


**LIPRO**  
Presents  
**HIMOINSA**  
DIESEL GENERATORS  
FROM SPAIN



8 KVA - 2500 KVA  
Lipro Energy Ltd.  
Call: 8817147, 8817918, 8818082

**BOSE**  
Better sound through research

It's time to expect more from home theater.



Graphics Information Systems Ltd. 8811140



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

As the dust begins to settle in the Sidr-hit south, the young ones -- most of whom have lost a father, a brother or a sister and more than they have ever had -- make an effort to escape from the everyday struggle on the bank of River Baleshwar. The venue is called *Joar-bhata* (high and low tides) stadium, where they find their source of entertainment, an exciting game of football only when a piece of land is available during a low tide. The picture was taken last Sunday at Rayenda in Bagerhat district, more than seven months after Cyclone Sidr ripped through the southern part of Bangladesh, killing nearly 10,000 people and making millions homeless.

## Ashraf skins the Tigers

**Cricket**

**BISHWAJIT ROY**

Gazi Ashraf Hossain on Tuesday painfully observed that the country is really unfortunate to live with so many incapable players competing in international cricket.

"It is very unfortunate that we have to continue with a set of players who have averages between 15 and 20. One cannot compete at the international level with such a poor average but they survived because we have lack of quality players in the pipeline," said Ashraf while reflecting his experience with the Tigers in Karachi during the second round of the just concluded Asia Cup.

A former national skipper turned chairman of the cricket operations committee at the Bangladesh Cricket Board Ashraf was also very critical about the individual performance.

"I am sure most of our present cricketers will be disqualified if you arrange a trial of international standard but we are helpless," he said acidly.

Talking of the Tigers' last Asia Cup match against Pakistan, Ashraf was shocked to see the players' lack of hunger and maturity.

"It seemed they had already packed their luggage before the game. May be it was their subcon-

scious mind, but they had no concentration on the match rather were thinking on coming back home," noted Ashraf.

The disgruntled cricket official also raised the question whether the current crop of players understand their responsibilities.

"Considering the top level facilities we provide them, we hardly get the return. They have to understand that they are doing a service for which they get money. Nothing would be impossible if they think in this way," said a derisive Ashraf.

He also rubbished the idea that scoring 200-plus runs shows improvement of the team.

"Almost all the Bangladesh matches in the Asia Cup were mismatches. When the other teams set a 300-plus target, we are talking about scoring 200 runs. The way our players talked about after every match was simply unbelievable," pointed Ashraf, contrary to the team's sentiment that of searching for positives even from such a bad tour.

"It is simply nonsense if someone says that he did not expect bouncers so early in the innings," he added.

"Can you imagine our top five batsmen even don't know how to stay for 35-40 overs at the crease. So one can even raise question about the players' ability. I think there is a big problem in their understanding. And another thing is that now we are not newcomers in the inter-

national arena," he said.

"Nazimuddin got more than enough chance to show his ability but totally failed to deliver. We should find out why this player was so erratic in his shots although he looked so disciplined in the nets," he questioned.

Ashraf also believed that it was a huge chance for the batsmen to show their best in the tournament.

"I don't know when they will get the opportunity again to play at such flat tracks they got in this tournament," he observed.

Asked about the Tigers' bowling, he said that one bowler could be punished in this kind of surface but one cannot be so indisciplined in his bowling especially when there is a specialist bowling coach (Sarwar Imran) in the team.

"Everybody is accountable. You may ask the question to our head coach (Jamie Siddons) why the bowling was bad despite the presence of a specialist bowling coach," he said.

Now the question remains how we get out from such a hole and Ashraf said that it was time to concentrate on the game's development.

"We have to focus on our Game Development Programme and the players should come from there.

We must carry it for long time and in addition we have to concentrate on the A team," replied Ashraf.

## Reds against all odds

**Football**

**AL MUSABBIR SADI**

Muktijoddha Sangsad began their training session for the coming football season.

This would be news to those who had closely followed the football club's struggle in the recent months. However, a few determined players, willing to do something special to honour the country's freedom fighters and their sacrifice, opted to be loyal and fight for the club's survival.

Led by Feroz Mahmud Titu, Muktijoddha had taken part in the transfer for the season just one day before the deadline even without getting permission from Muktijoddha Sangsad's Central Command Council.

