

Clarke sinks Pakistan

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Michael Clarke's all-round performance helped his team give Pakistan a dose of their own medicine as Australia won the third day-night international by 27 runs at Abu Dhabi Stadium here on Monday.

The 28-year-old hit a fighting 66 to anchor an otherwise struggling Australian innings which helped them reach 198-7 in their allotted 50 overs before claiming 3-15 to bowl Pakistan out for 171 in 47.1 overs.

Clarke's brilliant bowling -- which saw Pakistan lose their ten wickets in the space of 76 runs -- steered his team to a 2-1 lead in the five-match series. Pakistan won the first match by four wickets, while Australia clinched the second by six wickets -- both played in Dubai last week.

The remaining two matches will be played here on May 1 and 3. The only Twenty20 match is scheduled for Dubai on May 7.

Shoaib Malik (30) and Sohail Tanvir (11) added 22 for

Zardari doubts bin Laden is still alive

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari said yesterday that Pakistani intelligence believes al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden is dead but acknowledged they had no evidence.

"The Americans tell me they don't know, and they are much more equipped than us to trace him. And our own intelligence services obviously think that he does not exist any more, that he is dead," Zardari told reporters.

"But there is no evidence, you cannot take that as a fact," he said. "We are between facts and fiction."

Zardari was responding to reports that Pakistani Taliban in the troubled Swat valley have said they would welcome bin Laden if he wants to visit the former Pakistani hill resort which is now in the hands of Islamists.

"The question is whether he is alive or dead. There is no trace of him," the president said.

Economic crisis

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The bank will respond by tapping its healthy balance sheet to increase lending up to \$100 billion over three years and launch initiatives in social protection, public works and agriculture, he said.

Zoellick spoke at a news conference that wrapped up weekend meetings of the World Bank and its sister institution, the International Monetary Fund, aimed at determining what additional action is needed to counteract the worst financial crisis in decades. The weekend kicked off with a meeting of finance ministers of the Group of Seven major industrialized nations that expanded into a meeting of the Group of 20 nations, bringing in such rising economic powerhouses as Brazil, India and China.

There was general agreement at the meetings that voting shares of those nations in the IMF and World Bank should be increased to reflect the changed global economic situation. Ministers pledged to examine ways to do that.

The closing news conference took an unexpected turn when Mexican Finance Minister Agustín Carstens, chairman of the World Bank policy-steering committee, outlined steps his government was taking to confront an outbreak of swine flu. He disclosed that the bank was providing a \$25 million loan for medicine and logistical help and another \$180 million for operational needs.

Zoellick said already-mobilized bank public health experts with experience dealing with SARS, or severe, acute respiratory syndrome, and Asian bird flu would provide practical help to Mexico.

In their communique, ministers at the bank meeting said "more needs to be done" as the financial crisis unfolds.

"We urge all donors to accelerate delivery of commitments to increase aid and for all to go beyond existing commitments," the ministers said.

While they met, small groups of protesters demonstrated near the headquarters

of the eighth wicket to raise hopes of Pakistan's win before both were dismissed on the same score of 170.

Clarke and Nathan Hauritz got two wickets each off successive deliveries as Pakistan, fast approaching the target with openers Salman Butt (48) and Ahmed Shahzad (40), having put 95 for the first wicket in 22 overs, lost four wickets in the space of 12 runs.

Off-spinner Hauritz (2-25) struck with the first ball of the 23 over, forcing an edge off Butt's bat for a smart low catch in the slip. Butt hit seven boundaries during his 77-ball knock.

The very next ball, Younus Khan spooned a catch to mid-on off a ball which stopped on him.

2 die

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The ICDDR,B sources say 65 to 70 percent patients are suffering from severe diarrhoea. Every day more than 800 patients are seeking treatment at the Centre, which crossed 1,027 on April 11.

"Normally we receive some 400 to 450 patients during the pre-monsoon season every year. This time the rush of patients has broken the record of last 40 years," said Dr Azharul Islam Khan, head of the short stay unit, ICDDR,B.

According to Dhaka Medical College Hospital authorities, the department of medicine is receiving more than 3,000 patients suffering from different diseases every day at the outdoor. The normal number of patients at this department is around 2,500.

