

'Try Ershad Shikder's beneficiaries'

BNP leaders, businessmen and his relatives demand trial of people listed by probe bodies, display of 10 videos recovered from Swarnokomol

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Some influential BNP leaders, businessmen and relatives of notorious criminal Ershad Shikder including his sons have demanded arrest and punishment of his political godfathers and financial beneficiaries.

"They have demanded display of ten videotapes recovered from Swarnokomol, Ershad Shikder houses, after his arrest.

"How can Ershad Shikder's political godfathers and financial beneficiaries be spared from legal action?" said

said city BNP Secretary Nazrul Islam Manju while talking to this correspondent.

"They helped rise of this notorious criminal and condoned his killings", he said.

He demanded fresh investigation against 19 police officials including 10 former commissioners of KMP, a former cabinet minister, 10 political leaders including an MP, a former army officer, some journalists and 16 railway officials and employees as listed by a high level committee formed by the former Awami League government and a high powered intelligence team.

Another prominent leader of Khulna City BNP seeking anonymity said the videotapes will show who drank wine with him and danced with whores at different hideouts at Skidghat.

Khulna Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) President Alhaj Munir Ahmed said they must also give exemplary punishment for encouraging Ershad Shikder to commit heinous crimes including

murder and helping him accumulate wealth and property by forged and illegal means.

He said an Additional IG (Inspector General of Police), a police superintendent and an Inspector of police are still in service. Besides, one police officer is now OSD while 15 others have gone on retirement. These police officials suppressed Ershad Shikder's crimes after receiving huge amounts of bribe at different times.

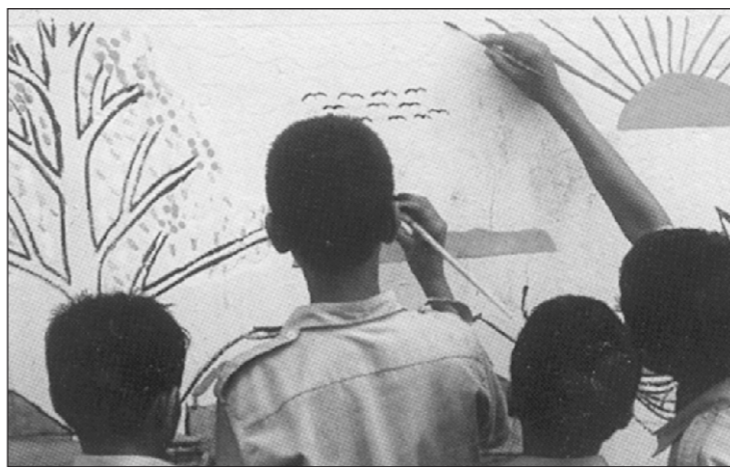
Some of them dined, drank and danced with Ershad Shikder as mentioned in the exhaustive report of the probe body formed by order of former home minister Mohammad Nasim during Awami League rule.

The big cats will be out of bags if the ten videotapes are screened. Leaders of political parties, godfathers and some police officers will

be seen enjoying wine and women with Ershad Shikder, said two businessmen at Khulna Bazar seeking anonymity.

Several reports were submitted to the government by probe bodies after thorough investigation against Ershad Shikder's beneficiaries in civil and police administrations, railway department, political parties, and the media. Businessmen of Khulna Bazar, railway station, Skidghat and Clay Road demanded immediate arrest of these beneficiaries as per the list submitted to the Home Ministry.

This correspondent also talked to Ershad Shikder's three sons Jamal, Kamal and Helal and daughter Saad Yasmin. They also demanded punishment of the people involved with their father in his crimes.



Students learning lessons through drawing pictures on the black board (left) and a teacher surrounded by attentive students at a school introducing the IDEAL system.



PHOTO: STAR

A milestone in primary education

IDEAL project raises enrolment to 85 pc, reduces dropout rate to 30 pc

MUSTAK HOSSAIN, *back from Manikganj*

Sharmin and Rakib, like many other children, are now more interested to come to school because of a unique teaching method that has made lessons easier than the conventional system.

The Kamta Government Primary School among many that has adopted the Intensive District Approach to Education for All, popularly known as IDEAL. This has improved the quality of the teaching.

"The IDEAL has created great enthusiasm among students and parents due to its unique features," its headmistress Nazma Akhtar told this correspondent during a recent visit.

The new system includes training to teachers on how to improve teacher-student relation and to attract students by using 'teaching aids'.

Teachers are now more accountable, said Abul Kasem, a senior teacher.

At classes, they have to approach every student to make lessons understandable and visit their houses in case of long absence to bring them back to school.

"Teachers need to work more and with attention to ensure proper teaching to all students in their designated areas," said the headmistress.

Teachers have to do everything from planning lessons to singing songs in classes and play with students to make classes attractive, said Assistant Upazila Education Officer Hanif Ali.

Primary school teachers are also trained in Multiple Ways of Teaching and Learning (MWTL) at Manikganj and 150 other Upzila Resource

Centres (URCs) across the country.

The project has proved a success. Gross enrolment in primary schools rose to 85 per cent of children in designated areas while the rate of dropout has reduced to 30 per cent. This is a milestone in the education sector, Ali and other officials said.