A number of stars like Aminul, Rajani, Hassan Al Mamun, Arman Aziz and finally, Matir Munnah departed due to the uncertainty but those who stuck together have come as far as it can get.

"We have started training yesterday and considering the situation a few months earlier, it looks like a miracle," Titu told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Everyday, we used to go door to door seeking permission to build the team but it never came. A few players left, I have no grudge against them as everyone has his right to choose, but I was encouraged to go on by my colleagues who did not bother about money even after two off-seasons.

"We felt that the club had given so much to the footballers that it was our duty to pay something back.

"The permission came a week

after we had completed the transfer formalities on our own and with support from Dhaka City Unit Command's Amir Hossain Mollah."

Adviser to Sangsad and also to the club, Maj Gen (ret'd) Amin Chowdhury has now taken steps to remove the financial crisis.

"He (Amin's) needed the permission of the Central Command to get involved and now he has become active. We hope we will not suffer any financial strains. Even we can become more solvent than other clubs and recruit quality foreign players to make a formidable side like the past."

Titu's optimism, however, will only be proved once the game rolls into the field at the end of this month with the Federation Cup. The Reds have lost a score of top stars and it would be hard to fill in the gaps.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

## Dhoni rested, Yuvi out

**Cricket**

**CRICINFO, undated**

India have included uncapped players Rohit Sharma and Pragnan Ojha in the 16-member squad for the three-Test series in Sri Lanka. Yuvraj Singh has been left out, while Gautam Gambhir wins the opener's slot ahead of Wasim Jaffer. Zaheer Khan also returns to the team after injury niggles ruled him out of international action so far this year. With Mahendra Singh Dhoni opting out, the selectors have named two wicketkeepers in Dinesh Karthik and Parthiv Patel. The selection committee also announced the 30 probabilities for the Champions Trophy in September.

Yuvraj -- a member of the selection panel said he had been dropped -- has been in poor form of late; he marked his comeback to the Test team with a 169 against Pakistan in Bangalore last year, but was dropped from the XI after scoring 19 runs in four innings during the Test series in Australia. Yuvraj is also susceptible against spin, another factor that could have gone against him, given the conditions in Sri Lanka.

Irfan Pathan, Piyush Chawla, Mohammad Kaif and Ramesh Powar are the other omissions from the Test squad that featured in the home series against South Africa. Harbhajan Singh returns to international cricket after completing his five-match ODI ban for slapping Sreesanth, who wasn't in the

reckoning as he's still recovering from a side strain. The squad consists of seven batsmen, two wicketkeepers, four fast bowlers and three spinners.

Part of the winning ICC World Twenty20 side in South Africa, Rohit impressed in the CB Series in Australia earlier this year and continued his form for the Deccan Chargers in the IPL. Ojha, the Hyderabad left-arm spinner, recently earned a call-up to the ODI side. "It's a dream come true. Any cricketer would want and

generally try to bowl like I do in the Ranji Trophy."

Gambhir forces his way back into the Test team on the string of impressive performances in limited-overs cricket and domestic tournaments. He replaces Jaffer, who's had a poor run in Tests since the Eden Gardens Test against Pakistan last year, in which he scored a double-century.

Parthiv last played for India in October 2004; since then Karthik and Dhoni have won favour for a spot in the Indian team. Karthik last played the Bangalore Test against Pakistan, which Dhoni had to skip due to an ankle injury. Karthik had played as a specialist opener in Test series in Bangladesh and England last year, and in the home Tests against Pakistan.

Karthik was surprised with his selection. "I didn't know if Dhoni was playing the series or not. It feels great that they have given me a chance," he told Cricinfo. "I don't see this as a stop-gap arrangement for Dhoni but will look at this as a great opportunity to perform and prove my credentials.

"Ajantha Mendis will be a tough bowler to pick but it's really exciting challenge to play someone like him. I am confident that if I get a chance I will do my best to perform both in batting and wicketkeeping."

Parthiv was due to lead India A in the Emerging Players Tournament in Australia. Suresh Raina replaces him, while S Badrinath will captain the team. Parthiv had an impressive 2006-07

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

## Cricketers to learn English in AIUB

**SPORTS REPORTER**

In order to bring fluency to their English language, American International University of Bangladesh (AIUB) are all set to help the national cricketers.

AIUB have come forward after being requested by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and will not take any payments.

"You know better how weak the cricketers are in English and it is important for the players to speak fluently," said Ishiaque Ahmed, a BCB member.

