry proposed incorporation of a new section, Section 354 ka, in the Penal Code, saying, "Any person or persons involved in outraging, harassing or assaulting any girl or woman, minor or adult, on streets, public transport, educational institutions or in any other public place will come under this offence."

The LC observed that inclusion of the Section was "not necessary" because "the principles aimed at the proposal are available" in the existing Code.

About the Home Ministry's proposal for enhancement of punishment to death or imprisonment for life instead of imprisonment for life or rigorous imprisonment for a term up to ten years and also fine.

"The object can be achieved conveniently by enhancing punishment of offences under Section 347 and 348 of the Code to such an extent as may be deemed fit by amending Section 364 of the Code," suggested the LC adding that the existing definition of abduction as provided in section 362 of the Penal Code

See Page 12 Col 4

## PM greets Gujral, recalls his role in promoting ties

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday felicitated Inder Kumar Gujral on his assumption of the office of the Prime Minister of India, reports UNB.

In a message to Gujral, she said, "We regard you as a genuine friend of Bangladesh and hold you in high esteem for your personal interest and valuable contribution to promotion and further strengthening of Bangladesh-India friendship and cooperation."

Hasina recalled with a sense of deep appreciation that the significant developments in relations between the two neighbouring countries during the past few months were "the outcome of your initiatives and statesmanship."

She said: It is my sincere belief and expectation that with you as the prime minister of India, the close bonds of friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation so happily existing between our two neighbouring countries and the peoples will grow from strength to strength and be further intensified in the days ahead in an atmosphere of goodwill and understanding.

## Bangabandhu murder Defence counsel for transfer of case to another court

By Staff Correspondent

Examination of prosecution witnesses in the Bangabandhu murder case in the Court of District and Session Judge, Dhaka, was adjourned yesterday till April 29, following a defence petition expressing apprehension about fair and impartial trial for his client in this court.

The petition was submitted when the judge rejected prayers for adjournment of the days proceedings.

Moving the petition, the defence counsel said that his client will move to a higher court seeking transfer of the case to any other competent court.

The District and Sessions Judge, Golam Rasul, after one and a half hour proceedings, fixed April 29 and 30 for the examination of prosecution witnesses.

"If a petition under Section 526 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPc) is admitted by the Honourable High Court Division, the trial will be postponed till the final decision. But if it is rejected by the said court, the trial, i.e. examination of the witnesses, will start on April 29," said Public Prosecutor Anisul Huq, talking to The Daily Star regarding the court order.

Huq is one of the six special public prosecutors nominated for this case to assist Serajul Huq, Chief Special Prosecutor.

Of the 20 accused in the case, six are facing trial while 14 are absconding. Of the six, five are in the jail custody and they were produced before the court yesterday. They are: Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farookur Rahman, Lt Col (relieved) Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, former minister of state for information Taheruddin Thakur, Lt Col Mohiuddin Ahmed, Acting Director, BNCC, Dhaka and Honourary Capt Abdul Wahab Joarder.

The other accused, Begum Zobaidda Rashid, wife of absconding accused Lt Col (dismissed) A Rashid Khondaker, was earlier granted bail by the Supreme Court. She, however, was represented by her lawyer.

During the proceedings yesterday, Advocate Mahbubur Rahman, on behalf of his client Begum Zobaidda Rashid, submitted the prayer for adjournment.

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## PMO seeks report card from all ministries

Star Report

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has sought the report card of ten months of Awami League-led government, highlighting the achievements from all ministries concerned, high placed sources said.

According to a memo from the PMO, the ministries have been asked to furnish the details of Prime Minister and AL President Sheikh Hasina's speech scheduled at the Awami League council session on May 7-8.

The sources said the ministers who received the memo from the PMO have asked officials concerned to prepare the notes as soon as possible.

The triennial AL council, rescheduled thrice, is likely to be held without further change in the city.

## Cabinet approves proposal to ratify convention banning chemical weapons

The cabinet has approved the proposal for Bangladesh's ratification of the convention on the prohibition of development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and their destruction, reports BSS.

The approval was given at a cabinet meeting held last night in the Prime Minister's office with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The cabinet also approved the proposal to ratify the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No-100 (1951) concerning equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value.

Ministers, state ministers in-charge of different ministries, cabinet secretary, principal secretary to the Prime Minister and secretaries concerned were present at the meeting.

## ESCAP survey report Dhaka can achieve 7pc growth by 2000

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh will be able to achieve a growth rate of up to seven per cent by the year 2000 if the current trends in the economy continue, the ESCAP has said.

