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## BNP road march tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia leads a one-day "mini road march" from Dhaka to Aricha tomorrow as part of the ongoing anti-government campaign.

This fourth road march of its kind aimed at mobilising public support against the government's decision to "provide corridor facility to India on the pretext of transshipment" and bringing an end to the "misrule" of ruling Awami League.

The former prime minister who is also the leader of the opposition will start the march from Amin Bazar under Savar thana at 10am after addressing a public meeting there.

She is scheduled to address public gatherings also at Savar Bazar at 11:30am, Bolihata under Dhamrai thana at 12:30pm, Nayadangi under Shatulia thana at 1:30pm, Manikganj bus stand at 2:30pm, Baniajuri under Gheor thana at 3:40pm and Aricha Ghat under Shibhalaya thana at 4:40 pm.

## Saifur protests Lockwood's remark

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Standing Committee member and former Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman has protested the remark by UNDP's Resident Representative David Lockwood at the Asian Parliamentarians' Conference for Peace and Cooperation.

In a statement yesterday, he said Lockwood's remark on BNP and opposition's absence in the conference is "unexpected, unwanted and devoid of diplomatic norms."

"His unfortunate comment has damaged the image of UNDP in Bangladesh. Being a resident representative of UN's front organisation, he has no right to undermine political parties and politicians," Saifur Rahman said.

The BNP leader said there may be differences between the government and opposition on political matters, and they themselves might resolve the problems.

"We cannot accept any comment under any circumstances by a foreign official, who is holding the position of an international organisation, that is dishonouring to Bangladesh's politicians and parliament members and may damage the image of Bangladesh abroad," the former Finance Minister added.

## Hyundai office attacked, looted at Sirajganj

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Sept 3: Several thousand people attacked and looted the office of Hyundai Engineering here this afternoon soon after it was formally handed over to Bangladesh Water Development Board in an official ceremony.

The Korean builders had constructed Tk 320 crore Bangabandhu Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge (BJMB) embankment.

However, the reason of the sudden swoop on the office could not be known immediately. The executive engineer of Sirajganj BWDB, Mohammad Ali, took charge of the office.

The mob clashed with the police and Ansar personnel stationed at the office at Ranigram, Kopdaspur, in the town. They ransacked the office and looted furniture and other valuables of the Korean com-

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## Inside Today

### Article

## Infrastructure and the changing face of poverty

Column: Beneath the Surface  
by Abdul Bayes  
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## Star Literature

Book review: Facing up to challenges; Impression: Dhaka on Hemingway; and Theatre: Present situation of amateur theatre in Bangladesh  
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## Prayer Timings

September 4

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:20	4:25
Johr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:45	5:00
Maghrib	6:25	6:30
Esha	8:00	8:30

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Four-day confce concludes today

# Asian lawmakers set to endorse peace forum

By Staff Correspondent

The proposal for formation of the Association of Asian Parliamentarians for Peace (AAPP) is likely to be endorsed today, the concluding day of the Asian Parliamentarians' Conference for Peace and Cooperation.

The final plenary session of the four-day conference, which is being held in the capital, is also expected to endorse election of an executive council, and the charter and rules of the proposed forum apart from selecting its headquarters.

Besides, various recommendations as regards peace, human rights, disarmament and conflict in Asian countries are also set to be adopted by the summit on the day.

Four working groups, comprising representatives of the participating nations, yesterday finalised a number of recommendations including formation of the AAPP for adoption by the first-ever conference of the Asian lawmakers.

Opposition lawmakers from BNP and its allies are boycotting the event.

On the third day yesterday, parliamentarians from 26 countries presented papers on the state of peace and other themes of the conference and strongly supported the proposed AAPP.

Speaker of Bangladesh parliament and Chairperson of the conference Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury presided over yesterday's working session in the morning. The session was attended by the heads of delegations from 31 countries, Malaysian Speaker Tun Mohamed Zahir bin Haji Ismail also chaired the session for some time.

