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Seventh JS rewrites by-election records

By Nazmul Ashraf

The seventh Jatiya Sangsad has eclipsed all previous records on parliamentary by-elections in the country. In its 39-month life, it has already witnessed 21 by-polls to its vacant seats and is going to see five more including today's one (the 22nd) in Faridpur.

The 23rd by-election is scheduled for November 15 in a Tangail constituency. And the schedules of the rest three by-elections to the vacant seats of parliament in Kishoreganj, Sirajganj and Rajshahi are yet to be announced.

Another by-poll to a Bhola seat has been pending since early days of the present Sangsad due to legal complications.

By-polls were announced for 16 seats, vacated by those who

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Security beefed up: Faridpur-4 bypolls today

Security has been beefed up in Sadarpur and Char Bhadrans thanas of Faridpur district ahead of by-election in Faridpur-4 constituency today, reports BSS.

Army and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) were deployed while extra police were called in the area as the commission declared all the 76 polling centres of the constituency as "vulnerable".

An Election Commission press release said 30 security personnel would be posted at each polling centre, while 12 striking force and 17 mobile teams comprising BDR and Armed Police Battalion members would be on "intensive patrol duty" under a magistrate for each teams.

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Inside Today

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Military coup in Pakistan

Why Indians Should Not Gloat

Pratul Bidwai writes from New Delhi

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Focus

Of standards quality control

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Prayer Timings

October 27

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-15
Zohr	12-45	1-30
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-30	5-35
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

270 shops being built along railway tracks in Karwan Bazar Rly land grabbed, safety rules violated

By Staff Correspondent

The Railway Kalyan Trust (RKT), a welfare association of Railway employees and officials, is constructing 270 shops along the western side of railway tracks in Karwan Bazar, violating railway safety rules and a Rajuk decision not to allow shops there.

When contacted Zahiruddin Ahmed, Managing Director of RKT told The Daily Star that the RKT got the land on lease from Bangladesh Railway (BR) in 1994 but could not construct the market due to "complications".

But Rajuk Chairman, M. Azizul Haque said RKT's proposal to build shops was rejected at a recent meeting in which Rajuk recommended tree plantation there.

The BR, owner of the land, had earlier rejected a Rajuk plan to build a road along the tracks and connect Tejgaon and Karwan Bazar with Panthopath near the FDC. The proposed road would have greatly eased traffic jam in the bustling commercial area. The BR had rejected the proposal on the plea of laying more tracks along the site, Rajuk sources said.

According to BR's safety rules, 20 feet space must be kept on both sides of any railway track to ensure safety. For narrow gauge trains to ply, the space required is six feet three inches on each side from the center of the tracks.

