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A view from the Gully

From Page 1

lennium.
Sanath Jayasuriya, who took the cricketing world by surprise with his exceptional batting in 1996 and thereafter, surprised everyone, once again, but not by his hitting prowess but by his timidity and indifference. He appeared a ghost of his former self. Time takes its toll but for Jayasuriya a short span of time took a heavy toll. What a pity! Stewart and Hick steered their team to victory. Both were in superb form against the mediocre Lankan attack. Sri Lanka never recovered and looked the champions they were; lost two more matches against South Africa and India and they went, rather unsung, from the competition. A sorry sight indeed. It is time for them to take stock of their cricket and infuse new blood if they really want to move forward from here on.

West Indies were another shocker. True they were not in their best elements but the crowd loved them, so did the viewers. The expectations were raised because of their recent showing against Steve Waugh's Australians. Down two Tests and then coming back from behind to draw the series, particularly with Brian Lara coming to form with three centuries and then sharing the honours in the seven-match one-day series. But the sudden withdrawal of experienced all-rounder Carl Hooper definitely weakened the middle-order and the bowling which was so evident in their matches. With Walsh and Ambrose on the threshold of retirement, West Indies must find out young replacements and try to attract more youngsters towards the game of cricket.

The plight of England was once again evident in this tournament. As Geoff Boycott points out time and again England have very few world class players compared to other top teams and are always short on talent. Moneywise soccer is more affluent in Britain, and hence more and more young people are taking to this game discarding cricket.

This is not a happy trend and unless reversed in time cricket might take further dip in the near future. A lacklustre

performance by England was finally sealed by India as the latter raced to the Super Six. It was a pity that none of the three — England, West Indies and Sri Lanka — made it to the Super Six, while New Zealand played the semis against Pakistan. That was not on the cards. But in a game of cricket these uncertainties make the hearts throb and the eyes wet.

Akhteruzzaman pushed to last row in JS

Rearranging his Parliament seat, BNP's outspoken MP Akhteruzzaman has been pushed to the last row from the fourth, reports UNB.

Taking floor to speak on cut motion on the supplementary budget yesterday, the army major-turned lawmaker twice pointed to the sudden change and wanted to know from the Chair the reasons for the push-back, and thus insult to him.

"I have been pressed against the wall ... you can't push me any more. Time is running out," Akhter told Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid hiding his annoyance in a smile.
"Now you will have to break the wall. You know better who has done it," quipped the Deputy Speaker hinting that it was done at the directive of Akhter's party that has taken serious exception to his recent stance against its decision.

Sec 144

From Page 1

mand, a pro-Kader group, called a protest meeting at the Udayan at 11 am as district BCL declared Kader Siddiqui *persona non grata* in the district.

But local Awami League and JCD called another meeting at the same venue and at the same time to protest "indecent" comments of Kader Siddiqui on the Prime Minister in parliament.

The two groups brought out processions outside the area and held meetings at Shamsul Haq Gate and Masjid Road causing protesting imposition of Section 144.

Rly compartment for Ajmeer goers assured

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee has assured that a compartment of train from Calcutta will be kept reserved for the pilgrims to Ajmeer Sharif, reports UNB.

The assurance came yesterday in response to the desire of his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina.

The pilgrims from Bangladesh who will travel to Calcutta by bus will get the advantage of reserved compartment to travel to Ajmeer.

Booking for the train journey can be made from Dhaka.

Vajpayee pays tribute to martyrs, Bangabandhu

The visiting Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee yesterday paid rich tribute to the martyrs of the country's Liberation War by placing wreaths at the national memorial at Savar, reports BSS.

After placing wreaths, the Indian Prime Minister stood in solemn silence when bugles of Bangladesh Army played the last post and the national flag of Bangladesh was lowered to half-mast.

Vajpayee signed the visitor's book and placed a sapling of "Gandharaj" (Cape Jasmine) in the adjoining garden of the memorial.

Vajpayee also paid glowing tributes to the country's founding father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman saying his sacred memories will constantly inspire the future generation.

"I pay my homage to the extraordinary leader who led his country to liberation," Vajpayee said while visiting the Bangabandhu Museum in the city yesterday.

The Indian Prime Minister placed wreaths at the portrait of the Bangabandhu immediately after his arrival. He was then taken round different rooms and floors of the museum.

Toxic items

From Page 1

across the world and about 30 countries have so far withdrawn Belgian dairy products from markets. Some Asian countries have also banned import of these items from those countries.

Earlier, messages were sent to Bangladesh embassies in Belgium, France and the Netherlands, seeking advice whether to ban import of dairy and poultry items from those countries. But no response was received till yesterday, officials said.

2 murdered

From Page 1

Hospital sources quoting relatives said that Ripon left his house on Saturday night with Hannan and Biplob. But Ripon did not return home that night.

The youths who accompanied Ripon told Ripon's father yesterday morning that he met with an accident at Matuail, police said.

