

Beckham acts brave



REUTERS, London

England captain David Beckham still believes he can inspire his country to a major title and has no intention of resigning.

The day after England's agonising 6-5 penalty shootout defeat by Portugal in their Euro 2004 quarter-final, Beckham was clearly angry that his leadership was being questioned.

"Do you think I can inspire the team like I could in the past? What

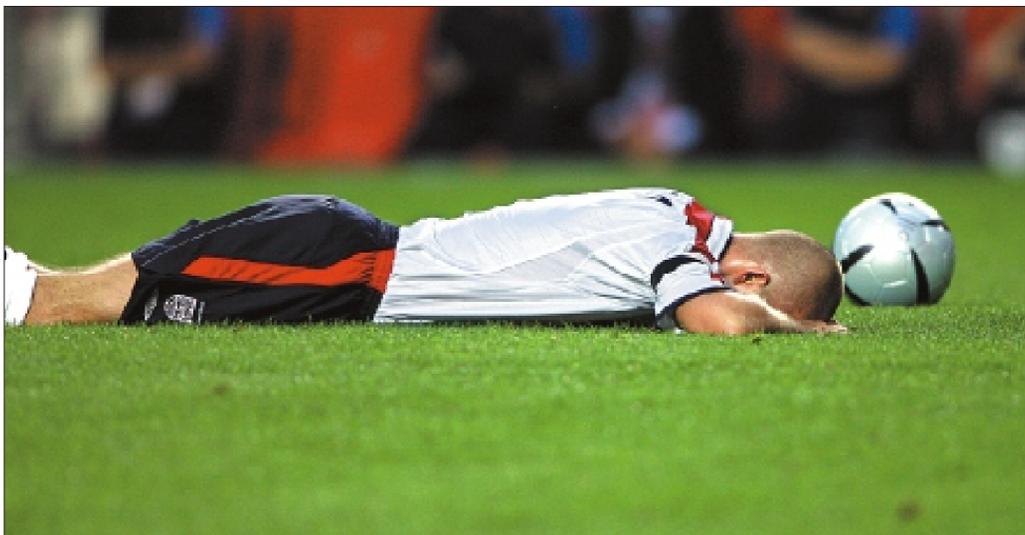


PHOTO: AFP

CAPTION NOT REQUIRED! ....An absolutely distraught England captain David Beckham drops to the ground after missing the first penalty in the tie-breaker against Portugal in their quarterfinal match at the Estadio da Luz in Lisbon on June 24.

**TODAY'S MATCHES**

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|--|
| NETHERLANDS vs SWEDEN                    |
| Quarterfinal                             |
| Live on Star Sports at 12:40 am (Sunday) |

Crime jitters Ctg businessmen

Chamber to have monitoring cell

NURUL ALAM, Ctg

Frequent attacks on business houses, increase in abduction and mugging and a general slide in law and order in the port city triggered concern among the business community and general public.

"We've launched an anti-crime campaign and held rallies at different business points in the wake of criminal activity to create awareness among businesspersons," said President of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) Amir Humayun Mahmud Chowdhury.

"We have also decided to set up a special cell at the Chittagong chamber to monitor attack on any businessperson and help the

affected ones," the CCCI president said, adding, "We'll take some other move if the situation remains unchanged."

Mahfuzul Huq Shah, director of the CCCI and coordinator of the chamber's law and order affairs, said, "At least five business houses on an average come under criminal attack a day in the port city."

"Besides, businesspersons often face threats from extortionists for toll and hardly call the police if they are under attack," he added.

Acting commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Amjad Hossain told The Daily Star that they have already beefed up security in the city against the backdrop of a slide in

law and order.

"We've arranged a review meeting and alerted officials of the 12 police stations to take special measures to cut crime," he added.

Attack on business house Tradecom at Momin Road on June 24 came as latest in a string of attacks on the business community here.

On June 17, armed muggers took away Tk 2 lakh from officials of pharmaceutical company Orient Lab at the WASA crossing, while an office of ACI, another pharmaceutical house, in Mehdiabagh was robbed of Tk 7 lakh on June 13.

Criminals attacked a showroom of Rangs Ltd. in Bandartila and

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COP MURDERS

Court sends held sisters to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A court yesterday sent the two sisters held in connection with Sunday's killings of two cops to Dhaka Central Jail on completion of their three-day remand.

