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Shikdar remanded for 32 days

Five counts of murder charges

KHULNA, Oct 6: Top terrorist Ershad Shikdar was taken on 32 days police remand in five murder cases today, reports UNB.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate P R Chakrabarty granted 28 days remand in four cases — Shahjahan, Akimul, Jahangir and Siraj murders — seven days each, and four days in Kalu murder case.

The CMM court also permitted Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) to remand Shikder's bodyguard, Noor Alam, for 18 days.

Neither of the two was, however, produced before the CMM court during their remand orders.

A senior official said a high-level police team would interrogate Ershad Shikdar at Sonadanga thana during the remand. KMP took him to Sonadanga police custody from jail this afternoon after court appearance.

A 28-member squad, including two Directors of NSI and DGF, 10 Police Super and 10 Inspectors, has already been formed to interrogate Shikder and his bodyguard, he said.

Earlier, police escorted him from Jessoro into the district court here today for hearings in two of the murder cases filed against him.

In one case he was indicted today (Wednesday) by the court as thousands of people thronged the court premises.

Shikder, who had been detained in Jessoro Jail since his arrest on August 11, was brought here by road amidst tight security.

Police officials said a prison van took him from the jail gate at about 8:20 am and brought him to Khulna Jail at 11:38 am.

From Khulna Jail he was taken to the District and Sessions Court at around 12 noon.

Benapole gets ready for freight trains

By Mian Ali

Bangladesh Railway expects to earn about Tk 15 crore revenue annually once the Benapole railway station is opened for trade between Bangladesh and India, according to official sources.

We are now technically ready to allow freight trains through the Benapole track," said a top official of the Railway. A trade protocol between the two countries has to be signed for allowing Indian freight trains up to the border on the track, he said.

The 36-km Jessor-Benapole rail track was recently restored at a cost of Tk 25 crore to connect Bangladesh and Indian railways at the border point for movement of trains.

The Railway now earns about Tk 30 crore revenue annually from export and import

3 girl students get DU stick

By DU Correspondent

Three students were expelled from the Shamsunnahar Hall of Dhaka University and five others warned yesterday for indulging in "clandestine activities" at the hall.

The action was decided at a meeting of the hall authorities yesterday with Provost Prof Sultan Shafi in the chair, according to a press release.

"Action against the students was taken after scrutinising the recovered documents of Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) at the hall on September 23 and taking opinion of the students and student leaders," the release added.

The expelled students are Farida Yasmin Tantu of Zoology department, Shawkat Ara Khanam, Cammey of Management department and Nilufar Yasmin of Islamic Studies department.