Some 15 percent of the total patients seeking treatment at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Hospital are suffering from diarrhoea, said Emergency Medical Officer Dr Saiful.

Around 22 people died of diarrhoea in the last one month, while 2,292 more patients were admitted to hospitals in 40 districts in last 24 hours.

Meantime, over 300 students largely affected by viral fever, cough, throat and chest pain and also with problems of diarrhoea and skin diseases are taking treatment every day, said sources at Dhaka University Medical Centre.

During April 19-25, 2,001 students received treatment with registration from the allopathic section of the Centre, whereas the number was 1,220 during March 19-25.

of the two organizations three blocks from the White House. They chanted "IMF, tear it down. World Bank, tear it down."

Ministers attending the IMF-World Bank meetings said they saw signs that the world economy is stabilizing, but it will take until mid-2010 for the world to emerge from the worst recession in decades. They said stimulus packages, bank recapitalization and other actions taken by governments and central banks to deal with the crisis are beginning to show results.

"Carefully, cautiously, we can say that there is a break in the clouds," Egyptian Finance Minister Youssef Boutros-Ghali, chairman of the IMF's International Monetary and Financial Committee, said Saturday. He said some financial markets are trending up and other economic indicators are improving, "but there are still downside risks."

On Saturday, as protesters demonstrated in the streets, the finance ministers tried to work out details of the \$1.1 trillion plan that President Barack Obama and his G-20 counterparts announced at their recent summit in London. There was much talk about how to come up with the fresh \$500 billion infusion that the G-20 pledged to the IMF at the summit. More than \$300 billion is already pledged by the U.S., the European Union, Japan, Canada, Switzerland and Norway. It remains unclear which countries will open their wallets wider -- or at all.

To make up the shortage, the IMF agreed to sell bonds -- something it's never done in its 65 years -- to emerging economies such as China, Brazil and India. Those nations have said they want a greater voice at the IMF before they'll provide additional resources.

The bonds would help reach the goal announced at the G-20 in London, but provide shorter-term financing than the pledges made by the U.S., European Union, Japan and others.

Khaleda notice

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Talking to reporters after the meeting Law Minister Shafique Ahmed and State Minister Qamrul Islam said the government did not deem it necessary to reply Khaleda's notice. It is rather preparing to face the issue legally, they added.

"The government will take legal action, as per cabinet decision, if she does not vacate the house within 15 days," said Qamrul Islam.

Talking to The Daily Star another minister preferring not to be quoted said Hasina told the meeting that Awami League would face the issue politically if the opposition took to the street.

"What she [Khaleda] wants to do about the matter? If she goes to the court, the government will go to the court and if she takes it politically we will face it politically," Hasina was quoted as saying by the minister.

At the meeting Hasina asked her cabinet colleagues not to speak to the media out of his or her ministry's jurisdiction.

She also requested the ministers and state ministers to speak very less about the issue to avoid controversy, sources said.

Power crisis

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DPDC is operating in about 65 percent areas in the city while Desco in the rest 35 percent.

Saleh Ahmed said, "We are trying to ensure utmost electricity supply to the Wasa water pumps so that there is no interruption in the water supply."

Dhaka city now gets 1,400 MW against a demand for more than 2,000 MW of electricity.

Meanwhile, though the Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Factory Ltd (CUFL) was shut down yesterday to divert its 40 million cubic feet of gas to Rajan Power Plant to increase power generation in the region, but the power plant could not get ready to receive the diverted gas supply.

PDB Chairman Alamgir Kabir said that the Rajan station could get ready to receive the additional supply by Wednesday.

"Gas supply system is a technical task which takes a little time to get everything ready properly," he said.

Two power generation units, each having a de-rated 180 MW capacity, were forced to reduce production by 120 MW each because of gas shortages.

"We are hopeful that if additional gas is properly supplied, the two units would be able to increase generation to 360 MW from the present level of 240 MW," said the PDB chairman.

"The planned generation enhancement will improve power supply in the Chittagong region from Wednesday," he added.

Focus on

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Talking to The Daily Star over phone yesterday, PAC Chairman KH Rashiduzzaman said it would help recover public money if the committee could unearth the cases of embezzlement, if there's any.

