

Tigers' first warm-up today



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh launch their second World Cup campaign with a limited-overs practice match against Kwa Zulu Natal today.

The first of the two lead-up matches will be held in Ladysmith.

Khaled Mashud's men reached South Africa on January 31 after attending a two-week conditioning camp in Namibia, where the visitors won an unofficial five-match limited-overs series 4-1.

But the practice match against the South African provincial team will be a tough test for Bangladesh ahead of their opening World Cup preliminary match against Canada on February 11.

Bangladesh set off for South Africa with two targets to achieve.

Firstly, to end a 26-match losing streak and also improve on their maiden World Cup performance in England four years ago.

The rank-outsiders won two matches in England including a memorable 62-run victory against eventual finalists Pakistan.

Bangladesh have been pencilled in Pool B along with Canada, West Indies, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, Kenya and South Africa in the biggest cricket competition.

While in Namibia, Bangladesh's sorry batting finally clicked in their last one-day game where opener Al-Shahriar struck a magnificent 177 off 145 balls.

They will play their second practice match against the same selection at Kingsmead on February 5.

Most bottled water unsafe, say finds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most of the bottled drinking water in the market is unsafe, as they do not conform to the international safe drinking water protocol.

The level of inorganic elements declared in the label of some bottles exceeded the recommended level for human consumption. For instance, sodium was found in excess, which may lead to high blood pressure.

More than half the bottles carried information about minerals and others constituents which were not well founded.

A two-year research on quality of commercially available bottled water revealed.

The researchers, however, did not disclose the brand names of the bottled water, certified mostly by the Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institute (BSTI), the official authority to certify safety of the products.

They made public the finds at a seminar in the city yesterday titled, "Study on the quality of commercially available bottled water in Bangladesh". The Bangladesh Academy of Sciences organised the seminar.

Plasma Plus, an application research laboratory, carried out the water sample analysis on 58 brands of drinking water bottles including four imported brands labelled as mineral water.

K M Mostafa Anwar and Mala Khan of Plasma Plus who carried out the research presented the findings at the auditorium of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC).

They found the source of water bottled for marketing was mostly ground water while one of the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina waves to the crowd after she got bail in a MiG-29 graft case from the Special Court for Dhaka Division yesterday.

PM to talk manpower issue in Malaysia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia assured manpower recruiters that she would raise the issue of resuming manpower export to Malaysia during her upcoming visit to that country.

The assurance came when leaders of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agents (BAIRA) called on her at her office yesterday.

She also asked recruiting agents to send people abroad at minimum cost and to bring discipline in the sector.

The prime minister is scheduled to go to Kuala Lumpur on February 24 to attend the Non Alignment Movement Summit.

Manpower export to Malaysia remained suspended since 1997.

State Minister for Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Mohammad Quamrul Islam was also present during the two-hour meeting with the BAIRA leaders, who included its president M A H Salim MP and 27 executive committee members.

The BAIRA leaders requested the PM to withdraw the recent government decision requiring Tk one crore deposit by recruiters for manpower export to Saudi Arabia.

Meeting sources said the BAIRA

leaders termed the decision 'illogical' and said it will neither bring discipline in manpower export nor reduce the cost.

The PM asked the state minister to resolve the issue through discussion with BAIRA leaders.

UNB adds: The Malaysian government has recently renewed work permits of some 120,000 Bangladeshi workers following the prime minister's initiative, Quamrul Islam said.

The prime minister asked the delegation to set up training centres for overseas job-seekers so that they have better knowledge of their trade as well as the laws and culture of their host countries.

"Good reputation and trade skills will pave the way for increased manpower export and wages," she observed.

In this context, she said that despite high demand, nurses couldn't be sent abroad due to lack of the required skill, and requested recruiters to arrange for nurses' training.

She also mentioned that poor people, some of whom have to sell all their properties to pay for travel and other costs, often fall prey to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Hasina gets bail in MiG-29 case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former prime minister and Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina was granted bail in a graft case yesterday.

The Special Court for Dhaka Division granted her bail in the case concerning purchase of eight MiG-29s for the Bangladesh Air Force during her rule (1996-2001).

Judge M Azizul Huq heard both the prosecution and the defence and granted bail upon a Tk one lakh bond with two guarantors. He also exempted Hasina from appearing before the court in person during the next hearings, except on the day of charge-framing.

The next date for hearing of the case is March 13.

Six other co-accused in the case also got bail. They are former army chief General (Retd) Mustafizur Rahman, former air force chief Air Vice Marshal (Rtd) Jamaluddin Ahmed, former defence secretary Syed Yusuf Hossain, Air Commodore (Retd) Mirza Akhtar Maruf, former

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Shahriar, Mamun fear further arrest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Writer Shahriar Kabir and Professor Muntasir Mamun fear further arrest.

Detectives have been shadowing them since their release last month, both told The Daily Star yesterday.

A police official confirmed that the detectives were directed to watch Muntasir and Shahriar. "If they tarnish the image of the country by any means, they will be arrested again," the official added. Shahriar was arrested twice without any specific charge.