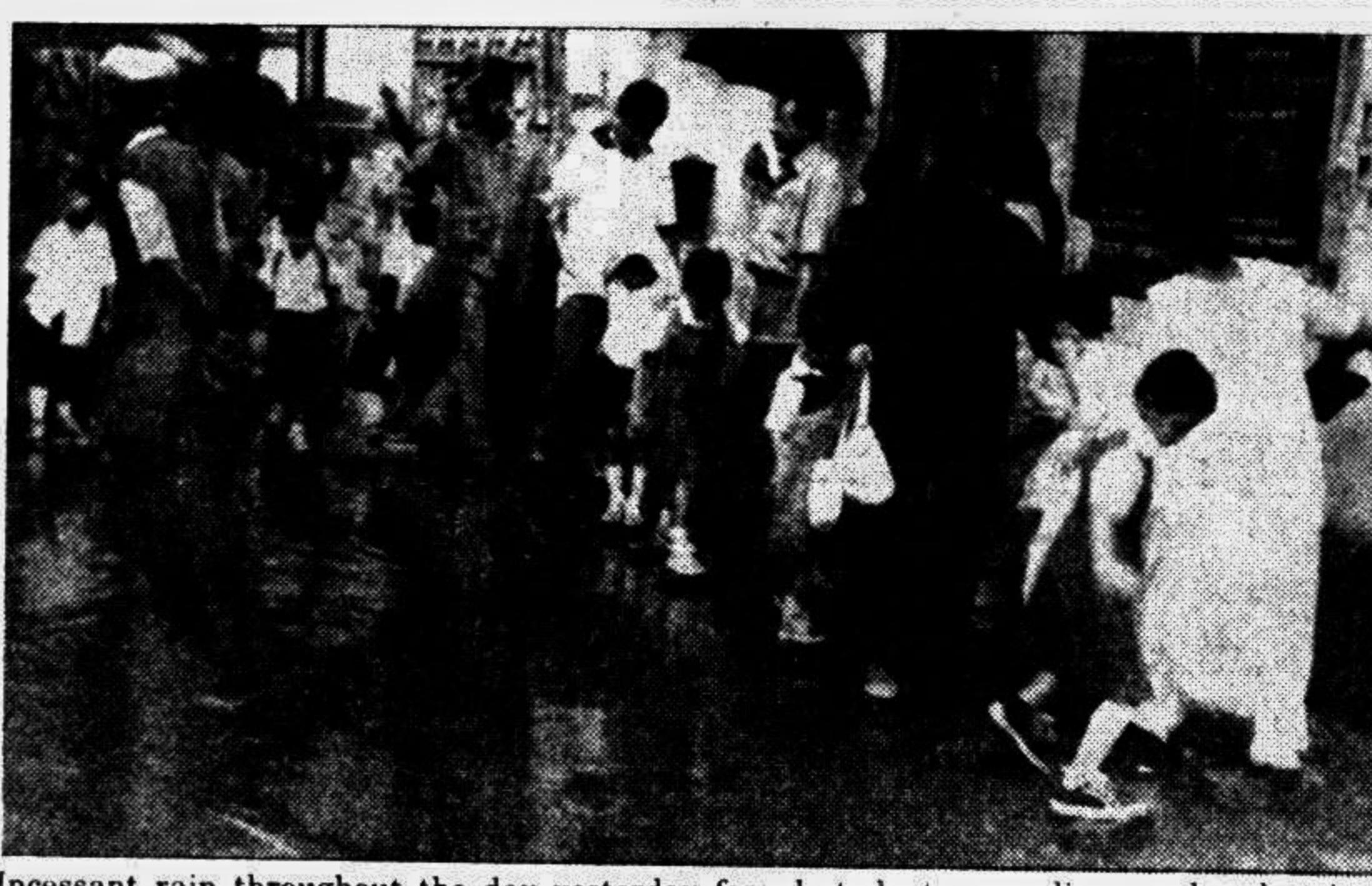
Those warned are Jesmin Nahar, MA final year student of Islamic Studies, Fatema Shirin, third year student of Sociology, Happy, first year student of Economics, Ambiya, first year student of Islamic Studies and Farida Akther, second year student of Law.

The penalised students admitted to the hall authorities that they used to influence the innocent students of the hall to engage themselves in organisational activities by using religious sentiment," the release added.

The ICS activists collected fund for their organisation in the name of hall, which also tarnished the image of the university, it said, warning, "If any student is found involved in such illegal and unauthorised activities, she would be expelled from there."

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Incessant rain throughout the day yesterday forced students, guardians and pedestrians alike to do some acrobatic walk on the bricks, balancing sometimes on one leg on the road near the entrance of Willes Little Flower School.

— Star photo by Sk Enamul Haq

Myanmar considers gas export to India

Dhaka-Yangon deal to better border infrastructure

By M Anwarul Haq

The visiting Myanmar Commerce Minister Major General Kyaw Than yesterday said his country is examining the possibility of selling gas through pipeline to India.

He said his country is interested in exporting gas to India and that a number of proposals by foreign companies are being examined.

Myanmar has an estimated 23 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

The minister was talking to The Daily Star at the end of a dinner hosted by Bangladesh-Myanmar Business Promotion Council at Sonargaon Hotel on Tuesday evening.

