

Italy face press fury



The Italian press directed its fury at its national team yesterday after the Azzurri crashed out of Euro 2004 while Sweden and Denmark qualified.

"The millionaires go home," said the Il Messaggero daily after Italy beat Bulgaria 2-1 on Tuesday but were eliminated after Denmark and Sweden drew 2-2 to finish first and second in Group C and move into the quarter-finals.

Il Messaggero was in no doubt that this result was a "nordic arrangement" and Italian TV was buzzing with conspiracy theories yesterday.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

TODAY'S MATCHES

Portugal vs England
Quarterfinal
Live on STAR Sports at 12:40 am (Friday)

Qaeda threat to Iraq PM

AGENCIES, Baghdad

Islamist militants vowed yesterday to assassinate Iraq's interim prime minister, just hours after they said they had beheaded a South Korean hostage in the violent run-up to a U.S. handover to Iraqi rule.

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian accused by U.S. officials of organising many deadly attacks in Iraq, made the threat against Prime Minister Iyad Allawi on an Islamist website.

"As for you, Allawi -- sorry, the democratically elected prime minister -- we have found for you a useful poison and a sure sword," said a taped voice, purported to be Zarqawi's own.

Allawi, a tough former Baathist who plotted against Saddam Hussein from exile, responded defiantly.

"We do not care about these threats, we will continue to rebuild Iraq and work for freedom, democracy, justice and peace. Iraqis have faced these threats before," said a spokesman from his office.

The interim government, selected by a U.N. envoy in consultation with U.S. and Iraqi officials, will be sworn in when the U.S.-led occupation formally ends in a week's time.

Zarqawi's group, Jama'at al-Tawhid and Jihad, said on Tuesday it had decapitated South Korean hostage Kim Sun-il after Seoul refused to withdraw forces from Iraq.

Hours after finding Kim's body, U.S. forces launched an air strike on a suspected safe house of Zarqawi's group in Falluja, west of Baghdad, the second such raid in four days. Residents said the attack destroyed a garage and killed four people.

Arabic Al Jazeera television showed footage on Tuesday of hooded gunmen standing over a kneeling Kim, who was blindfolded and wearing an orange tunic similar to those worn by prisoners in U.S.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



PHOTO: STAR

Participants sit a mathematics examination on the first day of a two-day National Mathematics Festival at Notre Dame College yesterday. Bangladesh Math Olympiad Committee is staging the festival in collaboration with the Dutch Bangla Bank and the Prothom Alo.

National Maths Festival opens

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two-day National Mathematics Festival at student level began yesterday at Notre Dame College in Dhaka with a festive mood.

As many as 411 participants, who have won at divisional and regional levels, are taking part in the final maths Olympiad competition divided into four categories.

Besides, teachers' workshop, SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

41 dengue patients hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 41 people suffering from dengue fever were admitted to different city hospitals in the last 24 hours until yesterday evening.

Doctors said most of the dengue cases are normal dengue fever but many of the suspected cases are yet to be confirmed.

They also said some of the cases have symptoms of dengue SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Bikalpa Dhara to go to court if army deployment refused

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh will seek court order if the government refuses to deploy army at all polling centres by June 26 to make the July 1 by-elections in Dhaka-10 constituency free and fair, party leader and newly elected lawmaker Mahi B Chowdhury said yesterday.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Prayer Timing

June 24

| | Azan | Jamaat |
|---------|-------|--------|
| Fajr | 4-05 | 4-40 |
| Zohr | 12-45 | 1-15 |
| Asr | 5-00 | 5-15 |
| Maghrib | 6-52 | 6-55 |
| Esha | 8-17 | 8-45 |

Source: Islamic Foundation

Police, Rab to get Tk 93cr firearms Saifur sick of seeing cops getting killed by criminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Cabinet Purchase Committee yesterday approved a Tk 93 crore proposal to purchase modern firearms for police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab).

The committee at a meeting with Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman in the chair asked police and Rab to improve their performance reflecting a marked improvement in law and order situation.

"I am ready to give you whatever money is needed for law and order improvement. But I am not ready to accept policemen getting killed while trying to catch criminals," a

meeting source quoted Saifur as saying in a reference to the death of two policemen during Saturday's shootout with criminals in Motijheel.

The committee members felt that it was a shame that well-trained law-enforcers are killed by criminals who are not trained.

"Police personnel should be given more training for more efficient handling of crime so that they don't die trying to capture criminals," a source said quoting Saifur.

State Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar told the meet-

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

11 JCD men accused of Patuatuli cop attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police accused 11 members of BNP's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and 15 to 20 others for Tuesday's assault on a police constable following a clash between Jagannath University College students and businessmen at Patuatuli.

Constable Abdul Kader, who was critically injured in head hit by a concrete slab thrown from inside the college, has been operated on at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital. Physicians said his condition could be known for sure after 72 hours.

The 11 JCD cadres named in the first information report (FIR) filed by Sub-Inspector Ramzan Hossain of Kotwali Police Station are Babu, Kala Masud, Masud, Mamun, Selim,

SEE PAGE 14 COL 8

The trusted turns kidnapper

2 Uttara children abducted by the boy their mother sheltered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Trust perhaps will never come easy for Salma Begum, the mother of abducted Sabbir and Sajib, as the boy whom she provided food and shelter kidnapped her sons on Monday to extract Tk 10 lakh in ransom.

"Who do I trust now? I gave him (Moktar, the mastermind) food when he was starving and shelter when he had no place to go and in return, he kidnapped my children and is now asking for Tk 10 lakh ransom!"

"My babies cannot stay away long without me and I haven't seen them for three days. I don't know where they are now, what they are eating or whether the kidnappers

gave them any food," the bed-ridden mother told The Daily Star yesterday, failing to hold back tears. The worrying mother has also fainted several times.

Kidnappers picked up Sabbir, 9, and Sajib, 7, when they came out of their school, Baikalik Cadet Academy at Moimartek in Uttara Monday afternoon. They phoned the family later to demand the ransom.

Locals said two youths aged about 22 went there in a white microbus and roamed in front of the school, parking the vehicle near a drug store.

"From the description of the witnesses, I am sure Moktar was one of the kidnappers," said Babul

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

Plan on for uniform grading for state, pvt universities: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has said the government is actively considering introduction of a uniform grading system for both public and private universities.

"The government has taken a number of measures to improve the standard of education in the country's public and private universities," she said responding to a question from SA Sultan MP of Chandpur in parliament yesterday.

She said an accreditation council has been formed to regularly monitor the standard of education in the universities.

The prime minister informed the House that the University Grants Commission (UGC) had

formulated uniform rules of the recruitment of teachers, officers and staff for the public universities.

She said a uniform financial rules and accounts manual has been prepared by the UGC for ensuring transparency in financial rules and policies.

The UGC, in coordination with the vice-chancellors of the private universities, is also preparing a broad guideline that will act as the base for formulating statutes of the respective private universities, she said.

The National Education Commission 2003, formed to recommend guidelines for the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5