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Tigers turn world upside down

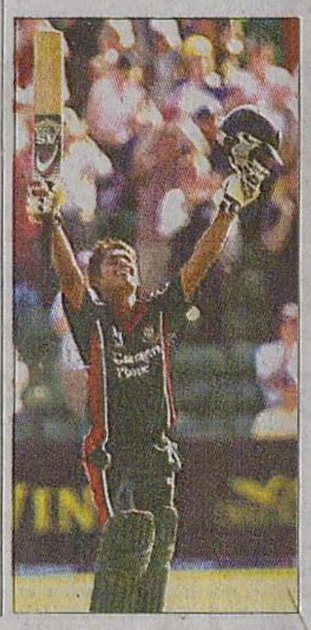

PHOTO: AFP

An elated Mohammad Ashraful, *left*, exults after hitting his maiden ODI ton; Bangladesh supporters, *right*, celebrate their fairytale victory over Australia at Sophia Gardens in Cardiff.

Ashraful hits epic ton to hand Aussies 5wkt upset

AL-AMIN *from Cardiff*

For once Bangladesh is on the top of the world and a little Mohammad Ashraful is the darling of Cardiff where his magnificent hundred pulled off the biggest upset in the annals of one-day cricket.

History was made at Sophia Gardens in a most stunning fashion when Aftab Ahmed hit the first ball of the final over for a magnificent six and then sneaked a single off the next delivery and with that Bangladesh toppled world champions Australia by five wickets.

Instantly, a small yet proud section of Bangladesh supporters, who had been relentlessly waving the red and green national flag and honking horns, rushed to the pitch.

It was Bangladesh's tenth win in their 108th ODI appearance and their first against the mighty Australians, and they did not think of a better time to achieve that when their very existence in cricket's top flight had been going through a torrid time.

There was also conviction the manner in which they defeated Australia. Chasing 250 to win, Bangladesh batted like true professionals with Ashraful leading the way with a poetic 101-ball 100.

The little genius, who scored a first-ball duck in the first game against England, started in the most unconvincing fashion-- blocking the first

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US under secy due June 26

UNB, *Dhaka*

US Under-Secretary for Political Affairs R Nicholas Burns will be in Dhaka on June 26 for talks with Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan on issues of bilateral interest.

This will be the first ever high-level visit by a top bureaucrat of the US State Department to Bangladesh after President Bush was inaugurated in the White House for a second term.

Diplomatic sources said Burns will hold a meeting with Morshed Khan and is expected to make a courtesy call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

He will leave Dhaka on June 27.

Burns is in charge of regional and bilateral policy issues, and is responsible for integrating political, economic, global, and security issues into the United States' bilateral relationships.

MP aspirants must give personal info to EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

From now on, one willing to run for the parliamentary polls will have to submit a set of information to the Election Commission (EC) on their academic qualification, profession, source of income, and criminal records, if any.

The EC at a meeting yesterday approved a format of affidavit, in line with the eight-point directive of

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JAPAN VISIT IN JULY

PM may sign deal on SME staff training

SHARIER KHAN

During her July 12-15 visit to Japan, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is likely to sign an agreement that would allow Bangladeshi employees of about 60 sectors of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to work in the same sector in Japan for three years.

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FIRE PANIC

15 hurt in RMG unit stampede

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 15 garment workers, fearing an outbreak of fire, were injured in a stampede at a garment factory at Kafrul in the capital yesterday.

Employees of the Cherry Private Limited in Ibrahimpur said a local electric transmitter adjacent to the

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Correction

In the Friday issue of The Daily Star, a story headlined "Top trade bodies blast budgetary measures" had an inadvertent error. The word "fast" was printed instead of "last" in the sixth paragraph of the story. We regret the typo.

Why holding 2 offices will not be illegal

HC orders CEC Justice Aziz, others to explain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday ordered the chief election commissioner (CEC), the government and others to explain in four weeks why Justice MA Aziz's holding the office of the CEC alongside his being a sitting Supreme Court judge should not be held as illegal.

An HC bench issued the show-cause rule on respondents -- the CEC, the law secretary, the Supreme Court registrar and the Election commission (EC) -- following a writ petition filed by three SC lawyers challenging the legality of Aziz's holding the office of CEC alongside that of Appellate Division judge.

Advocates Ruhul Quddus, Abdul Mannan Khan and Nazneen Nahar Dipu filed the petition on June 11 asking for an explanation as to under what authority Justice Aziz claims to be simultaneously holding both offices.

The HC partly heard the petition that day and ordered the petitioners to gather from the Supreme Court registrar whether Aziz is still holding the office of Appellate Division judge. The court also directed them to inform it of their findings during yesterday's hearing.

The counsel for the petitioners yesterday told the court that the lawyer filing the petition, Advocate M Saleem Ullah, on June 12 asked in writing to the SC registrar for providing them with information on whether CEC MA Aziz is still holding office of a judge, but they are yet to get a reply.

The counsel also told the court citing press reports that quoted the newly appointed CEC as saying that he had not resigned as a judge.

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Justice MA Aziz

Mosharraf quits on car scam

STAR REPORT

State Minister for Energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain yesterday resigned over the Tk 1 crore Lexus scam after the prime minister asked him to stand down.