Enquired why the emphasis is more on the last seven years, he said, "Taking disciplinary measures after examining the audit objections that are decades old might prove difficult as many of the individuals responsible for anomalies and misuse of public money might have already died."

About the CAG recommendation to form sub-committees, he said they would decide on it later. "If necessary, we will form sub-committees."

About the fate of a huge number of unresolved audit objections before 2000, Rashiduzzaman said they would discuss the matter.

Earlier, coming out of the meeting he told reporters that PAC would give priority to scrutinising the objections to the government expenditure on power, energy and water.

"People are suffering immensely for power, gas, and water crises. So, we have decided to prioritise scrutiny of the audit objections regarding spending in these sectors," he said.

The CAG report also suggests that the committee review implementation of the decisions taken by PACs in the previous three parliaments.

The then public accounts committees had directed the ministries concerned to recover the money embezzled.

Wasa water poses

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safe hygienically; maybe not aesthetically as it stinks," said Chief Engineer Md Nurul Haque.

Over 10,000 diarrhoea patients, who drank polluted water, were committed to the ICDDR,B cholera hospital, while 30 of them died in this season only.

The hospital sources say this year the number of such patients is much higher than that of the previous years.

Experts say drinking this stinky water for long time increases the risk of different diseases like cancer, liver diseases and jaundice.

A study conducted by IWM and supported by the World Bank found "extremely high organic pollution" in the waters test results. The report also mentions high concentration of total dissolved solids, chloride, sulphate, ammonia, cadmium and the heavy metal chromium in the polluted water.

In some areas including Hazaribagh, Tarabo and other localities near the Buriganga concentration of some chemicals are found at higher than the Bangladesh standard, the report mentions.

The Institute of Water Modelling (IWM) conducted the study for the World Bank as their internal report in 2006 but they never published it.

Of the water supplied by Wasa, only 15 percent comes

from surface water sources and the rest they lift by deep water pumps.

Due to pollution in surface waters, the city dwellers mainly have to depend on groundwater. It has been observed that excessive withdrawal of groundwater is lowering the city water table for long.

Another study of Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council shows the groundwater table has fallen one metre or more posing a great threat to the sustainability of the city itself.

Asked about the quality of drinking water, M Minnathulla, chief of the environmental programme of the WB, briefly said the quality of drinking water in the city is not good.

The demand for fresh drinking water is rising rapidly thanks to increasing population and industrial growth.

Dhaka is projected to be the world's fourth most populous metropolis by 2020 with 22 million inhabitants, according to the United Nations Population Fund.

Currently, Wasa is producing around 1,200 Ml/day for the urban water supply from about 423 deep tube-wells.

The Wasa is already facing problems in extracting groundwater this year in many areas including Mirpur, Shyamoli, Khilgaon and Basabo, insiders say.

BDR carnage

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confusion whether public prosecutors will at all be needed in this case.

The government also appointed two other SC lawyers -- Syed Haider Ali and Mosharrar Hossain Kajal -- as public prosecutors for the case.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday at his Secretariat office told newsmen that he did not know whether any public prosecutor was appointed for the case.

Anisul Huq, also a state counsel for Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman assassination case, told The Daily Star at his Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) chamber yesterday afternoon that he received a letter signed by Mir Shafiqul Alam, a deputy solicitor under the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Thursday night appointing him as chief public prosecutor of the case.

He said Syed Haider, a former deputy attorney general (DAG), and Mosharrar Hossain Kajal, a lawyer for ACC and state counsel for Bangabandhu killing case, was appointed public prosecutors in the Pilkhana carnage case.

Earlier, talking to newsmen, Anisul Huq said if the

case is tried under the Bangladesh Army Act, 1952, there is no need for public prosecutors.

"The case is now under investigation and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has been conducting the enquiry into the incident. Under which law the accused of the case will be tried shall be determined after completion of the investigation process," he said.

He said the investigation of the case is going on under conventional laws.

When asked why they have been appointed as prosecutors, since there is no scope for appointing public prosecutors under the Army Act, Anisul said, "I do not know why the government appointed us. The government knows best."

He said, "Prosecutors can be needed during the investigation of any case. Perhaps, we have been appointed to examine the legal aspects of the investigation."

