

Kumar, Mahela rule

FROM PAGE 1
double century. The wicketkeeper-batsman became only the sixth batsman to have scored back-to-back double hundreds.

The list includes the great Don Bradman, Walter Hammond, Vinod Kambli, South Africa captain Graeme Smith and Australia skipper Ricky Ponting.

But the morning was not as gloomy as the end reflected after left-arm paceman Syed Rasel removed both openers and things could have been better if his confident lbw appeal against Jayawardene, when on nought, was turned down by umpire Suresh Shastri. Television replays indicated that the marginal decision could have been given in favour of the bowler.

Rasel first trapped Upul Tharanga (12) in front of the stumps as the left-handed batsman padded up a straight delivery and then his brilliant incoming delivery flicked the balls of Michael Vandort (43) to reduce the hosts to 74-2 after resuming the day on 30-0.

But in the end, the left-arm seamer got rid of Jayawardene, but by then it was too late for his side as the right-hander along with Sangakkara punished the Bangladeshi bowlers throughout the day to entertain the small crowd.

Right-hander Jayawardene

started the assault first with some fine strokeplay, making up for the two days lost to rain. That enabled his side to maintain a run-rate above four runs an over and he struck his second hundred of the series, 18th of his career so far, having just played 101 balls.

His brilliant knock of 165 that came from 210 deliveries with the help of 15 fours and three sixes came to an end when he was caught at mid-off by his Bangladesh counterpart Mohammed Ashraful off Rasel.

But the story remained that of Sangakkara, who was unbeaten against Jayawardene, when on nought, was turned down by umpire Suresh Shastri. Television replays indicated that the marginal decision could have been given in favour of the bowler.

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Right-hander Jayawardene

College student murdered in Comilla

A CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

Police found the body of a college student with his throat slit by Aluya-Monoharpur road in Burichang upazila yesterday morning.

The victim was identified as Nazmul Hasan alias Polash, 19, son of Abdul Kuddus of Chandipur village in Brahmanpara upazila. Polash took in the recently held HSC examinations from Sonar Bangla College.

Police said the assailants might have killed the youth at midnight on Thursday and dumped the body beside the road. They picked up Polash's friend Monir Hossain alias Khokon from Panipora village in Chandania upazila for quizzing.

A murder case was lodged with the Brahmanpara police station yesterday.

Pirates loot 18 trawlers, kidnap 25 fishermen

UNB, Bagerhat

Pirates looted fish, fishing nets and other valuables worth over Tk 13 lakh from 18 trawlers on the Bay adjacent to Narkelbaria area of the Sunderbans on Thursday night.

They also abducted 25 fishermen along with three trawlers and demanded Tk 5 lakh as ransom for their release.

With this, pirates looted fish and other valuables worth over Tk 35 lakh from 28 trawlers on the Bay in the last five days.

Coastguards of Mongla (west zone) have been conducting operations in various areas, including Kachikhali, Dimer Char, Dublar Char and Narkelbaria, to arrest the pirates and rescue the abducted fishermen.

Production

FROM PAGE 16
chairman to close it on the pretext of overhauling work.

Workers and employees said the mill authorities never responded to their appeal for increasing wages and salaries and they were paid Tk 67 instead of Tk 113 as the daily wage, in defiance of the BCIC's official order issued on February 14 this year.

The managing director, on the other hand, said the proposal for increasing wages and salaries was rejected in BCIC's board meeting held in Dhaka on July 5.

Meanwhile, the 35 workers kept on daily wage basis for overhauling have refused to work as all the 105 workers and employees have decided to launch movement for 'reopening' of the mill.

Established in 1966, Khulna Hardboard Mill was closed due to severe financial crisis on December 15 in 2002.

The mill resumed production on September 14 in 2005 allegedly on political consideration under the influence of former industries minister Matiur Rahman Nizami but nagging technical faults including leakage in boiler tubes frequently disturbed its production.

Only 12 officials including the managing director are serving at the mill as permanent staff while the authorities did not take any step to make the job of workers and employees permanent after the resumption of production in September 2005.

Rajuk surveyor

FROM PAGE 1
Rajuk chairman, four pads, cheque books of 10 banks and five passports.