President Iajuddin Ahmed accepted his resignation letter after it was forwarded to him on acceptance by the prime minister.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the evening asked Mosharraf to explain his position on the luxurious car he had received from Canadian company Niko Resources blamed for the Tengratila Gas Field Explosion early January, sources said.

Unsatisfied with his explanation, the prime minister asked him to resign.

Mosharraf, who was convicted of corruption in the previous BNP regime, resigned on health grounds, the sources added.

Although an investigation committee clearly blamed Niko that sealed the unsolicited deal in Bangladesh using political lobby in the "alternative power house" of the government, it has not been punished or penalised so far.

The Tengratila blowout damaged at least 10 billion cubic feet (BCF) of gas worth $2.5 million, apart from severely damaging the geological zone.

Instead of punishing Niko and its drilling contractor, who is backed by the "alternative power house", the minister punished the managing director of Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration Company (Bapex).

BAPEX is the partner of Niko in the country's one and only joint venture agreement in the gas exploration and development sector. The

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The much-talked-about Lexus car.

PHOTO: STAR

LONDON HR MEET

Dhaka to counter criticism today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A day after boycotting the much-hyped European human rights conference on Bangladesh in London, the Bangladesh high commissioner to UK convenes a meeting today in East London to counter 'anti-Bangladesh campaigns.'

Participants in the "European Human Rights Conference on Bangladesh: Extremism, Intolerance and Violence" held at

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Trade, security, water to figure in Delhi talks

Foreign secretaries sit June 21

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A foreign secretary-level meeting between Bangladesh and India begins in New Delhi on June 21 to review the entire range of bilateral relations.

The two-day talks at this level, taking place after two years, will have an 'open-ended agenda,' official sources said.

"I am going to Delhi with an open, fresh and positive mind for consultation with my Indian counterpart Shyam Saran. We will discuss all issues of bilateral interests and cooperation," Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin told reporters at his office yesterday.

"We are looking for a positive consultation and attaching

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Big fire burns high-rise office in Motijheel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire burnt an office in a high-rise building downtown Motijheel, causing damage worth Tk 40 lakh and triggering panic in the commercial hub yesterday morning.

The fire originated from an electric short-circuit at the chairman's office of Aftab group on the fourth floor of the 19-storey Uttara

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MONEY LAUNDERING CHARGE

Bidisha's bail plea rejected

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected the bail petition of Bidisha, former dictator HM Ershad's estranged wife, in a money laundering case filed under bailable section.

The case, in which she was shown arrested, was filed on Thursday on a charge of funnelling abroad local and foreign currencies worth Tk 21 crore.

Metropolitan Magistrate Abdur Rouf Khan passed the order following a petition for bail placed before it by the defence.

Moving the petition, Advocate Zahirul Islam, Shafiuddin Bhuiyan, and Kazi M Sajwar Hossain told the

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FENCHUGANJ POWER PLANT

Disqualified Chinese bidder gets nod again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Cabinet Purchase Committee yesterday approved for the second time awarding the contract to set up a 90 megawatt combined cycle power plant in Fenchuganj to a disqualified lone Chinese bidder.

Earlier on April 20, the cabinet committee at a meeting chaired by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman approved the same deal along with a decision to quickly provide the bidder with 10 percent down payment, ignoring a government restriction on such payment.

Following reports on the deal in The Daily Star, the cabinet later sought some clarifications from the bidder, Harbin Power Engineering Ltd.

Satisfied with the clarifications, the cabinet committee yesterday re-approved the project and decided to forward it to the Economic Affairs Committee, also headed by Saifur, to approve 10 percent down payment to Harbin. The committee is likely to approve this payment soon, sources said.

Harbin, backed by a business lobby close to the government, gets this contract after the Power Development Board (PDB) cancelled five rounds of tender bids.

The company has won the bid by making an offer of Tk 524 crore. It is also the lone company to get the contract for another power project-- the 100 MW Tongi Power Plant of the PDB-- under the ruling BNP-led

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3 criminals killed in 'crossfire'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

Three criminals were killed in "crossfire" with police in two incidents in Daulatpur upazila in Kushtia and Chandina upazila in Comilla district yesterday.

Pakhi Mollah, 28, and Hasmot Ali alias Hasu, 30, were killed in "crossfire" between police and their accomplices at village Selimpur in Daulatpur upazila early yesterday.

Daulatpur police arrested four alleged criminals including Pakhi and Hasu from Sihala village on Friday morning, police said, adding that Pakhi and Hasu admitted to possessing arms at various locations in the upazila.

A police team led by the officer-in-charge of Daulatpur Police Station started for Sihala village with Pakhi and Hasu at about 3:30am to recover the firearms.

When they reached Selimpur field, cohorts of Pakhi and Hasu attacked the police, prompting them to retaliate.

The two criminals, trying to escape from the police van during the hour-long gunfight, got caught in the "crossfire" and died on the spot, police said.

Police recovered a shutter gun from the spot.

Pakhi was accused in six cases on various charges including murder, abduction, rape and robbery, while Hasu in five cases, of them two for murder, police said.

UNB adds from Comilla: The

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