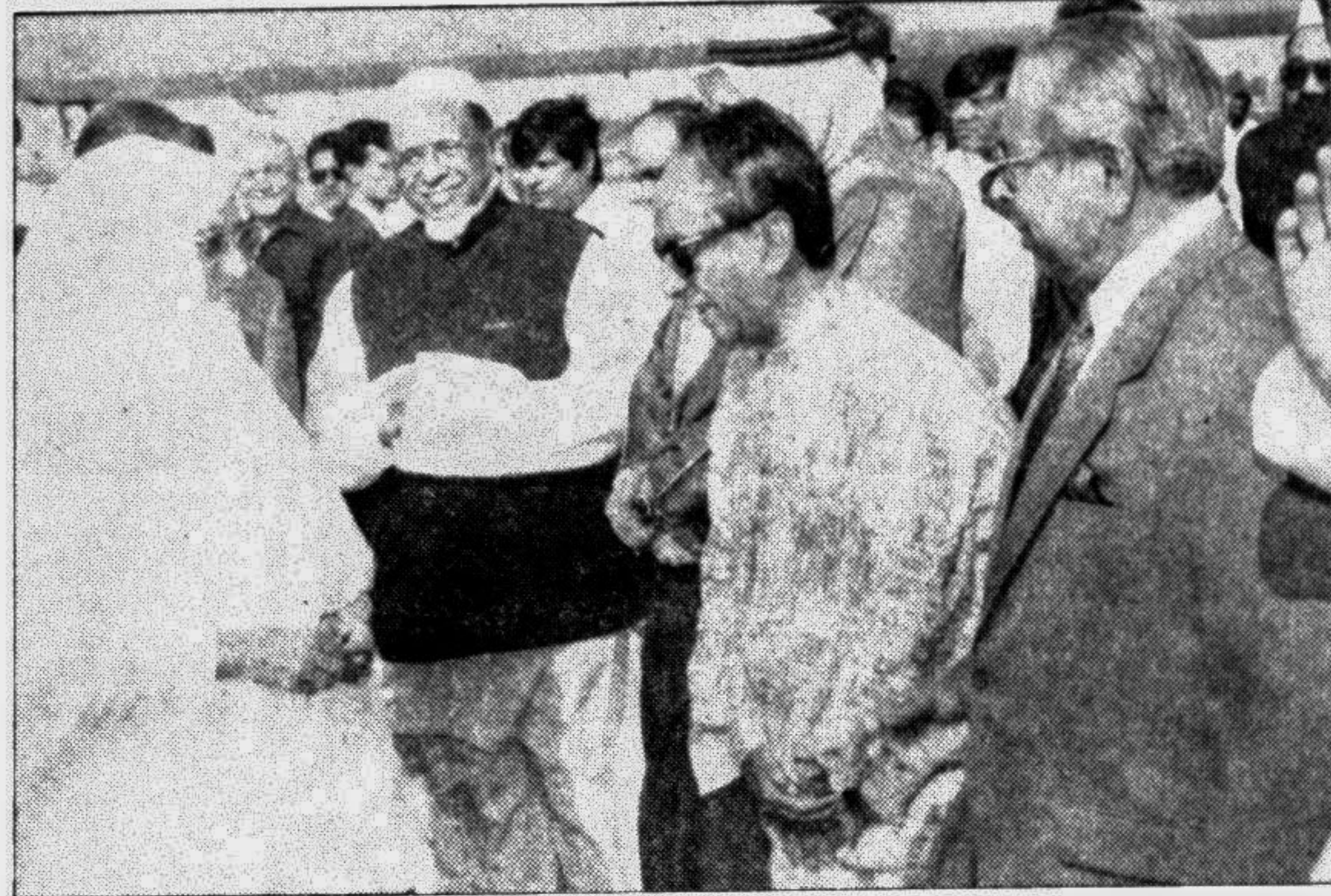


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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina returned home yesterday after performing Hajj. — PID photo

7 rifles, one revolver recovered in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Apr 21: Police arrested two terrorists and recovered seven rifles, one revolver and 356 bullets after an exchange of gunshots with the notorious Nasir group during a raid in its hideout in Kotwali thana this evening, reports UNB.

The arrested were identified as Mohammad Mamik, son of Delwar Hossain of village Dharmapur in Fatikchhari thana and Nurul Islam, son of Abdul Motaleb of Barapal area in Doublimooring thana of the city. They are now under interrogation.

The recovered arms and ammunition include one G-3 rifle, two Chinese rifles, one AK-47 rifle, two MARK-4 rifles, one MARK-4 sawed-off rifle, one .302 bore revolver, and 356 bullets of rifle and 6 of revolver.

Police said acting on a tip-off, a team of plainclothes DB personnel raided a house adjacent to Suhrawardy hostel of Chittagong College at about 6:15 pm today.

The police fired 12 rounds of gunshots in the encounter with the armed gang who tried to resist the policemen.

At one stage, the members of the gang including its leader Nasir tried to escape, but two of them failed.

