

JFA CUP Tangail in semifinals

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Tangail moved into the semifinal of the JFA Cup Under-16 Football Tournament after defeating Narayanganj 2-0 in the last match of the final round in Group-B at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Thursday.

Tangail earned six points from three matches. They will face Group-A runners-up Rangamati in the second semifinal on Sunday.

Man of the match Syed Mohammad Rafique of Tangail netted both the goals in the 10th and 78th minutes.

Satkira also moved to the last four from the same group despite conceding a 2-4 defeat against Kurigram, who were buoyed by a hat-trick from Hasanur.

Satkira and Narayanganj earned four points each but Satkira moved ahead by virtue of a superior goal difference.

Satkira face Group-A champions Dhaka in the first semifinal on Saturday.



PHOTO: AFP

Painted in national colours, Togolese supporters enjoy their team's African Nations Cup match against Cameroon at the Cairo Stadium on Wednesday.

Eto'o overhauls Togo exit

REUTERS, Cairo

Cameroon striker Samuel Eto'o, who will be watching the World Cup on television in June, struck his fourth African Nations Cup goal in two games on Wednesday to eliminate Germany-bound Togo.

Eto'o followed up Saturday's hat-trick against Democratic Republic of Congo by scoring the first goal and setting up the other as the Indomitable Lions beat Togo 2-0 to qualify for the quarterfinals.

Togo, who have yet to score a point or a goal, cannot now qualify with one match still to play. Angola, also World Cup qualifiers, were held 0-0 by the Congolese despite having a one-man advantage for 71 minutes after Tresor Mputu was sent off.

The results in Wednesday's Group B matches have added to the intrigue over how Cameroon failed to make the World Cup while Togo and Angola qualified for their first finals.

Although the latter pair produced improved performances in a double bill at the Military Academy stadium, where tracksuited conscripts were brought in to boost an otherwise meagre crowd on a chilly afternoon, they lacked firepower in attack.

Cameroon have a maximum six points from two games, followed by Congo on four and Angola on one. Congo need only a draw against Cameroon on Sunday while Angola must win and hope Cameroon continue their winning run.

Eto'o had already struck the post and been deprived by a world class save from keeper Koffi Agassi before he scored another superb goal in the 68th minute. After a series of rebounds in the Togo area, the ball ran loose to Eto'o and the Barcelona striker rifled home a first-time shot from the edge of the area.

With five minutes left, Eto'o cut in from the right and fed substitute Albert Meyong Ze, who cleverly flicked the ball home.

Togo striker Emmanuel Adebayor, who threatened to go home after a public spat with Keshi earlier this week, started the game

despite being labelled a cry baby by his boss.

Adebayor came close to putting Togo ahead in the 53rd minute when he latched on to a defence-splitting pass by Moustapha Salifu.

The lanky forward took the ball past Hamidou Souleymane, who managed to flick the ball away with his legs as Adebayor was about to score.

Adebayor's performance earned praise from Keshi.

"He played really well but I don't want to concentrate just on one player's performance," he said.

Congo were on the back foot after Mputu was dismissed for kicking out at Angolan defender Kali after 19 minutes.

But even with their man advantage, Angola could not convert dominant possession into goals with captain Akwa particularly guilty of squandering a myriad of half-chances.

They were also vulnerable on the break with Congo striker Lomana Lua Lua blasting wildly away after breaking free in a counter-attack.

Mexico beats Norway in friendly

REUTERS, San Francisco

Luis Perez struck late on to give Mexico a 2-1 win over Norway in an international friendly on Wednesday.

The match served as a 2006 World Cup finals warmup for Mexico, who will face Portugal, Iran and Angola in Group D in Germany this summer.

Norway were full of running early on and took a deserved lead after 10 minutes through Ole Martin Arst.

Mexico responded with a brilliantly taken goal from Francisco Fonseca in the 37th minute, neatly controlling and turning the ball past Espen Johnsen in the Norway goal.

The second half was a lively affair, with both sides having chances to score before Perez fired home in the 87th minute to give Mexico the win.

Arsenal out to keep Henry

AFP, London

Arsenal have made a lucrative offer to star striker Thierry Henry in their bid to hold on to the Frenchman, chairman Peter Hill-Wood has said.

The Gunners are determined to keep their 28-year-old record goalscorer amid reports that Barcelona are preparing to steal him from under their noses.

"I'm not going to say what (the contract) is, but it made me shudder. It's a lot of money," Hill-Wood said.

"It's for five years. Arsene Wenger thinks he's physically capable of playing for another five years.

