

Real coming to China in August

AFP, Beijing
The star-studded Spanish club Real Madrid will play a match against a Chinese side in Beijing on August 3 to commemorate the second anniversary of the capital winning the right to host the 2008 Olympic Games, a local paper reported Saturday.

Sachin, Shaun top players

Table with 2 columns: Player Name and Points. Includes names like S Tendulkar, H Gibbs, R Ponting, etc.

Myanmar blank

FROM PAGE 8
Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza, who is now making a steady recovery from injury, will play for City Club in place of right-arm seamer Tareq Aziz Khan who is now in the Bangladesh team.



Manchester United forward Paul Scholes (R) scoring his first goal against Newcastle United at St James's Park in Newcastle yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Doubt over Zim's tour



AFP, Harare

Zimbabwe's scheduled ten-week cricket tour of England and Ireland, due to start in 19 days time, has still not been approved by the Mugabe government's Sports and Recreation Commission here.

The decision whether to allow the tour to go ahead rests with this body, which formally approves or refuses permission for all sports tours overseas of whatever discipline, including up to Olympic Games squads.

The Zimbabwe Cricket Union is increasingly anxious about the delay. Chief executive Vincent Hogg said: "We are becoming very concerned. The squad is due to fly to London on April 29 but we haven't received the Sports Commission's approval yet, and there is so much to do."

ZCU general manager Ian Robinson confirmed Thursday that a decision whether they have permission to send a team to England and Ireland had not been received.

He said the application was formally submitted to the SRC several weeks ago. "It was certainly timely," he said.

All arrangements for the lengthy tour are in place in England and Ireland. It includes two Test matches against England, at Lord's and at Durham, several matches against Counties, two games in Ireland and a triangular one-day series against England and South Africa, which ends mid-July.

Revenues from the tour would go a long way towards the further development of cricket here. Optimistically, the Zimbabwe national selection committee is nevertheless expected to come up with a 16-man squad and its management on Monday next week as part of the many preparations that have to be undertaken provisionally.

The union's concerns are high because England boycotted their cricket World Cup fixture in Harare on February 13, the players claiming that the Zimbabwe capital city was unsafe after receiving threatening letters.

Their boycott, made despite repeated assurances of safety by the ICC, the ZCU, and then by an independent international security organisation and a South African judge, is said to have angered President Robert Mugabe.

And this has given rise to speculation in Zimbabwe that the scheduled tour to England could be refused in response to the boycott.

Mollah, Dastgir elected

SPORTS REPORTER
Golam Rasul Mollah and Alhaj Dastgir Chowdhury were elected as the new president and secretary general of Bangladesh District and Divisional Sports Organisers Forum following its Annual General Meeting at a city hotel yesterday.

Minister for Fisheries and Livestock and Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeq Hossain, Jute Minister Major (retired) M Hafizuddin Ahmed, BB, Alhaj Mosaddek Ali, political advisor to the Prime Minister, BFF president SA Sultan MP, BCB advisor Shah Nural Kabir Shaheen MP, BAAF president Abdus Salam were present among others in the AGM that elected a 51-member new executive committee.

Ponting's plan

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and put it away, because the outfield is so very fast that if you hit the ball in the gaps you should get fours."

Langer's score of 146 was his 14 Test ton and his second in five outings in the West Indies.

"The pitches in the Caribbean are good to bat on and that's one of the reasons why I like to play here," Langer said.

"The Caribbean brings the best out of me because the atmosphere makes me happy and fresh."

One of the few bright spots for the hosts was the performance of fast bowler Vasbert Drakes.

The 34-year-old, making his third Test appearance, claimed both centuries and finished with five for 93, his best Test figures.

"I don't think it was a wicket that any bowler would dream about, but playing against Australia and knowing that quite a few of their batsmen go at the ball pretty hard, I just tried to bowl in areas to contain them."

"We didn't do very well on Thursday but we were able to come back and bowl some good spells, and although the Australians have a big lead we can take heart from the way we performed."

"It will give the team more confidence going into the third day."

The West Indies will resume on 16 for no wicket, with Wavell Hinds on two, and debutant Devon Smith on 13.

Premiership

MU devastate Magpies



AFP, Newcastle

Manchester United blew Newcastle's lingering title hopes out of the water with a stunning six-goal display at St James Park on Saturday.