The remarks of the Myanmar commerce minister on gas exports to India came only three months after Myanmar Foreign Minister Win Aung disclosed Yangon's intention regarding gas export while on a trip to Dhaka.

Replies to another question, Kyaw Than said he does not know of any written invitation to Senior General Than Shwe about visiting Dhaka.

"I am sure if the Senior General is extended a formal invitation, he would be pleased to visit your country. He has already visited several countries."

Dacoity at a city house

By Staff Correspondent

Dacoits took away money, gold ornaments and other valuables from a flat in the city's West Agargaon area in the early hours of yesterday.

According to police, a gang of about seven dacoits got inside the first floor flat of Nur-E-Alam, an engineer of PWD, by cutting an iron grill of a window at about 2:30 am.

The dacoits, aged between 20 to 30, ransacked the house and took away about 25 tolas of gold ornaments, Tk 22 thousand in cash, five wrist watches and other valuables, police added.

Hasan Saeed

laid to rest

Eminent journalist Hasan Saeed was laid to rest at Banani graveyard yesterday, reports UNB.

Earlier, a namaj-e-janaza was held on the National Press Club premises after Zohri prayers.

Political leaders, ministers, senior journalists and members of the Press Club attended the janaza and paid tributes to Saeed.

Executive Director of UNB and former Dhaka Bureau Chief of Associated Press (AP), Saeed died of a massive heart attack at his Lalmoni residence Tuesday afternoon.

Opposition's demonstration programme tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance has deferred its country-wide demonstration programme scheduled for today.

As per the new schedule, the BNP, Jatiya Party, Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic Oikya Jote will now hold rallies and stage demonstrations across the country tomorrow to protest the killing of Sherpur district unit Jatiyatobadi Seccesbakh Dal leader Bidyut Talukder during the October 3 hartal, says a press release.

The decision was made as the National Sports Council will accord a reception to the national football team at Paltan Maidan this afternoon, the liaison committee said in its statement yesterday.

As part of the central programme, BNP will hold a protest rally at Muktangan at 4 pm and bring out a procession from there.

Golden boys come home

From page 1

Youth and Sports Jaiyan Abedin Hazari, Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports A S M Shahjahan, former State Minister for Youth and Sports and Convenor of Dhaka City BNP Sadeque Hossain, MP, Whip of Jatiya Party in Parliament Fazle Rabbi, BFF General Secretary Farzul Rashid, MP, officials of the National Sports Council and BFF, and sports organisers were present at Zia International Airport to receive the football heroes.

Hanif Obaidul Quader and Sadeque Hossain received the team first with bouquets. They were followed by the other leaders and officials.

Hundreds of football fans, some of them with band-party, showered rose petals on the footballers and chanted victory slogans.

The footballers waved from their open-truck on their way to the Prime Minister's official residence, Ganabhaban, to meet Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Today's grand reception, organised by the National Sports Council, will be held at 3:30 pm.

A preparatory meeting for the grand reception was held at State Minister for Youth and Sports and NSC chairman Obaidul Quader in the chair.

Obaidul Quader has urged all political parties and socio-cultural organisations to participate in the reception.

BFF sources said cultural function would follow the reception. "With the soccer heroes, the BFF officials and

ON ARRIVAL AT DHAKA

Our Sports Reporter adds:

Jewel Rana said they needed a world of luck to win the SAF gold in Kathmandu. The victorious Bangladesh captain, who led the side from the front to win the first-ever football gold in the 15-year history of the regional event, said this while talking to the press at a local hotel yesterday.

To become champions you need a certain degree of luck. This time the lady luck was on our side", said the tall defender.

Bangladesh had earlier made four SAF final appearances, but never tasted the football gold. Their fate in any regional meet, involving the seven SAARC member nations, was likewise.

"I was a member of the team in the last three SAF finals. But on all three occasions I could not play as I was yellow-carded in earlier matches. This time I was lucky to play the final" said Jewel.

"We were totally shattered when we lost to Maldives. It had also affected our performance against Sri Lanka. But then we sat down together and decided to forget what happened in the group matches. It worked and we beat India in the semi-final", said Jewel.

