

Batting fails

FROM PAGE 16
eventually fell prey to the tall Mohammad Irfan, who ended up with a five-wicket haul.

Bangladesh's total of 246 on a moderately sized Blacktown Olympic Park in Sydney was never going to be enough. It's also a sign of the days to come. The last few matches in Australia suggest that in order to secure a safe score a team needs to score around 300 runs. The Tigers failed to cross 250 in their first three practice matches.

A good showing from Bangladesh's pacers however ensured that the match got stretched till the end.

Wickets taken by Rubel Hossain, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Taskin Ahmed reduced Pakistan to 52 for 3 in 16 overs and it gave Tigers the start they needed. An unbeaten 93 from Sohaib Maqsood ensured that there were no further jitters. Pakistan won the game with three wickets and eleven balls remaining.

While there were signs of encouragement for the Tigers, there are still a number of areas that they desperately need to focus on. One can't for instance blow away a match after getting into such a good position. The other issue will be with regards to the two slow left-armers in the Bangladesh side. While Taijul Islam leaked 56 runs in seven overs in the last practice match, Arifat Sunny gave away 31 in four. These specialist spinners are yet to make their mark.

The Tigers play their next practice match against Ireland on February 12.

Fakhrul again

FROM PAGE 16
army major in front of Baitul Mamur Jame Masjid on January 4. The case in which Fakhrul was sent back to jail yesterday was lodged with the same police station. The lawsuit accuses 51 leaders and activists of the BNP-led 20-party alliance and 120 to 150 unnamed people of setting fire to a motorbike of a police sergeant at Purana Paltan on January 5.

According to the remand prayer, the bike was torched with an intention to kill the policeman.

On January 6, detectives picked up Fakhrul as he came out of the Jatiya Press Club with pro-government journalists who were protesting against his stay there. The BNP leader had been at the press club for around 24 hours.

Wreckage found

FROM PAGE 16
location secret however, for fear of looting.

"It was a breath-taking moment and we felt all kinds of sensations. One could feel the energy of the place and breathe the pain," Alborno said.

The group said they found scattered debris and bones and were able to see a large section of the fuselage without needing to dig it out.

The wreckage location does not match with the site that official publications had expected the plane to have crashed.

The plane had been on route to Santiago, carrying the team members and its staff back from an away match in Osorno in the Copa de Chile. The team and staff had been spread across two flights, but only one made it back to the capital.

Rescue teams spent weeks searching for the missing plane but never found it, and symbolic funerals were held for the missing players.

Set afire

FROM PAGE 16
Begum Shahida Sultana, first secretary (Labour Wing) at Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, over phone yesterday.

Malaysian Criminal Investigation Department in Penang arrested the woman near the scene at a construction site in Bukit Mertajam area of George Town several hours after the incident.

A murder case would be filed in this regard by the Malaysian police, Sultana told The Daily Star. She added the woman, who set fire to Raju and his bike pouring petrol, claimed he had owed the amount to her.

However, Raju's nephew Kamruzzaman, who is also a migrant worker in Malaysia, yesterday trashed the woman's claim.

"She had supplied a worker from Myanmar to the construction site of my uncle [Raju]. After eight days the worker quit with his 360 ringgit partial salary," he told The Daily Star over phone from Penang.

But the Indonesian woman claimed the amount from Raju on behalf of the Myanmar national. She also had an argument with him before he flew to Bangladesh on January 5.

Raju returned to his workplace after having his machine-readable passport on January 23, Kamruzzaman added.

Raju, who used to work as a construction contractor for around 14 years in Malaysia, left behind his wife and a 15-year-old son, who is a class eight student at a local school in Jessore.

Youth killed in 'shootout'

FROM PAGE 1
lifeless body smeared with blood and mud on a trolley at the Dhaka Medical College morgue.

"Mother, your son is no more. They killed him. Who will now look after me?" she told her mother-in-law over the phone around 2:10pm.

Talking to The Daily Star, she said her husband had gone out of their residence for his workplace around 11:00am on Thursday. Two hours later, his cell phone was found switched off.

Russell had been traceless since then, Shefali claimed, adding she went to at least nine police stations in the capital and Keraniganj in search of her husband but none could give her any clue.

Victim's brother Akash Sarder claimed that five to six months ago, South Keraniganj police arrested Russell from home and demanded Tk 50,000 for his release.