Delegates divided into four working groups met in the afternoon to finalise recommendations on the four themes of the conference. The recommendations were endorsed unanimously after lengthy debates.

The working group on human rights recommended formulation of a Charter of Human Rights for Asian Nations. A committee would be formed with members from the proposed AAPP to formulate the charter which will be circulated among the Asian countries for endorsement by governments of those countries.

The group felt that Bangladesh could initiate the formulation of the proposed charter.

It suggested adequate measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, children and other disadvantaged sections of the society and ratification of the International Criminal Court by the governments concerned.

The second working group recommended establishment of a regional early-warning system for effective detection, prevention, resolution and transmuting after lengthy debates.

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## Garments export to US

# 126 cases of visa forgery detected

By Rafiq Hasan

A total of 126 garments factories have been found involved in forging visa documents for exporting apparels to the US so far this year, commerce ministry sources said.

The factories exported about 24 lakh pieces of apparels forging visa documents. More than 50 thousand dozen trousers and shorts were exported under category 347/348 by forging visa documents because of high demand for these items this year.

Investigation is going on and the number of "fraudulent" factories may rise, the sources said.

The forgeries were detected by comparing the original export visas issued by the Export Promotion Bureau (EOB) with documents collected from US

Customs, which were submitted to the US ports during entry of consignments, EPB officials said.

More cases of forgery may be detected when more documents will be available from the US Customs, they said.

They however said forgeries may have been done from outside the country by exporting garments to the US by using Bangladeshi name tags.

About 77 per cent of the export quota under category 347/348 was utilised till the last week of last month. A temporary embargo on export of apparels under this category is likely to be imposed when the quota will be exhausted this month, according to sources in

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## Babu runs dist AL body without party approval

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Sept 3: Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury Babu has been running a committee of Chittagong South District Unit of Awami League for a long time without approval of the party high command, insiders said.

Babu claimed himself to be the president of that committee while his close associate Moslem Uddin was made general secretary.

Babu declared the committee by holding a conference of the unit at J M Sen Hall in the city on December 21, 1996.

The rival leaders of the South unit protested formation of the committee and complained against Babu. But the central committee did not take any action against him.

The high command, however, did not approve the committee against the backdrop of serious protest from the rival camp.

The rival camp leaders

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## Hosts bow out

Kerul FC defender Cjaba is grounded by Bangladesh defender Rajani while skipper Jewel Rana (R) and Masood Rana watch during their crucial Bangabandhu Cup clash yesterday. The hosts were eliminated on goal difference after a 2-2 draw. Match report on page 13.

— Star photo

## Angling in Dhanmondi lake 'banned'

By Morshed Ali Khan

Professional and amateur anglers have been told to wind up from Dhanmondi lake in the city.

The authorities have excluded the "sport" from the Dhanmondi lake development project on the excuse that baits pollute the lake water, sources concerned said.

For over four decades, Dhanmondi lake has been a major angling spot in the city. The Amateur Anglers' Association in the area evolved centring the lake.

In the past, international angling tournaments were held in the lake, attracting participants from several SAARC countries.

"Instead of encouraging the sport, Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has whimsically sealed off one of the last remaining resorts for the anglers," said an association member and a retired civil servant requesting anonymity.

He alleged that the decision was taken as DCC officials were not aware of the fact that angling is an increasingly popular sport around the world. "DCC should immediately consult experts and set an environment friendly guideline for the anglers," he said.

Azizul Islam Mukul of the association said that from 1964 to 1980, the lake water was pollution-free. During those years, angling was a regular sport in the lake but its water

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## Nepali FM arrives today

Dr Ram Sharan Mahat, Foreign Minister of Nepal, will arrive in the city today on a three-day visit to Bangladesh, sources in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said last night, reports BSS.

The sources said Dr Mahat will deliver formal invitation to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to attend the next SAARC Summit to be held in Kathmandu later this year.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad will receive Dr Mahat at the Zia International Airport.

