

Tigers crush Kiwis

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The first ever defeat to Bangladesh effectively dashed New Zealand's hopes of claiming the second spot behind Australia in the one-day rankings that could have guaranteed had they won the series 3-0.

Heavy overnight showers did not cause a second's delay to the start of the series opener and Daniel Vettori's inserted side never showed signs of recovering from a top order disaster on a wicket that gradually dried up for easy batting.

For Bangladesh it augured all well despite fears of more embarrassment after the ICL fallout that saw 14 top cricketers including seven national players joining the rebel Indian league.

And after a long time, the cornered Tigers played sensibly to dominate their opponents in all three departments of the game. Tamim Iqbal struck Kyle Mills's first ball for four through mid-off but the left-hander chased a wide delivery by the same bowler to give Styris an upish catch at the slip on 12.

His opening partner Zunaed, who came to his ninth ODI on the back of a total of 62 runs with an average of 7.75, finally put his acts together to notch his maiden ODI fifty -- 85 off 137 deliveries -- to shape the Tigers' first ODI win against a Test nation since their World Cup defeat of South Africa on April 7, 2007.

Man-of-the-match Zunaed kept his head down during a 67-run association with Mushfiqur Rahim, who was promoted to number three and responded with a gritty 59-ball 30, before sharing 109 runs with Ashraful in the day's most significant partnership.

The left and right combination of Zunaed and Ashraful never let the Kiwi attack settle on a line and even a spinner of Vettori's class struggled, the left-arm failing to grab any success in nine overs.

Zunaed, who celebrates his 21st birthday on October 30, sent the ball eight times to the ropes but made most of two lives in the 40s -- both times dropped by Styris off his own bowling -- to complete 50 runs. Just eight runs short of victory, the youngster from Rajshahi who was looking very tired, was deceived by awkward bounce from Mark Gillespie to edge the ball to Oram behind point.

Ashraful's captain's knock once again proved why Bangladesh have

Six powers to discuss Iran in a few days: US

AFP, Washington

The six powers trying to scale back Iran's nuclear ambitions will consult soon via telephone about the "next steps" to take at the United Nations, a State Department official said Wednesday.

Top State Department and foreign ministry officials from the United States, Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia will debate further UN Security Council action to halt Iran's sensitive nuclear work, the official said.

"We have a political directors phone call that will probably take place in the next several days. It hasn't been finally nailed down yet in terms of timing," said the official who was speaking on the condition of anonymity.

William Burns, the third-ranking official at the State Department, and his colleagues will discuss "next steps in the UN Security Council," the official said.

On the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York on September 29, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said the six powers would "move forward" with further measures against Iran over its nuclear defiance.

She spoke two days after the 15-member Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution urging Iran to suspend its sensitive nuclear fuel work, but offering no new sanctions and merely reaffirming existing ones.

The United States and its European allies had pushed for new, tougher sanctions against Tehran but ran into resistance from Russia and China.

The UN Security Council has already imposed three sets of sanctions on Iran for its refusal to heed international calls to stop uranium enrichment.

The West and Israel have accused Iran of using its nuclear programme as a cover to build nuclear arms. But Tehran insists its programme is strictly peaceful and solely aimed at generating electricity.

EC worry deepens

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official in the EC Secretariat said.

The project for preparing voter list with photographs and facilitating issuance of national identity cards is scheduled to hand over the voter list to the EC on October 12.

"We are trying our best to remove the difficulties the Election Commission is facing regarding the demarcated constituencies," EC counsel Shaheed Malik told The Daily Star.

Former BNP lawmaker Abdul Mannan filed a writ petition challenging the EC's July 10 gazette notification that finalised the re-demarcation of 300 parliamentary constituencies.

Following the petition, the HC on August 7 stayed the effectiveness of the notification for three months and issued a ruling on the government and the EC asking them to explain in two weeks why the notification should not be declared unconstitutional and illegal.

The HC stay order will expire on November 6. But Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda on Wednesday said the EC would announce the schedule for the ninth parliamentary polls on November 1 or 2.