"The Comilla district administration has recently instructed organisers of a reception not to allow me to

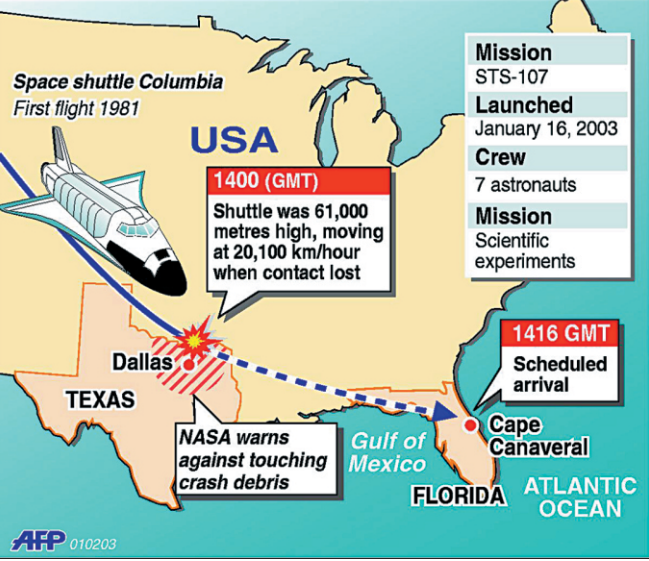
SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Feb 3		5-46 pm
Feb 4	6-38 am	

Prayer Timings		
Feb 3		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-45	6-15
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-52	5-57
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Space shuttle Columbia lost on re-entry



Japanese astronaut believes Iced debris may have led to shuttle disaster

AFP, Tokyo

Debris that struck the left wing of Columbia during take-off may have been heavily iced and led to the shuttle's disastrous breakup, Japan's pioneer astronaut said yesterday.

"Even if it's just a heat insulator, heavy ice sticks to it," said Mamoru Mori, 55, the first Japanese astronaut to fly on a NASA shuttle, the Endeavor in 1992.

"If that iced fragment fell in the vibration of lift-off, there is about a 50 meter drop to the left wing, so the shock would be very big," he told a news conference at the National Space Development Agency of Japan (NASDA).

Ice would be formed because hydrogen fuel is stored at temperatures around minus 250 Celsius in the tanks from which the debris apparently fell, Mori said.

NASA shuttle program director Ron Dittmore told a news conference on Saturday in Houston, Texas, that debris that struck the left wing of Columbia during take-off may have played a role in the accident that killed all seven astronauts aboard.

"We can't discount that there might be a connection," he said. "But we have to caution you and ourselves that we can't rush to judgment on it because there are a lot of things in this business that look like the smoking gun but turn out not even to be close."

Mori, who also flew on the Endeavor in 2000, suggested the debris may have damaged protective heat tiles and led to the failure of multiple sensors on the left wing as the shuttle was engulfed in flame.

"In the simulator, there are quite often cases where the craft burns up or drops into the Pacific Ocean," he said. "It seems as if it became a reality."

Meanwhile, mission specialist Soichi Noguchi, 37, who was to have been aboard Atlantis in a March launch to become the fifth Japanese astronaut, said through NASDA that he felt great pain at the loss of Columbia and its crew.

"When I first heard the news I couldn't believe it," he said, according to NASDA. "My heart really aches."

'Lobby hard to protect farmers' rights'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and other developing countries should lobby hard to protect its farmers against certain WTO provisions.

Speakers at a regional workshop here yesterday said this on the concluding day of a two-day workshop on 'Protecting Farmers' Rights: Policy and Option'.

They also suggested formation of a committee comprising ministries concerned, scientists, Bio-diversity experts and NGOs to evolve an integrated approach to face the issues.

SAARC countries should take a common stand and strategy in this regard, they noted.

Munjurul H Khan and Farhad

Mazhar of Bangladesh, Dr Wajid H Pirzada of Pakistan, Suman Sahai of India and Ratnakar Adhikari of Nepal presented papers at the workshop.

It was organised by Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) in collaboration with South Asian Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), Environment Ministry, UNDP and Ford Foundation.

Manzarul H Khan in his paper suggested that Bangladesh should frame laws to protect knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities for sustainable use of bio-diversity.

Any proposal to strengthen Intellectuals Property Rights obliga

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

BAC files case against Kejriwal

BSS, Dhaka

The Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC) yesterday filed a case against Marwari businessman Ashok Kejriwal for failing to repatriate export earnings of Tk 44.55 crore to the country.

National Bank Limited has been named in the case to have facilitated the fraud, said an official release of the BAC.

The BAC filed the case with the Metropolitan Session Judges Court

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Iqbal gets ad-interim bail

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday granted ad interim bail to Awami League leader Dr HBM Iqbal in a case of illegal possession of foreign liquors.

The Court also issued rule upon the government to show cause why the case against Iqbal should not be quashed and stayed proceedings of the case filed with Gulshan police on October 30, 2002.

The orders came upon a petition filed by Iqbal who was shown

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2