Replying to a question on why the minister does not know about the appointment, he said he does not know what is going on with the appointment of prosecutors.

"There may be something wrong with our appointments and I will ask the law minister about it," he said.

Embassies asked

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University, Bangladesh Open University, Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University, Jagannath University, National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam University (Mymensingh) and Sylhet Agricultural University.

Besides, Terrestrial Telecast Facilities Preservation for Bangladesh Television Act 2009 was approved by the cabinet, exclusively reserving the right to the state-run Bangladesh Television (BTV).

PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad at a post-meeting briefing at the PID conference centre said BTV will continue to get terrestrial facilities as it is a state institution.

The BTV will use the terrestrial facilities for the spread of education, the flourishing of culture and heritage and disseminating development message to the people. "Others will not get the facility," Azad said.

If necessary, BTV will launch another separate channel to telecast parliamentary activities and educational programmes," Azad quoted the PM saying.

Addressing her colleagues at the first cabinet meeting after returning from Saudi Arabia, Hasina said Bangladesh expatriates in Makkah in public raised various allegations against the ambassador and officials of the Bangladesh embassy and consulate office over there.

"Not only from Saudi Arabia, from many other countries we have received allegation of neglect of duty against embassy officials," Azad quoted Hasina as saying.

The PM said the embassy and consulate officials should change their attitude and mentality and concentrate on

well being of the expatriates whose hard-earned money keeps the country's economy vibrant.

Hasina informed the cabinet about pros and cons of her April 21-25 visit to Saudi Arabia.

She expressed her happiness to the Saudi government has settled the problem related to transfer of iqama (work permit).

On April 21, the Saudi King and the Saudi Foreign Minister in Riyadh informed the PM that their cabinet had decided to allow transfer of iqama of the expatriates.

The PM also informed the meeting that she sought lands in Makkah and Madinah to set up dormitories for accommodation of hajj pilgrims from Bangladesh.

Taking the problem of education of the expatriates' children in Saudi Arabia into account, she further said the government would take initiatives to establish two schools in Makkah and Madinah.

War crimes trial

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the purview of the trial process and the list of freedom fighters would also be corrected.

"Special allowances would be given to freedom fighters who served in the army," he said.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Hasan Mahmud said the government would seek help, if necessary, from countries that have tried their war criminals.

The minister told this to journalists yesterday after meeting Aiko Simareji, member of Japan's house of council.

Hamid

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get office rooms in the old MP hostels adjacent to the parliament building.

Ministers, whips, the leader of the House, the leader of the opposition, and chairmen of parliamentary standing committees already have office rooms in the parliament building.

All rooms in the old MP hostels remain unused as lawmakers are provided with apartments in the NAM Building since the last parliament.

The lawmakers have been demanding for a long time that they be provided with office rooms for enabling them to perform their parliamentary duties properly.

"The members of parliament will be able to perform properly if they are provided with offices," Hamid said.

Meanwhile, Chinese Ambassador in Bangladesh Zhang Xiany met Speaker Abdul Hamid in his parliament office yesterday.

"During the meeting, they discussed matters of mutual and bilateral interests, with particular reference to exchange of parliamentary delegations between the two friendly countries in the days ahead," said a news release of the Parliament Secretariat.

RU professor

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China and London in 1990, 92 and 93 respectively.

Dr Khan represented Bangladesh in the 30th General Conference of UNESCO held in Paris in November, 1999 and made valuable contribution in the proclamation of 21st February as the "International Mother Language Day."

BDR man

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Shamim Reja of Taluigachha company was taken to Sathkira Sadar Hospital in a critical condition.

Later he was moved to Jessor Combined Military Hospital as his condition deteriorated, hospital sources said.

Sources said the incident happened as a BDR patrol team led by Nayek Subedar Shamim chased a group of smugglers who were trying to enter Bangladesh territory with smuggled goods from India.

BSF men of Amudia camp under Swarupnagar police station of India, opposite Taluigachha camp under Sadar upazila, opened fire indiscriminately on BDR patrol team while it reached Kambarani area.

The incident left the BDR man Shamim Reja seriously injured as he received bullet in his left hand.

