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People's Right to Know

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2002 FIFA WORLD CUP
KOREA JAPAN
GLOBAL ESCAPE



Keane shown the door

INTERNET, Dublin

Republic of Ireland captain Roy Keane has been sent home from Japan following his criticism of the Football Association of Ireland.

The news means Keane has probably played his last international match as he had earlier revealed his intention to concentrate on club duties following the World Cup.

The FAI has confirmed the Republic captain is on his way home.

The news ends a three-day saga, in which Keane threatened to quit but was then persuaded to change his mind.

The catalyst was a training ground argument with goalkeepers coach Pat Bonner, but Keane's outspoken comments regarding Ireland's preparations and the training facilities in Saipan were the final straws.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

TCB may be closed down

UNB, Dhaka

The government is likely to close down the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) which is incurring huge losses.

Official sources said the commerce ministry is working on the winding-up procedures following persuasion by the finance ministry.

They said the cabinet is expected to approve a proposal for the closure of the state enterprise after the return of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia now in New York.

Officials at the commerce ministry said that after the closure of TCB, its movable and immovable properties would be given to the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB).

Besides, TCB's 484 regular officials and employees will be offered golden handshake with due compensation.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Tax on NGOs in business

No PKSF fund for those in politics, says Saifur

STAR REPORT

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday came down heavily on some non-government organisations (NGOs) for their alleged involvement in politics and business.

The commercial activities of these NGOs will come under the tax net in the next budget, he said while speaking at a pre-budget meeting with the representatives of the NGOs at the National Economic Council (NEC) conference room in the city.

"We are thinking of taxing the commercial activities of the NGOs. But microcredit programmes of the NGOs will remain out of the net," he said. "If you want to get involved in politics or business, do it directly, and not in the guise of social activities."

However, he mentioned that 95 per cent of the NGOs are doing well and a very few are involved in politics. "Our relation is uneasy with the few NGOs who take an interest in politics. We do not like these NGOs."

The country's private sector has been asking the government to bring the commercial activities of the NGOs under tax net. According to trade bodies, the NGOs, exempted from tax, create an uneven playing field for commercial companies.

He urged the NGOs not to get involved in politics. "If they (NGOs) refrain from politics and work as development partners of the government, they have nothing to fear," he added.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



PHOTO: AFP

An Indian soldier keeps vigil in Panser village in Kathua district yesterday some 75kms south west of Kashmir winter capital Jammu. More than eighty houses were gutted, after Pakistani troops fired mortar shells on the village.

Hasina says joining JS hinges on atmosphere

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her party the Awami League (AL) will join the parliament only when a favourable atmosphere is there.

She flew back to the capital yesterday, ending a month-long private visit to the USA and the UK.

"We will not follow anyone's desire to join the parliament... the Awami League does not want to be used as a pawn," said Hasina, also Awami League president, to journalists at the Zia International Airport.

She however expressed her doubts about whether her party MPs would be allowed to speak there should they join it.

Referring to the coalition government's two-thirds majority in the House, the opposition leader said they can do anything they like.

"They care little about whether the 58 MPs of the Awami League join or not."

"We never said that we'll not go to parliament. We're also not against a dialogue. But the government, which is only making informal proposals for dialogue, is still continuing repression and torture on the opposition activists," she said.

"What's the point of having such talks? Do they (the BNP leaders who offered the dialogue) have any power to make a decision? There is none in the government who can give a correct decision."

On the question of joining the next parliament session beginning on June 4, the AL chief said her party stands by its earlier stance on this crucial issue.

Casting doubts on the outcome

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Islamabad on war footing, Delhi blows hot and cold

Vajpayee sees clear sky, but warns lightning may still occur

REUTERS, ISLAMABAD, New Delhi

Pakistan yesterday put its capital on a war footing, but Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said he saw clear skies replacing the war clouds gathered over their tense border in disputed Kashmir.

Vajpayee's softer rhetoric -- a day after telling troops to prepare to fight for victory -- was tempered by him also. He dismissed as nothing new a pledge by Pakistan to prevent militants operating from its territory.

But as he spoke, Pakistan put its capital on a war footing, cancelling all leave for government officials and ordering civil defence volunteers to attend first aid and fire-fighting courses.

Asked at a news conference in India Kashmir if he thought war clouds were gathering, Vajpayee said: "I said something else as well, which you didn't repeat. I said 'the sky is clear'."

"But sometimes lightning can strike even when the sky is clear. I hope there will be no lightning."

Meanwhile, AFP adds, Pakistan called on the United Nations to pressure India to begin negotiations over the disputed state of Kashmir as the two countries stood on the brink of war Thursday.

Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar sent a letter to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, copied to the president of the Security Council, urging them to help defuse the "explosive situation".

Describing India as "an arrogant power" using the fight against terrorism as a pretext for aggression, the letter said Pakistan was ready to cooperate with any effort to reduce tension and promote dialogue.

The latest stand-off between the two nuclear rivals was sparked by a massacre in Indian-controlled Kashmir last week, which New Delhi blamed on Pakistani-based insurgents.

Pakistan denies the charge and Sattar's letter repeats a call for the deployment of independent observers along the Line of Control (LoC) which divides Kashmir between the two countries.

Islamabad says that while it provides "moral and diplomatic support" to Kashmiris seeking independence from India, it does not back armed incursions from its territory.

"Such false accusations malign the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Morshed talks US investment, pvt port with Congressmen

UNB, Dhaka

The foreign minister Wednesday discussed with US congressmen matters relating to American investment in Bangladesh, including construction of the proposed private container terminal by US company SSA (Stevedoring Services of America).

Morshed Khan told the congressmen in Washington that the government had set up two committees to examine the question of constructing the container terminal in Chittagong.

The foreign minister responded to various queries in a meeting with the Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia of the House Committee on International Relations at the US Congress.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Indian fighters, choppers violate airspace

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Two Indian jet fighters and two helicopters intruded Bangladesh airspace and flew some six kilometres inside yesterday afternoon.

Officials said the intrusions were very unusual and certainly a 'breach of all protocol between sovereign neighbours'.

Dhaka did not even try to intercept the intruding aircrafts, as they entered the airspace flying very low at an altitude of between 75 and 100 metres to evade radar detection, sources said.

It is a normal practice to scramble jets whenever information about air violation reaches air headquarters.

Two Indian fighters, one trailing the other in a space of a few minutes, flew into Bangladesh territory at around 11:00am. The type of aircraft involved in the violations could not be known. Both came from the eastern direction over Brahmanbaria and flew over Sharail and adjacent areas, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) forces, who spotted the aircraft, said both were fighters.

Around 30 minutes later, two Indian military helicopters flew inside Akhaura, Colonel Bazar and other adjacent areas. The choppers hovered

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Dhaka for UN move to defuse tension

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh yesterday requested UN Security Council (UNSC) permanent members to take an initiative to defuse the escalating tension between India and Pakistan to stop outbreak of a war between the nuclear weapon neighbours threatening peace and stability in South Asia.

A foreign ministry spokesman said Bangladesh Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Iftakhar Ahmed Chowdhury has been asked to convey the message from Bangladesh government to the UNSC permanent members.

Bangladesh also requested its representative to convey its grave concern at the tension between the two nuclear weapon countries rising on a daily basis, the spokes

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

World Cup quiz draw in Rajshahi today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The draw of the 3rd round of The Daily Star-Rangs -Toshiba World Cup Quiz, the first of its kind in the city, will be held today at 4:00 pm at the Rajshahi Medical College auditorium.

Vice-chancellor of Rajshahi University Prof. Faisal Islam Faraqi will be present at the function as chief guest. Editor and publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam will also attend the function.

A colourful procession was

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Bina murder Party rivalry, smuggling links main reasons?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Either the leakage of information of a smuggled consignment of gold seized at the Zia International Airport Wednesday or an intra-party conflict might have led to the killing of newly elected BNP ward commissioner Binoy Krishna Sarkar Bina.

Meanwhile, Kotwali police arrested 14 people under the Section 54 of the CrPC at Shankhari Bazar on suspicion and are now interrogating them.

Several police teams left Dhaka yesterday in pursuit of the killers who fled the city immediately after the incident, said sources.

Intelligence sources said Bina, also owner of a jewelry shop in the old part of the city, had close links out the information about the haul of gold bars over his rift with the smuggling cartel.

The smuggling racket allegedly backed by some influential persons in the ruling party may have a hand in the killing. The leakage of information that caused a heavy financial loss infuriated the smugglers, the sources said.

"The smugglers involved some professional killers of the city in killing Bina soon after the seizure of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Pilferage of bullets from armoury: 4 arrested

UNB, Tangail

Four persons including an army man have been arrested following pilferage of bullets from the armoury of 30-Field Regiment Artillery at Ghatail Cantonment.

The arrested are Al Amin and Rasel of Jharka village and Suzon of Kaitala village. Besides, Sergeant Abu Hanif of army was also held in this connection, sources concerned said.

A case was filed in connection with the pilferage of around 4,600 bullets, each sized 7.62 multiple 39,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3