"It was like a dream come true when the referee blew the final whistle. I stood on the

ground for few minutes. I was wondering whether we had really done it at last", reflected Jewel while recalling the finest moments at the Dasarath Stadium.

"I have achieved everything. Now the time has come for the new generation to take over for the better of football in future", said the long-serving national player who announced his retirement from the national team after the final against hosts Nepal.

"I don't have any complaints against our football authorities. It is their job to carry the success to greater heights. But I will request everyone never to question a player's commitment for the cause of the nation", said Jewel.

The press briefing was also attended by Bangladesh Football Federation general secretary Farzul Rashid MP, joint secretary Badal Roy and the tour manager Abdul Gaffar.

But Shamir Sakir, the man behind the success story, was not present. The Iraqi coach of the national team surprised everyone when he went home on Tuesday instead of returning to Dhaka from Kathmandu.

Gaffar explained: "He (Shamir) did not tell me anything. When he was leaving the hotel at Kathmandu he told me he would be back in Dhaka after seven days. Shamir told me that he received an emergency message from his family and that's why he was going to India.

"It was like a dream come true when the referee blew the final whistle. I stood on the

(related story in Star Sport)

(related story in Star Sport)

NDI workshop ends with AL singing its own song

By Staff Correspondent

A three-day workshop on the practice of parliamentary democracy in the country ended in the city yesterday with the ruling Awami League highlighting various steps it has taken in strengthening the parliament and other democratic institutions.

Opposition BNP, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami attended the workshop on the first two days and blamed the ruling party for making the parliament ineffective.

Washington-based National Democratic Institute organised the workshop titled "Parliamentary democracy: Role of the Speaker, the parliamentary committees and the civil society", at Hotel Sheraton.

Fifteen lawmakers from BNP attended the workshop on the opening day while eight MPs from two factions of the Jatiya Party and one from Jamaat took part on the second day.

Besides Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury, seven other ruling party lawmakers attended the workshop on its concluding day. They are: Law Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khashar, PM's Adviser on Parliamentary Affairs Suranjit Sengupta, State Minister for

Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Whip Khaleda Khanam, Akhtaruzzaman, Col. (retd) Faruk Khan and Dr. SM Akbar.

The ruling party legislators highlighted various steps taken in the past 39 months rule of the present government towards strengthening democracy, the parliament in particular.

They said appointment of non-minister MPs as head of the parliamentary standing committees has helped such bodies to function much more effectively than ever before.

Under the new arrangement, they added, transparency of the government has been ensured as the committees are scrutinising functions of different ministries and making the civil servants accountable to the public representatives.

Despite boycotting the parliamentary proceedings, the opposition members are attending the committee meetings and discussing various issues relating to governance and public interests.

For the first time in the country, the state-owned TV and radio are broadcasting live the proceedings of the parliament, besides covering the

committee meetings, the Awami League lawmakers stated.

The AL lawmakers further said introduction of the "prime minister's question hour" in the House has been a big step towards ensuring government's accountability to the parliament.

The present parliament has discussed many issues of national interests, many of which were demanded by the opposition, the ruling party said, adding members of the Opposition Bench have been given more time than their colleagues in the Treasury Bench during such discussions.

The AL legislators also told the workshop that they have chosen for President a person who is acceptable to all.

They claimed to have forced the previous government to constitutionalise the idea of holding general elections under a non-party caretaker government. The idea has been widely acclaimed as a great step towards institutionalising democracy.

All these steps, they viewed, have strengthened parliamentary democracy, restored in 1991, in a country that did not enjoy democracy in the last two decades.

Business itself gets divided

By M Shamsur Rahman

The business community of the country appears to be divided over an FBCCI proposed action plan.

The division became apparent as only three business leaders among nine invitees turned up at a meeting, convened by the FBCCI President, to discuss the action plan yesterday. The meeting finally did not take place.

But in another incident outside the FBCCI building, two bombs exploded, damaging three cars