

EU's no to embargo on illegal immigration

AFF, Seville

European Union leaders agreed yesterday not to slap sanctions on poor countries as part of a plan to step up measures to combat illegal immigration, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said.

"We have reached a very balanced solution that clearly indicates that we want to limit and to channel immigration," Schroeder told a press conference.

"You know, and I am not ashamed of it, that I would have liked to go further in the way of sanctions. But it was not do-able."

Spain, which passes the EU presidency to Denmark on July 1, and Britain had hoped to propose sanctions against poor countries that fail to cooperate with Europe on curbing illegal immigration.

But they were forced to back down yesterday in the face of resistance led by re-elected French President Jacques Chirac, who argued that EU development aid was better used as a carrot, not as a stick.

Several other countries joined France and Sweden in criticising the notion of sanctions -- notably Portugal, Belgium and Luxembourg.

Wrapping up a two-day summit in Seville that was shaken by a string of bomb attacks in other parts of Spain, the leaders also reaffirmed that the European Union's planned 2004 enlargement into eastern Europe was firmly on track.

"This common aim can be realized within the timeframe envisaged only if each candidate country adopts a realistic and constructive approach" in the final stages of accession talks, a draft version of the summit conclusions said.

Discussions were delayed yesterday by more than an hour as

the leaders took in the World Cup quarter-final match between South Korea and Spain.

And Seville was bracing for tens of thousands of demonstrators expected on the streets in the evening, at the tail end of the summit.

Their three-hour march, organised by a coalition of groups called the Seville Social Forum, was to set off at 8:00pm (1800 GMT) and be followed by a "concert against globalisation" into the early hours of today.

Illegal immigration was the dominant issue for the EU leaders who met beneath the mosque-like dome of the Seville convention centre -- an architectural reminder of the eight centuries, until 1492, when Muslims ruled much of Spain.

Set to be endorsed was a proposal to create "without delay" a body that would bring together the chiefs of the 15 EU member states' border police services.

Diplomats say it could serve as the embryo of a single European border police, but not for many years yet.

The leaders were also to agree: -- To review by year-end the list of countries whose citizens need visas to enter the European Union.

-- To launch a "common identification system for visa data" based on a feasibility study to be presented in March next year.

-- To speed up the conclusion of agreements with third countries on the speedy repatriation of illegal immigrants.

-- Adoption by the end of this year of a program to send Afghan refugees back home, now that peace has returned to their nation.

-- Formal adoption at the next EU interior ministers' meeting of legislation that would tighten up penalties for persons involved in smuggling foreigners into Europe.

Spain, which passes the EU presidency to Denmark on July 1, and Britain wanted to go a step further by proposing sanctions against poor countries that fail to cooperate with Europe on curbing illegal immigration.

Floods kill 3, maroon 2 lakhs in Rangpur, Mymensingh

REUTERS, Dhaka

Monsoon floods, caused by heavy rains, have killed three children, damaged hundreds of houses and marooned some 200,000 people in northern Bangladesh over the last three days, officials said yesterday.

The officials said 100 people were also injured when over 300 mud houses collapsed in the floods that destroyed roads and communications in the Mymensingh and Rangpur districts.

"Some 500 people were also evacuated to 20 shelters," Manirul Islam, deputy commissioner of Rangpur, told this news agency by telephone.

He said nearly 50,000 people had been marooned in Rangpur district. "The situation may deteriorate if the rains continue," he said.

The three children were killed in the Mymensingh district where 150,000 people had also been marooned, officials at Mymensingh said.

Meteorologists forecast more rain and gusty winds of up to 50 kilometres per hour over the country in the next 24 hours due to a persistent monsoon low over the Bay of Bengal and the central part of the country.

14 killed

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when a Dhaka-bound coach collided head-on with a truck coming from Dinajpur near Boikhola in Basail upazila.

Drivers and helpers of both vehicles fled the scene soon after the accident.

Police seized the vehicles and filed a case with the Basail Police Station.

Hasina

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"It is an insult to the nation's highest office and democracy, we feel ashamed of it," the opposition leader said while briefing newsmen at her parliamentary chamber. She termed the move by the ruling party as a clear violation of the constitution.

"By no authority can a parliamentary party take any resolution asking the president to quit his office. It is only at the parliament where a motion can be moved to discharge the president," Hasina, also the former prime minister told reporters, referring to the constitutional provisions.

