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## BSF attacks BNP, allies to hold protest rallies today

**By Staff Correspondent**  
The BNP-led opposition alliance will hold demonstrations across the country to protest the recent killings of BDR jawans and civilians at Chapainawabganj and Thakurgaon as well as Indian BSF's frequent attack along the borders.

As parts of the countrywide programme, the BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Oikya Jote will hold protest rallies and bring out processions at all the city and district headquarters' this afternoon.

The demonstration also aims at registering protests against Indian border security BSF's frequent attack in different border areas, kidnapping of people and BDR personnel, looting of property, violation of boundary rules, occupying of land and Awami League government's 'reluctance' in these matters vis-a-vis Indian aggression.

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## No scope to back out, says Khaleda

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia said there is no scope to back out from the one-point oust-govern movement, reports UNB.

"BNP has no scope to look back or linger the movement. Repression of Awami League has reached extreme levels. Now we have to carry out the one-point, oust-govern movement," she told a delegation of Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB).

Over a hundred leaders and members of DAB led by its convener Prof MA Hadi and general secretary Dr AZM Zahid Hossain called on the BNP chief at her 29 Minto Road official residence last night.

The DAB leaders handed over a memorandum to Khaleda Zia in which they rejected the proposed National Health Policy terming it 'anti-people.'

The doctors also discussed the ensuing election of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), set for November 18.

Khaleda Zia's press secretary Ahmed Nazir briefed newsmen when the meeting was underway.

The BNP chairperson said the current national movement and professional movements would have to be carried out concurrently.

"We have relegated our demand to one point from five points to make it easy for the government to comprehend (the gravity of the movement)," she was quoted to have told the physicians.

"The people are supporting us as Awami League during its three-and-half-year rule did nothing for the country. The country's situation is miserable as the government destroyed and politicised all the institutions," she told the doctor leaders.

**Plaintiff beats accused in thana hajat: SI suspended**

**BARISAL, Sept 24:** A Sub-Inspector of Barisal thana in Patuakhali district was suspended for allegedly helping a plaintiff to torture an accused in the thana hajat, reports UNB.

Police sources said SI Mafizur Rahman helped Jasim Farazi, plaintiff of a case, to torture Zahangir Mridha, an accused of the case, in the thana hajat on September 10.

**Inside Today**

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'Gas export from new fields needs grave weighing'

Debt write-off deal within striking distance: IMF

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**Prayer Timings**

**September 25**

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:30	5:00
Zohr	12:45	1:30
Asr	4:30	4:45
Maghrib	6:05	6:04
Esha	7:45	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Hasina receives Unesco award 'Human dignity & social justice must for peace'

**PARIS, Sept 24:** Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally received the prestigious Unesco's Felix Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize at a function here this afternoon and observed "peace is within the reach of all people if they truly wish to have it," reports BSS.

Accepting the award, Hasina said: "Peace is certainly attainable, but not without a culture of peace, nor without social and economic justice and equality."

She called for getting rid of poverty and the woes that accompany it. "We must have respect for human dignity. If we have that, we cannot permit a single man or woman, let alone children, to live in conditions that reduce human dignity and create a crippling environment."

"We have heard so much about human rights. To me

there are no human rights more important than the right to life free from poverty, disease, illiteracy and shelterlessness.

"This is what is peace. This is what we must attain and not merely a resolution or transformation of conflict."

The prime minister referred to signing of the peace accord in the trouble-torn Chittagong Hill Tracts and said that her party while in opposition regarded it as a political problem. As the Leader of the Opposition in parliament she first demanded a political solution to the problem and asked for setting up a national committee with members of parliament from both sides. "But it the then government failed to solve the problem," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said after coming to power her govern-

ment tried to generate trust and friendship among the tribal people and by the grace of Allah, succeeded in signing the peace accord.

The prime minister paid rich tributes to Jyotindra Bodhipriya Larma (Shantu Larma), the leader of the former insurgents in Chittagong Hill Tracts and now Chairman of the Regional Council, for his sagacity, wisdom and the quest for peace.

Referring to the surrendering of arms, she said Larma while she gave him a bouquet in return. Terming this an unforgettable moment, she said "the world has not seen such a moment for long, certainly not in recent times."

The prime minister told the

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Unesco President Federico Mayor presents Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (C) with the Houphouet-Boigny peace prize as former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger (R) applauds during an award giving ceremony at Unesco headquarters in Paris yesterday. — AFP photo

## WB blasts govt for unsolicited power deals

**By Shahriar Khan**

The World Bank has blasted the government for 'violating its commitment to the donor community in June that it would not seek unsolicited power deals.'

