

Blair blasts unruly English fans

AFP, London

British Prime Minister Tony Blair condemned yesterday violence involving England football fans at the Euro 2004 championships, saying that such hooligans brought "shame" on the nation.

"It's just worth pointing out that those, whether here or indeed in Portugal, who have engaged in disorder, they are a tiny minority of people," he said in response to a question in parliament.

"I don't believe they are true English football fans at all," Blair said. "They bring shame upon our country and shame upon the vast majority of decent English football fans who simply want to enjoy the game."

Portuguese police arrested 33 British nationals in the southern Algarve holiday region late Tuesday and early Wednesday

following a second night of foot-ball-related violence.

The disorder took place in the resort town of Albufeira, which is being used as a base by many fans from various nations competing in Euro 2004.

There had been no trouble from England supporters after the team's first game, an agonising 2-1 loss to France on Sunday which saw the French score two last-gasp goals.

However this defeat did prompt outbreaks of violence in a series of British towns, which Blair also slammed.

"Let me make it absolutely clear, these are completely intolerable, and the police should come down very heavily...and make sure that those who engage in this disorder face heavy penalties," he said.

Sellers ask govt

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sciences as reference and textbooks and compel the importers to pay taxes, making import more expensive.

The absence of a list of text and reference books according to syllabus of different government and private universities, technical institutes and other educational institutions is also making it difficult for the pre-shipment inspection agencies to identify which are textbooks and which are not, he pointed out.

"That's why they make mistakes in identifying tax-free or tax-imposed books."

M Nazmul Karim, another BBPS leader, said because of the import tax imposed by the government in 2002, import of books made a 50 percent fall in the last one year. The PSI system is the main obstacle to importing books, he added.

Traffic tails

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in various city points to uncover manholes for clearing the waterlogged areas.

Sources said rainwater was cleared within one and half hours but traffic backlog continued to turn worse as more vehicles flowed in on streets after the shower stopped.

The Met office said 47mm of rain was recorded in Barisal, 30mm in Khulna, 28mm in Maizdee Court, 19mm in Sathkira and 20mm in Chuadanga yesterday.

Heavy rainfall is likely in the capital today (Thursday), it forecast.

Saifur

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In the question time, Saifur explained different initiatives proposed in the budget and future steps relating to child rights.

"In the near future, secondary students will get free books like the primary students," he declared.

On a question why a teacher of social science teaches grammar, the minister said, "I also ask the same question to the education minister."

He, however, said apart from recruiting teachers the government was also giving them training.

The 'Child Parliament' members informed the finance minister about the education for brothal children, health services, entertainment purposes, non-implementation of child budget and the poor state of schools.

President of Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee Shahriar Kabir, said,

"Bangladesh lost the opportunity to get the post of OIC secretary general because the government nominated an anti-liberation war person, which also tarnished the image of the country." He congratulated the OIC-member countries for not electing him.

The city AL and Bangladesh Chhatra League said nomination of Chowdhury damaged Bangladesh's image abroad.

Living in death traps

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logical structure built in the Mughal era. The structure is in ruins and so vulnerable that it may collapse any time.

"Out of our 450 students, at least 150 are living in the Bara Katra building," said Abrarul Haq, 12, a student of Jamia Hossainia Ashraful Ulum Madrasa.

Some grabbers on the other hand are using Chhoto Katra, another archaeological building of the same age as Bara Katra, for commercial purposes.

Both the Katras were built between 1644 and 1663. But, instead of the archaeological department taking them under its protection, the historical buildings are still being used for residential and business purposes.

Some other archaeological sites, including Ruplal House, Nawabbari Gate, Ahsan Manjil and Nilkuthi, have also fallen into so bad a condition that they are also feared to be broken down anytime. But the department of archaeology fails to maintain them for lack of funds, officials concerned said.

Neither Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripaksha (Rajuk) nor Dhaka

City Corporation (DCC) has been paying adequate attention to the urban areas of Old Dhaka, the establishment of which dates back to the 16th century. These two agencies even do not have any proper list of the ruined and high-risk buildings in the city. Now they are only trying to shift the blame for the Wednesday's catastrophe on each other.

"As far as I know, Rajuk doesn't have any specific plan about the old buildings of the city," said a top Rajuk official, who did not want to be named, as he said, "It has become a very sensitive issue."

Rajuk has a list of only 120 unplanned buildings across the city, but no list of risky buildings. On the other hand, according to the Planning and Design section of the DCC, the number of risky buildings is 81 in its Zone-2 covering the old parts of the city.

But officials of both Rajuk and DCC admitted to The Daily Star that the number of risky buildings would be no less than 1,000.

Recently a private firm out a survey of the aged buildings in the old city. The survey marked more than 500 buildings as vulnerable.

Play due role

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parliamentary standing committee on fisheries and livestock ministry, Sahidul Islam, chairman of the standing committee on power and energy ministry, Nurul Islam Moni, chairman of the standing committee on science and ICT ministry, MA Matin, chairman of the standing committee on water resources ministry and Musharraf Hossain, chairman of the standing committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts affairs ministry.

The committee chairmen expressed their gratitude to the prime minister for creating an atmosphere where the standing committees were working independently as per the rules of procedure.

Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury, who was present at the meeting, later told reporters that the meeting was part of a routine programme of interaction between the Leader of the House and the standing committee chairmen.