A hat-trick from the inspirational Paul Scholes, goals from Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Ryan Giggs and a Ruud van Nistelrooy penalty saw United romp to a 6-2 victory that lifts them three points clear of Arsenal going into Wednesday's Highbury showdown.

The blitzing of a Newcastle team that had not lost a home league match since September was the perfect response from United to their own Champions League drubbing at the hands of Real Madrid in the Champions League.

It also ensured that, after last week's 4-0 thrashing of Liverpool, United are now only one goal behind Arsenal in terms of goal difference.

Cruelly for the expectant Newcastle crowd, United's rampage came after

Jermaine Jenas had raised their hopes with a spectacular opening goal. The young England midfielder lashed home a 25-yard drive after Fabien Barthez had beaten out Craig Bellamy's left-foot volley.

But the home side's hopes of a late title surge were crushed in a 12-minute blitz before half-time in which United struck four times.

Solskjaer, playing in midfield because of a hamstring injury to David Beckham, started things off by springing the Newcastle offense trap to chest down a Giggs cross before hooking a left-foot shot past Shay Given.

Two minutes later, the Norwegian turned provider with a neat return pass for Scholes that was finished off with an emphatic volley.

Newcastle's defence was looking increasingly dishevelled and it was no surprise when Giggs cut into the box from the left to set up Scholes's second, a sweetly struck right-foot drive from the edge of the area that curled away from Given and up into the top corner.

Irish defender John O'Shea, playing in Gary Neville's right-back slot, dem-

onstrated his attacking ability a minute before the break. After skipping past two Newcastle defenders he drove a ferocious shot across the crossbar and Giggs hammered in the rebound.

Any hopes the Newcastle faithful might have entertained of a miraculous fightback were snuffed out seven minutes after the break.

Titus Bramble's weak headed clearance fell straight to Diego Forlan, whose pass to Solskjaer was flicked onto the overlapping Gary Neville.

A low cross left Scholes with a simple finish at the far post to complete his hat-trick.

Bramble's miserable afternoon was then compounded when he pulled Forlan down in the box, handing van Nistelrooy the chance to send Given the wrong way for his 36th goal of the season.

What would otherwise have been the perfect afternoon was marred slightly for United when a weak clearance from Barthez enabled Jenas to set up Shola Ameobi for a consolation strike for the home side, two minutes from the end.

FA Cup semifinals preview

Seaman eyeing 1000th



AFP, London

Arsenal goalkeeper David Seaman could make his 1,000th professional appearance when the holders face First Division Sheffield United in Sunday's FA Cup semi-final at Old Trafford.

England international Seaman has been out of action since sustaining a hamstring injury in March.

But the double holders' manager Arsene Wenger, whose side are currently leading the Premiership, said he would have no hesitation in bringing back Seaman, 39, for such a high-profile match.

defender Martin Keown is doubtful with a hamstring problem while fellow centre-back, Frenchman Pascal Cygan, is suspended.

"Robert will not play against Sheffield United, but there is a chance that he could be fit for next Wednesday (when Arsenal face title rivals Manchester United)," Wenger said.

"I will assess Martin Keown on Saturday morning and see if he can play," the Frenchman added. England full-back Ashley Cole is set to return after a hernia operation.

Sheffield United last won the FA Cup in 1925 and have not appeared in the final since 1936.

But the Blades have been enjoying a fine season under voluble manager Neil

to put on a show." United fans will be hoping their team's performance is more impressive than Warnock's verse.

The second semi-final is another Premiership against First Division clash with Southampton taking on Watford at Villa Park.

The south coast club caused one of the great Cup upsets when, as a member of the old Second Division, they beat Manchester United 1-0 to win the trophy for the first and only time back in 1976.

Under manager Gordon Strachan the 'Saints' have abandoned their annual fight against relegation and are 11th in the table.

But they may have to do without captain Jason Dodd for Sunday's match. The defender has missed Southampton's last two matches with a bruised foot.

Goalkeeper Antti Niemi (knee) is a doubt while striker Agustín Delgado (back) and Marian Pahars (knee) are both out.

Southampton will be most people's favourites but they have beaten First Division opposition three times on their way to the last four.

And Strachan said the pressure of the occasion would not be a problem for his team: "What can I say to the players? Relax lads, take it easy, take yoga classes," he told the Southampton website on Friday. "They're good enough lads to get on with it."