Police later recovered the arms from the house.

Nasir, hailing from Hathazari, was wanted by Fatikchhari police in 10-12 cases of terrorism, murder, snatching and possessing illegal arms.

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Relief for Ruma fire victims demanded

BANDARBAN, Apr 21: Fire victims of Ruma thana of the district are facing acute shortage of food as the government allotment for them has run short, reports UNB.

Meanwhile, the district administration distributed some 1225 kg rice among 1100 affected people. The stock has already been finished.

Local Government Parishad Chairman Mongku Ching Chowdhury demanded emergency relief materials including food for the distressed people.

ESCAP survey report

From Page 1

accounted for 65 per cent of the Bangladesh working population in 1995, the report said quoting statistics.

In 1995, Bangladesh attracted only USD 125 million in FDI compared to 5,800 million in Malaysia, 4,500 million in Indonesia, 1,750 million in India and 639 million in Pakistan.

The survey identified Japan, Australia and New Zealand as the region's three developed countries and classified Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar and Laos as least developed.

Dr. Aminul Islam told The Daily Star later that continued overcrowding of the agricultural sector and poor living conditions in rural areas meant that people were moving to the city to find work.

He said that although growth in the manufacturing sector was creating employment and taking some of the pressure off rural regions, rural-to-urban migration was further crowding cities, creating slums with poor health conditions and increasing the crime rate.

A top Finance Ministry official later told The Daily Star that industrialisation alone would not solve Bangladesh's economic woes and help the ultra-poor. Development of the agricultural sector should be the cornerstone for economic development in the country because it will benefit small farmers, contribute greatly to the GDP and also feed the manufacturing and transport sectors, he said.

He said the ultra-poor—10-20 per cent of the population—has little or no access to health and education services. Better services in the two sectors will encourage donor agencies to provide funding.

UNB adds: Increase in cross-border transport and cooperation in telecommunications are also important for regional development, the ESCAP survey said.

It also urged developed countries to increase aid to investment. Developed countries should also not use anti-dumping measures to protect their own markets, it said.

Turning to Bangladesh's macro-economic balance and stability, the report says Bangladesh has been successful in reducing the

average annual inflation rate from about 10 per cent in 1981-1990 to just above 4 per cent in 1991-95. The most recent trends indicate a tendency for inflation to stabilise at that low level or to come down further.

Recent policy initiatives have emphasised continued price stability along with greater mobilisation of domestic resources. To that end, monetary and fiscal reforms have been carried out, the report said.

Tax collection has been stepped up and expenditure growth restrained to reduce fiscal deficits, it added. The ESCAP report observed that gaps between domestic savings rates and the modest investment rates prevailing in the economy as well as between the public sector revenue and expenditure remained too wide. It, however, said efforts to accelerate domestic savings and investments were being further strengthened in Bangladesh.

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Hasina returns home

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina returned home yesterday from Saudi Arabia after performing the holy Hajj, reports UNB.

The Prime Minister arrived at the Zia International Airport at about 8:15 am. She left Dhaka on April 14.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman, Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria, City Mayor Mohammad Hanif, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan, Dean of Diplomatic Corps Shata Zarab, Army and Navy chiefs, high civil and military officials were present at the airport.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, on completion of Return Tawaf in Makka Muazzama, went to Madina Manwara on Saturday and performed Ziarat at the Rouza Mubarak of Hazrat Mohammad (SM). She also offered prayers at the Masjid-e-Nabawi.

During her stay in Mina, the Prime Minister also had a meeting with Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud at his palace on Thursday.

JP rebels await withdrawal of Zafar's expulsion

By Staff Correspondent

The conflict in the Jatiya Party hierarchy continued as the three rebel leaders were expecting withdrawal of the expulsion order against Kazi Zafar Ahmed prior to a dialogue with Party Chairman HM Ershad, according to sources in the party-high command.

"Withdrawal of the expulsion order is yet to be thought about," said Nazir Rahman Manju, additional secretary general of the JP, talking to The Daily Star last night.

The issue may come under consideration "only if the two senior leaders set across the table with the party chairman," said Nazir Rahman, adding "if they make a request, it will be honoured."

Shah Moazzam Hossain, spokesman for the three rebel leaders told this correspondent last night that they were expecting withdrawal of the expulsion order within a week.

Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, Kazi Zafar Ahmed and Shah Moazzam Hossain, the three senior leaders of the JP, have challenged Ershad's leadership in the party. Of the three, Kazi Zafar was expelled on grounds of anti-party activities.

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No change in economic, foreign policies: Gujral

NEW DELHI, Apr 21: India's new prime minister, Inder Kumar Gujral, said today that he would press ahead with open-market economic reforms pursued by the two previous governments, reports Reuters, BSS.

Gujral told reporters after taking the oath of office that he would keep the foreign and finance ministry portfolios for himself in his new centre-left government.

"We will continue the economic reforms and strengthen them," Gujral said.