In a letter to the finance minister on Tuesday, the WB also criticised the government for not abiding by the 1330 MW private sector power generation ceiling.

The government earlier decided to award the contract for the second phase of 450 MW Meghnaghat Power Plant to Marubeni through unsolicited negotiations.

The government decision

prompted US company AES, builders of the first phase of the project, to consider suspending all project activities in Bangladesh, sources concerned said.

The WB further said that if the government went ahead with the Meghnaghat phase-2 project with Marubeni, it would not support an IFC loan for the 360 MW Haripur power project and sign the Partial Risk Guarantee.

AES has been negotiating with IFC, an affiliate of the WB, for a loan for the Haripur project and WB had earlier agreed

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## Heroin haul The tip-off came from British Drug Dept

**By Staff Correspondent**  
The British Drug Department (BDD) had played a major role in the recovery of 24.1 kg heroin from a city hotel on Monday, according to sources in the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC).

The BDD came to know that a consignment of heroine was to reach in Britain from Bangladesh. They also got some information about its trafficking and two buyers in Britain.

On the basis of information gathered in Britain, they contacted DNC in Dhaka and sought its assistance. Two BDD officials flew to Dhaka but requested the DNC to keep it secret.

The two British officials hired a room at hotel Razzoni Isa Kha and started closely screening the smugglers.

On the day of the operation,

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## AL-BNP politics Similar bills, similar tunes but opposite parties

**By Nurul Kabir**

The government of Awami League is out to introduce a law which the party had vehemently opposed some seven years ago while in opposition. The party at that time found certain provisions of the legislation 'repressive of the highest order', which it is proposing now.

The government of Khaleda Zia introduced the controversial law, the suppression of Terrorist Offences Act, and got it passed in parliament for a two-year period in November 1992. The entire opposition led by Sheikh Hasina's Awami League stayed outside the House during the passage of the said bill as they refused to be a party to 'such an anti-people law'.

The law was initially promulgated as an ordinance in

September 1992 by the then President Abdur Rahman Biswas.

The ordinance, popularly known as anti-terrorism ordinance, provided for 'summary trial' in special tribunals for crimes like destroying public property, breaking vehicles, raising obstruction to traffic movement, collecting illegal tolls, terrorising people by creating panic or by force, creating obstacles to the process of inviting or awarding tender bids of any organisation by force and so on.

The ordinance also provided for severe punishment for the crimes and recognised those as non-bailable offences. The ordinance provided the special tribunals only 60 days to complete trial of any case under the law.

In some special situation, the period was 90 days.

The opposition objection to the ordinance primary stemmed from the apprehension that certain provisions would seriously affect citizens' right to register protest against undemocratic activities of the party in power.

Certain provisions of the BNP sponsored ordinance said: "Any person or organised group creating obstacles to any traffic movement in the streets, rivers, railways or in the air ways, or deviating the route of a vehicle against the will of the operator concerned by illegal force or by threat—

"Or, any person or any organised group terrorising people"

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## Eighth SAF Games open today

**KATHMANDU, Sep 24:** The 8th South Asian Federation (SAF) Games will be inaugurated here tomorrow.

King of Nepal, Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, will formally open the biggest sporting meet of the seven South Asian nations at a two-and-a-half-hour long colourful inaugural ceremony at the Dasharath Stadium.

Some 1063 athletes from the seven SAARC nations will vie for 159 golds in 12 disciplines—athletics, football, swimming, boxing, karate, taekwon-do, wrestling, weightlifting, volleyball, table tennis, shooting and kabaddi.

The participating athletes arrived in Kathmandu from yesterday except some from Bangladesh, whose contingent was broken into three batches for the journey from Dhaka. The last batch of the Bangladesh contingent, comprising of the

boxing, taekwon-do, wrestling and volleyball teams, reached Kathmandu this afternoon.

The athletics and football competitions will be held at the new-looking Dasharath Stadium, which has been renovated for the Games with the help of the Chinese government. Boxing and taekwon-do will be held at the Shahanshah Hall, karate and volleyball at the Tripureshwor Indoor, kabaddi at Sanogachor Gyaneshwor, shooting and swimming at the Birendra International Sports Centre, table tennis at the Lainchour Indoor, and weightlifting and wrestling at the Royal Nepal Academy and Smriti Bhawan.