"As we could not afford the money, they implicated him [Russell] in a murder case. He was on bail," Akash told this correspondent over the phone.

DB VERSION

A group of criminals hurled cocktails and petrol bombs at a DB van at Matuail in Jatrabari area around 3:00am. They also fired bullets, prompting the DB men to retaliate with shooting that left a man injured, said Jahangir Hossain Matubbar, deputy commissioner of DB (east) of

Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Law enforcers took the injured to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where he was declared dead.

A pistol, two bullets, four crude bombs and two petrol bombs were recovered from the spot, claimed the DC.

Watching TV news on the incident, family members went to the DMC morgue around noon and identified the dead as Russel Sardar.

But DC Jahangir Hossain claimed the man was known as Boma Russell, whose name came up in the confessional statements of Shahidullah Khan and Parvez. The two are accused in cases for the January 23 Jatrabari bus arson that left one dead and 28 injured.

UNIDENTIFIED BODY

On information from locals, a police team found a bullet-hit body of a man near a garbage bin on Purabi-Kalshi road in Mirpur yesterday. Aged 30 to 35, he was shot in the head, cantonment police said.

Seven crude bombs and seven petrol bombs were found beside the dead, they added.

Atiqur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Cantonment Police Station, said the man was in gabardine trousers, a shirt and an ash-coloured jacket.

The body was sent it to the DMC morgue for an autopsy.

Heading for uncertainty

FROM PAGE 16
get his hand checked again in two weeks, said Partha Sankar Paul, resident surgeon at the DMCH burn unit.

Moreover, it is unlikely that the trauma from the gruesome arson will allow him to drive in quite a while, said the physician.

However, the wish to get back to work remains unfulfilled not only for Piar, but also for a dozen other burn victims who are all earning members in their families. They took short- or long-term treatment at DMCH.

As many as 125 arson victims have taken treatment at the DMCH burn unit since the BNP-led 20-party's blockade began on January 6. The hospital authority has so far released 59 of them.

Fifty seven burn patients were still admitted to the hospital as of yesterday.

Another victim Salahuddin, 44, who received eight percent burns in the Jatrabari arson attack, took treatment for nine days at DMCH.

A plastic factory worker in Demra, he still feels anxious to take a bus ride, he told this correspondent yesterday.

But he too needs to get back to work sooner rather than later and earn

money for his six-member family, he added.

Authority restricts entry to burn unit
After a couple of untoward incidents, the DMCH authorities yesterday made a move to restrict entry of visitors and media persons to the burn unit.

From now on media persons will have to write down their names, designations and other required information in a register book before entering the unit, said Samanta Lal Sen, honorary adviser to the burn unit.

Taking advantage of the burn victims' sufferings, a shooting team on Thursday showed up at the unit and started filming a victim.

They did not bother to take the patient's permission. A woman from the team, apparently an actress, even posed beside the patient with glycerine applied to her eyes to show that his sufferings made her cry.

In another incident on Saturday, a photographer was seen to make an arson victim pose at the high dependency unit (HDIU).

Earlier, the burn unit had restricted visitors' entry to the unit, saying that presence of random people may cause infection to the patients.

Nagorik Samaj pushes for talks

FROM PAGE 1
people from different professions was held at the Engineers' Institute on February 7, where the participants unanimously adopted a proposal on holding "a national dialogue to resolve the national crisis".

The proposal of the meeting was also sent along with the letters.

"I humbly request you as the guardian of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to play a special role in taking a noble initiative for holding a dialogue in light of the proposal," reads the letter sent to the president.

In the letters, the Nagorik Samaj also requested the prime minister and the BNP chief to take initiatives for holding talks considering the proposal.

Talking to the BBC Bangla Service, PM's Political Affairs Adviser HT Imam last night said they were not giving importance to this initiative at this moment as the roles of the persons involved in this process were questionable, except for ATM Shamsul Huda.

"You cannot sit for talks with the people who are carrying out attacks, killing innocent people and destroying

the country's economy," he said.

BNP standing committee member Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman said he thought his party would take the initiative of the Nagorik Samaj positively.

Contacted, Shamsul Huda did not want to elaborate on the matter, but said, "We are working silently and with caution as there are many quarters that may try to foil this initiative."