Now either the HC rule will have to be disposed of or the stay will have to be vacated in October to clear ways for the announcement of the election schedule, said legal experts.

"If the stay remains in force until November 6, the Election Commission cannot announce the election schedule on November 1 or 2," one of them said.

Meanwhile, because of the stay order the EC cannot begin two of its vital tasks -- preparing the constituency-wise electoral rolls and finalising the list of polling stations.

Prospective candidates also cannot start their election preparations because of the uncertainty about the constituencies. Many of them already communicated with the EC to know about the fate of the recent re-demarcation, EC officials said.

EC Secretariat officials, however, said they might begin preparing the constituency-wise voter lists and the list of polling stations on the bases of the new and old parliamentary boundaries.

"We are planning to prepare two sets of them considering the urgency,

Durga puja

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idols in water after inviting her to return to them next year.

In the morning, Bijoya Dashami -- the last day of the festival -- was celebrated at around 22,000 puja mandaps across the country. The last day of the puja asserts reaffirming peace and good relations amongst people. Families visit each other to share sweets during the Dashami festival.

In the capital city, thousands of men, women and children joined the traditional idols immersion procession. The procession, comprising with 62 trucks carrying 32 idols of Durga, was brought out from Palashi near Dhakeshwari National Temple.

It ended at Waizghat after parading through different city streets. In the evening, the idols were immersed in the Buriganga amid sadness and tears.

The government took tight security measures through out the five-day long festival. Members of different law enforcement agencies escorted the procession and stayed with them till the immersion of the idols was completed.

A large number of law enforcers including the Rapid Action Battalion stood guard over the puja mandaps.

Nirmal Chatterjee, joint secretary of the Mahanagar Sarbajaneen Puja Committee, said around ten thousand people participated in the procession. Hindu community leader CR Dutta and Nim Chandra Bhomik among others, attended the immersion procession.

Idols from around 40 Puja Mandaps of the city were gathered at Shankhari Bazar Puja Mandap and then immersed into the Buriganga at Ganakuti.

Durga Puja is the worship of 'Shakti' or divine power embodied in Devi Durga. It symbolises the battle between good and evil where the dark forces eventually succumb to the divine forces.

The day was marked with a public holiday. On the occasion, President Prof Dr Iajuddin Ahmed and his wife Prof Dr Anwara Begum hosted a reception for the Hindus at Bangabhaban yesterday.

The state-run and private television channels and radios aired special programmes while newspapers published special supplements to mark the festival.

In Chittagong, devout Hindus immersed the idols in the Bay of Bengal along the Patenga sea beach in the port city amid a security cordon effected by Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) and Rab.

Thousands of devotees from all corners of the city, carrying the idols gathered along the beach and immersed the Durga idols.

Leaders of different political parties, social, cultural organisations and members of the civil society greeted the Hindu community on the occasion. They also visited different puja mandaps across the country.

World leaders

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initial market rebound, with the Tokyo Stock Exchange's benchmark Nikkei-225 index rising into positive territory for the first time in a week before closing down 0.5 percent.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index rose 2.65 percent in afternoon trade, recovering some of its recent losses.

Early reaction on the markets in Europe was also positive. London's stock market rebounded 2.48 percent in morning trading, French stocks rising 2.09 percent at the start of trading and Frankfurt's DAX opening 0.81 percent higher.

Wall Street on Wednesday dropped 2.01 percent after a highly volatile session. The Dow Jones Industrial Average has shed 14.7 percent over the past six trading days.

Justin Urquhart-Stewart, marketing director at Seven Investment Management, said the rate cuts were "exactly what we needed, and reinforces the message this is a coordinated international response to a very dangerous situation."

"Now that we've reached Defcon One in the banking system, thank heavens we're getting the right reaction, because the alternative is unthinkable," he added. Defcon One is the US military's highest level of alert.

Britain's Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who announced an 875-billion-dollar package Wednesday that involved a possible partial nationalisation of several banks, urged European counterparts to follow suit to help begin thawing the global credit freeze.

