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History beckons

HASAN MASOOD from Multan

The whole country will wait with baited breath in eager anticipation of Bangladesh's first ever Test victory after the Tigers' reduced Pakistan to 148 for six at close on day three of the third and final Test against Pakistan at Multan yesterday.

After squeezing out a 260-run lead, Bangladesh pushed Pakistan on the back-foot and

with only Inzamam-ul Haq (53 not out) at the crease as the last specialist batsman and 113 to get, the Tigers are odds on favourites to create history in their 24th Test.

On a day when some horrendous umpiring decisions went against them, Bangladesh showed enough character to keep on fighting.

Resuming on 77 for four, the tourists lost captain Khaled Mahmud off the very first ball of the day when he was lured to paceman Shabbir Ahmed.

In stride Alok Kapali, who had retired hurt on day two after being

struck near the right eye by a Shabbir bowler. Kapali added three runs to his overnight 19 before he was controversially taken by Pakistan skipper Rashid Latif behind stumps off debutant medium pacer Yasir Ali. However, TV replays showed that Latif had dropped the catch when he took a tumble. Surprisingly neither leg umpire Ashoka de Silva nor the other umpire Russell Tiffin managed to spot the fumble.

Next to go was the impressive Rajin Saleh who flashed outside the off-stump to Omar Gul and was caught behind for 42.

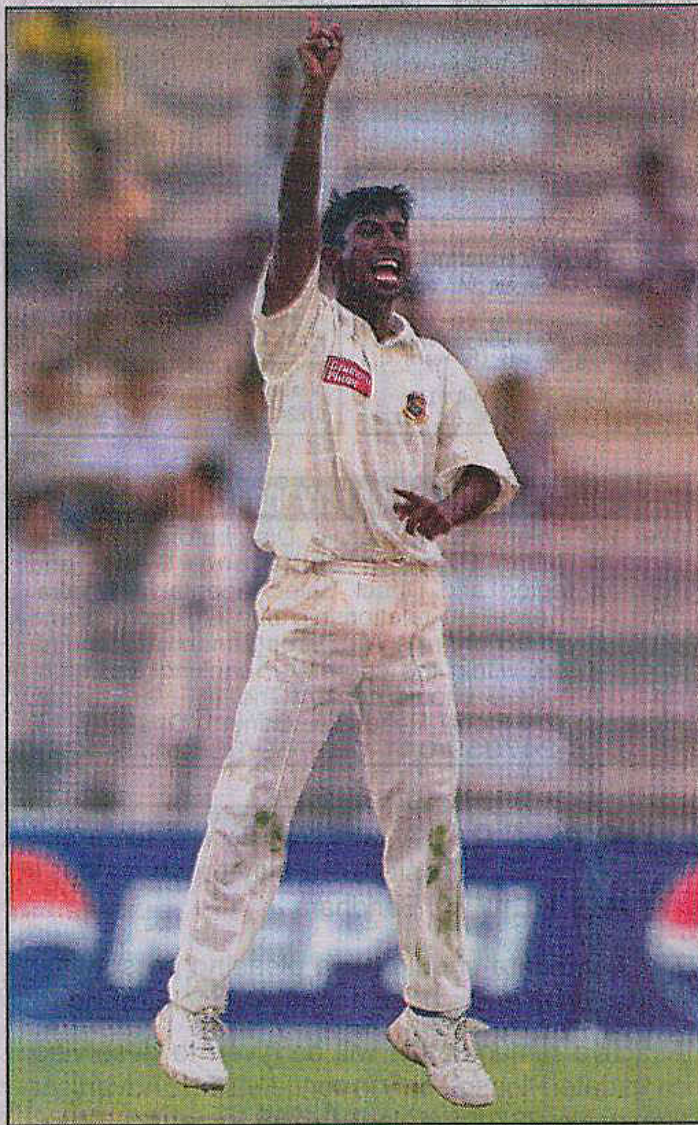
Umpire De Silva then adjudged Mohammad Rafique leg before to Shabbir when the ball clearly pitched out side the line of the leg stump.