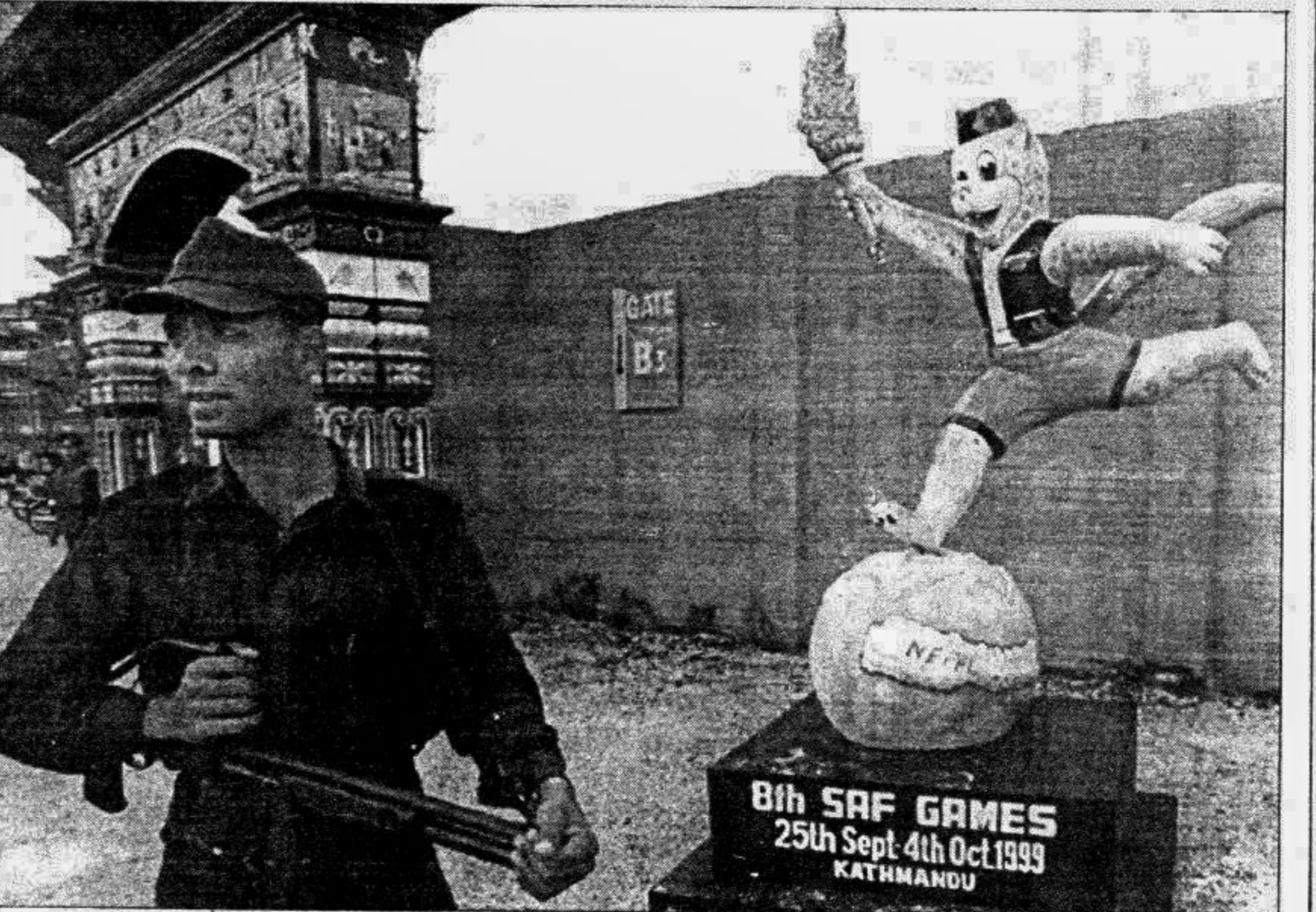
There are as many as 10 gold medals for boxing, one for football, 35 for athletics, one for kabaddi, 16 for karate, 26 for shooting, 29 for swimming, seven for table tennis, 16 for taekwon-do, two for volleyball,

and eight each for wrestling and weightlifting.

Out of 159 golds, Bangladesh athletes will compete for 98—eight in boxing, nine in athletics, nine in karate, 18 in shooting, 28 in swimming, seven in taekwon-do, seven in wrestling, eight in weightlifting, two in volleyball while one each in football and kabaddi.

Meena, a popular cartoon character introduced by UNICEF in Nepal as in other areas of the region, will feature in the opening ceremony of the SAF Games in addition to other displays.

Brought to life by a group of children of the Nepal Bal (children) Sangatha, the Meena contingent will march past with a banner appealing to the society to "Give the Girl Child a Chance". This has been arranged to champion the course for gender equality.