They also found documents of around 50 bighas of land that Nikhil owns at his village home at Daudkandi in Comilla.

The sources alleged that Nikhil, using the fake seals of top Rajuk officials, used to approve designs of buildings and tamper with land measurement to facilitate those who bribed him.

Nikhil was suspended around two months ago after the authorities found cases of gross irregularities and corruption against him.

The joint forces handed over the surveyor to Uttara police yesterday afternoon. Process of filing a case against him was going on as of filing of this report at 8:00pm yesterday.

Canada to shelter

FROM PAGE 16
Myanmar following discrimination and oppression back at home.

A total of 2,36,599 refugees have been repatriated so far. But it is believed that many of them have entered Bangladesh again and are now living in various parts of the southern districts.

Many Rohingya gathered on the bank of the Naaf river at Teknaf where they have been living in makeshift houses for the last three years.

Following repeated requests from the UNHCR and the European Commission, the government recently decided to shift around 10,000 illegal Rohingyas to a safer place as their living condition on the riverbank was deplorable.

Crucial coal policy

FROM PAGE 1
Imam, research director of Centre for Policy Dialogue Prof Mustafizur Rahman, Petrobangla director Moqbul-e-Elahi and Chief Executive Officer of Infrastructure Investment Facilitation Centre Nazrul Islam.

Finalisation of the coal policy is being viewed as very important since it will decide the fate of existing deals with Asia Energy or Hosaf and also of other offers now awaiting government approval.

Experts and officials believe that under a sound policy Bangladesh's coal resources can change the country's future where investment will be encouraged safeguarding national interest. Tapping coal resources would need billions of dollars of investment, they noted.

The sixth draft prepared by a committee headed by the energy ministry's additional secretary Wahidunnabi Chowdhury was found highly self-contradictory, while it left questions on crucial issues like open pit method of mining unanswered.

"It seems that the draft was prepared not from a national perspective but from the perspective of making Asia Energy's Phulbari coal mine deal as difficult as possible. This is why this draft appears to be so self-contradictory," said a geological expert.

Top energy ministry officials felt that this draft was becoming prohibitive as it was being influenced by a group of people nurturing ultra nationalism and reservations about private investment.

"This prompted the energy ministry to form a fresh committee to scrutinise this draft," one source said.

Critics say the draft will not seek amendments to the existing Mineral Resources Regulation 1968 and the Mines and Minerals (Control and Development) Act 1992 but its contents grossly contradict these legal frameworks.

For instance, the existing law and regulations fix coal development royalty at 5 percent if coal is tapped through underground mining and at 6 percent if tapped through open-pit mining. The draft on the other hand puts the basic royalty rate at 10 percent, assuming the basic price of coal at \$25 per tonne. Then it adds 1 percent additional royalty on each \$2.5 hike above \$25. At the present international price of coal, this implies a royalty of over 25 percent.

Royalty rates in other countries swing between 0 percent and 13.5 percent. Some countries like Chile or Peru depend entirely on 30 to 35 percent corporate tax while countries like Indonesia put the rate at 13.5 percent with 30 percent corporate tax.

According to a Petrobangla expert, royalty rates are low in most countries because most of the coal deals are decades-old. "Those were formulated at a time when energy prices were low and the countries had different sets of values. Now, global energy price has gone up, and price of coal has also gone up significantly. Many countries are now considering higher royalty," he said.

"Royalty is separate from corporate tax. Tax is universal. Royalty is set on natural resources that we will continue to lose with mine development. Six percent is too low. But making a formula that seeks 25 percent royalty is absurd because this would be in addition to corporate tax for the investors. This has to be a win-win for all," he added.

Article 2.2 of the draft says that up to 2035, coal would be the primary source of power generation in the country and the existing reserve does not give any scope for exporting coal or using coal in for any other purposes. But other parts of the draft suggest that a developer can export the same quantity of coal it uses for power generation.

Coal experts say the present technologies can convert coal into many forms of energy which will have wider positive impact on the economy if that is encouraged. But the draft-makers did not seem to be aware of such technologies or other uses of coal.

The draft also demands that a mine developer must off-load shares in the share market from the day it starts commercial operation. Energy sector investors term such condition unrealistic.