Dr Mahat will hold talks with his Bangladesh counterpart on matters of bilateral and regional interest and also the state of SAARC activities, the sources added.

## By Reaz Ahmad, back from Jessore

Spread of an unknown disease in eggplants, unsuccessful application of IPM (integrated pest management) and unabated use of contraband pesticides have posed a big problem for brinjal growers in Jessore.

The plants along with brinjal got rotten due to the disease, said farmers at Churamankathi near Jessore town. Similar reports were also received from Meherpur district.

Syed Ali, who grows brinjal in his small plot of land at Churamankathi, told this correspondent, "I noticed the disease last season also, but not in such an epidemic form as this time." Farmers in the entire brinjal growing area along the river Bhairab in Jessore now eagerly wait for agriculture experts and extension workers to come to their aid.

The farmers denounced an experimental IPM application which, they said, has failed to prevent crop damage by pest attack.

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# Most of the major rivers mark fall

The overall flood situation across the country marked slight improvement yesterday with recession of water levels in most of the major rivers, reports UNB.

Water level in the Brahmaputra-Jamuna system recorded further fall at all points and is likely to fall further while the Ganges-Padma system remained static and is likely to fall at all points.

Almost all the rivers in the Meghna basin experienced fall while all the rivers in South-eastern Hill basin recorded further fall.

According to Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre, flood situation in and around Dhaka and Narayanganj districts may improve slightly.

Besides, flood situation in Panchagarh, Dinajpur, Kurigram, Rangpur, Gaibandha, Bogra and Jamalpur districts is likely to improve with recession of water levels while the

prevailing situation in Sirajganj, Pabna, Natore and Naoaganj districts may also improve.

The flood situation in Chapainawabganj, Rajbari, Faridpur, Madaripur, Shariatpur, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Chandpur districts may, however, remain unchanged.

In Brahmaputra basin, the Brahmaputra recorded fall by 10 cm at Noonkhawa while the Jamuna by 17 cm at Bahadurabad, 11 cm at Sirajganj and 7 cm at Aricha, the Dharala by 12 cm at Kurigram and the Teesta slightly.

In Ganges basin, the registered fall by 3 cm at Harding Bridge, 6 cm at Coalondo, 7 cm at Bhagayakul while the Karata by 7 cm at Panchagarh and the Punarbhaba by 65 cm at Dinajpur.

Although the overall flood situation marked improvement, ten rivers in three basins

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## Bhuiyan tells home minister

# Renovate jails for AL men's comfort

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has advised the home minister to renovate the jails soon because 'time has come for the ruling Awami League men to go to prison.'

He said the condition of jails is now miserable and it would be wise for the home minister to take steps for renovation of those so that they (AL men) could feel comfortable in the prisons.

Bhuiyan was addressing a rally at Mukhtang in the city yesterday, organised by City BNP to protest Monday's attack on the party's mass procession and the Janakantha office by terrorists of the ruling Awami League and arrest of BNP leader Anwar Zahid.

Leaders and activists of BNP kept in prisons illegally are suffering a lot due to miserable condition of jails, Bhuiyan said. "But now the government should renovate the jails for their (AL men) comfort."

He also warned that AL lead-

ers and activists might be netted under the proposed Anti-Terrorism Act, which the government is planning to place in the Jatiya Sangsad and get it passed.

The BNP secretary general apprehended that the government would use the Act to suppress the main opposition party. The current anti-government agitation by BNP could not be resisted by making new laws or by increasing repression, he asserted.

He categorically denied BNP's involvement in the attack on Janakantha office and demanded a judicial probe into the incident. He blamed AL 'terrorists' for the attack on BNP procession and also on Janakantha office.

Referring to the case filed against Anwar Zahid and his arrest, Bhuiyan said,

"I think the Janakantha owners did not want to file the case, but they were forced to do it. The home minister rushed to

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## Kibria seeks more Indian investment

Finance Minister Shah AMS

Kibria has said trade and investment, transfer of technology and mutual cooperation can lay the foundations for an enduring economic relations between Bangladesh and India, reports UNB.