Later, Ripon's relatives recovered him in a critical condition from the spot. He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. He was shot in his back.

He died at the DMCH at about 10 am yesterday. None was arrested in this connection till filing of this report. A case was lodged with Demra thana.

G8 summit in Cologne ends \$70b Third World debt slashed

COLOGNE, Germany, June 20: Leaders of the world's richest countries agreed to cut billions of dollars off Third World debt at their annual summit which ended here today, but sent Russia home empty-handed until it does better on economic reform, reports AFP.

There was however a key common thread in the G8 summit's message on debt both to an ailing Russia and the world's poorest countries — "Follow our economic prescription to the letter or you will get nothing."

In the final communiqué from the three-day summit on Sunday, the G8 leaders welcomed Russia's promise of economic reforms in a deal agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

But they made it clear that no further debt relief would be forthcoming until the reforms had been implemented, releasing a new installment of international aid.

"We welcome the outline agreements recently reached by Russia with the IMF and the World Bank and look forward

to their speedy implementation as a further important step in Russia's reform program," the G8 leaders said.

"Once an IMF agreement is in place, we encourage the Paris Club (of creditor governments) to act expeditiously to negotiate a debt rescheduling agreement with Russia," the statement said.

Russia is seeking to restructure some 100 billion dollars in debts of the former Soviet Union, which constitutes the bulk of Russia's 140 billion-dollar foreign debt.

Leaders of the Group of Seven — Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States — had already agreed Friday to slash 70 billion dollars off the more than 200 billion dollars in debt of the world's poorest nations.

The price was the same as for Russia, however — relief would only be available to countries "pursuing sound policies, and that demonstrate a commitment to reform and poverty alleviation."

Countries wanting to qualify for debt relief under this initiative will first have to establish

a three-year track record of economic good conduct — an improvement nonetheless over the current situation where the qualifying period is six years.

The G8 took up the economic good conduct theme again in their final communiqué on Sunday, stressing that while international assistance and debt relief was important for developing countries, "their positive effects depend on sound national efforts towards economic and structural reform and good governance."

The International Monetary Fund and other international institutions have placed an increasing emphasis on the need for sound social as well as economic and social frameworks in programs to help countries out of economic trouble in the wake of the Asian financial crisis, which saw millions fall back into poverty as unemployment spiraled.

And when it comes to relieving debt, donors are insisting that the money saved on debt payments will be used for improvements in basic social areas such as health, education and reducing poverty.

Finality of an anticlimax

From Page 1

would have said in a different context, was *la deluge*. It had been stressed time and again, incidentally by yours truly as well, that the Pakistani openers needed to get the team off to a good start. The Australian quickies had to be stalled, lest they had an early look at the coy middle order. For the first few overs, Pakistan looked to be on song. The only concern, even at that stage, was the way Saeed Anwar was going for his shots.

It was Wasti who fell first, predictably to Glenn McGrath's extra bounce, a nothing shot, compounded by a blinding Mark Waugh special at slip. Anwar then decided to get his bat in working order, for the next match it seemed. Having spent about ten minutes doing something, he should have done back to the dressing room, he left a gate big enough for Damien Fleming to hit the stumps, as soon as he took strike.

If Pakistan harboured any intentions of mounting a recovery, it must have been in the mind. Out in the middle, the middle order caved in to some inspired bowling and abysmal batting techniques. Shane Warne exploited the petrified state of mind of the Pakistanis, to run through the batting literally at will. Warne had been turning the ball as well as he could, ever since the conditions had improved in June. Against South Africa, he looked the Warne of old. At Lord's, he was vintage. It was the stuff that legends are made of. For starters, he had Jaz stranded hopelessly in no man's land, then spun a vicious turner straight into the stumps. Except for sundries, Jaz was the top scorer with 22. The rot was about to set in. Nothing that Pakistan could do now: Warne was like a serial killer gone berserk.

Steve Waugh suddenly acquired the Midas touch. Every bowler he turned to, provided him with a wicket. Except for a dropped catch, the Australians put together a near perfect display of quality bowling of the

highest pedigree, and fielding that was exceptional. The overall effort was aptly epitomised by Ricky Ponting's catch to get rid of Saqlain Mushtaq. Australia not just bowled out Pakistan for 132, they packed too much firepower for the Pakistanis. At Lord's, the Aussies were in no mood to take prisoners. This was a winner-take-all situation and the Aussies were in an indecent hurry.

If Pakistan had any incipient desires to make a match of it, they managed to keep it under wraps. The match was made more of a mockery by Adam Gilchrist, who never allowed the vaunted Pakistan attack to make any impression. Akram had no choice but to have an attacking field. That left yawning gaps in the field, which Gilchrist proceeded to pick and choose. Runs came fast and furious. Shoaib Akhtar huffed and puffed for all he was worth, but never came close to blowing the house down. Gilchrist fell much against the run of play, but by then the match had slipped irrevocably from Pakistan's reach. For purely academic purposes, Ricky Ponting went into the scorebooks as another Australian casualty. In any case the Aussies were not in the mood for nit-picking.