A typically pugnacious 28 from wicket keeper Khaled Mashud and some lusty hitting from the tall gave Bangladesh a competitive lead which turned out to be a substantial one at the end of the day.

Left arm paceman Monjurul

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Bangladesh four wickets away



Bangladesh paceman Tapash Baisya goes up in anticipation on the third day of the third and final Test against Pakistan at Multan yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

AL hints at joining next JS session

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) may join the upcoming session of the Jatiya Sangsad to protest political killings and other issues, party sources hinted yesterday.

But the AL has not yet taken any decision to join or boycott the House that goes into session on September 11.

The AL will take the decision at its parliamentary party meeting after the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina returns from Chittagong on September 11.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Saber Hossain Chowdhury, AL organising secretary, expressed concern over the law and order downside.

Hasina, also AL president, on Thursday night called Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid and Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid to get briefed on parliamentary affairs.

US civilian killed in Baghdad

AFP, Baghdad

A US civilian, an employee of Kellogg, Brown and Root, was killed in a roadside shooting here Wednesday, the company said yesterday.

"The employee was fatally shot in Baghdad while driving a vehicle that was escorted by military personnel", KBR said in a statement.

In Baquba, a 13-year-old youth, Omar Saad Jassem, was accidentally killed late Thursday after American troops opened fire and missed their target, his father told AFP yesterday.

"At 2145 (1745 GMT) an American unit was chasing and opening fire on an individual who was riding a motorbike, and fatally wounded Omar who was nearby," the boy's father Saad Jassem said.

The adolescent was ferried from Baquba, northeast of Baghdad, by an American helicopter to a hospital where he was pronounced dead.

American troops have faced

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Govt trying to cling to power by destroying AL: Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the BNP-Jamaat alliance wants to cling to power by killing Awami League (AL) leaders and workers including herself.

"They have put some 1,000 Awami League leaders and workers, including myself, on their hit list in Dhaka and 8,000 others across the country. This is how they (BNP-Jamaat) are coming up with a dangerous blueprint to destroy Awami League," she said.

The AL president was addressing the 3rd National Council of Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad, a forum of physicians, at BIAM auditorium yesterday.

Referring to the unrest in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) over the last couple of days, Hasina said the CHT used to be a promising area where her previous AL government had established peace, ending

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Tk 6 lakh fake notes found in city lake

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fake 500-taka notes worth about Tk 6 lakh were recovered from Dhanmondi Lake yesterday.

A regular cleaner, Sobeda Begum observed a large paper-bag floating in the middle of the lake under the bridge adjacent to Road No. 8 of Dhanmondi at around 11:30am.

Sobeda collected the bag and found 12 bundles of 500-taka notes inside.

She informed the police and a mobile team took the money to Dhanmondi Police Station.

Dhanmondi police suspect that somebody had left the bundles a few days ago to avoid arrest.

Politicians make curbing crime difficult: FM

'Admn doing all to rescue Jamal'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday said curbing crimes became difficult because of the double standards of political leaders who harbour gangsters and speak of rooting them out.

"Political leaders are often found travelling with criminals in the same vehicle," he said while talking to journalists at a 'Face-to-Face' programme at the local press club organised by Chittagong Reporters Council.



M Morshed Khan

Referring to the abduction of business magnate Jamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury, the foreign minister said: "I'm hopeful he will be released soon. The administration will do its best (to rescue him)."

The minister said Bangladesh would not send troops to Iraq for siding with any party or working for or against any side.

"We can only send troops to help mitigate the sufferings of the people of Iraq," he said.

He said Bangladesh would send

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Businessman gunned down in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A businessman was gunned down and a pedestrian wounded in an armed attack at Purana Paltan in Motijheel yesterday.