Nagorik Samaj under the banner of Jatiya Oikya Prokriya (national unity process) had organised the meeting where distinguished personalities expressed the need for taking initiatives for holding a national dialogue to come out of the ongoing crisis.

Eminent jurist and Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain, former CEC ATM Shamsul Huda, former caretaker government advisers -- Dr Akbar Ali Khan, CM Shafi Sami, Rasheda K Chowdhury, former Bangladesh Bank governor Salehuddin Ahmed, former IGP Nurul Huda, advocate Shahdeen Malik and CPB President Mujahidul Islam Selim, among others, spoke on the occasion.

Owners won't run

FROM PAGE 16
told The Daily Star after the meeting, attended also by top police officials.

He urged all transport owners to ensure their vehicles reach destinations before 9:00pm.

"The culprits are launching hit-and-run attacks. And, it's not possible for law enforcers to stay everywhere on the highways," he added.

The transport leader said the regular bus services would resume once the situation improves.

Talking to reporters, Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said, "All-out security

measures have been put in place. But untoward incidents can still take place on empty roads. That is why we have decided that buses should reach their destinations by nine o'clock at night. We will return to the round-the-clock bus services soon."

At least 69 people have been killed since the blockade began on January 6. Most of them were victims of arson attacks on vehicles.

On Saturday, Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Hoque requested transport owners to keep long-rousted buses off the road at night.

Japanese tourist says drugged, raped by guide in India

AFP, New Delhi

A Japanese woman has accused an Indian tourist guide of drugging and then raping her in the historic city of Jaipur, police said yesterday, the latest in a series of sex attacks on foreigners in the country.

The 20-year-old said the guide offered to show her around Jaipur,

famous for its grand palaces and forts, on his motorbike on Sunday before assaulting her on the outskirts of the "Pink City" in the evening.

The woman said she was given food laced with drugs before being attacked by the man thought to be aged about 25, Dharam Chand Jain, police inspector general for Jaipur district, told AFP.

HC gets 10

FROM PAGE 16
The new judges are Deputy Attorneys General Rajik Al Jalil, Bhismadeb Chakrabarti, Md Selim and Md Sohrawardi, Supreme Court lawyers Khijir Ahmed Chowdhury, Jyotirmoy Narayan Deb Chowdhury and Md Iqbal Kabir Lytton, Metropolitan Sessions Judge of Chittagong SM Mojibur Rahman, Supreme Court Registrar Md Farid Ahmed Shibli and District and Sessions Judge of Gazipur Amir Hossain.

The Awami League-led grand alliance government has so far appointed 68 HC judges after assuming power in 2009.

Civil society

FROM PAGE 16
dialogue but they are not equally vocal against burning people to death, meeting sources said.

However, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who presided over the meeting, refrained from making any critical comment and said civil society members should also be vocal against arson attacks and killing of innocent people, they added.

The cabinet during the discussion also decided to strongly enforce the existing laws to check the ongoing violence in the country.

Talking about arson attacks and killings in the indefinite blockade, some senior ministers said a strong law should be promulgated to stop the violence. Law Minister Anisul Huq, however, said there was no need for a new law since the existing ones were enough to address the issue, sources said.

"It is possible to stop the violence if we can properly enforce the existing laws," the law minister was quoted as saying by a minister after the meeting.

The laws that are to be strongly enforced are Anti-Terrorism Act, Special Powers Act and Speedy Trial Tribunal Act, said the minister who wished not to be named.

A total of 68 persons have been killed in the ongoing violence so far and 43 of them were victims of arson attacks since the indefinite blockade began on January 6.

Earlier the cabinet gave approval to set up a new wing under the Posts and Telecommunications Division to suggest and support the Posts and Telecommunications Ministry in matters of policymaking.

Youth demonstrate

FROM PAGE 16
"Now we are looking for financiers so that we can go for commercial production. Currently, the copter runs on rechargeable batteries but it is possible to run them from solar panels too," said Nasouri.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday inaugurated the technology expo and conference.

Germany-based AplombTech BD, owned by a non resident Bangladeshi, also presented a robot that can walk through fire while providing live streamed information.

The company's smart home solution also attracted many visitors at the fair. All the electrical devices can be controlled by smartphones from both in and outside the home, said Md Ayatullah, graphic designer of the firm.

Md Bazlur Rashid, a meteorologist of the Bangladesh Meteorologist Department, said they have been providing people with mobile-based weather and cyclone forecast services for the last one year.