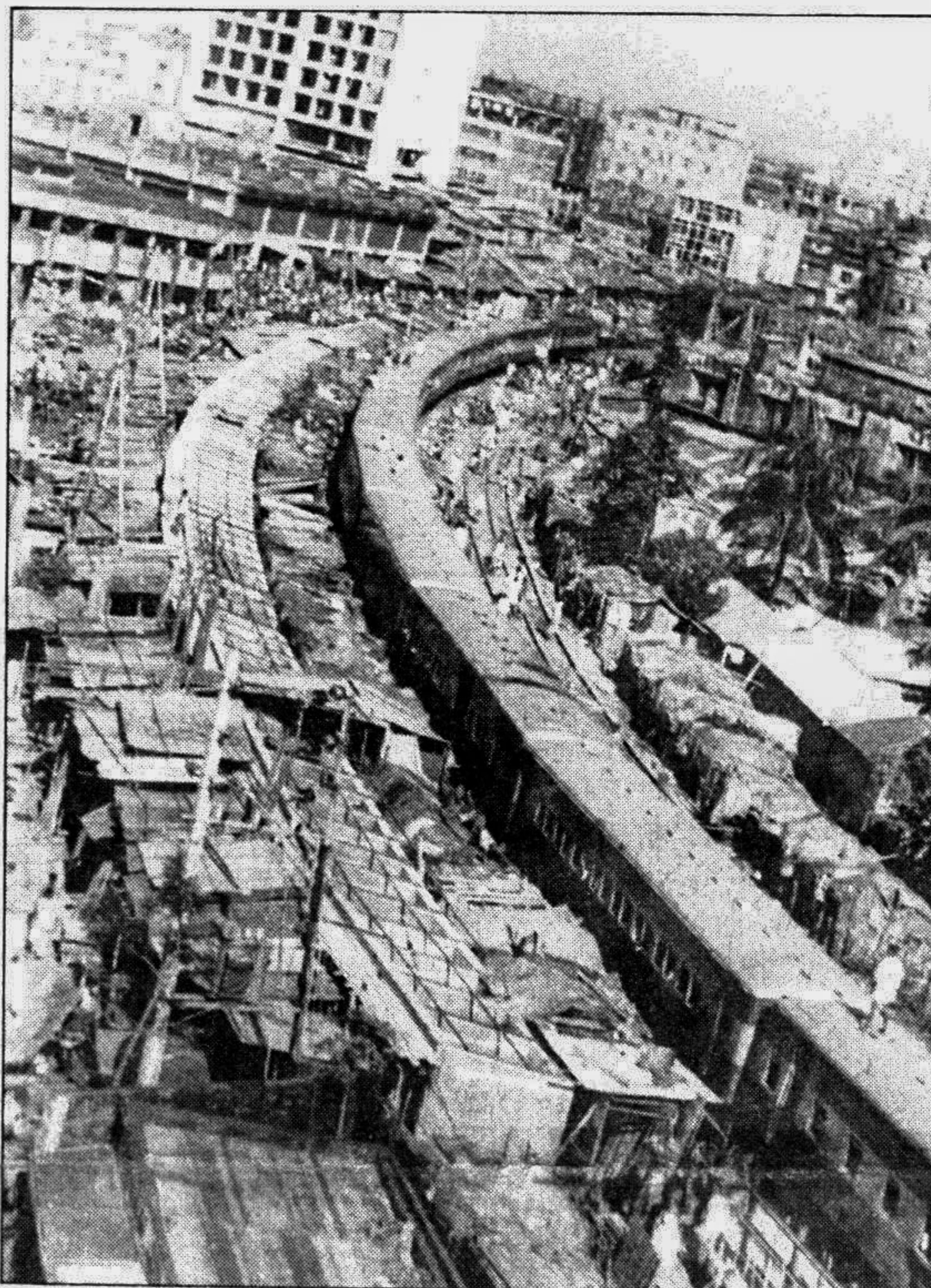
But slums have sprang up along the tracks in the city. Railway engineers say, even a minor train derailment could be fatal in those areas. The BR has long been making a futile effort to remove slums from its lands, kept for safety.

Now, as the authorities' efforts to remove unauthorised shops along the tracks have apparently failed, RKT has launched the project involving nearly Tk 1.48 crore. About 100 shops have already been built, sources said.

BR's Director General, M. A. Rahim, when contacted, said the shops at Karwan Bazar will also serve as a "wall", deterring trespassers from invading the tracks. He said the BR has a plan to raise a wall along the tracks up to Tongi.

Zahiruddin Ahmed claimed that approval of plans was not

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The lengthening shadow

The Railway Kalyan Trust has built structures for rent as shops on both sides along the track at the heart of the capital, defying safety rules and a Rajuk decision.

— Star photo by A K M Mohsin

Young man stabbed to death in city

By Staff Correspondent

A young man was stabbed to death by unidentified assailants near Munshikhola cotton factory in the city's Shyamur area Monday night, police said.

The dead, identified as Shahidul Islam Swapan, 25, son of Emran Hossain, a resident of Alambari, was found under Shyamur police station.

The victim's mother Khan Chan Begum went to the spot and identified the body of his son yesterday morning. She also lodged an FIR with the police accusing Delwar, Mohammed Ali, Kanu, Manir, Dulal and Idu of the killing her son.

Swapan's body was lying

See Page 12 Col 3

BNP prepares for 'road march' Sylhet chapter 'desired' change in schedule

By Staff Correspondent

Main opposition BNP has taken preparation for its two "road march" programmes aimed at mobilising support for toppling the Awami League government.

Earlier, the BNP planned to lead a two-day road march towards greater Sylhet from October 31 to November 1, but changed the scheduled due to "tremendous pressure" from its Sylhet chapter which asked for making the march at least a three-day affair.

According to the changed schedule, the BNP will now embark upon a one-day road march from Dhaka to Comilla and Brahmanbaria districts on November 1.