Asked to comment on relations with Pakistan, Gujral, who was foreign minister in Deve Gowda's cabinet, said: "Our foreign policy will continue to be the same."

The new prime minister said he would announce his government's plans for the 1997-98 (April-March) budget to parliament, scheduled to reconvene later today.

Lok Sabha Speaker PA. Sangma said today that Gujral had indicated he supported the government budget presented in February by former finance minister P. Chidambaram.

Sangma told reporters after a meeting with Gujral that the new prime minister wanted to push a budget covering the entire 1997-98 (April-March) fiscal year through parliament.

"His (Gujral's) indication is he will go by the old budget," Sangma said, referring to Chidambaram's plan.

Gujral said that he would try to serve without fear or favour.

The 78-year old leader told a questioner that he would per-

sue the Tamil Manula Congress (TMC) to join in the United Front government. "I will make very effort to persuade them to join," he added.

The TMC whose leader GK Moorthy was in the race for the post of prime minister refrained from taking part in the new United Front government but supporting it from outside.

Another report says, Gujral today expressed confidence that India will "succeed" in improving relations with Pakistan particularly after the resumption of the stalled foreign secretary level talks between the two countries last month.

"I am sure we will succeed," asserted Gujral to a pointed question at the annual session of Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) here.

"I am fundamentally a perennial optimist," he said adding the very fact the bilateral talks had begun, augured well for improving relations.

Gujral as India's external affairs minister, is known to have promoted what has come to be known as "Gujral doctrine" to promote good neighbourly relations with all the South Asian nations.

Reaffirming this policy, he said one of the aims of India's foreign policy was to promote friendly relations with neighbouring countries and added that India was doing whatever it could to promote SAPTA in this context.

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3 killed in city incidents

By Staff Correspondent

Three persons were killed in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

One Gifari, 22, and an unidentified youth, aged 27, were killed in two road accidents in Lalbagh and Gulistan areas respectively in the early hours of yesterday.

Meanwhile, Tejgaon police began an investigation into the mysterious death of another unidentified youth.

Our DMCH Correspondent reports, one young man took an unconscious man aged about 24 to the Suhrawardy Hospital yesterday afternoon from where he disappeared shortly afterwards.

The Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Tejgaon thana told The Daily Star last night that a friend of the unidentified youth left the hospital saying he was staying in Hotel Modern at Nababpur Road. But police could not find him there.

The OC also said that before the youth had left the hospital, he had told doctors that his friend was killed in a road accident near Mirpur.

Police were interrogating the hotel manager, who said the boarder did not leave his permanent address.

58 more Rohingyas return to Myanmar

COXS BAZAR, Apr 21: Fifty-eight more Rohingyas returned to their Myanmar homeland from the refugee camps in the district today, reports UNB.

With this, a total of 228,877 Rohingyas, who took refuge in Bangladesh territory, have been repatriated.

The remaining 22,000 Rohingyas refugees in the camps of the district are awaiting return home.

The Rohingya repatriation agreed upon by authorities of Myanmar and Bangladesh remained suspended for the last three weeks due to New Year and Eid-ul-Azha, said officials here.

A high-level meeting between officials of the two countries in Chittagong on January 8 resolved to complete the repatriation process by March 31, 1997.

However, another batch of Rohingyas is likely to be repatriated next Thursday.

Preparations for holding HSC exams complete

The government has taken all necessary preparations for holding in a fair manner the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination beginning May 8, reports UNB.

An announcement of the Education Ministry yesterday said preparations had already been completed to prevent unfair means in the coming exams.

Punitive measures have been planned against those who will be involved in dishonesty or rumours on question paper leakage, the ministry warned.

Actions were also taken against some teachers or institutions found guilty in the question paper leakage scandal during the last SSC examination in different parts of the country.

The Education Ministry sought cooperation from students, guardians, teachers and mass media in holding the examinations smoothly and fairly.

They paid tolls

From Page 1

group of farmers was beaten up and at one point was forced to unload their cattle at an open field, he alleged.

"We came with 25 bulls in two trucks. At every major intersection we were stopped and asked to pay tolls ranging from Tk 50 to Tk 2,000," said Nazim Rahman who was trying to sell his cattle at the Banani cattle market on Wednesday last.

Describing the plight of his journey, Rahman said after overcoming numerous difficulties en route to Dhaka his team was stopped by 50 to 60 stick-wielding youths at Khilkhet Bazar. "In the presence of the policemen they demanded that our trucks be unloaded and the cattle sold at their market," he said.

"One by one the bulls were unloaded and taken to a nearby field. I ran to the thana but was told to sell my cattle at the site which did not have any facilities, let alone buyers," Rahman said, adding that some of his team members had to smuggle out 12 cattle and come to the Banani market.

"Whenever the police stopped us they first threatened us with things like 'accompany us to the thana, where are your papers', then finding us helpless they asked for the money," Rahman said showing his account book.

He said the group had to pay tolls of Tk 400 at Baidyanathpur, Tk 50 at Kushtia, Tk 800 at three different