Anyone can call "10491" to get the service, he added.

Visitors also flocked to the expatriate welfare ministry's stall as the ministry was registering people for landing jobs in Saudi Arabia under government supervision.

On the first day of the expo, thousands gathered at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre to witness the country's progress in digital initiatives.

Shameem Ahsan, president of Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS), said this is the "largest" technology fair in South Asia as 85 specialists from 25 countries are participating in 60 seminars.

At the same time, 60 public and 125 private institutions or companies are also taking part, he added.

"About three lakh visitors came to the fair last year and we expect the figure to be five lakh this time around."

Investors will also sit with local firms for prospective business deals, an exclusive at this year's fair.

At the inauguration session, Zunaed Ahmed Palak, ICT state minister, said students used to travel across the country for admission (in universities), but now they can apply through mobile short messages.

Paper filing systems are turning into virtual filing systems in the country, which is curbing corruption, he mentioned.

The government has set up 500 WiFi routers in public offices and distributed 18,000 tablets among public officials.

Ministers from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives, Vietnam and Cambodia will participate in the four-day fair.

Coming of 'tribalism'

FROM PAGE 1
an independent country for our people.

However the question is being forced into our minds and we are compelled to ask if we are witnessing the rise of a kind of "tribalism" in our politics?

In a tribal conflict, group identity overwhelms everything else. Every member of one side hates everyone of the other, simply because they belong to the opposite side. The belief is that there cannot be anybody or anything good on the other side. Therefore there is no qualm about depriving every member of the opposite side of all his or her basic rights. Demonising the other side becomes a full time affair, and gangs of one group going out and painting the other side as "devil incarnate" becomes an everyday sight.

In such circumstances propaganda holds centre stage, and all sorts of discussions and debates become impossible. Conversely every crime committed by "my side" becomes acceptable because it has been committed against the "devils". Thus all semblance of justice, rule of law, evenhandedness, fair play, and right or wrong lose meaning and relevance, and the society loses its basic values.

The prevailing all encompassing hatred between the AL and BNP, the irrationality of the violence, the inconsideration about the effect on the economy, and the indifference towards the impact on lives of ordinary citizens -- smacks of the rise of a type of "tribalism" in our politics.

In the eyes of AL, every member of BNP and Jamaat are "enemies" who deserve to be eliminated, howsoever. Those who were political contestants for power, and with whom state power has been sequentially shared over the last 24 years -- with each party coming to power by turn through elections -- have now become intolerable "rivals" deserving death. The dehumanisation of our politics is now complete.

There is absolutely no rationale for what the opposition is doing. Brutal killing of ordinary citizens, indefinite stoppage of industrial production, meaningless political programme of "aborodh" that nobody is observing voluntarily, can only be termed as a totally immoral, unethical, and conspiratorial grab for power that no freedom loving people can accept even for a minute. Till yesterday 68 people were killed. Many of them burnt to death. The last time in history when people were burnt alive at the stakes as a matter of practice -- when proponents of the present agitation burn people regularly, what can we term it but "practice" -- was in the middle ages. Have our politicians taken us back to the medieval times with buses replacing the stakes?

On the contrary, the government has not given us any explanation why it denied the BNP the right to hold a rally to commemorate the 5th January, 2014, the day they claim when "democracy" was killed, which triggered the present sad events. Why was Khaleda Zia forcibly "confined" in her office and why her free movement was restricted? Why thousands of BNP activists and most of their leaders are either in jail or on the run? Why there are mountains of cases against many of the BNP leaders?

While we will never tire of saying that nothing justifies the killing of innocent people as the opposition activists are doing, at the same time we must raise the question of political space for the opposition for peaceful demonstrations. There cannot be any denying of the fact that today there is no space for any peaceful protest in the country.

A good example of the state of our free expression is the reaction of the ruling AL to a suggestion by some eminent civil society members for a dialogue simultaneous with the stoppage of the violence. Instantly the group was condemned, with the food minister saying, "...They are like cancer on the society. This parasite...the

cancer named civil society must be uprooted from the society."

Who are these "cancerous" elements and "parasites"? One of them is the former chief election commissioner under whom the present government got elected in December 2008, another is a leading framer of our constitution and a close collaborator of Bangabandhu -- not to mention an internationally famous and sought after lawyer. There were many others with immaculate reputation, and long career in development and nation building. But they are all "parasites and should be uprooted from society" just because they hold a different view to that of the government.