An armed security official stands alert beside the 8th SAF Games mascot at the opening ceremony venue in the Nepalese capital of Kathmandu yesterday. —AFP photo

## Sculptor Novera to return home after 3 decades

**PARIS, Sept 24:** Novera Ahmed, the out-of-sight legendary figure in the country's arena of arts and culture, has finally decided to return home ending three decades of self-exile, reports BSS.

The decision of Novera, one of the architects of the Dhaka's Central Shaheed Minar, came when she called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the first head of the government who found out and met the artist in her prolonged exile life.

Talking to BSS, eminent painter Shahabuddin, who was present during the emotional meeting between Hasina and Novera at Hotel Hilton here, said the meeting lasted for nearly one hour and twenty minutes.

He said Novera expressed her professional agonies particularly related to the change in the original design of the Central Shaheed Minar.

Novera's contemporary artists and others who were close to her earlier said she was not even paid the remuneration as the designer of the Shaheed Minar pledged by the then East Pakistan authorities.

Novera left the then East Pakistan for the last time in 1969 and since then refused to come back home.

A number of articles, poems and even novels were written on or dedicated to her in the past 30 years. Novera's apparent apathy towards public life almost made her a mysterious lady in her homeland and even in Europe.

A number of exhibition of her works were held at home and abroad with the last one being in Dhaka early this year.

Novera, a pioneering figure in country's sculpture, was awarded the "Ekushey Padak" last year for her contribution to the field of architecture, but she refused to accept the prize due to 'personal reasons.'

But she changed her mind and agreed to accept the award when Sheikh Hasina urged her to accept it in a special ceremony on her return home.

## Gas-based industries welcome, PM tells French investors

**PARIS, Sept 24:** Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today urged French businessmen to become partners of progress of Bangladesh by investing their capital in the country where investment is secure and rewarding too, reports UNB.

"Foreign investment in Bangladesh is secure against nationalisation and expropriation through an act called Foreign Private Investment (Promotion and Protection) Act 1980," she told her business audience at an investment forum in the French capital.

"I assure you of all possible cooperation and assistance from my government and the people of my country in this venture."

Urging the French entrepreneurs to visit Bangladesh for investments the prime minister said Bangladesh perhaps offered the most attractive

package of incentives to foreign direct investors.

President of the MEDEF International Michel Sallard also addressed the meeting attended by leading businessmen in Paris.

Later replying to queries from the French business leaders, the prime minister said the Asian crisis could not have any influence on Bangladesh economy as the government is following a strong economic policy.

She agreed with the business leaders that development of rural communications is very much important for the country's overall growth.

"The government has taken steps to expand the rural communications system," she told them, adding that steps have also been taken to improve the telecoms system.

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## Shikdar's 'six wives'

**From Quazi Amanullah**

**KHULNA, Sept 24:** Apart from eight mistresses, Ershad Shikdar married six women since 1976.

Four of them were divorced for opposing his wayward life. The remaining two including his first wife Khodeja Khanam, 42, have been staying in the palatial house, 'Swarnakamal', in Sonadanga residential area.

Ershad Shikdar's sixth wife is Shanjida alias Shova, 28, whom he married in May this year.

Beautiful women, Shova was forced to divorce her former husband Kazi Manjuddin Chand, 48, a noted businessman and veteran leader of Khulna district Awami League.

Shova was forcibly trapped in Ershad's ice factory and vio-

lated by him as her husband failed to pay back over five lakh taka which he had borrowed for business purpose, according to the judicial statement of Noore-Alam, one of the armed cadres of Ershad. Alam was arrested last month.

Shova then decided to commit suicide. But she could not do it. Ershad kept on courting her and promised to keep her as 'Queen of Swarnakamal' built in 1986 at a cost of about Tk two crore.

Ershad also assured her to transfer all his bank accounts and land property in her name.

When Kazi Manjuddin came to know about the incident, he beat Shova. She then complained to Ershad against

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## Fate of Mulayam Singh, Maneka, Fernandes to be decided today

**NEW DELHI, Sept 24:** India's staggered general elections enter its penultimate phase tomorrow in the backdrop of main opposition Congress hotly disputing the exit poll surveys which give a clear majority to ruling BJP-led alliance.

Polling in the fourth of five-phased elections to Lok Sabha will cover 74 constituencies spread over nine states where an estimated eight crore people are eligible to cast votes.

Among the key political personalities whose electoral fate will be decided in the fourth

phase are Defence Minister George Fernandes, who seeks a third term from Nalandar constituency in Bihar state, Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav, Federal Minister Maneka Gandhi, Minister of State for Information Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, and former parliament speaker Purno A Sangma.

Mulayam Singh is in fray from two constituencies in Uttar Pradesh, a decision his rivals say was prompted by the fear of losing in one of them.

