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INSIDE TODAY

SOUTH ASIA

The war at Jaffna holds the ominous prospect of drawing international and regional superpower into the vortex, writes Mansoor Mamoon

COMMENT

In his bid to appease the ultra-religious groups, is Chief Executive of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf leading the country towards Talibanisation, asks Dilara Chowdhury

SPECIAL

Five years have gone by since 189 countries signed the Beijing Declaration at fourth World Conference on Women to step up efforts to empower women. Now it's time to take stock of how much progress has been made so far, writes Dr Nazmunnessa Mahtab

ENVIRONMENT

Severe drought in South Asia has underlined the need for change in the traditional concept of drought management, writes MMQ Mirza

PDB chairman removed

By Staff Correspondent

Power Development Board (PDB) Chairman Quamrul Islam Siddique has been made Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in the Ministry of Establishment, as recommended by the Energy Ministry.

Rural Electrification Board (REB) Chairman Brig MA Malek Mollah has been appointed chairman of PDB on deputation.

A government notification to this effect in 'public interest' was issued with effect from yesterday noon.

Sources concerned said that the Prime Minister, who also holds charge of the Energy Ministry, had a meeting with Siddique in the morning and signed the order making him OSD at noon.

The Energy Ministry had earlier sent a letter to the Prime Minister's Office recommending Siddique's removal on the ground that he was grossly violating office norms and chain of command and his activities were hindering progress of various power projects in the pipeline.

Siddique's 'rigid and aggressive' handling of the donors and 'prompting' the recent dispute with US power company AES were considered the 'most controversial role' played by him, some sources pointed out.

A UNB report says, "The government had to take the harsh decision because he (Quamrul) not only created a conflicting situation with the donors but also raised public debate through newspapers on government's policy decisions," a high official of the Energy Ministry said.

He also disobeyed the Prime Minister's instruction for smooth supply of electricity to the rural areas. "He, in many places, not only obstructed the extension work of the Rural Electrification Board (REB) but also cut down the existing lines," the official told UNB.

Previously, Siddique was chief engineer of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED).

HE was appointed PDB chairman on deputation one year ago following the removal of Nuruddin Mahmud Kamal.

Experts question revised GDP growth

By Inam Ahmed

The government's GDP estimation has once again come under question as officials and experts feel that under the current circumstances, it was assessed quite a few notches higher from the ground reality.

The government now advocates that fuelled by a fantastic Boro paddy production, the GDP growth estimation for this year has gone up significantly from the growth projected in the new series of national income estimates.

The earlier projection showed the GDP growing at a rate of 5.47 per cent at constant market price this year. This figure was prepared for the Paris Club meeting in April.

However, State Minister for Planning Dr. Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir has voiced a significantly higher growth rate of 6.23 per cent during announcement of the next year's ADP, which he feels was because of higher than expected Boro output.

When the growth was set at 5.47 per cent, the Boro output was assessed to be 9.6 million tonnes. But Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics has upped its Boro outlook to 10.6 million tonnes that also raises the GDP growth to 6.23 per cent, according to sources.

Now the question is whether a one million tonne increase in Boro will really increase the GDP growth by 0.76 per cent.

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Sri Lankan skipper Sanath Jayasuriya executes an exquisite cover drive on his way to a sterling century in yesterday's Pepsi Asia Cup cricket match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. —Star photo

Exclusive electorate for Zila Parishad polls

AL bill has no place for opposition views

By Nazmul Ashraf

The ruling party plans to get the Zila Parishad Bill passed in the forthcoming parliament session, ignoring all opposition suggestions, including direct election to the Parishad.

Introduced in the parliament in the last session, the bill provides for an indirect election to the Parishad comprising

a chairman and 20 members including five from the reserved quota for women.

As envisaged in the bill, public representatives elected to other local government bodies in a district will vote to elect the chairman and members of the

Zila Parishad.

The electorate will comprise the mayor and commissioners of the city corporation, where it exists, chairmen of Upazila Parishads, chairmen and commissioners of Pourashavas, and chairmen of Panchayats.

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Indians crushed under Lankan juggernaut

By Hasan Masood



Skipper Sanath Jayasuriya fashioned a typically aggressive century to propel defending champions Sri Lanka to their second successive victory in the Pepsi Asia Cup yesterday.

At the floodlit Bangabandhu National Stadium, India, fresh from a thumping eight-wicket win over hosts Bangladesh on Wednesday, found going tough right from the start before conceding a 71-run defeat.

Having won the toss and

opted to bat, Jayasuriya, the explosive left-handed opener, scored 105 to help his side to what eventually proved to be an insurmountable total of 276 for eight in the stipulated 50 overs.

India's reply, quite typically, was built around yet another fabulous innings by master blaster Sachin Tendulkar. But, the mighty Marathi's 95-ball 93 was not enough in the end and Indian innings folded to the last ball of the 45th over on 205.

The unexpectedly easy win virtually booked Sri Lanka's berth in the final of the four-nation championship. The 1996 World Cup winners now have the maximum four points

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Man of the Match



Sanath Jayasuriya (Sri Lanka)

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View from the Gully

India take a tumble

By Tawfiq Aziz Khan

The predictions of many that the India-Sri Lanka match would produce tons of runs on the placid wicket of the Bangabandhu National Stadium all came true until India took a tumble at 174 and was ultimately shut out for 205, leaving the Lankans with a big victory.