If we look around the strife ridden world we will see many countries and societies are being torn asunder by territorial, ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural, and tribal conflicts. In comparison we appear to be supremely blessed by the absence of such conflicts. We are a unified people, and our unity is unique, and as such precious. Given the facts that we are 95 percent Bangalees, more than 85 percent Muslims, that also Sunnis, that we are nearly from the same ethnic and racial stock, and that almost every one of us have the same mother tongue, makes us one of the most homogeneous and unified people in the world. (I am also very conscious that our massive "unity" has made us blind and insensitive to the rights and needs of our minorities. A failure that might cost us dearly in the future.)

Our present day divisive, acrimonious, and zero-sum politics is destroying that precious, rare, and highly prized unity. The AL and BNP were united in the anti-autocracy struggle that caused Gen Ershad's fall. Together they restored the parliamentary system in place of the presidential one. They also worked together to install the caretaker government system, insisted upon by the AL. In spite of the culture of boycott, MPs from these two parties worked together in various committees of the parliament and brought about many changes through their collective wisdom.

There are many countries in the world where relationship between their leading parties is far from ideal. Presently the relationship between the Democrats and the Republicans in the US is so hateful that one author has termed it as the "second civil war". The relationship between the BJP and the Congress in India, between the Muslim League and Imran Khan's Tehriq-e-Insaf in Pakistan, between the rival parties in Sri Lanka, South Korea, Indonesia, and the Philippines are all known to be extremely bitter. But this bitterness surfaces only during the elections, and that also within prescribed limits, and recedes after the polls.

However there is an exception where election after election could not stop the rivalry -- Thailand. Political infighting created the opening for the military to capture power. In Egypt we also saw the return of the military, because President Morsi misused his electoral mandate.

This paper, this writer, and by far the majority of the people of this country abhor and oppose extra-constitutional action by any quarter. But just as they abhor and oppose, so also they expect our political leaders from both sides to ensure peace and stability, to show political acumen, to be accommodative, to be welcoming of dissent, to be matured in dealings with rivals, and most of all to adhere to a democratic culture and ensure good governance.

Burning by the opposition, and crossfire by the government will destroy our prospect for growth, and feed the tendency towards "tribalism" in our politics, a clear sign of which is contained in the comment of our information minister, saying, "How can there be a dialogue between demons and humans?"

To the Hutus and the Tutsis, the others were the demons. Need we say more?

Certificates of 26 more revoked

FROM PAGE 16
The ministry gave the revoke order yesterday, following recommendations by the Jatiya Muktiyoddha Council.

The government has so far annulled certificates of 213 government and non-government employees who include bureaucrats with the status of secretary, joint secretary and deputy secretary.

The government has also revoked certificates of 2,367 members of a special guerrilla force formed by the NAP-Communist Party-Chhatra Union combine in 1971.

Those who have lost their war hero status in the latest order include Iftekhar Uddin, senior executive officer of Sonali Bank, Fazlur Rahman, deputy director of Directorate of Health Services, Nurul Islam, executive engineer, Ibrahim Miah, superintendent engineer, Abdul Matin, additional chief engineer of the Project to Protect Shahbazpur Gas Field, Shamima Akter, joint chief of the Planning Commission, Dilip Kumar Dash, deputy divisional engineer, Rahmat Ali Bishwas, principal of Chudanga Govt College, Kamal Uddin, associate professor of Satkhira

Govt College, and Siraj Ali, headmaster of Debhata Registered Primary School.

Fake freedom fighters came under scanner, amid widespread allegations that a large number of government officials fraudulently obtained war hero's certificates over the past few years to extend their service period by one year.

In November 2012, the government extended the retirement age of government employees with freedom fighter's certificates from 59 to 60 years. Earlier in April 2010, their retirement age was extended by two years from 57.

Around 11,000 freedom fighters were working in the government services following the 2012 extension.

Currently, there are around 2.12 lakh freedom fighters. The number was around 1.98 lakh in a gazette published during the BNP-Jamaat rule in 2002.

Freedom fighters, their children and grandchildren now enjoy 30 percent quota in government jobs. Besides, special quota is preserved for war heroes' children and grandchildren at public schools, colleges and universities.