Wahidul Islam Igloo, 32, was fatally injured as assailants sprayed bullets on him near his Purana Paltan residence. He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital

(DMCH) where he died.

Monir, 30, an employee of a nearby press, also received four bullets in his legs in the same incident. He was admitted to the DMCH.

Family sources said three local criminals -- Palash, Zahid and Bulbul -- came in a motorbike to talk to Wahidul at his house at about 3:00pm. During the course of con-

versation they hurled abuses at Wahidul's brother Mukhtar, following which Wahidul confined Zahid in a storeroom on the ground floor while the two others managed to escape on their motorbike. Zahid also escaped later.

"Soon after the incident, Wahidul went outside to meet someone when the killers came on a motorbike and shot him point blank in front of Sobhan Mansion, just 100 yards from his house," said a brother-in-law of the victim.

"I saw three gunmen shooting at Wahidul. As I ran for cover, I fell down on the ground and one of the attackers came to me and shot me in

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PHOTO: STAR

Relatives grieve over the death of Wahidul Islam Igloo, a 32-year-old businessman (inset), shot dead at Purana Paltan yesterday.

Another flees captivity in Chittagong

BSS, Ctg

Another kidnap victim managed to escape from the clutches of his abductors in the city following a similar incident of escape in Raozan last week.

The victim was identified as Mizanur Rahman, son of Jamaat Ali of Bilashar Bari under Sri Mongal Upazila of Moulvibazar district.

Doublemooring Police arrested two alleged kidnappers -- Anwar and Mohammad Nizamuddin -- in connection with the incident, a Chittagong Metropolitan Police press release said.

Police said Anwar, an alleged member of a kidnappers' gang, along with others kidnapped Mizan from a residential hotel at Patantuli

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Attack on Lobi's house Charges pressed against four AL leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police pressed charges against four including a Jubo League leader on Wednesday for launching attack at the residence of a BNP lawmaker on August 25.

The accused are Shahid Iqbal Bithar, vice-president of Khulna Jubo League, Birendra Nath Ghose, president of ward No. 23 unit of AL, and Sramik League leaders Mohsin Reza and Arun Kundu.

BNP Lawmaker Ali Asgar Lobi's nephew Ali Abrar Shinnu filed an FIR against the four on August 27, accusing them of launching the attack at Lobi's residence after the murder of Khulna city Awami League (AL) President Monzurul Imam.

Sub-inspector Ajmal Huda of Khulna Police Station submitted the chargesheet, stating that the accused kept confined the residents of the house at gunpoint, damaged three private cars and interior of the house, and looted valuables worth Tk60,000 during the rampage.

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Living in danger at DU

Rickety halls have become too risky for students

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Hundreds of Dhaka University (DU) students are at risk of injury as halls of residence have been allowed to fall into a dangerous condition.

The north block of Fazlul Haque Hall has been sealed off after the authorities spotted cracks. Last September, students in 20 rooms were forced to move out because the hall authorities said it was too risky for them to stay.

Students in adjoining rooms say they are not safe either, as cracks have opened in their walls, too. A fortnight ago, a lump of plaster weighing about five kilograms fell in one of the rooms. Students have identified 78 rooms as dangerous.

Moniruzzaman Razin, a student, said many students were so worried about the worsening condition of the hall that they could not sleep properly. Some were so frightened that they slept in their friends' rooms.

Professor AM Sarwar Uddin Chowdhury, a house tutor, said concrete plaster of his residence attached to the hall building had also fallen.

There has been falling masonry at Salimullah, Shahidullah, Jagannath, Surya Sen and Haji Mohammad Muhsin halls and at two other university buildings.

Mould and weeds grow on many walls, as water seeps through cracks, and flaking plaster is common. Falling roof plaster has been a problem for years but no repairs have been undertaken because the university authorities say they do not have adequate funds for maintenance.