"Quality of our coal is very high. When we are making a policy, we should recognise this fact and outline the policy accordingly. But this draft emphasised local use of coal to the degree of encouraging it for domestic or brick-field use. Instead, we can export this coal to get greater returns. We can use coal for petro-chemicals. There are other options to consider," said a coal expert.

Article 6.1 of the draft demands demurrage security deposit of 4.5 percent of the project cost at the beginning. This could greatly raise cost and hurt initial investment.

Hotel Hilton and the FBCCI, but not with Bangladesh Textiles Mills Association, International Arbitration Centre and any CNG filling stations.

Some 30 years ago, the Hatirjheel wetland was extended up to the present Green Road area, but earth-filling activities have shrunk it by more than one kilometre.

"After decades of neglect, the present government is now paying attention to Hatirjheel since the wetland is critically important for the city. In the meantime, however, the environment has suffered a great loss," said Iqbal Kabir Liton, lawyer of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association.

Housing and Public Works Adviser Anawarul Iqbal recently declared the building of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) situated on Begunbari wetland illegal as the BGMEA built the building without Rajuk's approval.

To build the building on two bighas of land the BGMEA had filled up around two acres of land. The organisation filled up the canal in front of the building and installed three large pipelines to drain out water.

Asked about their future plan regarding the BGMEA building, Rajuk Chairman KM Harun said a team of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology is now conducting a study and action will be taken on the basis of its report.

Sonargaon Hotel authorities are also conducting development work for their extended parts filling up adjoining area of Begunbari wetland.

The Wetland Protection Act 2000 prohibits filling up of any wetland without government approval.

The present caretaker government recently directed to cancel all allocations made by Bangladesh Railway in Begunbari and Hatirjheel areas during the tenure of the immediate past BNP-led coalition government.

The railway allocated land to Hotel Hilton International, Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), International Arbitration Centre, and a few CNG filling stations.

Railway Estate Officer Delowar Hossain said, "Following the government announcement of cancellation we have sent all documents to our legal expert for analysis."

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No step yet to stop

FROM PAGE 1

Two-storey corrugated tin-shed houses, 250 one-storey tin-shed houses, a temple, a mosque and a shrine, two private primary schools and an industrial unit.

The Rajuk list, however, does not mention two housing companies that have already filled a large portion of Hatirjheel near the Rampura bridge.

The Rajuk survey was limited to Hatirjheel area since some government agencies, including Rajuk itself, Water and Sewerage Authorities (Wasa), and Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), have submitted proposals for constructing a link road or a circular road in the area to reduce traffic congestion in the city. The proposals also include constructing other structures.

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HSC admission

FROM PAGE 16
medium student, Tk 21,000 from a commerce group English medium student and Tk 20,000 from a commerce group Bangla medium student during their admission.

A university teacher whose son is an admission seeker to Rajuk Model College, questioned the rationale of charging so much money as admission fee and development fund.

The college authorities do not have to pay any rent for the infrastructure, he said.

Uttara Milestone College has fixed Tk 25,000 for a science group student and Tk 24,000 for a commerce group student as the total admission fee including that for development fund.

A student has to pay Tk 18,560 for admission into Motijheel Ideal School and College. According to the college admission prospectus, development fee is Tk 11,000, admission fee Tk 3,000, monthly fee Tk 1050, board fee Tk 90, session charge Tk 2300, computer fee Tk 5500, research fee Tk 200, diary and syllabus fee Tk 230, rover scout fee 20 and freshers' reception fee Tk 300.

Dhaka City College is charging Tk 12,717 from a commerce group student, Tk 10,467 from a science group student and Tk 10,214 from an arts group student. Lalmitia Girls College has fixed Tk 9,600 as admission fee for a science group student and Tk 9,000 for a commerce or arts group student.

Notre Dame College is charging Tk 11,500 from a science group English medium student, Tk 8,500 from a science group Bangla medium student, Tk 8,000 from a commerce student and Tk 7,500 from an arts student.

Government colleges are also violating the government circular. Dhaka College is charging Tk 1,600 from a student of science group and Tk 1,400 from a student of arts or commerce group.