However, contradicting some press reports BNP leaders said the two-day road march scheduled towards greater Sylhet from October 31 was not postponed, but shifted and that another one-day march has been taken up.

BNP leader Tariqul Islam said the party chairperson Khaleda Zia will now lead a three-day march towards greater Sylhet probably during November 9-11. He said party leaders of the four districts of greater Sylhet have requested

that the march be held in the second week of November.

He said the party is also mulling over a road march in Khulna division.

BNP's liaison representative in the Four Party Alliance M. Shamsul Islam MP said leaders from Sylhet, especially M. Saifur Rahman MP, requested the party chairperson to extend the planned road march in Sylhet for at least one more day.

He said there was also request from Comilla and Brahmanbaria districts to lead a "mini road march" there. Following the requests, he said, the party has decided to lead a one-day march in Comilla and Brahmanbaria on November 1 and a three-day march in greater Sylhet probably from November 9.

BNP sources said Khaleda Zia is expected to address at least seven wayside public meetings during the one-day march in Comilla and Brahmanbaria. The spots are: Daudkandi, Chandina, Debidar, Muraigar, Brahmanpara, Kashba and Brahmanbaria district headquarters.

The sources also said the road march in greater Sylhet

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'Monir may have died from diphtheria'

By Staff Correspondent

A probe committee report, submitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital authorities yesterday, said Monir Hossain, a Dhaka University student, "may have died" at the hospital "from diphtheria."

But Monir's father had said earlier that his son was suffering from tonsillitis and accused the doctors of not attending his son. Monir died on Wednesday last.

The ENT department of DMCH formed the probe committee on Sunday to investigate the allegation.

The three-member committee was headed by Dr. Sabah U. Ahmed. Two other members were Dr. Abu Yusuf Fakir and Dr. Yusuf Haider.

The report claimed that Monir was examined by Dr. Zahirul Islam Shakil although

Dr. Aroop was on the duty roster on that night.

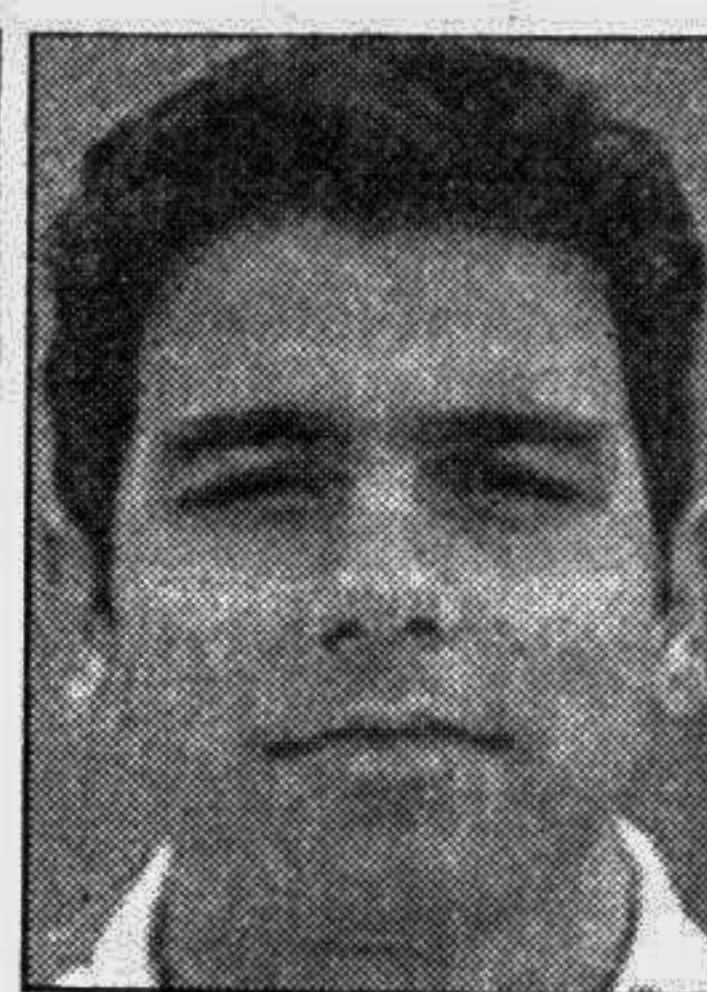
Dr. S. U. Ahmed told The Daily Star yesterday, "The on-duty ENT doctor — Dr. Shakil thoroughly examined Monir Hossain and found that he had clear symptoms of diphtheria."