Gunfire between BDR and BSF continued for half an hour from 7:45am to 8:15am at Taluigachha border, sources added.

Mahbube Rashid, deputy assistant director of 41 Rifles Battalion, told The Daily Star that they sent a protest letter condemning the BSF attack on BDR men.

Passengers

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a meeting took the decision as a part of strengthening the regular surveillance across the country.

and family welfare ministry at a meeting took the decision as a part of strengthening the regular surveillance across the country.

At the same time, training on the disease would be imparted to the health staffs and immigration officers at the airport while travel advisories would be provided to the outbound airport passengers. Messages regarding coughing etiquette would also be disseminated among the passengers, sources at the meeting said.

Though the IEDCR examines sample of influenza collecting across the country round the year, it is yet to find any change in its samples. However, the government will take the measures to prevent Swine flu caused by H1N1 strain.

Stay on case

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awarding Barapukuria coal-mine operation contract to a Chinese company. Ten former ministers from BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami are among the other accused.

The HC granted bail to Khaleda Zia in this case last year, and has lately extended the operation of that order, Mahbuddin Khokon told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, in two other corruption cases, the High Court yesterday extended for a year its stay orders against the proceedings against Khaleda's younger brother Shamim Iskander and Ismat Ara, wife of Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka.

Talks with Taliban

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"We are demanding a suspension of the operation so that Sufi Muhammad is able to get out of his village."

He added: "The operation is contrary to the peace agreement, and we believe there is no point talking peace when there is violence in the area. But a decision on that will be taken by our [council]."

The situation in Lower Dir remains tense as families continue to flee the battle zone.

The Pakistani military said troops killed another 20 militants today in the Maidan area.

The NWFP government said earlier that at least 25 suspected militants were killed on Sunday when they attacked army convoys.

The clashes started when the government deployed troops in some areas of the district over the weekend.

Hundreds of civilians have been fleeing the conflict zone. Correspondents say this was presumably to prevent an incursion by militants similar to the recent one in Buner district.

The operation came after 12 children were killed in Lower Dir on Saturday after playing with a bomb they mistook for a football.

Civilians have begun leaving the Lower Dir area but many are

still trapped in their villages.

Karimullah, a farmer in the Samarbagh area of Lower Dir, told Reuters news agency: "I am leaving everything here and taking my family. We can't take a risk with troops fighting the Taliban."

The Taliban spokesman in Swat, Mullah Khan, accused the government of violating the terms of the peace agreement in Swat.

The Taliban warned of militant attacks in all parts of Malakand division -- the group of six districts where the new Sharia law has been enforced -- if the military operation in Dir was not halted.

The government and the military say they still want to abide by the terms of the Swat peace deal and consider it intact.

However, they believe that the Taliban are yet to fulfil their part of the deal, which is to disarm and to concede administrative power to government departments.

In Buner, the presence of the Taliban continues in main towns despite an announcement on Friday that they would leave the area and go back to their bases in Swat.

Troops have still not advanced beyond a border village.

Swine flu

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Israel who fell ill following travel to Mexico, World Health Organisation (WHO) experts will meet in Geneva on Tuesday to discuss whether to raise the pandemic alert level and the European Commission also said it was calling an urgent meeting of health ministers to discuss the situation.

The global outbreak of swine flu spread fear of economic contagion through financial markets and the travel sector yesterday, blighting any green shoots of recovery from the financial crisis, AFP adds.

The travel and tourism sectors were hit particularly hard by memories of how the bird flu scare that began in 2003 had reduced the number of travellers and cost the airline sector billions of dollars.

The latest swine fever scare scythed through stock markets, cutting back gains made last week on some signs that the global economic crisis may be bottoming out.

But some pharmaceutical groups were in fine form on prospects for sales of their flu treatments and related supplies.

Wall Street showed an opening fall of 0.96 percent after losses in Europe of 0.71 to 2.54 percent, a slight gain in Tokyo where the yen firmed against a flu-weakened dollar, and sharp falls in Hong Kong and South Korea attributed mainly to flu fever.

BBC says the World Bank is providing Mexico with more than \$200m in loans to help it deal with the outbreak while shares in airlines have fallen sharply on fears about their economic impact of the outbreak.