Students feel more encouraged to attend schools which have introduced the IDEAL method.

"I like to come to school as class is more interesting now," said Lovely Akhtar, a student at Kamta Government Primary School.

The IDEAL will be incorporated in the Second Primary Education Development Programme (PEDPII), Unicef officials said.

The PEDPII with an estimated budget of \$1.815 billion will be the biggest ever education programme in the country, aimed at raising the standard of primary education. It will be implemented by the Directorate of Primary Education under the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education.

The IDEAL project created enthusiasm among students and parents even in remote areas, said Unicef's head of Child Education Development James Jennings.

It has been implemented at 36,997 schools in 36 administrative districts and 1,48,405 teachers have been trained. Two more districts -- Chandpur and Sylhet -- were brought under the project recently.

"The IDEAL has taught us to take class in a planned and systematic way," said teacher Abul Kasem.

"We prepare ourselves through making lesson plan, which helps us a lot to take class confidently,"

IDEAL project helped us to make

a yearly plan, taking input from teachers, students, guardians and managing committee, she said.

Nurul Islam, a guardian of a student, said, "The project has

created a great enthusiasm among local people and guardians feel encouraged to be associated with the new method".

College student buys 20 hurt as smugglers trade fire in Daulatpur

Another abducted youth rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

The family of college student Nurul Islam alias Chapal, 18, bought freedom for him from abductors yesterday after paying Tk one lakh.

He was abducted on Thursday night.

According to family sources, abductors released him after they realised Tk 1 lakh from them through a media.

But they did not disclose the identity of the abductors as they threatened them of "dire consequences" if their names are disclosed to police or newsmen.

Chapal said the gang blindfolded him and left him at a place near his house in the early hours of yesterday.

"I don't know any more", Chapal told local journalists.

In another incident, police rescued another abducted youth after a

gunfight with the captors at Kandabaria village in Kumarkhali on Friday night.

Lattu, 22, son of Tofazzol Hossain of Natabaria of Sadar upazila was shopping at Lovely Tower, a shopping mall in Jhenidah town Thursday evening.

Some people called him out and escaped taking him on a motorbike. Later they demanded Tk 50,000 ransom from his family and asked them to reach the money at a house at Kandabaria village.

Tipped off, a police team led by Kumarkhali thana OC Mohammad Selim raided the house of one Golai Seikh at the village and rescued him.

After a gun fight, police caught one of the alleged abductors -- Saiful Islam -- and recovered a gun. A case was filed with Kumarkhali police station.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

At least 20 people were injured, 9 of them bullet-hit, in a gun fight between two groups of alleged smugglers at bordering Jamalpur village in Daulatpur upazila Thursday night. Police said the clash erupted over establishing supremacy in the areas, about half a kilometer from Jamalpur BOP (BDR observation post).

Police said the clash erupted after altercations between members of Nodu group and Yunus group over lifting of smuggling goods at a border point.

They traded at least 50 shots, locals said. Bullet-hit Mocher Biswas, 45, Sujon, 20, Faisal, 20, Hamid, 23, Anarul, 22, Mukter, 28, Akal, 24 and Naharul, 32 were admitted to local hospital.

BDR patrol has been intensified in the area as a tense situation was prevailing, police said.



PHOTO: STAR

The dilapidated Keane bridge on Surma river in Sylhet city, which is to be replaced with a new bridge.

Agitation mounts against RCC bridge plan on Surma

Bids to be finalised today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

A government move to construct an RCC bridge instead of the earlier planned hanging bridge on the Surma river in the city has fuelled the on-going agitation.

The bridge will replace the 66-year old existing Keane Bridge.

A hanging bridge project at the site was, approved by the ECNEC earlier, was cancelled recently, sources said.

Protesting the cancellation, the Greater Sylhet Ganadabi Parishad (Committee to Realise People's Demand), a nonpartisan forum, held a in the city meeting on Friday.

Speakers there termed it a conspiracy and said a tougher agitation will be launched to realise the demand for hanging bridge. An official on Thursday said a recent NEC meeting decided to construct an RRC bridge to replace the Keane Bridge.

Seven construction firms on May 9 dropped proposals against the tender floated earlier for the RCC bridge, he said.

The tender documents will be opened today. A committee headed

by the Sylhet Roads & Highways (R&H) Superintending Engineer will scrutinise the tender documents, official sources said. Tender documents were sold till 28 April, they said.

The R & H will provide Tk 25 crore and implement the project, to be completed in 600 days.

An amount of Tk 25 lakh would be spent to demolish the 66-year old Keane bridge.

Plying of heavy vehicles through the dilapidated bridge was stopped long ago.

The then Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury, elected from Sylhet Sadar constituency, first took the initiative to construct a bridge, replacing the old one.

A Tk 55 crore project was then taken up for construction of a 308 metre steel bridge to replace the Keane bridge in 2001. Tender for the 4-lane bridge was also floated and some preliminary works were done.

After the change of government, Finance Minister Saifur Rahman announced that a hanging bridge would be built. The Prime Minister also laid the foundation in February 2003.