"We have got a positive response from the AIUB and are now waiting for the BCB approval," he added.

"It is not a new matter for us as we had earlier taught English to the different government officials without any cost," said Lutfar Rahman, public relations director of the AIUB.

Abdul Kader Nazmul, AIUB sports coordinator, said that they would also teach computer literacy to the cricketers.

## Open squash

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Towhid, Muhit, Jagdish and Omar became group champions to reach the A Division semifinals of Delta Life Open Squash tournament at the Dhaka Club Squash court yesterday.

In the last group matches, Omar of Gulshan Club beat Firoz Cadet College in 2-0 sets and Mamun of

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8



### Did U Know?

The third edition of Asia Cup was the first time that a multi-national cricket tournament was held in Bangladesh in 1988. India beat Sri Lanka by six wickets in the final.



### Mahela Jayawardene

(Sri Lanka cricket captain)

"I wasn't really surprised with the way (Ajantha) Mendis bowled. We have given him the freedom to go out there and play his way. That's the way he takes games away from the opposition."

After winning the Asia Cup title on Sunday.

### Shakil new game development chief

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Former cricketer Shakil Kasem was yesterday made the chairman of game development committee of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

After being made a member of BCB's ad hoc committee last week, Shakil replaces Lt Col (ret'd) MA Latif, who resigned recently, as the head of cricket's development.

Another new ad hoc committee member, Engineer Golam Mohammed Alamgir, was appointed chairman of the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM) and tournament committee.

Alamgir replaces Gazi Ashraf Hossain as the CCDM chief and Salim Bhuiyan in the tournament committee.



PHOTO: AFP

Cheerleaders dance during a training session in suburban Beijing as part of China's preparation for the biggest show on earth, the Summer Olympics that commence on August 8. These cheerleaders will entertain the spectators during breaks in games like basketball, beach volleyball and some of the other sports during the 17-day extravaganza.

## 30 DAYS TO GO China confident of success

**AFP, Beijing**



China voiced confidence on Tuesday that the Olympics would be a success, although it warned exactly one month ahead of the Games that

hostile forces were still intent on derailing the historic event.

Chinese officials also dismissed pollution concerns that were highlighted by another smoggy day in Beijing, and rejected accusations that the government had not honoured its commitments to improve human rights and press freedoms.

"The development of China cannot be held back by any force. We have full confidence that we will hold a high level Olympic Games," foreign ministry spokesman Qin Gang said as he spoke out against a broad range of China critics.

Preparations for the Games

appeared to be running smoothly, with all the stadiums already built and China opening the main press centre on Tuesday to cater for the roughly 6,000 journalists who will descend on Beijing.

However some of the main organs of China's state-run press also marked the one-month Olympic countdown by focusing on the nation's critics that it said were trying to use the Games to hurt the country.

"The single obvious threat to the impending Games appears to be politicisation," the English-language China Daily said in an editorial.

"It is no secret that various anti-China forces have been colluding to hijack the Games for political ends... We should not tolerate any plot to derail the event."

China has also repeatedly warned of a range of security threats to the Games, particularly from its western region of Xinjiang that has a large Muslim population,

as well as from groups critical of Chinese rule in Tibet.

"As the Beijing Olympics get nearer, every kind of anti-China and hostile force will seek a thousand ways to intensify efforts to engage in sabotage activities," China's vice chief of police Yang Huanningsaid last week.

Critics have accused Beijing of exaggerating or fabricating the security threats to provide an excuse to stifle any dissent that could embarrass the communist rulers during the Olympics.

Amnesty International was among a range of critics to use the one-month countdown to again hit out at China for not honouring pledges to improve human rights and press freedoms that it made to win the Olympics in 2001.

But foreign ministry spokesman Qin responded that China had committed to bettering human rights regardless of the sporting event.

"Since the founding of the

Communist Party of China, it has been trying its utmost to improve human rights, and it will be our goal and purpose in the future," he said.

One other major concern for China has been pollution, and the city's environmental woes showed no signs of abating on Tuesday despite having already implemented some measures designed to improve air quality for the Games.

On July 1, 300,000 highly polluting vehicles were banned from the capital, while some work at construction sites and factories has been suspended.

International Olympic Committee chief Jacques Rogge this year warned that some endurance events, such as the marathon, may be postponed if the pollution is too severe.

But with more than one million cars -- or about a third of those in Beijing -- due to be taken off the road

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8