Motijheel police produced Shima, wife of Idul, a suspect of the murders, and her sister Nasima to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate but did not seek further remand. The sisters were arrested from Dhaka Medical College Hospital premises Sunday.

"We may pray for further remand tomorrow (Saturday) as we haven't got any substantial information from them," said Inspector of Detective Branch (DB) of Police Nurul Amin, who is investigating the case.

Police showed 14 among the 21 people picked up early Thursday from Dhaka University campus arrested under section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code and pro

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Seed crisis looms in next boro season

Cash-starved BADC fails to pursue seed-growing activities

REAZ AHMAD

A seed crisis in the next boro season looms as the cash-strapped Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) is failing to pay several hundred farmers and farm workers their dues and pursue new seed-growing activities.

Officials said the state-run seed marketer's outstanding dues to farmers hit about Tk 24 crore.

Without paying the dues to contract growers who produce seeds for the BADC, the corporation is now failing to strike fresh deals with them for supplying 15,500 tonnes of rice seeds for the next boro season.

The contract growers, who supplied 15,000 tonnes of wheat seeds in last winter, have so far received only Tk 3 crore of Tk 17.70 crore in outstanding bills.

The growers who supplied 9,200 tonnes of potato seeds to BADC four months ago, are yet to get any money. Their outstanding bills stand at Tk 7.63 crore.

The BADC and agriculture ministry officials said workers of over a dozen BADC farms did not get their wages for the last two months that amount to Tk 2 crore.

On back of the unpaid bills and wages, the BADC urgently needs at least Tk 19 crore more to place orders for 15,500 tonnes of boro seeds.

Officials fear unless the required fund is given to the semi-autonomous corporation, it will neither be able to pay the farmers' dues nor be able to market boro seeds in the next season in time, triggering a quality seed crisis in the market.

Fund crisis hobbles the vital BADC activities at a time when Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman has proposed to double farm subsidy to Tk 600 crore in the fiscal 2004-05 and the agriculture ministry plans to raise its seed supplying capacity to 10 percent from five percent.

Although the BADC supplies only 5 percent of cereal seeds, it is

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Hasina, Goh Chok talk investment

UNB, Dhaka

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday called on Singaporean Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and discussed bilateral issues including more Singaporean investment in Bangladesh.

During the 45-minute long meeting at Sonargaon Hotel, the former prime minister also raised the point of recruiting skilled Bangladeshi manpower by Singapore and sought his cooperation in this regard.

Hasina's Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury told reporters that Singapore considers Bangladesh as a moderate Muslim country and has been watching different developments here.

"During the discussion, huge arms and ammunition haul in Chittagong in April this year also came up," Sabers said.

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil MP, Zillur Rahman MP, Kazi Jafarullah MP and Syed Abul Hossain MP were present.

Meanwhile, Goh Chok Tong left Dhaka for Sri Lanka yesterday end

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BEXIMCO CLASSIFIED LOAN

IFIC hard pressed to reschedule over Tk 100cr

M SHAMSUR RAHMAN

2004.

The International Finance Investment and Commerce Bank (IFIC) board is under pressure to approve an out-of-the-way proposal to reschedule a huge amount of classified loan of Beximco Holdings Ltd.

The proposal is likely to be tabled at the next IFIC board meeting on June 28 Monday, though a legal notice has already been served on the holding company to realise a Tk 136.43-crore default loan as on June 7 last.

Beximco Holdings is seeking a 50-percent interest waiver on its default loans and merger of the balance interest and the principal loan amount into a non-interest-bearing account to be paid back over a period of 15 years from April

The Beximco Group is also asking the IFIC Bank to renew the letter of credit (L/C) limits of its two sister concerns -- Beximco Apparels and Beximco Knitting -- which the bank refused earlier after Beximco Holdings had defaulted in repaying loans.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Beximco Group Vice-Chairman Salman F Rahman said Beximco is seeking what was allowed in case of other companies some five to six months ago.

Salman said, in one instance, a particular borrower, who was also a sitting director of the bank, received a total waiver of some Tk 160-crore loan. "So, we are not asking for something unprecedented or out-

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Monica feels betrayed by Clinton memoir

REUTERS, London

Monica Lewinsky says she feels betrayed by Bill Clinton's failure to acknowledge how he destroyed her life in his newly released memoirs.