He said, "Monir had 'dirty gray' or 'dirty patches' in his throat which was a clear symptom of diphtheria. His pulse was quite high which also indicated a clear symptom of diphtheria."

Dr. Ahmed said, "After Dr. Shakil was convinced about diphtheria, he referred the patient to the Infectious Diseases Hospital (IDH) at Mahakhali."

"But Monir's father expressed his reluctance to go to IDH at that hour of the night and he requested the on-duty

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Solanki's reply

Sports Reporter

Vikram Solanki hit an unbeaten 106 as England A made a solid reply to Bangladesh's 315 for eight declared on the second day of the three-dayers in Chittagong yesterday.

The 23-year-old struck three sixes and 13 fours and reached his century in 165 balls as the tourists reached 269 for seven at the close.

He came to the wicket at 93 for two and soon started dominating Bangladesh bowlers with ease. Openers Ian Ward and Michael Cough laid a solid foundation for their team, putting on 82, Ward, while at 53, was

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Shikdar, his men make no confessions under Sec 164

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Oct 26: All the senior police officials of the 25-member interrogation team left Khulna tonight for their respective places of work after completing interrogation of Ershad Shikdar and his arrested accomplices.

But they failed either to convince Shikdar and his accomplices make judicial confessions under Section 164 or help the KMP in recovering the arms and ammunition which were under their possession. They compelled Shikdar only to confess to murders under Section 181 and not under 164 KMP, KMP sources said.

Confession under Section 164 is important for trial, said a senior lawyer of Khulna Bar Association.

The interrogators will submit a report to the IGP soon, KMP sources said.

Pandemonium in Lok Sabha over Bofors gun deal

NEW DELHI, Oct 26: The main opposition Congress joined by AIADMK today staged an angry walk-out in the Lok Sabha protesting inclusion of the name of late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in the chargesheet of controversial Bofors gun deal case, report BSS, AP.

The protest was also seen in the upper house — Rajya Sabha. The confrontation over the charges filed in court last week threatened to delay the government's heavy legislative agenda. The Congress said it won't cooperate in the speedy passage of bills unless Rajiv's name is removed from the charges.

Rajiv Gandhi was accused of trying to block the probe by federal investigators into alleged

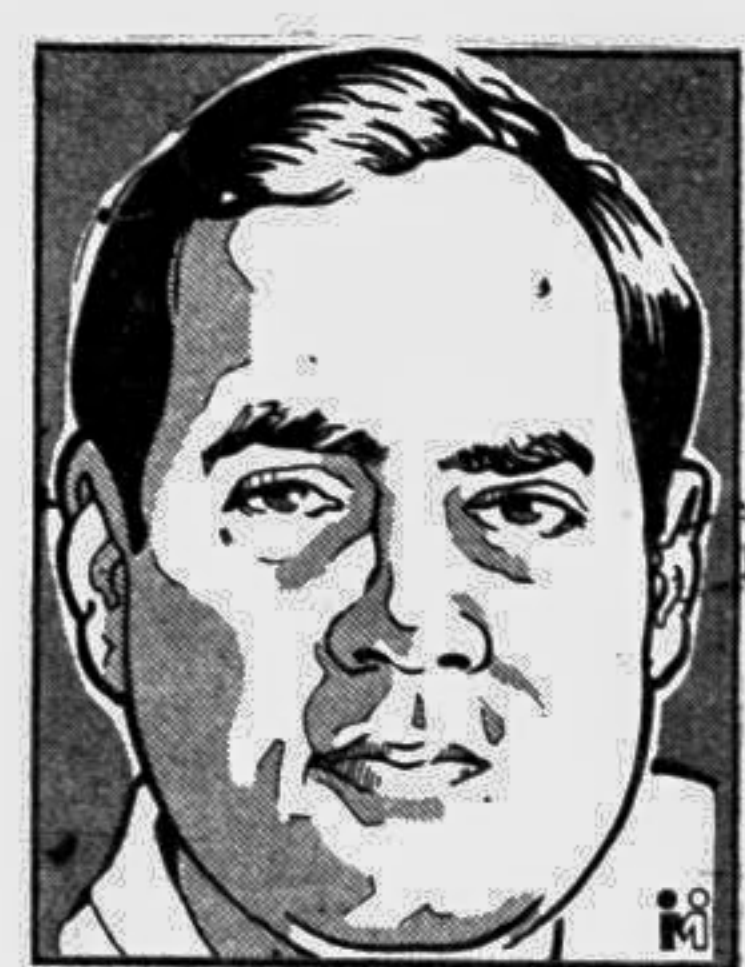
kickbacks from a 1.4 billion dollars purchase of artillery guns from Sweden in 1986 during his administration.