"This is an issue which affects us all. A concerted approach with national schemes ... would address this problem," he wrote in a letter to French President Nicolas Sarkozy, current EU president which was copied to other EU leaders.

German Finance Minister Peer Steinbrueck said he saw no immediate need to nationalise any of his country's banks but this could change. He said "the German banking sector has been hit badly by the financial crisis but less hard" than other countries, Steinbrueck told the Handelsblatt daily.

"But this might change as uncertainties about future developments are currently much too high."

Speaking on French television, European Central Bank chief Jean-Claude Trichet said "excessive pessimism is ill-advised."

"We all together call upon the market participants who are in this state of intense turbulence, we tell them to collect themselves," he said. "There are elements of confidence out there."

With top economic policy makers headed to Washington for the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, Trichet said: "It is very important that we coordinate as closely as possible."

Jamaat to go for EC

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According to the EC's announcement, political parties must apply by October 15 for registration on meeting the conditions laid down in the revised Representation of the People Order (RPO).

After the commission moved to ease the registration procedure to allow the parties to register by amending their constitutions provisionally, Awami League, Jatiya Party and some other organisations decided to get registered.

BNP too does not seem to have any major problem with fulfilling the criteria. But Jamaat must contend with bringing some fundamental changes to its constitution, observed political analysts.

Of the registration stipulations, those that threaten Jamaat's standing as a hard-line Islamic organisation rule the party leadership, they added.

On August 28, the Jamaat secretary general filed a writ petition with the High Court (HC) challenging the criteria.

The same day the HC issued a ruling on the government and the EC asking them to explain why three RPO sections including the ones restricting registration of religion-based parties should not be declared illegal.

Jamaat had been maintaining that the commission should not enforce the provisions until the court's rule is settled.

Of the criteria it opposed, one says a political party shall not be qualified for registration if objectives in its constitution run counter to those in the country's.

Another says a party shall be adjudged ineligible to register if its statute seems to encourage discriminations on grounds of religion, race, caste, language or sex.

The party voiced reservations also about having a specific constitutional provision to ensure at least 33 percent positions at all committees are reserved for women by the year 2020.

According to constitution experts, Jamaat's charter clearly undermines the preamble of the constitution of the people's republic of Bangladesh.

The preamble reads: "... it shall be a fundamental aim of the state to realise through the democratic process a socialist society, free from exploitation -- a society in which the rule of law, fundamental human rights and freedom, equality and justice, political, economic and social, will be secured for all citizens."

Aims and objectives of Jamaat's constitution, on the other hand, are to establish Khelafat (Islamic rule) and get mankind to follow and practise Allah-directed life without adhering to any manmade ideologies or rules.

At this point, the legal experts said, Jamaat's constitution rejects the supreme law of the republic that is manmade.

In fact, there are disagreements in many respects, they added.

As per Jamaat's statute, one will have to swear complete allegiance to Allah and his prophet (sm) to join the organisation.

This means only devout Muslims can be a member or leader of Jamaat-

Le Clezio

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"Revolutions" from 2003 as summing up "the most important themes of his work: memory, exile, the reorientations of youth, cultural conflict."

The emphasis in Le Clezio's work has increasingly moved in the direction of an exploration of the world of childhood and of his own family history," it added.

Le Clezio is an avid traveller, and his fiction is as likely to be set in Mexico or the Sahara as in Paris or London.

With his first novel, "Le Procès-Verbal" (1963, The Interrogation), published when he was only 23, Le Clezio was seen as a newcomer to the Nouveau Roman (New Novel) movement spearheaded by Alain Robbe-Grillet.

But he defied easy classification and rapidly became a cult author, a lonely chronicler -- rarely given to making public statements -- of the perils of modern life, particularly in its urban variety.

A passionate admirer of two other great travellers, Robert Louis Stevenson and Joseph Conrad, Le Clezio won the Renaudot award in 1963 for "Le Procès-Verbal," France's second most prestigious literary award after the Goncourt prize.

His latest novel "Ritournelle de la faim" (Same Old Story about Hunger) released this year has been hailed as breaking new ground, exploring French guilt over its wartime past.