Terming the move a bad precedence, she said it would be ominous for the future of democracy in the country. She viewed it as a result of the ruling BNP's all out efforts to politicise the state segments.

She said there are certain constitutional provisions to remove the president from the presidency and none of the provisions were applied in the process.

"The moment a person becomes president, he is of the state and not of any party. The people do not expect him to act in a partisan manner," said Hasina adding that none can use the presidency for party interests.

During the hour-long briefing, Hasina recalled some of the activities of former president, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmad that harmed her government and party activities and said, "we did not take such decisions despite his (Shahabuddin's) harmful acts."

Referring to former president Justice Shahabuddin Ahmad, Hasina said that her government had appointed a neutral person in the presidency and the BNP had the opportunity to go to him on many issues because of his neutral role.

Shihab murder

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against them.

Earlier, the court recorded statements of 28 out of 33 prosecution witnesses.

The trial of the case began at the court on May 19.

DB Inspector Nazrul Islam submitted the charge sheet to the CMM's court, Dhaka on April 18 against six people.

The court framed charges against the accused on May 9.

The accused are Monir Hossain Liton, Abu Syed, Mahbulul Haq Rubel, Faisal Sharif Raju, Imran Hossain Sabuj and Nasim Sheikh.

Of them, Liton and Syed were arrested and later sent to jail hajat. The four others have been absconding since the incident.

Shihab, 13, a student of class seven of Motijheel Model School and College, was abducted from in front of his school on February 7. The abductors killed Shihab the same day, slashed his body into pieces and dumped those at several places in the city.

DB police recovered the decomposed parts of the victim's body from three places in the city's Bashabo and North Goran areas after 53 days of the incident.

The untouchables

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brother of his, Josef, is serving a prison term.

Accused in three cases with the Gulshan Police Station on charges of murders and other criminal cases, Syed Imam Hossain left the country recently to avoid arrest. He was the former JCD leader of Titumir College and had ties with influential ruling party leaders.

Prokash Kumar Biswas, accused in an arms case with the Mirpur Police Station, is also out of the country. He is the brother of Bikash, a notorious criminal, and rival of Kala Jahangir.

Jobber Munna, accused in nine cases with the Tejgaon Police Station on charges of murder, robbery and other criminal offences, is hiding in Keraniganj. He was a Jubo Dal leader and close associate of Hiron, an infamous name in the transport sector.

Munna had been staying with Titon, another criminal, at a rental house in the Cantonment before the latter's arrest.

Abbas alias Killer Abbas, accused in 10 cases with Kafrul, Kotwali and Cantonment police stations in connection with murder and other criminal conduct, is hiding at Kafrul, Arman, accused in three cases with the Ramna Police Station in connection with violent crime and possession of arms, at present stays in Eskaton. He is a close associate of Jubo League leader Liakot.

Mollah Masud, accused in nine cases with the Ramna Police Station which include ones filed under the Public Safety Act, murder and other criminal activities, is staying abroad. Educated in a madrasah, Masud is a close associate of Trimuti Subrata Bain, another notorious gangster.

Mosir Rahman Kochi is an accused in 14 cases with Cantonment and Kafrul police stations under the Arms Act and Explosive Substances Act. He is hiding at Ibrahimpur. His brother Ataur Rahman alias Azad, who was

accused in 19 cases including one for murder, was gunned down at the court premises on June 29, 1999.

Trimuti Subrata Bain, accused in 17 cases with the Ramna Police Station, left the country after the murder of 'Seven Star' gang leader Chanchal. Born a Christian, he adopted Islam after his first wife left him. He married a Muslim girl and changed his name to Fateh Ali. He formed a gang named 'Seven Star' with the help of Moallah Masud, Tikka, Joy, Chanchal and Babu.

Immamul Hossain alias Helal and Picchi Helal, accused in seven cases with Mohammadpur and Ramna police stations in connection with murder and other criminal activities, has also left the country. Before his departure he was staying at Asad Avenue in Mohammadpur.

Mohammad Alauddin, accused in 11 cases with the Tejgaon Police Station in connection with murder and other crimes, is staying at Tejgaon. He ran in the last DCC election for a post of ward commissioner.

Mohammad Hannan alias Pichhi Hannan, accused in 11 cases with the Tejgaon Police Station, is hiding at Joydevpur.

According to sources, Liakot Hossain and his brother Hannan, a former general secretary of Siddeswari College students' union, were both accused in a case with the Motijheel Police Station. They are now hiding in Keraniganj.