Increased level of foreign direct investment (FDI) and improved labour productivity could further increase the growth rate, ESCAP's Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 1997, released at a press conference here yesterday, said.

Director of the UN Information Centre (UNIC) in Dhaka and UN Resident Coordinator David E. Lockwood and President of Uniconsult International Ltd Dr A I Aminul Islam, a development consultant, explained the highlights of Bangladesh economy to newsmen while releasing the survey. UNIC Information Officer Kazi Ali Reza and CIRDP DG A V S Reddy were also present.

The ESCAP report said, during the 1980s Bangladesh achieved a growth rate of 4.3 per cent, but a population growth rate of over 2 per cent left little room for an increase in per capita income.

The report emphasised the need for trade liberalisation and regional cooperation.

It said the countries of the region could consider re-establishing a regional stock market as a means for cooperation.

For Bangladesh, the survey stressed the need for improved education, reduced corruption, stabilisation of inflation rate and improved transportation and communication systems.

It said in Bangladesh, coordination between government and non-government organisations seems to have been constrained by the absence of policy analysis of short term trends and macro-economic prospects. The report stated, "Dependence on agriculture limits the capacity of such countries to participate more actively in international trade or to attract FDI." Agriculture

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## Thailand Trade Fair 1997

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The fire-ravaged Maniknagar slum in the city yesterday. —Star photo

## Maniknagar fire 2 killed: 6 held for arson

Two bodies including one of a baby were recovered from a fire-ravaged slum at Maniknagar in the city on Sunday, reports UNB.

Although no casualty was reported immediately after the fire, the firefighters later found the bodies of one Kalu, 32, and a two-week old baby.

A group of people, numbering about 25 to 30, set fire to the slum at Maniknagar on Sunday afternoon.

Police yesterday arrested six people in connection with the arson. They are Milon, Mohammad Ali, Alamgir, Nuruzzaman, M Rabiul and Arif.

Of them, first two were accused in a case filed with Denra thana. Local people alleged that they were involved in the fire.

See Page 12 Col 8

## 1167 industries asked to set up waste treatment plants

The Department of Environment (DOE) has directed the industries concerned to set up waste treatment plants in their industrial units that are causing pollution to environment, especially the river water, by releasing solid and chemical waste, reports BSS.

The DOE officials said, they have identified 1167 industrial units as "most polluters" and served notices to them for taking effective measures to control environmental pollution.

A survey conducted by the department said, about 14000 tonnes of solid waste and 16000 cubic meter of chemical waste are discharged by the industries every year into the rivers in Dhaka and its adjacent areas while, more than 1200 industries of the country discharge about 35000 cubic meter waste in the river water everyday.

The survey report said, the major polluter industries including fertiliser, pulp and paper mills, dyeing, printing and finishing, textiles, iron and steel mills, factories producing cement and pesticides, plastic, distilleries generate different types of solid, liquid and in some cases gaseous waste with varying pollution burden.

The river water of nearby industries contains high concentrations of suspended and dissolved solids with high biological oxygen demand (BOD) loadings of 2000-3000 mg per litre.

The waste water is creating gross localised pollution of the river water and low plain lands.

Urea fertiliser factories release metallic catalyst as solid waste while liquid ones include ammoniated water ejected from urea and ammonia plants and acidulated water ejected from the water treatment plants. Both solid and liquid waste from fertiliser plants are claimed to be treated for recovery of micronutrients and neutralisation, the officials said.

In case of paper and pulp mills pollutants come from discharge of chipper house, pulp mill washing and bleaching units. The four public and one private sector pulp and paper mills release waste water of about 2.28,000 cubic meter per day and the pollution load is 40,000 kg per day, they said.

A senior scientific officer of DOE said atmospheric pollution in the form of gaseous and particle emission take place from chemical recovery plants. Sulphur emission from power and recovery plants using sulphur based fuels are also a major source of pollution, particularly in the western part of Bangladesh where there is no natural gas supply.

He said dyeing printing and finishing in the textile industries

See Page 12 Col 8

## They paid tolls at 18 points while bringing cattle to city

Star Report

A group of farmers from Jhenidah bringing cattle to Eid cattle markets in the city was allegedly subjected to paying a total of Tk 6,000 as tolls at 18 different places.

According to the farmers, the tolls were realised by at least five different groups including police personnel, Roads and Highways department employees, mastans and others claiming to be 'bonafide tax collectors'.

Azizur Rahman, leader of the farmers' group and a Union Council member from Vhaina union under Harinakunda thana in Jhenidah, told this correspondent that he had formed a cooperative with 24 others to rear cattle for the Eid market. In addition to harassment all along the route, the

See Page 12 Col 6