The story revolves around Ethel, a young girl growing up in the French bourgeoisie whose self-satisfied existence is shattered by the war.

"Jean-Marie Le Clezio is a great French monument who towers over our literature," said critic Franz-Olivier Giesbert.

Among the better-known of his more than 20 novels are "La Guerre" (1970, War), "Mondo" (1978), "Desert" (1980), "Le Chercheur d'Or" (1985, The Prospector), "Onitsha" (1991) and "Etoile Errante" (1992, Wandering Star).

"Wandering Star" and "Onitsha" are among his works that have been translated into English.

Le Clezio was born in the Riviera city of Nice on April 13, 1940 to an English father and French mother; the family had roots in both Brittany and the Indian Ocean island state of Mauritius.

He went on to study literature, and taught briefly at the universities of London and Bristol.

Earlier this year, he won Sweden's Stig Dagerman literary prize, a distinction he shares with Austrian writer Elfriede Jelinek who took the honours in 2004 before going on to win the Nobel later the same year.

Le Clezio will receive the Nobel diploma, medal and a cheque for 10 million kronor (1.02 million euros, 1.42 million dollars) at a formal ceremony in Stockholm on December 10.

Last year, the prize went to British writer Doris Lessing.

N Korea navy warns of possible sea clash with S Korea

AFP, Seoul

North Korea's naval command on Thursday accused South Korean ships of violating its territorial waters in the Yellow Sea and warned that escalating tensions could lead to a clash.

The warning came two days after the headline communist country fired short-range missiles in the Yellow Sea, the scene of bloody naval clashes in 1999 and 2002.

"The situation... has become so tense that a naval clash may break out due to such military provocations as the ceaseless infiltration of warships deep into the (North's) territorial waters," the state news agency KCNA quoted a naval spokesman as saying.

He accused the South's navy of sending more warships into the North's territorial waters since early September in an attempt to set the disputed sea border known as the Northern Limit Line (NLL).

The two Koreas have remained technically at war since their 1950-1953 conflict ended in a fragile armistice, rather than a peace treaty.

North Korea has never recognised the sea border with the South that was drawn up by a US-led UN Command after the war, and it is a frequent flashpoint between them. Pyongyang puts the border at further south.

45 rebels

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The LTTE has been fighting for a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka since 1972.

Fighting is currently centered around the north where troops are advancing on the rebels' headquarters in the town of Kilinochchi, 330 kilometres (208 miles) north of Colombo.

A Sri Lankan military advance on the stronghold of the rebel Tamil Tigers in the island's northeast triggered heavy fighting that claimed casualties on both sides, the defence ministry said yesterday.

Ground troops backed by warplanes inched towards the rebel capital of Kilinochchi on Wednesday killing 45 guerrillas and wounding 30, the ministry said. It placed government troop losses at eight dead and 48 injured.

The government is looking to deal the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) a major psychological blow by taking control of Kilinochchi, which has been the rebels' administrative centre for the past decade.

Having wrestled the east from the rebels in July 2007, Sri Lanka's army chief said over the weekend that his soldiers had reached the outskirts of the town.

The United Nations estimates 230,000 people have been displaced in the recent wave of fighting in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts.

The head of the LTTE's political wing, B. Nadesan, accused the Sri Lankan government on Thursday of launching a "genocidal war".

He said thousands of Tamils had been uprooted from their homes and villages and forced to seek refuge in the open as a result of the military offensive.

Sri Lanka pulled out of a six-year Norwegian-brokered truce in January, since when the military says 7,303 rebels and 715 soldiers have been killed.

IIRO accounts

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Following the allegation of the IIRO's link with the al-Qaeda, the Bangladesh Bank suspended its bank accounts in Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, Islami Bank earlier this year informed the BB in a letter that the IIRO has been involved in health, education and socio-economic development programmes of the country since 1990 and neither the BB nor the NGO Affairs Bureau has taken any regulatory measures against the IIRO so far.

It also mentioned that the NGO Affairs Bureau has recently approved a Tk 60 crore 'Health, Education, Socio-Economic Development' project for the years 2007-12.