Rajiv was assassinated in 1991.

Two foreign businessmen, a Swede and an Italian, and two Indians also were charged in the alleged bribery by the Swedish company AB Bofors.

As soon as the Lok Sabha began its sitting this morning, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Madhav Rao Scindia took the floor to accuse the government of deliberately bringing in the name of Rajiv Gandhi in the chargesheet of Bofors case which, he said, was aimed at tarnishing the image of the Congress party.

See Page 12 Col 1



Rajiv Gandhi

DESA asked to cut system loss from 24 pc to 20 by Jan

By Sharier Khan

The Power Development Board (PDB) has finally taken some serious measures to cut system loss from 24 per cent now to 20 per cent by January next, sources said.

At the same time, PDB authorities have given verbal instructions to Dhaka Electric Supply Authorities (DESA) to reduce the system loss significantly and increase bill collection by 120 per cent so that it can pay its dues to PDB by July next.

DESA authorities were also told by the Finance Minister in recent meetings that "drastic solutions" will be considered if financial matters can not be improved satisfactorily by July next.

System loss in the power sector eats up nearly Tk 350 crore of revenue. Earlier, most of this system loss was attributed to organised theft by PDB-DESA meter readers and ledger writers.

PDB authorities have identified that power theft is actually done in connivance with a sec-

tion of officers. So, clear cut instructions have been given to the officials concerned to reduce system loss by 4 per cent by January next or to face "administrative action", the sources said.

Instruction has also been given to raise the bill collection ratio to more than 100 per cent from the present 85 per cent to realise the arrear dues.

Besides, the PDB authorities have already initiated "massive transfer of officials to remove dens of corruption", the sources added. Trade union activists, who used to oppose such moves in the past, have also been convinced by the PDB authorities and they are not creating any problem, one source said.

Meanwhile, the Finance Minister has expressed his dissatisfaction at the serious financial mismanagement in PDB and DESA. The PDB has over Tk 2500 crore dues with clients. Of these, DESA is the biggest defaulter with over Tk 1700 crore dues to PDB. Other

See Page 12 Col 2

BCL leader murder

Hartal at Kashba disrupts train communications for 12 hours

From Our Correspondent

COMILLA, Oct 26: A dawn-to-dusk hartal was observed at Kashba thana headquarters in Brahmanbaria district today protesting killing of BCL leader Umar Khan alias Gommar.

Omar, president of BCL Kashba thana unit was stabbed allegedly by JCD activists at 4 pm yesterday. He died on way to hospital.

Train communications between Dhaka-Chittagong and Chittagong-Sylhet were disrupted for 12 hours from 8 am to 5 pm due to a barricade put up at Kashba station. The pickets ransacked one Noakhali bound train coming from Dhaka and beat up its driver.

A protest rally was held on Brahmanbaria Govt College campus at 7 pm today.

Later a procession carrying the body of Omar Ali was brought out in the town.

Dacoits loot gold, pistol from a flat in Mirpur

By Staff Correspondent

Dacoits took away about Tk 2.74 lakh in cash and gold ornaments and a licensed pistol with ammunition from a flat of a textile mill owner on Mazar Road in the city's Mirpur area in the early hours of yesterday.

According to police, a gang of about eight armed men entered the ground floor, flat of Azizur Rahman, the textile mill owner, after breaking open an iron grill of a window at about 4 am yesterday.

Brandishing arms, the gang tied up the inmates of the house in two rooms of the flat and looted gold ornaments weighing about 40 tolas, Tk 15 thousand in cash and Azizur Rahman's licensed 22 bore pistol with 50 bullets, police added.

They left the flat after an hour. None, however, was arrested in connection with the dacoity till filing of this report last night.

A case was filed with Mirpur thana in this regard yesterday.

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