Badrunessa Girls College has fixed Tk 1,700 for a science group student and Tk 1600 for a student of arts or commerce group.

Several other colleges are also charging additional admission fees.

US forces gun down 6 Iraqi policemen

'Iran-backed militant' captured

AFP, Baghdad

US troops in Iraq captured an alleged Iranian-backed militant leader yesterday, as a New York Times reporter became the second journalist slain in as many days in the violent Iraq police capital.

The US forces killed six Iraqi police and seven militiamen after coming under fire during a raid in central Baghdad to arrest a police lieutenant accused of running a terror cell, the military said.

An American unit called in an air strike to protect themselves after coming under "heavy and accurate fire" from an Iraqi police checkpoint during the pre-dawn operation.

The strike was sought in order to "prevent further escalation of fire between the Iraqi police checkpoint and coalition forces," said a US military statement.

"The close air support was directed in front of the Iraqi police, not at them to prevent further casualties," it added.

The detained "terrorist" led a unit of the Special Groups, the military's name for Iraqi militant cells supported by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' covert Qods Force, the statement said.

The US military regularly charges the Qods Force of arming and funding Iraqi extremists to attack troops in Iraq. Tehran denies the charges.

US forces work alongside Iraqi police to train them and prepare them to take over security responsibility in Iraq, but often find their nominal allies are infiltrated by militant and insurgent sympathisers.

In a separate statement the military said its forces had also killed two suspected militants and detained 19 more in raids carried out in Baghdad and western Iraq.

Meanwhile, an Iraqi journalist working with The New York Times in Baghdad was shot dead on Friday, the newspaper's Baghdad bureau chief said.

Mass Suicide

FROM PAGE 1
locality, was an ex-army man and a gold medal winning boxer of the Pakistan Army before the independence. He settled at Kashor in Mymensingh town near the house of his-in-laws in 1972 after retirement.

Tuhin said till 1995 the family had been devoted to regular Muslim religious activities but after Anwar Fakir had taken up a self styled religiosity, the family stopped following their regular practices.

"That might have made the local people believe that the family did not follow Islamic rules," said Tuhin terming the assumption that the family members had converted to Christianity, 'a rumour and nothing else'.

Tuhin told The Daily Star that after Anwar Hossain's death in 2000, a dispute erupted between the local people and the family over Anwar Fakir's burial, as the family members wanted to wrap Anwar's body in a red cloth and bury him sitting in the grave complying with 'the will of Anwar'.

"Since then a chasm between Anwar's family and the local people started to form making the family increasingly isolated from the neighbours," said Tuhin, who claims to have been very close to Mahi.

As the family avoided the local people, the locals also avoided them, he said adding, "We, as relatives tried on several occasions to establish good relations among them."

Another relative of Anwar Fakir said they avoided the family only to maintain good relations with the local people.

Tuhin said Mahi used to meet the family's financial needs after his father's death, but the killing of Mahi in 2003 left the family in a financial crisis. Arif, another son of Anwar, who used to work for a private firm, started to contribute to the family after Mahi's death, but the support was not enough, Tuhin noted.

"Financial constraint however was not the cause of the suicide," Tuhin said adding that all the family members were fervent followers of late Anwar Hossain Fakir.

A source said Zayed Khatun, 85, mother of Hena, was informed of the suicide, turning her speechless with shock.

Anjuman-e-ma'fulul Islam buried the bodies in local Kalibari graveyard under the supervision of Mymensingh municipality as relatives were not willing to receive the bodies, said Officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station Dipak Mazumder.

Following filing of an unnatural death case with Jamalpur Railway Police, officer-in-charge of the department, Abdus Salam Bhuiyan, is investigating the case, said Assistant Sub-Inspector Hayat Mahmud.

"Jamalpur Railway Police is investigating the case and we are rendering all necessary supports," said Mymensingh Police Superintendent Rafiqul Islam. The spot is under the jurisdiction of Jamalpur Railway Police, he added.

Currently an eerie silence is prevailing at the victims' residence which is now sealed off and being guarded by police.

Bird flu

FROM PAGE 16
Institute at Savar in Dhaka for confirmation.