The students said a Fazlul Haque Hall extension was demolished a few years ago because it was feared that it could collapse anytime and although reconstruction work had been underway for years, it was still incomplete.

"We have identified the risky rooms of the Fazlul Haque Hall and

blocked off the rooms to avoid accidents," Dhaka University's Chief Engineer Mohammad Ameer Hossain told The Daily Star.

He said a consultation team from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) had visited the hall and submitted a planning report. But, according to Hossain, its failure to submit a final report was holding up work.

But Dr Al Khan of BUET's civil engineering department and a member of the two-member consultancy team said, "We have submitted our final report to the DU authorities and recommended that they demolish and reconstruct the decayed portion."

Meanwhile, engineering office sources say that every year they submit proposals for remedial work on the worst buildings, but they never get the go-ahead because the university does not have enough funds and the authorities are bogged down in bureaucracy.

'Scrap Modhupur park project, punish Mahalchhari attackers'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a rally organised by Bangladesh Indigenous People's Forum in the city yesterday demanded of the government to scrap the National Park Project in Modhupur, saying it will imperil the life of indigenous people.

They also demanded exemplary punishment of those involved in the attack on indigenous people in Mahalchhari of Khagrachhari recently.

Addressing the rally held at the Central Shaheed Minar, Barrister Debashish Roy, king of the Chakma circle, said the park project should not be implemented without prior consultation with the local indigenous people. This could lead to mass resentment and deterioration of law and order in the area, he feared.

Demanding cancellation of the project, the Chakma king said, "This kind of so-called development project will not bring any positive change in the life of the indigenous

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PHOTO: STAR

Demonstrators at a Bangladesh Indigenous People's Forum rally in Dhaka yesterday demand that the government scrap the National Park Project in Modhupur and punish attackers of indigenous people in Khagrachhari.

City hotels hotbeds of shady trade

STAR REPORT

They look like mediocre residential hotels. Just walk in and you will be shocked to see how many of them trade in sex.

According to police statistics, about 80 per cent of the hotels and massage parlours sell sex.

The hotels and massage parlours have sprouted in the city with the apparent support of law enforcers.

Although police arrested 123 sex workers and 70 clients at three hotels and one massage parlour in Purana Paltan on Wednesday, the establishments did not stop sex trade yet.

The sex workers and clients were produced before court on Thursday and were sentenced to a 10-day imprisonment each.

A massage parlour located on the ground floor of a hotel at Bijoyagar crossing remained open to clients on Thursday, with about 15 women working inside. A guard

stands at the entry to the parlour and opens the gate only when he feels the visitor is interested in the 'service' by women masseurs.

"We charge each message-seeker Tk 150 an hour," said the caretaker of the one-room parlour with 12 reclining chairs.

"We give police tolls every day. They raid our places when we refuse to pay," he said.

The bustling Motijheel has as many as 50 residential hotels selling sex and Paltan has become home to about 10 massage parlours, creating nuisance in the areas.

The penalty for creating and being involved in such nuisance is a maximum of three-month jail and fines -- the punishment law enforcers call inadequate.

"We cannot take any action against the hotels that sell sex. What we can do is arrest sex workers, pimps and their clients," said SM Mohiuddin, officer-in-charge (OC) of Motijheel Police Station.

"The district administration can take action against the businesses by cancelling their licences," said a top police official, adding the law says an organisation will lose its licence if the same crime is proved against it thrice.

Police arrested many before, but they came out on paying fines and resumed the activities, he said.

Hotel owners claim they have nothing to do with what goes on in a rented room. "When someone hires my room, there is no way to understand who will create nuisance inside," said Mezbah, owner of a hotel at Malibagh.

But a top police official said: They know it for sure what is going on in hotels.

A syndicate of gangsters and hotel owners, managers and boys run the business with back-ups from local influential people. "In some cases, managers and hotel boys run the clandestine business keeping the owners in the dark," he said.