"There can also promote a larger development cooperation climate in the South Asian region," he told a discussion meeting of Indian businessmen at a hotel in Calcutta yesterday.

Kibria, now in West Bengal for a four-day visit, called upon the Indian entrepreneurs to take advantage of liberal investment climate in Bangladesh.

He observed zero-tariff facility to 25 additional items for Bangladesh would help reduce the existing trade gap between the two neighbouring countries.

"It will also create a new opportunity for the Indian investors to benefit from joint venture or 100 per cent owned investment in Bangladesh," the Finance Minister said.

Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) jointly organised the meet.

Welcoming the Bangladesh

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## Mugging: Angry people detain 3 policemen

By Staff Correspondent

Local people, angry that the cops were late in responding to a call for help, detained three policemen for more than two hours in the Old City yesterday.

The three from Sutrapur thana allegedly arrived long after a mugging incident at Dinanath Sen Road.

Sutrapur thana, however, denied having been informed of the incident, but said that three policemen on patrol rushed there after hearing it from a rickshawpuller.

The duty officer said an assistant sub-inspector and two others went to the spot near the mosque at Din Nath Sen Road at about 1:30pm and were detained by people who came out of the mosque after Juma prayers.

Later, the Sutrapur OC went there and secured their release after discussion with the local people.

Local residents and shopkeepers said the police team appeared one and half hours after the incident. They alleged that police never took any action against muggers and miscreants "as they make a lot of money from them".

## Ershad, Kader hold talks at Tangail

TANGAIL, Sept 3: Jatiya Party chairman and former president H M Ershad had a brief parley with Kader Siddiqui at Akur Takur Para in the town at about 8:30 am. Siddiqui's father Abdul Ali Siddiqui, welcomed the former president.

Later, Ershad went to the ailing mother of Kader Siddiqui and stayed beside her for some time. The JP chief also presented her with a Sari.

## Ershad Shikdar killed 60, his bodyguard says

From Quazi Amanullah

KHULNA, Sept 3: Ershad Shikdar was involved in brutal murders of at least 60 people including his nephew, his bodyguard Noor-e-Alam has said in a confidential judicial statement.

The murders were committed from 1982 till the killing of Jubo League leader Khalid Hossain in June this year, he said.

Noor-e-Alam (40) was arrested Tuesday night by Khulna thana police. Alam said he worked as Shikdar's bodyguard till he was arrested on August 11.

As a constant companion of Shikdar, he is one of witnesses to 25 brutal murders committed by Shikdar himself from 1989 till June, 1999. Alam told a First Class magistrate in his statement made on Wednesday, according to court sources here today. "Ershad Shikdar never let his opponent live", Alam said.

Most of the persons were killed by slaughtering or injecting poison, Alam disclosed in the statement made under Sec-

tion 164. Bullets were rarely used. All the bodies were dumped into the ground or thrown into river at dead hours of night. Only three bodies were returned to their relatives, he said.

Alam may be made a government approver so that police can get details about the murders, the sources said.