Once again it was proved beyond doubt that the wicket was neither taking turn nor helping the seamers, who toiled in the terribly humid conditions. Jayasuriya rightly elected to bat and, with de Silva, gave a solid start to the innings. Indians drafted their third spinner in Nikhil Chopra, but found the going tough against de Silva. Jayasuriya and Atapattu, Ganguly, once again, had to turn to the bowling exploits of Tendulkar to bail him out and the 'little master' obliged with vital

breakthrough. It was interesting to see the Lankans reading the regular spinners right but fumbling with Tendulkar's grips. The weakness of the Indian spin attack was once again pathetically exposed as the three regular spinners combined accounted for only one wicket in 20 overs. It was the third day on trot that the great Indian leg-spinner Kumble returned without a wicket.

Jayasuriya once again demonstrated his grit and determination to score his hundred under trying conditions until he was stranded by Kaluwitharana. And had Vaas not lent tremendous support to Kaluwitharana, he would have been definitely the villain of the piece in the Sri Lankan team.

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Beyond the Boundary

Of mind and matter

By Shakil Kasem

As predicted the Indian bowling was carved to the bone yesterday. On a user friendly batting track that is worth a few runs just to look at it, Ganguly's men floundered disastrously against an experienced and classy line of batsmen. But, we all knew that, didn't we?

Apart from a reflex catch off Aravinda, who had by that time set the momentum going for the Sri Lankans anyway, Kumaran did little of note with the new ball. At the other end Agarkar continued to struggle. Obviously, mediocre bowlers, no matter what the extensive store of Indian mythologies might try to insist to the contrary, are not exactly worth a dime, when confronted by class such as that of the Sri Lankan top order.

Sanath Jayasuriya, who has

not lately performed to the expectations induced by his exalted standards, decided to come good yesterday. In spite of the sweltering heat, he paced and pieced together a three-figure knock that was as good as any he has ever played. Jayasuriya was acutely conscious of course of the fact that the Indians have a monumental batting line-up. He needed his team to put up a big score, and how well the batting rallied around him. Atapattu, Kaluwitharana down the order and Vaas of all people, helped the score to almost frightening proportions. Against this Indian attack in this competition at least, any self-respecting batting line-up worth its salt should look for and get 300 plus. The fact that

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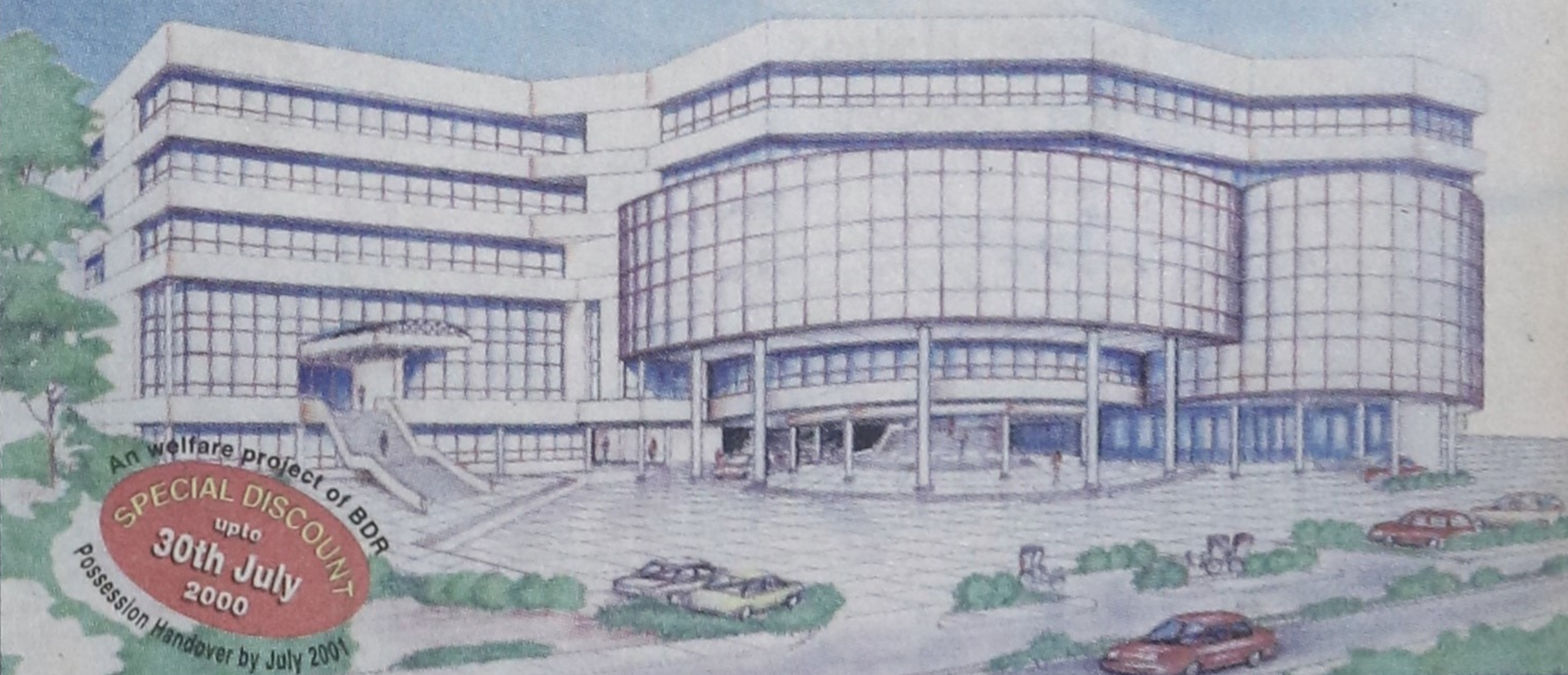
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