Watford, who reached their one and only FA Cup final in 1984 where they lost to Everton, could give a start to on-loan teenage Newcastle striker Michael Chopra. The 19-year-old forward scored four goals in Watford's extraordinary 7-4 league win over Burnley.

Earlier in the campaign Watford were on the brink of administration and the players had to take a 12 percent pay cut.

But manager Ray Lewington said finance would be the last thing on their mind this weekend. "I've no doubt my players will give everything. They will run until they drop."

FA CUP SEMI-FINALS
SUNDAY
Old Trafford: Arsenal v Sheffield United (1230GMT)
Villa Park: Watford v Southampton (1530GMT)



Table with 2 columns: Event and Time. Includes BTV India vs South Africa, ESPN Western Union World Football, STAR Sports India vs South Africa.

Star Whizz Kid Competition 192. Tick the correct answers, post to The Daily Star. Win attractive prizes. Competition closes at 8 pm April 25, 2003 and draw shortly afterwards.

Table with 3 columns for quiz questions and answers. Includes questions about the man-of-the-tournament in the Cricket World Cup, lowest score in the World Cup, and highest score in the World Cup.

Aussies assume control

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Drakes removed Ponting, who offered a sharp catch to Marlon Samuels at slip to finish his 289-minute stay at the crease, punctuated with 18 boundaries.

Just when the West Indians had an encouraging middle session taking three wickets and then removing 157-Test record-breaker Steve Waugh for 25 soon after tea, Gilchrist blasted away in typical fashion to push the Australians well past a 200-run lead.

Gilchrist, who crashed nine fours and two sixes in his 146 minutes at the crease, added 85 runs off 83 balls for the seventh wicket with Andy Bichel (39) to take the initiative away from the home side.

Gilchrist, playing in his 40th Test match, has a batting average of 58.52. Drakes, the 33-year-old Barbados fast bowler, finished with 5-93 off 26.1 overs on a heart-breaking pitch for bowlers and was clearly the best of the Caribbean quicks.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the first cricket Test between Australia and the West Indies at the Bourda Oval on Friday:

Singing the Smith
FROM PAGE 8
"In the World Cup, the pressure got on to us. Our top players, including Kallis, did not strike. It was a major disappointment as hosts," said Simons.

Cricket scorecard table for West Indies vs Australia. Includes columns for batsmen and bowlers with runs, wickets, and other statistics.

Looking into

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"We had a serious discussion since the defeat and we have identified certain areas which need to be corrected. We have also decided to give each member of the team specific targets which they must strictly follow on the ground," said Mahmud without elaborating.

The beleaguered Bangladesh team was also scheduled to attend a brain-storming session with former South African off-spinner Pat Symcox last night. Symcox is now in Dhaka as part of the STAR Sport commentary team. The Bangladesh Cricket Board is also



Winners of the BAF Golf tournament pose with their trophies at the Kurmitola Golf Club on Friday. Home Minister Air Vice Marshal (ret'd) Altaf Hossain Chowdhury was present as the chief guest on the occasion. Group Captain M Delwar won the title while Air Officer Commanding of the BAF Base, Air Commodore Rashidul Haque won the Best Gross trophy.

PHOTO: ISPR

Latif lauds

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where they will take part in another triangular one-day series next month, also involving New Zealand.

That will be followed by a trip to England in June for the three-match NatWest Challenge.

Zimbabwe are also heading to England where they will play two Tests before taking part in a one-day series, also involving South Africa.

"We did well to get to the final, but didn't put enough runs on the board to challenge Pakistan."

"It is something we have to work on if we are to do well in England," said skipper Heath Streak.

Lanka may have

FROM PAGE 8
before the Sharjah Cup.

On Friday morning he handed over an official letter confirming his position, explaining that it would not be in the interests of the team for him to continue.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid and clues. Includes clues like '23 Stick figure?', '24 Mac rivals', '25 Jones' partner', etc.

Cryptogram puzzle grid and clues. Includes clue 'Today's Cryptogram: Q equals F'.

CRYPTOQUIP
Q I I S W N Q I G S Y Q R I V H I F
G I H S A V E R F V E R S Y
Q A A J . A S V N H W A S V I G I X ,
V N H X ' I H N G R V H J A D F .
Yesterday's Cryptogram: I ALWAYS GESTURE "HELLO" TO EVERY PERSON I MEET. I GUESS I HAVE A PERMANENT WAVE.
Today's Cryptogram Clue: Q equals F
The Cryptogram is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.