Aga Shamim, another most wanted criminal and booked in three cases with the Kotwali Police Station, has left the country for Sweden along with his family members.

Jafar Ahmed Manik, charged by Motijheel and Sabujbagh police stations on charges of murders and other criminal activities, has also left the country.

Sagar alias Amin Sagar and Tokai Sagar, an accused in seven cases with Cantonment, Kotwali and Ramna police stations under the Explosive Substances Act and other criminals activities, is now in

the USA.

Meanwhile, the Detective Branch of Police claimed to have arrested Khorsheed Alam alias Rasu from Dhanmondi Club in the city on May 28. Rasu, a gang leader dominating the Moghbazar-Siddheswari area, is accused in two cases with the Ramna Police Station.

The detectives also arrested Khandaker Naim Ahmed alias Titon from his rental house in the Cantonment area on June 12. Titon has been accused in five cases with Dhanmondi and Hazaribagh police stations in connection with murder and other criminal offences.

Kamal Pasha alias Pasha, with notoriety as a professional killer, was handed over to the Mohammadpur Police Station by his father on May 20.

Sony's death

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Report of the committee, headed by Vice Chancellor of the National University Prof Abdul Momin Chowdhury, is based on discussions and interviews with BUET authorities, students, police and others.

Thanking the committee for its work, the Prime Minister reiterated her assurance to nab those involved in the shootout

Sources in Prime Minister's Office said that the committee had tried to identify those responsible for the death of Sony and made certain recommendations to check recurrence of such incident.

The government will examine the report and take steps in line with the recommendations, the sources added.

Khaleda had earlier assured Sony's parents that those found guilty of killing their daughter would not be spared.

Others on the inquiry committee are Additional Secretary of the Education Ministry Mohammad Abdur Rashid Khan and Deputy Secretary Sheikh AK Motahar Hossain.

ROK float in fairyland

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Germany. That is a remarkable achievement for a nation that had failed to win a single World Cup match in five previous appearances at the finals.

For Spain, it was another miserable end to a World Cup campaign that had promised so much. Spain have never finished higher than fourth, back in 1950, and they have now lost in the quarter-finals on four occasions.

With their leading forward Raul absent because of a groin injury they looked toothless in attack, although they still created the better chances.

Pride of Asia
The South Korean fans packing the stands had been relatively subdued as the game neared its conclusion and the atmosphere was not quite as intense as in the side's previous victories over Portugal and Italy.

The supporters, who had created a huge mosaic at one end of the ground proclaiming the side to be "the pride of Asia", exploded into life, though, when Hong crashed his penalty into the roof of the net.

"These fans are fantastic, without any violence, so I am so happy for them," South Korea's Dutch coach Guus Hiddink. "More dreams have come true."

Hiddink, who had three separate coaching spells in Spain, consoled the Spanish players before celebrating his own side's victory.

Match officials were surrounded by furious Spanish players at the end of the game in scenes that threatened to turn ugly.

Egyptian referee Gamal Ghandour had also disallowed a Spanish goal in normal time for what

looked a marginal off-side decision.

The players spoke with grim resignation after the match, though, as they tried to come to terms with defeat.

"We knew the referee would be like that," said goalkeeper Iker Casillas. "It is just what we expected."

For both teams, it was the second time running that they had endured extra time, Spain beating Ireland on penalties and South Korea ousting Italy with a golden goal from Ahn Jung-hwan.

Casillas had been his side's hero against Ireland but he could do nothing, although he came within a whisker of saving the first South Korea spot-kick from Hwang Sun-hong.

"Last week I said that penalties are a lottery and today I just couldn't stop any of them," Casillas shrugged.

Casillas had been forced into just one real save in the match, when he beat away a snap shot from Park Ji-sung on 67 minutes.

Formidable barrier
A Morientes header gave Spain their first good chance on 27 minutes, goalkeeper Lee Woon-jae clutching the ball gratefully just under his crossbar.

South Korea were getting nowhere, as Ivan Helguera and Ruben Baraja created a formidable barrier in front of the defence and Spain gradually took control of the game.

With halftime approaching, Javi de Pedro flashed a left-foot shot just wide from 20 metres and in injury time Fernando Hierro rose highest in a crowded area to head over.