The ECNEC at its meeting on October 23, 2002 okayed the project.

International tender was also floated twice -- in 2002 and in 2003. A Swiss-Indonesian firm became the lowest bidder, while a Chinese firm became the second lowest.

The ministry asked for issuing work order while a revised Project Paper was also made and sent to the ECNEC.

But the ECNEC did not finalise it. The hanging bridge project was cancelled on March 17.

This triggered agitation by political parties, socio-cultural and professional bodies.

A number of meetings and processions were held. Posters have appeared on city walls. Leaders of all political parties including ruling BNP have demanded immediate steps to implement the hanging bridge project. The Parishad will hold a 'grand rally' in the city on May 20 and called a half-day hartal in the district on May 31 to press its demand.

Barisal region gets one fourth of power needed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Barisal*

Load shedding amid a persistent heat wave has made life miserable in Barisal city and other areas in the region.

On an average, around 15 MW power is supplied during peak hours in Barisal electric supply region against a requirement of 85 MW, PDB sources here said.

The demand in Barisal city alone is around 30 MW. The peak hours are from 10 am to 2 pm and 6 pm to 10 pm.

There has been no rain in the region since the first day of the Bangla month of Baishakh.

Load shedding continued off and on in the city while the temperature reached 37 degree Celsius on Friday. Water supply in the city is also

disrupted by the load shedding and low voltage.

According to the PDB sources, Barisal electric supply region has 18 'feeders' under 11 KV distribution line and four 'feeders' under 33 KV line.

The regions includes Barguna, Jhalakati, Pirojpur and Madaripur districts. Power supply goes for four to six hours during day time in different areas.

Reports from Jhalakati and Madaripur say electricity is supplied for only four to five hours a day. Electrical equipment trips due to low voltage.

When contacted, PDB officials here said they do not hope the situation will improve soon because the supply from the national grid will not increase.

1 killed, 40 hurt as buses collide in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *B'baria*

One person was killed and 40 people were injured when two buses collided on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway at Amtoli in Brahmanbaria Sadar upazila Friday evening.

An unidentified man aged about 25, fatally injured in the accident, died at Madhabpur Upazila Health Complex. Autopsy of the body was done at Brhamanbaria Sadar Hospital.

Sapna Chandra Sen, 25, of Khariala village; Suruj Mia, 30, and

his daughter Sumi, 12, of Bejura village were admitted to Madhabpur Health Complex while Shah Alam, 45, of Sree Mangal was admitted to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital. The rest other were released after first aid at the hospitals.

Police from Islampur outpost in Brahmanbaria seized the busses belonging to Taj Paribahan and Bismillah Paribahan. The two buses were carrying about 90 passengers.

Witnesses said the two buses fell into roadside ditches following the accident.



PHOTO: STAR

The lone satellite school at Char Lata in Golachipa in Patuakhali district is closed since January, depriving about 500 children of the area of education. Upazila Education Officer Belayet Hossain when contacted said the school was closed on a government order.

SNAPS

Dr Wahid-u-Zaman takes over as PSTU VC

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

Dr M Wahid-u-Zaman took over as Vice-chancellor of Patuakhali Science and Technology University yesterday.

Earlier, he was a teacher of Agricultural Chemistry at Bangladesh Agriculture University, Mymensingh.

Born in 1952 at Jhatibunia village in Mirgonj upazila in the district, Dr M Wahid-u-Zaman obtained Ph D from Indian Agricultural Research Institution (IARI) in 1986.

3 chargesheeted accused held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

Three chargesheeted absconding accused in Panchanon murder case were arrested on Friday night from Baintala village in Assassuni upazila.

They are Saheb Ali, 30 and Kamu 32, sons of Rahim Mollah and Matiar Rahman, 30, son of Tofazzel Mollah of Bainfula village, police said.

Tipped off, ASI Fariduddin of Assassuni thana arrested them from a house at Baintala village and sent them to jail hajat.

Panchanon Mondal of Baintala village was strangled by miscreant on the night of March 2 last year. A case had filed with Assassuni thana.

After investigation police submitted charge sheet against the three.

Ward Commissioner held in Rajbari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

An Awami League leader and newly elected ward commissioner of Pangsha municipality in Rajbari district was arrested on Friday.

Police said they arrested Wadud Sardar, general secretary of Pangsha AL, on charge of beating a Jatyiatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader Ariful Islam on May 11.

Aadud was arrested after Ariful, organising secretary of Pangsha JCD, filed a case with the Sadar police. Sources said, the JCD leader was attacked by unidentified miscreants while he was returning home from Pangsha Bazar at about 10:pm. Local AL blamed BNP for the "false case" and demanded his immediate released.

Gang leader shot dead by rivals in Meherpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

One alleged gang leader was gunned down by his rivals at Kola village in the Sadar upazila in Meherpur district Thursday night.

Police said Aktarul Islam, 35, leader of a gang of criminals, came under attack when he was holding a meeting with his associates at his house. His rivals stormed into his house and shot him point blank. His accomplices managed to escape.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Meherpur Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Police said Aktarul was accused in a number of cases for murders, snatching and other crimes.