Naqvi, a BJP nominee, is pitted against Begum Noor

**Penultimate phase of Indian polls**

**From Pallab Bhattacharya**

Banu, wife of erstwhile Nawab Mikki Mian, in Rampur constituency, dominated by Muslims, in Uttar Pradesh, Noor Banu had lost to Naqvi in the 1998 parliamentary polls.

Maneka Gandhi, the estranged daughter-in-law of Nehru-Gandhi family, is seeking re-election from Pilibhit constituency, also in UP, where she was joined in campaign by her son Feroz Varun Gandhi, Sangma, who quit Congress

where the banned radical outfit has given a polls boycott call.

The campaign for the fourth phase was marked by a high-voltage controversy over the allegation levelled by George Fernandes about printing of "excess" ballot papers for his constituency, a charge firmly denied by the Election Commission.

Fernandes' claim that his charge was confirmed by the Director of Intelligence Bureau drew flak from the Election Commission as well as the opposition parties. The Commission accused him of trying to

"disrupt" the democratic process.

India's conflict with Pakistan in Kargil, corruption and political stability emerged as main issues in the electioneering for the fourth phase with BJP and Congress seeking to pin down each other with their respective line of arguments.

**Exit poll**

The run-up to the fourth phase of elections was also marked by Congress-led opposition sharply reacting to the exit polls for the first three phases which project the BJP and its

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**Crew of seized trawler sent to jail**

**From Staff Correspondent**  
**CHITTAGONG, Sept 24:** The arrested crew of an intruder Thai fishing trawler seized by Navy from Bangladesh territorial water yesterday, were sent to custody today after being produced in court by port police.

Police said 21 crew including 19 Myanmar nationals and two Thai nationals were arrested yesterday on charge of fishing in Bangladesh territorial waters in the Bay near Saint Martin island.

The fishing trawler was impounded.

Sources said some other intruder trawlers managed to flee.

## 75 killed in Indonesian cinema fire

**JAKARTA, Sept 24:** Fire swept through a packed movie theater complex in the Indonesian city of Yogyakarta, killing an unknown number of people, police said today, reports AP.

Early reports said nine were dead, but the afternoon newspaper Suara Bangsa put the toll at 75. Police said an accurate count was not available.

A Norwegian national was among the dead, Indonesia's Antara news agency said. It was not known whether the victim was male or female.

"We've taken out 15 bodies so far. We're still checking for more," a Yogyakarta police officer, who declined to give his name, told The Associated Press.

"I can't confirm how many are dead, because I could only see parts of bodies," said another officer, Sidik Zulfianto.

The four small cinemas in the second-floor complex had a combined 80 viewers when fire engulfed the two-story building late Thursday, the Suara Bangsa newspaper said.

At least five survivors escaped by running through the flames, and were badly burned, the newspaper said.

The fire reportedly started in a Muslim prayer room in a corner of the building, the newspaper said. Police are investigating the cause.

## Dacoit killed in gunfight with police

**By Staff Correspondent**  
An alleged dacoit was killed and two policemen were injured in an exchange of fire between police and a gang at Panthapat in the city Thursday night.

Three of the eight alleged dacoits were arrested from the spot and some arms and explosives were recovered from their possession. The others escaped, police said.

The dead was identified as Ismail, 25.

The injured policemen -- SI Saud Ahsan and ASI Mukhes of Dhanmondi thana -- were given first aid at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, DMCH sources said.

According to police, the gang entered a furniture shop at Panthapat at about 10:30 pm and attempted to commit dacoity. As employees of the shop cried for help, patrol police rushed to the spot.

The dacoits then started firing shots and exploding crackers. At one stage, police and the gang traded shots. Ismail was bullet-hit and was rushed to DMCH where he succumbed to injuries. His body was sent to DMCH morgue for autopsy.

## 7 killed in police firing in 2 Indian cities

**HYDERABAD, Sept 24:** At least seven people were killed today when police fired bullets to disperse mobs of Hindus and Muslims who clashed during processions carrying idols of Hindu god Ganesh. At least 40 people were injured in the violence in two cities, reports AP.

After batons and tear gas failed to quell Hindus and Muslims fighting with sticks and stones, police fired into a crowd in the western India city of Surat, killing at least seven people. Press Trust of India news agency said.

United News of India quoted hospital sources in Surat as saying 26 people were injured, including 10 reserve police officers.

PTI said the state government asked a High Court judge to probe whether police were justified in firing at the crowd. The Gujarat state is governed by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party.

In Hyderabad, capital of the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, police said more than a dozen people were injured as officers fired into the air above the heads of Hindu and Muslim groups, who were raining stones on each other and the police in an incident similar to that in Surat.