In an interview with British broadcaster ITV, scheduled to be shown yesterday, the former White

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Another Kushtia student abducted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Criminals abducted an HSC student after committing robbery at their house in Chakdaulatpur village in Daulatpur upazila Thursday night and demanded a ransom of Tk 5 lakh.

As many as 10 criminals stormed into businessperson Abdul Khaleq's house at around 11:00 and confined the family members at gunpoint.

The criminals looted Tk 20,000, ornaments said to be worth Tk 40,000 and picked up Khaleq's son Saifur Rahman Tutul, 18, candidate for the HSC examinations this year.

The abductors allegedly belonging to an outlawed party earlier threatened Khaleq with dire consequences as he refused to pay them Tk 2 lakh as toll, family sources said.

The family did not go to police as the criminals threatened to kill Tutul if a case was filed.

At least 79 people including 30 students were abducted in the last five months in the district. Of them, nine were killed, police rescued six, eight are still missing and the rest bought their freedom.

Some organised outfits of criminals and outlaws are reportedly carrying out abduction, sources said.



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina shares a light moment with Singaporean Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong yesterday when she called on the premier at Sonargaon Hotel.

Guardians slate high tuition by BIT

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The guardians of Bangladesh International Tutorial (BIT) students have urged the government to formulate an effective guideline for the country's English medium schools, lambasting the BIT for profiteering and low standard of education.

The BIT Students' Guardians' Forum at a press conference at Dhaka Reporter's Unity Thursday alleged, in the last six years, BIT has hiked its tuition and other fees impossibly up and beyond the guardians' means.

For instance, convener of the forum, Rina Rahman, said the annual tuition fee for Class iv to Class viii which was Tk 6,000 in 1998 has been progressively raised to Tk 15,000 in 2003 and Tk 18,000 in 2004. Tuition fees for Playgroup to Class iii

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60 injured in AL-BNP clash over use of football field

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

At least 60 persons were injured, two critically, in a clash between Awami League (AL) and BNP adherents over use of a playground at Dudhssar village under Saikupa upazila in Jhenidah district Thursday.

According to police, the clash ensued at noon when a group of AL followers went to the field to play football but was resisted by BNP men.

Sources said local BNP leader and incumbent chairman of Dudhssar union parishad (UP) Fazlur Rahman refused to let the AL adherents play in the field, which he claimed to own, though locals said it

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Pakistan PM may be changed by July 3

PTI, Islamabad

Pakistan Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali is likely to be replaced before July 3, the day when President Pervez Musharraf embarks on a tour of Scandinavian nations, according to a media report in Islamabad.

"Efforts are afoot to complete the whole process, including the exit of the incumbent Prime Minister, installation of the new man and a vote of confidence for him from the National Assembly before the President leaves for abroad," local daily The News reported on Friday.

Some even aggressively argued on the basis of credible informa-

tion that Jamali would not remain in office by the end of the current month, it said.

The man, who has been widely speculated to replace Jamali, Humayun Akhtar, the incumbent Commerce Minister, was tight-lipped in his parliamentary chamber, trying to give the impression as if he doesn't know what is about to happen, the daily said.

It quoted an unnamed official as saying that there is an official plan that the National Assembly's budget session will be prorogued to be summoned in a couple of days again for election of the new Prime Minister and voting out Jamali, if he doesn't resign and give a vote of confidence to the new man.

If the process of replacing Jamali drags on, in case of the Premier's refusal to hand over his resignation in the wake of a no-confidence vote by the ruling coalition's parliamentary party, the president may call off his foreign trip to be rescheduled after the completion of the process, the daily said.

Musharraf is scheduled to undertake a tour of Norway and Sweden to boost trade, political and economic ties with the two Scandinavian nations.

Quoting credible sources, the paper said Musharraf may also postpone his visit if the situation doesn't fully stabilise even after the

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**Prayer Timing**

June 26

|         | Azan  | Jamaat |
|---------|-------|--------|
| Fajr    | 4-05  | 4-40   |
| Zohr    | 12-45 | 1-15   |
| Asr     | 5-00  | 5-15   |
| Maghrib | 6-54  | 6-57   |
| Esha    | 8-17  | 8-45   |

Source: Islamic Foundation