On Thursday, the deputy commissioner's office received a faxed message from the institute, which said that poultry birds and pigeons in the areas have been affected with bird flu.

US House votes

FROM PAGE 16

Bush struck a defiant tone Thursday, insisting on his authority to run the war despite a report from his administration showing the Iraqi government was making only paltry progress and growing anxiety over the war from fellow Republicans.

"I believe we can succeed in Iraq, and I know we must," Bush said at a news conference dominated by the unpopular war, which has now killed 3,612 US troops.

Bush frequently invoked al-Qaeda, warning the withdrawal of 160,000 US troops in the country would mean "surrendering the future of Iraq to al-Qaeda."

The House of Representatives answered Bush with a vote to withdraw most combat troops by April, as Democratic leaders said the president's strategy deploying an additional 30,000 troops had proven a failure.

The House voted by 223 votes to 201 to pass the measure, but the Republican coalition stayed intact: only four party members voted with the Democrats.

The troop withdrawal deadlines have almost no chance of becoming law as the Democrats are well short of the two-thirds majority needed to override a Bush veto.

But Democratic leaders see votes for troop withdrawals as a way of keeping up pressure on the president and his Republican allies.

"The president hasn't seen the last of these votes," said Jim Manley, spokesman for Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. "We'll look forward to additional votes in September."

Bush reiterated that he is not ready to consider a change of course until the commander of US forces in Iraq, General David Petraeus, issues his assessment of the troop "surge" strategy in September.

The embattled president accused his Democratic foes of trying to encroach on his legal authority as commander-in-chief.

"I don't think Congress ought to be running the war," he said.

In a concession to lawmakers demanding more regional diplomacy, Bush said he would send Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Defence Robert Gates to the Middle East in August to consult US allies on the conflict.

Both cabinet heavy hitters had postponed foreign trips to launch an intense lobbying effort of wavering lawmakers, after several key Republican senators broke with Bush in recent weeks.

The political combat came amid more violence in Iraq, where US forces clashed with Shia militants in Baghdad on Thursday in a battle that claimed the lives of two Iraqis working for the international news agency Reuters.

Musharraf vows

FROM PAGE 16

General Waheed Arshad told reporters at the scene that 75 bodies had been recovered from the mosque and said "19 are beyond recognition and they could be anybody, any gender, any age."

The attack -- which ended a months-long standoff with the mosque's followers who wanted the imposition of Sharia law -- sparked calls for revenge from radical groups inside and outside the world's second-largest Muslim country.

al-Qaeda's second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri in an online message urged Pakistani Muslims to embrace jihad and revolt against the government.

In neighbouring Afghanistan, veteran Islamist warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar charged that Musharraf had "attacked the mosque to please (US President George W.) Bush," according to his spokesman Haroon Zarghon.

Thousands of angry mourners, meanwhile, turned the funerals of dead militants into religious protests.

Around 2,000 people chanting "Allahu Akbar" (God is greater) massed for the burial of cleric Abdul Rashid Ghazi, 43, the leader of the Red Mosque rebels, who was cut down in the crossfire as he lost his last stand.

"I lost my brother, my students, for the enforcement of Islamic Sharia (law)," Abdul Aziz, Ghazi's elder brother and the mosque's chief cleric, told a prayer meeting, before police took him away again.

In apparent revenge attacks, a

Hasina hassled

FROM PAGE 16
police escort had not arrived on schedule. As the security escort had not come, Hasina became visibly disappointed and decided to go to the hospital without any security if necessary.

Hearing about her resolve, law enforcers beefed up security around Sudha Sandan by bringing in reinforcement and built a police wall along the barbed wire barricades on the exit way.

But as Hasina informed the law enforcers that she would start walking if necessary, the on duty police officials began communicating with their higher ups, who sent a police escort for her to Sudha Sadan an hour after the previous schedule had past.

Hasina reached the hospital around 11:30am and stayed there for about 10 minutes. The AL chief draped Dr Moazzem's coffin with the flags of the country and her party. She also placed a wreath on his coffin.

Hasina observed a moment of silence in respect to her deceased colleague and prayed for salvation of the departed soul. She also expressed deep sympathy for the family members of late Dr Moazzem.