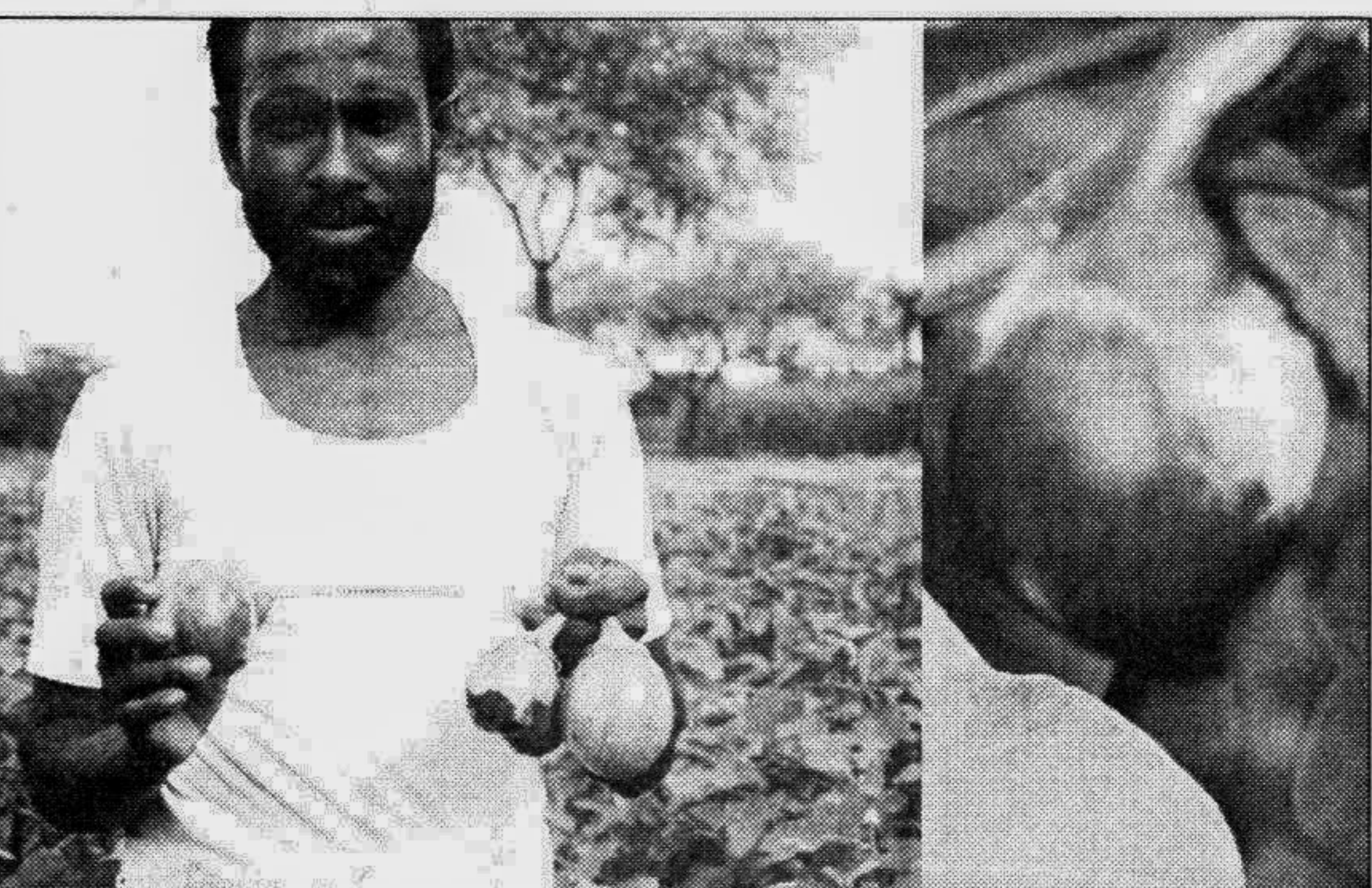
Alam, who joined Shikdar's gang in 1989, told the magistrate that he saw the murders 25 persons including Advocate Fatik, Ward Commissioner Moslem, Jainal, Kalu, Siraj, Jahangir, Insaf, Kamal, Khaleque, Shajahan, Abul, Teko (bad headed) Aziz, Nantu and Khalid.

Besides, six persons from Jessore and one from Jhenaidah were also shot dead at dead hours of night in Milky Dearha village under Rupsha thana for opposing smuggling of drugs, arms and sugar from a cross the border.

Alam said Shikdar amassed over Tk 100 crore from 1992 till

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# Mysterious disease attacks eggplants



Farmer Syed Ali shows brinjals affected by unknown disease (left), and close view of a rotten brinjal. —Star photo by Reaz Ahmed