Shane Warne, to no surprise of the assembled multitudes, emerged the highest wicket taker, and more significantly, as the man of the moment. More than any one else, it was he that turned the match Australia's way. He gave the Pakistanis not a moment's respite, he gave the world an image of what sheer joy a great artist of the game can provide, and he has given the Aussie selectors a few more sleepless nights to ponder, whether they were right in considering to write him off. Steve Waugh's faith in his comrade-in-arms of many a hard fought battle in the past, was vindicated. Australia owe a huge debt of gratitude to these two servants of the game, not only for bringing the Cup back into the Australian dressing

room, but also to let the rest of the world at large know for a fact that, you can only ignore Australia at your peril.

Pakistan did well to end up as the second best team in this competition. The captain led by example, was a leader out of the top drawer and provided the kind of inspiration that has turned this young side into potential world beaters. Their time would surely come. It was not meant to be this Sunday at Lord's. The Pakistanis, who had lent so much excitement and flair to this competition, provided in the end the tournament's biggest anticlimax. Why this great side should have crumbled with a whimper, when they were within whispering distance of the glory that they had desperately sought for the last few weeks, may well be the topic of a world-wide debate, for days to come. For the moment, it is time for retrospection. Wasim Akram and his men have done the game proud. The Australians were better on the day, much better than imagined. Shane Warne said, Australia were destined to win. So they certainly did. But, destiny received more than a helping hand from the man himself. Australia, for the record books, have now won two of the four World Cup finals they have played. It would need a great side to match this kind of achievement. It may be a while before such a side is sighted on the horizon. For the moment, let us content ourselves to remain awe-struck.

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PCP lays siege to Rangamati DC's office tomorrow

RANGAMATI, June 20: Pahari Chhatra Parishad will lay siege to DC's office here on Tuesday protesting the provision of issuing permanent residence certificates by the DC or Chakma Raja in appointing government primary school teachers, reports UNB.

Suppl bill passed

From Page 1

ment has failed to realise the estimated 10 per cent growth in revenue, Kibria said that he had achieved 95 per cent of the target.

Speaking against the additional allocation for the home ministry, the opposition lawmakers argued that entire police, already paid, reports UNB.

The government, has failed to contain law and order.

In reply, Home Minister Mohammad Nasim claimed that the country's law and order was very much under control and pleaded for adequate logistical support.

5-hr barricade on Dhaka-Tangail highway

GAZIPUR, June 20: Transport workers put up a barricade on Dhaka-Tangail Highway for five hours today protesting the arrest of a worker, reports UNB.

Police said the leaders of Kaliakoir Transport Workers' Association came to the local police station and demanded release of Moyezuddin who was arrested Saturday night on charge of theft and terrorism.

When police refused to release him, the angry workers took to the street and put up a barricade on the highway at Kaliakoir and Chandra, and damaged about 15 vehicles at about 10 am.

NATO ends air campaign

From Page 1

PRISTINA, June 20: The last of 40,000 Yugoslav troops rolled out of war-battered Kosovo today, watched by NATO which declared a formal end to the bombing campaign against Yugoslavia, reports AP.

Negotiators from the NATO-led peacekeeping force and the rebel Kosovo Liberation Army reached a demilitarisation agreement under which the rebels will stop carrying weapons in many parts of the province and place anything bigger than a sidearm or hunting rifle in storage within 30 days, US National Security Adviser Sandy Berger said.

Earlier, the opposition MPs opposed the idea of granting additional allocation for the ministry of foreign affairs. According to them, the government of Sheikh Hasina has consistently been pursuing a foreign policy subservient to India, while the foreign ministry is ignoring national interest across the world.

On behalf of Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, the finance minister claimed in the House that the foreign ministry had rather secured some successes 'which have never been achieved in the past 30 years'.

In this regard, the minister listed a number of foreign dignitaries including Nelson Mandela who have visited the country and the award of the prestigious UNESCO peace prize to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Meantime, the opposition objected to the foreign minister being represented in parliament by Kibria, a non-MP minister.

Deputy Speaker Abdul Hamid, however, ruled out the objection as there was precedence in Bangladesh's parliamentary history that a technocrat minister spoke on behalf of his cabinet colleague.

Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury adjourned the House immediately after the supplementary budget was passed at 1:45 pm, yesterday to resume again at 9:30 this morning.

India willing

From Page 1

India. In reply to a question on Kashmir Vajpayee said it is a "bilateral issue" and "we do not seek mediation."

He told another questioner, "No, I do not think that SAARC has suffered due to the recent border clashes at Kargil between India and Pakistan."

When asked about Kashmir issue, Hasina said Bangladesh wants India and Pakistan to resolve the Kargil conflict through bilateral discussion and not through use of arms.

Earlier, she started the press conference with brief introductory remarks. It was held at the Winter Garden Hall of Sheraton Hotel.

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Editor: Mahfuz Anam