Spain thought they had taken the lead four minutes into the second

half. De Pedro's free kick cross went in after hitting the back of Kim Tae-young as a group of players went up for a header but the goal was disallowed, apparently for off-side.

With both teams tiring, the match went into extra time and only two minutes into it, Morientes thought he had sent Spain into the semi-finals.

Instead, the game went to penalties and the first seven were confidently converted before Joaquin's weak strike was saved by Lee Woon-jae diving to his left.

Victory for Hiddink's side over Germany would take them through to the Yokohama final on June 30. Brazil will play either Turkey or Senegal in the other semi-final. To get there they will almost certainly have to play better than they did on Saturday, although Hiddink was in no rush to get to work on his preparation.

"We'll have a little glass of champagne now and what comes tomorrow comes tomorrow," Hiddink said.

TEAMS

Spain: Casillas, Puyol, Nadal, Hierro, Romero, Joaquin, Helguera (Xavi 93), Baraja, De Pedro (Mendieta 70), Valeron (Luis Enrique 80), Morientes

Booked: De Pedro, Morientes

South Korea: Woon-Jae Lee, Jin-Cheul Choi, Hong, Tae-Young Kim (Hwang 90), Yoo (Chun-Soo Lee 60), Park, Yong-Pyo Lee, Song, Nam-II Kim (Eul-Young Lee 32), Seol, Ahn.

Booked: Yoo

Attendance: 42,114

Referee: G Ghandour (Egypt)

Blind to books

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The visually impaired people use the Braille system for reading and writing. Created by a 15-year-old blind French boy named Louis Braille. The basic Braille symbol is called the Braille cell and consists of six dots arranged in the formation of a rectangle, three dots high and two across. The dots are arranged to make up the alphabet, numbers and punctuation marks and used for tactile reading and writing.

In 1991, the Ministry of Social Welfare initiated a project titled Braille Press and Artificial Limb Centre (Bपाल). Part of this project was to print around 60,000 textbooks in Braille each year for the schools.

In 1995, the government purchased a computer for printing Braille texts but it had no Bangla software. It took another five years before the software was made available for printing Bangla textbooks.

The Tk 50 lakh machine set up on the first floor of the National Blind Training and Rehabilitation Centre in Tongi, Gazipur, was tested in 1995 but it did not start printing until late 2000.

"Our students studying from class I to VI virtually do not get any textbooks for their education from the government although a very limited number of textbooks recently printed on a 'trial basis' were supplied here," said one of the teachers.

"Due to this problem many students have given up attending schools," another teacher said, requesting anonymity. "From the very beginning of the establishment of the institution, we have not been supplied with textbooks and we have a very scanty attendance for this reason."

However, many institutions are getting their textbooks from a number of NGOs working with the visually impaired, although students complained of the supplies being irregular and often insufficient.

The schools are not given an adequate supply of paper for writing. "There is no provision for supplying paper to students. We have a limited supply of paper, which is used only for printing. The type of

paper they require is not ordinary. It is thick and expensive," explained an official of the Directorate of Social Welfare.

Contacted, Anil Kumar Roy, the project manager, claimed that all books except arithmetic books are being supplied to students up to class V.

"We supply all textbooks -- Bangla, English, Science and Sociology for students but we don't have the capacity to print arithmetic textbooks for technical reasons," he said.

Roy added "there are a lot of problems in the printing procedure, for instance, in Science books there are numerous tables, which cannot be printed, making these texts practically incomplete."

A concerned official in the Directorate of Social Welfare, Abu Taher, when contacted, claimed that the government has been supplying textbooks to blind students. "We have a smooth supply of textbooks for students up to class V but unfortunately the printing press is not yet ready to print textbooks for students from classes VI to VIII."

Tofail granted anticipatory bail in corruption case

UNB, Dhaka

Former Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed was yesterday granted anticipatory bail for 2 months or till the submission of charge sheet in a corruption case.

A division bench of the High Court comprising Justice MA Aziz and Justice Momtazuddin Ahmed granted the bail when Tofail appeared before the court with the bail petition. The petition was moved by Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmood on behalf of Tofail.

The Bureau of Anti-corruption, Bhola, in a case accused the former minister of misappropriation of public funds in collaboration with some officials.

Turks tame Lions

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El-Hadji Diouf said. "We knew we would have to stop one day or another but that does not make it any less of a shame."

"Tonight it might have gone either way but the luck was on Turkey's side tonight and we wish them well for the rest of the tournament."