Fifteen other chairmen of the standing committees earlier met the prime minister in three phases and the remaining 35 will meet her gradually, Chowdhury added.

The prime minister hoped that the parliamentary standing committee would work effectively to fulfil the aspirations of the common people and ensure overall development of the country.

The Leader of the House asked the chairmen to play a more dynamic role and create an atmosphere for proper and timely use of the allocations made in the new national budget against the ministries.

During the meeting, the standing committee chairmen said the progress of activities of different ministries were satisfactory and positive.

Also yesterday, saboteurs blasted a key southern pipeline for the second time in as many days, shutting down Iraq's oil exports, and gunmen killed a security chief for the state-run Northern Oil Co.

The latest attacks at Iraq's oil

Two GIs killed in attack on Iraq base

June 30.

Elsewhere, radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr ordered members of his militia to leave the holy cities of Najaf and Kufa unless they live there, fulfilling a key aspect of an agreement meant to end fighting between his forces and U.S. troops.

Exports were halted last month through the other export avenue, the northern pipeline from Kirkuk to Ceyhan, Turkey after a May 25 bombing. Turkish officials said on condition of anonymity.

Two explosions on the southern pipeline occurred in the same area as a blast Tuesday. It could take up to two weeks to repair, Jassim said.

In another assault on the country's petroleum industry, Northern Oil Co. security chief Ghazi Talabani was killed in an ambush while going to work in the city of Kirkuk, said Gen. Anwar Amin of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps. Three gunmen attacked Talabani's car after his bodyguard briefly left the vehicle in a crowded market. The bodyguard was wounded.

Talabani, the third Iraqi official to be killed since Saturday, was the cousin of the head of one of the two main Kurdish political parties, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Saboteurs also blasted a northern oil pipeline about midnight Tuesday near the town of Dibis, some 20 miles west of Kirkuk, said Northern Oil official Mustafa Awad. The Dibis attack did not disrupt exports and the fire was extinguished, Iraqi oil officials said Wednesday.

How they see

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getting the post of its secretary-general this time. But the nomination of Salauddin Quader Chowdhury led to loss of the opportunity and that it was nothing unexpected, she noted.

Former ambassador Faruk Chowdhury told BBC last night Bangladesh's candidate was to become secretary-general of the OIC this time but an appropriate candidate with diplomatic experience was not nominated.

"He (the candidate) was considered unacceptable because he had several accusations against him," Chowdhury added.

Former assistant secretary general of the OIC from Bangladesh Arshaduzzaman told BBC Bangladesh faced international criticism for repeatedly selecting inappropriate candidates for the post of OIC secretary general.

"The candidate this time lacked experience and was not known internationally," said Arshaduzzaman. The previous political candidates had some experience in the international arena but this time the nominee is just a member of parliament and an adviser to the prime minister, he mentioned.

But former ambassador Mufleh R. Osamany told BSS "Unfortunately, our candidate this time faced campaigns against him by some Bangladeshi. This might have damaged our prospect at the last moment."

President of the Communist Party of Bangladesh Manzurul Ahsan Khan said, "It is not a defeat for Bangladesh, it is a defeat for

the world's anti-globalisation forces."

Hasina and other senior law-makers of her party said by nominating Salauddin, Dhaka lost its image on the world stage as its name wedged a rift in Muslim fraternity.

The leader of the opposition congratulated Turkey's candidate Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu on his election to the high office and hoped that he would reshape the OIC to face the present world challenges.

President of Ekatturer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee Shahriar Kabir, said,

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AL walks out of JS

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Bangladesh would have won the contest. Was there not a single candidate in Bangladesh to run for the office?"

Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar expunged all 'indecent words' used in the half-an-hour debate.

The high-tempered debate opened when AL lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta attacked the four-party coalition for the defeat, standing on a point of order.

The veteran parliamentarian demanded a general discussion on Bangladesh's foreign policy.

Mosharraf in his speech saw AL's hand in Salauddin's defeat.

Referring to the leader of the opposition's speech, he protested her 'indecent remarks' against a lawmaker in the House and demanded expunction of all unparliamentary words used in the unscheduled debate.

Jackson did not admit misconduct but said at that time that he was settling the case because of its potential to harm his career, according to documents obtained Tuesday by Court TV. The station shared copies with The Associated Press.

The 1994 settlement has been widely reported but this was the first time documents were available showing the specific figure.

The documents specified that \$15.3 million was to be held in trust by the boy's attorney. The boy, his family and Jackson agreed to keep the settlement confidential, according to the document.

The attorney representing the boy, Larry Feldman, did not return calls seeking comment.

Jackson's spokeswoman, Raymond K. Bain, said she could not say the documents were authentic but added:

"Whoever leaked this document did it with a willful intent to influence potential jurors" in Jackson's current criminal case. "It's outrageous, and I see it as an act of desperation," she said.

Hasina in her speech brushed aside Obaidur's remarks, saying Dhaka did not field a candidate in an understanding with Morocco.

Rabat promised to back Bangladesh in the next election, she said, adding: "Dhaka had every possibility to win the post as my government got assurances of support from most member countries."

"How will the Bangladesh candidate win the secretary general's post of the OIC against a counter-campaign at home?" he asked.

Hasina in her speech brushed aside Obaidur's remarks, saying Dhaka did not field a candidate in an understanding with Morocco.

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Bangladesh in the next election, she said, adding: "Dhaka had every possibility to win the post as my government got assurances of support from most member countries."

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