The IIRO has already allocated Tk 10 crore for the first phase of the project and asked the project officials to withdraw the fund from Islami Bank, Gulshan Branch.

Following the approval of the fund Islami Bank sought permission from the BB to re-activate the frozen account of IIRO so that it can withdraw the fund.

The IIRO has a fund of Tk 26.56 lakh with the Bahrain-based bank, the Bank Alfalah, and IIRO requested the bank to resume the operation of its account. Following the request Bank Alfalah requested Bangladesh Bank to provide it with the information about the present condition of IIRO bank account.

Earlier, Bangladesh Bank following the reports of alleged link of the IIRO with the al-Qaeda halted two bank accounts of the IIRO at Islami Bank and Social Investment Bank Ltd (SIBL) with whom IIRO had 50,445 shes worth Tk 1,000 each.

The BB suspended distribution of dividend against the shares of the IIRO with the SIBL while the Islami Bank voluntarily froze bank accounts of IIRO.

A high official of the Bangladesh Bank said the US Embassy had sought account information of IIRO under an UN resolution. But as the government currently is undertaking a project funded by the IIRO, the BB is seeking information from the foreign ministry regarding the status of the IIRO bank accounts.

Suicide blast

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"A green car entered and parked in front of the anti-terrorist building. The driver got out and presented two baskets of sweets to the officials sitting at the reception desk. It was followed by a big explosion," Gardezi said.

Body parts were found at the scene, which he said have belonged to the bomber, he said.

Emergency workers in orange jackets clambered over a huge pile of rubble to check for any people trapped inside. The blast exposed the interior of the building, collapsed a staircase and left a large crater.

The bombing comes less than three weeks after a suicide truck bombing at the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad, one of the worst terror attacks in Pakistan's history, in which 60 people were killed.

It also happened despite a huge security deployment in Islamabad to protect parliamentarians on the second day of a closed-door session at which security chiefs outlined their strategy for tackling militancy.

Shortly after the Islamabad blast, a remote-controlled bomb hit a police prison van and a school bus in the Upper Dir region of northwestern Pakistan, police and a government official said.

Three school children, four policemen and three prisoners died in the attack, they said.

"The van was carrying prisoners to jail after court proceedings when the roadside remote-controlled bomb went off," local mayor Sahibzada Tariqullah said, confirming the deaths of the policemen and the prisoners.

Senior police official Khurshid Khan said the three children were killed as their school bus was driving past at the time of the blast.

Upper Dir borders on Swat, a former tourist region dubbed the "Switzerland of Pakistan" where security forces have been battling pro-Taliban militants who tried to enforce harsh Sharia law a year ago.

Pakistani fighter jets and helicopter gunships Thursday destroyed a Taliban facility in Swat, killing 20 militants, security officials said.

Five civilians also died in crossfire between troops and militants in Swat, they said.

The strike targeted a rebel stronghold in Pochar, a village in the Swat valley, a former tourist area once dubbed the "Switzerland of Pakistan" where troops have been battling extremists since last year.

"Helicopter gunships and jets targeted militant strongholds in Pochar, inflicting heavy casualties on them" a security official told AFP.

Myanmar

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Talking to the media, the adviser said Maung Aye's visit has opened up a new chapter in bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Myanmar.

He said, "General Maung Aye was accompanied by seven ministers, senior officials and businessmen. We had set up meetings for most of them with our Bangladeshi counterparts. To the best of my knowledge so far, yesterday's meetings were very fruitful."

The adviser further stated that improving relationship with neighbours is a key cornerstone of Bangladesh's foreign policy.

According to our Rangamati correspondent, Gen Maung Aye landed at Rangamati at about 10.45am. Army Chief Gen Moeen U Ahmed accompanied him.

Maj Gen Shamim Chowdhury received Maung Aye at local circuit house.

Later, the Myanmar leader enjoyed a cruise in Kaptai Lake in an air force vessel and a cultural function at Gishshova Restaurant in Rangamati at 3.00pm.