Henri Camara had almost snatched victory for Senegal in the final moments of regulation time when his powerful low shot was well saved by Rustu Reber.

But the Africans were always chasing the game against their well-organised and more experienced opponents.

Turkey had the lion's share of the second half attacks, with the runs of Bayer Leverkusen midfielder Yildirim Basturk and Inter Milan's Emre Belozoglu stretching the Senegalese defence who were visibly flagging.

Basturk, one of the Turks' German-born players, rounded Papa Malick Diop but curled a shot wide and when he was later released on the right he overhit a cross which floated across the entire goalmouth.

Turkey could have had the game wrapped up by half-time if they had been more clinical in front of goal and it was their captain Hakan Sukur who was the biggest culprit.

The Parma striker, who was substituted with more than 20 minutes remaining, should have put Turkey ahead in the 27th minute after a breakaway move that finished with Hasan Sas squaring the ball to him just outside the six-yard box. Unmarked and with nothing more to do than sidefoot the ball into the net, Sukur allowed it to slip under his foot and away to safety.

Sukur spurned two more chances before Yildirim Basturk ran on to Sas's lob into the box and

headed past Senegal goalkeeper Tony Sylva. The ball trickled agonisingly close to the line before the lunging Omar Daf swept it clear.

Senegal had enjoyed a brief period of dominance early in the opening period and might have scored had Henri Camara not got in the way of Diouf's shot. Camara managed to turn and get a shot in but his effort was disallowed because he had been offside on the initial shot. Had he just let the ball go through his legs, the goal may well have stood and Africa's dream might have been realised.

TEAMS

Senegal: Sylva, Coly, Diatta, Cisse, Daf, Camara, Papa Bouba Diop, Pape Malick Diop, Dia, Fadiga, Diouf

Booked: Daf, Diouf

Turkey: Rustu, Korkmaz, Akyel, Alpay, Ergun, Davala, Basturk, Tugay, Emre (Erdem 91), Sukur (Mansiz 67), Sas

Booked: Emre, Mansiz

Attendance: 44,233

Referee: O Ruiz (Columbia)

Tareq

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station of the BNP chairperson's election office at Banani, they said.

In his reaction, Tareq said, "I tried to carry out, with all my dedication, any assignment the party gave me."

He said he would try his best to discharge the new responsibility thrust upon him.

"I am grateful to the party leaders and workers for their unstinted love, support and cooperation in carrying out the responsibilities the party had given me during the last election campaign, before and afterwards," he said.

He said he looked forward to working for the party with dedication and commitment.

Saifur faces resistance

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Dr Yunus mentioned that the trouble-ridden Chittagong port is harming the national economy. "Chittagong port is the nose which is tightening around our neck. It is going to kill us, if we cannot get ourselves out of it."

He suggested opening up the borders for neighbours on a reciprocal basis and building port facilities and road network, also keeping in view serving the neighbours -- eastern India, Nepal and Myanmar. "We can bring prosperity to ourselves faster only if we are willing to share it with our neighbours," he stressed.

Syeduzzaman said transparency, not participation of all, is more important in the process of preparing the national document for poverty reduction. He also stressed gradual reduction of about Tk 3500 crore annual losses of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and a strategy to invest those in a better way.

Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud reminded that the poverty reduction strategy must not fall in "donors' trap." He went on, "We should set our own target and not follow the donors' prototype model as that will not work."

About the poverty reduction strategy, Prof Mahmud asked all concerned to be farsighted. "Our problem is unique. Scarce land is our major problem due to scattered develop-

ment of housing and unplanned road network. Twenty years from now, there might not be any land, we will only see roads and houses. So, how best we can utilise our land should be planned from now."

He also said growth is not the only way to reduce poverty. "We should not focus only on income growth. Our major focus should be on social sector development," Prof Mahmud noted.

Doctor days

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day. He repeated some of his comments to the press the previous day, following his resignation.

In one of his remarks, the disheartened president said he treated a lot of patients all his life but unfortunately none of them stood beside him at the time of his 'grave distress', denoting political leaders and party colleagues. He said he accepted this as a part of life and will continue to dedicate the rest of his life for the care and treatment of patients both at home and abroad.

The former president intends to travel to a few countries and see patients there free of cost.

The telephone at his residence was fully restored yesterday after being inoperative the previous day.

Iran quake kills 500

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ince, Central province, the northern Gilan and Ardebil provinces and the western Zanjan and Kor