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NEVER ENDING WAIT...

1. A long wait for Indrani Pal at Shahjalal International Airport in the city yesterday for the return of her son Sadananda Pal from Libya.
2. Family members of migrants wait outside the airport hoping to catch a glimpse of their loved ones.
3. Delwar shows some of the 72 stitches on the injuries he received amidst the violent clashes in Libya.
4. A safe return could barely ease the thought of their unknown future.
5. One migrant shows a Khabja, a type of bread common in Libya. 20 men had to share one bread during mealtime.
5. One returnee exits the airport, lucky to escape with a luggage.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



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Freedom finally

FROM PAGE 1
and the ship started for Salah at 10:25am," he told reporters at an office in Agrabad of Chittagong.

Brave Royal and the ship's owning firm SR Shipping Ltd organised the press briefing.

On arrival at Salah, the crew will be first taken for some physical tests. They are expected to arrive in Dhaka on March 22.

Neither the company nor the government, however, admits paying any ransom for the release of the 26 Bangladeshis -- 25 crew members and the wife of the ship's chief engineer.

Muhammed Shahjahan, managing director of SR Shipping, said the companies did not pay any ransom and he does not know if the government did.

He, however, said they had worked in close cooperation with the government to secure the release.

The pirates and the SR Shipping hammered out an understanding on February 22 and the company received confirmation of the release on February 28, said Meherul.

Shajahan claimed the company has so far suffered a loss of \$2 million in the fallout from the hijack. Twenty five people have been recruited to replace the crew members. Once they take the ship's charge at Salah, the ship will sail towards Greece where it was heading with 43,150 tonnes of nickel at the time of the hijack.

A team of 33 members including officials of SR Shipping and Brave Royal will fly to Oman to receive the ship. Thirteen of them will go there today, while the rest tomorrow.

As per Oman laws, Bangladeshi crew cannot be supplanted there, but its government on Sunday gave permission following nego-

tiation with Bangladesh through diplomatic channel.

Quoting a monitoring report of the UK Maritime Trade Operations, Meherul said 24 ships captured are awaiting release at Somali coasts for last 125 to 300 days.

The Bangladeshi ship has been released much early compared to those, he said.

He also expressed his gratitude to the government particularly the prime minister, foreign minister and shipping minister for their efforts in this regard.

Besides, he thanked the Bangladesh embassy in Oman for doing visa process of the substitute team faster and bearing the cost. The process was likely to be completed yesterday.

On Saturday, Acting Foreign Secretary Mustafa Kamal said a lengthy negotiation took place through diplomatic and private channels.

On ransom, he said: "As per the international law, no government can give any ransom to anyone."

It was earlier reported that the pirates demanded \$9 million.

FAMILIES' REACTIONS
The news of the release came as a relief to the families of the 25 crewmembers after anxious wait for over three months.

Family members of several crewmen in the port city seemed relaxed. They, however, are waiting for the safe return of their loved ones.

Hearing the news, many of them gathered at the house of the chief officer of the vessel Abu Naser Mohammed Abdullah Majumder here yesterday.

Farzana Akter, the chief officer's wife, said: "I have been praying for his safe return since the hijack."

what actually happened, is jubilant hearing that her father will come home soon."

Naser's mother Shahanara Begum said she passed most of her time in the last three months praying for her son's homecoming.

"After a long time, I will get some sleep tonight," she said.

Abul Mansur, younger brother of the ship's second engineer Abul Bashar and also an employee of SR Shipping, said most of his family members have fallen sick as they could hardly sleep or take food since the hijack.

Bilkis Rahman, mother of Shahriar Rabbi, youngest crewman of the ship, started crying with joy hearing the news.

Later at midday she received a call from Shahriar who was enquiring, among other things, about Bangladesh's progress in the cricket World Cup, she said.

5 youths injured in attack by DU students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five youths of Lalbagh were hurt as 25 to 30 students of Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University allegedly beat them in the city's Suhrawardi Udyan last night.

The students, however, claimed they went to rescue a fellow who was beat up and confined in the park by the neighbourhood youths.

Officer-in-Charge Rezaul Karim of Shahbag Police Station said they rushed to the spot immediately but none were arrested.

SC asks SCBA to remove structures on its office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court authorities yesterday asked the president of Supreme Court Bar Association to take steps to remove all unauthorised structures from the roof of its office building immediately.

SC sources said Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque directed its officials to issue a letter to the SCBA president to remove the unauthorised structures following a report placed by chief engineer of public works department.

The PWD engineer said in the report that the structures on the roof of the building are vulnerable, according to the sources.

SCBA President Khandker Mahbub Hossain told The Daily Star at around 8:20 pm that he was yet to receive letter from the SC authorities.

He, however, said they will comply with the SC's order after arranging alternative place for those structures.

He also said that SCBA leaders will soon meet Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque for arranging an alternative place.

'Empower women more in politics'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar stressed the need for empowerment of women in politics and economics for the development of country.

They also demanded equal rights for women as they have the contribution to society like their male participants.

The place the demand at a seminar on this year's Commonwealth Day's theme "Women as Agents of Change" organised by Commonwealth Society of Bangladesh (CSB) at a hotel in the city yesterday.

Taleya Rahman, executive director of Democracywatch, said though reserved seats for women in the parliament have been increased, most of the MPs are not aware of their power.

"They (women MPs) often asked what I will do? What is my responsibility?" she said adding, "We have long miles to go for the empowerment of women."

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said the incumbent government is active enough to establish the rights of women.

Former ambassador Salma Khan presented the keynote paper where she mentioned the contribution of women in achieving social and economic goals in past years.

She however chalked out some barriers to hinder the progress of women include stereo-typed socio-cultural perception and practices and violence against women responsible.

Mizanur Rahman Shelly, vice-president of CSB, earlier revealed the activities of CSB in brief.

Among others, Enam A Chaudhury, president of CSB and Dr Sadeka Halim, professor of Dhaka University also spoke.

Tigers' Dutch demolition

FROM PAGE 1

won the match in the way they had exactly needed to do -- through a complete team effort -- in front of a capacity crowd at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium after two closely contested wins against Ireland and England and two defeats to India and West Indies.

With the easy sail, which was also a sweet revenge of their six-wicket defeat to these opponents in Glasgow last year, the Tigers kept their quarterfinal chances very much alive and they will definitely be looking forward to Thursday's match between England and West Indies, as the latter's victory will take them to the next round. In the case of England winning, the Tigers have to win their last Group B match against South Africa at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on March 19.

Back to the match; an inspired new ball spell from Shafiu Islam, followed up by the nagging accuracy of the battery of left-arm spinners led by seasoned campaigner Abdur Razzak who claimed three wickets for 29 runs, saw Bangladesh wrap up the Dutch on the cheap. The fantastic bowling was backed by a dazzling fielding effort -- though two catches were dropped -- which caused four run outs to shoot Netherlands out for a paltry 160 runs.

The ball didn't turn much on this slow pitch but the Dutch batsmen, except Ryan ten Doeschate who was unbeaten on 53, displayed a lack of skill when handling the Bangladeshi spin bowlers who maintained a superb line and length to set the platform for the important victory.

And then the most encouraging fact was that at least one batsman came up with that rare commodity -- the consistency for which the team has been crying out for so long -- as Imrul Kayes hit the second of his back-to-back half-centuries to guide

Bangladesh to the target of 166 for the loss of four wickets in 41.2 overs.

It was encouraging the way the southpaw batsman, who played a match-winning knock of 60 against England in the previous game, kept his cool and applied himself in the middle on a slow and low pitch to finish the game with an unbeaten 73, the innings which brought him his second man-of-the-match award in as many games; a rare feat indeed for any Bangladeshi batsman.

Chasing the easy target, Bangladesh got a jolt very early when the dashing Tamim Iqbal made a four-ball duck with the scoreboard reading nought. The local boy pushed through the line against Mudassar Bukhari but missed the line to lose his off stump to silence the crowd. But Junaed Siddiqui joined Kayes to repair the early damage and steadied the ship with a 92-run second wicket partnership.

It was not an easy track to play shots on, and coach Jamie Siddons must be happy with the way the two took the conditions into consideration to build their innings, before Peter Borren put an end to the partnership when Junaed (35 off 53 balls) slapped a poor delivery straight to extra cover where Pieter Seelaar took a simple catch.

Almost everything, however, went right in the match for the Tigers as all their plans were executed, with Shahriar Nafees making good use of his opportunity on his comeback to the side as he shared a 59-run third-wicket partnership with Kayes.

Nafees cashed in on his inclusion -- as left-arm spinner Sohrawardi Shuvo did earlier during his ten-over spell -- by playing a morale boosting innings of 37 off 60 balls with four boundaries.

Mushfiqur b Rubel then finished the game in style by hitting a boundary and six against Tom Cooper to make sure Bangladesh walked over the minnows to regain full confidence before their last group match against South Africa.

The Bangladesh team will leave the port city today with happy memories having won both their games here to revive the hope that was shattered after the disaster against West Indies, but they still have a big challenge on their hands to make their dream come true; which is to qualify for the quarterfinals.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard of the World Cup Group B match between Bangladesh and Netherlands at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong on Monday:

NETHERLANDS
Szwarczynski run out 28
Barresilbw b Shakib 10
Bukhari c Mushfiqur b Razzak 6
Cooper run out 29
Ten Doeschate not out 53
Kervezeez c Mushfiqur b Sohrawardi 18
De Groot lbw b Razzak 4
Buurman c Imrul b Razzak 0
Borren run out 3
Seelaar lbw b Rubel 0
Raja run out 0
Imrul not out 9
Extras: (lb-9) 9
Total: (All out in 46.2 overs) 160
Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-37, 3-66, 4-79, 5-113, 6-127, 7-127, 8-139, 9-14

Bowler O M R W
Shafiu 9.2 3 15 0
Razzak 10 2 29 3
Shakib 8 0 38 1
Rubel 9 0 36 1
Sohrawardi 10 1 33 1

BANGLADESH
Tamim b Bukhari 0
Imrul not out 73
Junaed c Seelaar b Borren 35
Nafees b Cooper 37
Shakib c Ten Doeschate b Cooper 1
Mushfiqur not out 11
Extras: (lb-2, lb-3, w-3, nb-1) 9
Total: (For four wickets in 41.2 overs) 166
Did not bat: Mahmudullah, Razzak, Rubel, Shafiu, Sohrawardi
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-92, 3-151, 4-153

Bowler O M R W
Bukhari 6 2 14 1
Raja 7 0 31 0
Ten Doeschate 6 1 30 0
Seelaar 10 1 25 0
Borren 5 0 28 1
Cooper 7.2 2 33 1