"We've made him an offer which is probably as good an offer as anybody in this country - maybe other than Chelsea - would make."

Cruciani picks

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Replying to a question about the new inclusions, Cruciani said that Sunny and Rintu, the under-23 players, are future prospects for the country.

Cruciani will begin the non-residential camp with 22 booters and his preliminary target would be to recover the fitness.

"The first week, we will train for two sessions and the players will need to recover their fitness after a long gap from the game. The second week, we will concentrate on football practice," said the Argentine, who is reluctant to release players for club duty.

Mohammedan Sporting Club and Brothers Union will participate in the AFC Cup but Cruciani reminded that national interest always gets the top priority all over the world.

"I will talk with the coaches but we have very short time for the first match. During this time, I can't train if I have to let go players."

National Team Management Committee member and team manager Sayeed Hasan Kanan also backed the coach, saying that the federation will handle the matter. He added that the national team will play a few warm-up games before their departure to the Uzbekistan capital on February 18.

SQUAD

Aminul, Biplab, Hassan Al Mamun, Sujon, Rajani, Nazrul, Sunny, Siraji, Parvez Babu, Titu, Arman Aziz, Joy Munna, Arman, Rintu, Abul, Asad, Ujjal, Emily, Farhad, Kanchan and Alfaz.

Cypriot wonder

FROM PAGE 16

Victory salutes after the unseeded Baghdatis fought back from two sets down to trounce Argentina's David Nalbandian.

No Cypriot has ever ventured so far at a major tennis tournament and the country was glued to television sets for the three-and-a-half-hour Melbourne drama.

"The fact he came back from two sets down is nothing short of a minor miracle... he's made believers of us all," said 35-year-old electrician Constantinos Gregoras.

"Baghdatis aiming for more wizardry in Oz," was the headline in the Cypriot Mail newspaper before his win.

Junior boxing from today

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The 3-day Apan-Jewelers 18th National Junior Boxing Championship will begin at the Mohammad Ali Boxing Stadium today.

The Bangladesh Boxing Federation (BBF) president Maj Gen Jahangir Alam Chowdhury will inaugurate the competition.

A total of 250 boxers from 65 teams from different districts, clubs and organisations will take part in under-16 competition, said BBF general secretary Latifur Rahman at a press conference on Thursday.

The boxers will fight in seven weight categories, 25.5kg, 29kg, 32kg, 35kg, 38.5kg, 42kg and 45kg.

It's Amelie

FROM PAGE 16

That have won her four Grand Slam titles, coming back from a set down against Russian fourth seed Maria Sharapova to win 4-6, 6-1, 6-4.

Installed as the bookies' favourite early in the tournament, she has lost only one of her five Grand Slam final appearances, at Wimbledon in 2001.

Regardless of what happens in the final on Saturday, she is just happy to be there after her injury-riddled season last year.

"No matter what happens on Saturday, I think I can be proud of my comeback. For sure I have a lot of ambition. I want to get it. So we'll see. The best will win," she said, adding that she saw it as a title defence.

"I think I had a little bit of revenge to come here," she said.

"I hope I can do it on Saturday because I didn't lose a match in Australia in 2004, and didn't lose yet any match here this year."

"I hope I can keep going this way. I love this tournament, and it's a lot of good memories, so I hope I can do it again."

BTTTF polls postponed

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The Election Commission on Thursday postponed the next polls of Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation (BTTTF) for an indefinite period.

The chief election commissioner of the National Sports Council Abul Kalam Azad postponed the elections as the disputes on the voter list were not resolved within the time frame.

Mashrafe's busy

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same venue against Rajin Saleh's side.

Sharapova's high-pitched squealing and grunting during points has again attracted attention at the Australian Open, with former great John Newcombe saying it is illegal.

Reports have said her grunts had been measured at 100 decibels, roughly the equivalent of the volume of a small aircraft landing nearby.

She again produced a full repertoire of squeals and grunts in her semi-final loss to Justine Henin-Hardenne at the Australian Open Thursday.

There has also been intense focus on the baby-doll, nightie-style dress she has been wearing here.

She also berated the media for what she perceived as being negative.

"For me to be able to go out there and play the quality of tennis that I did today, I think it was great," said the fourth seed.

"And I know that probably I'm going to be seeing headlines, you know, Maria can't get past the semis, Maria can't finish it off in the third."

"But take all that away and just look at the tennis that we both played today. I think that shows a lot."

Ronaldinho gives Barca the blues

Football

INTERNET, undated

Barcelona star Ronaldinho has sparked controversy in Spain by selecting six Chelsea players in his European dream team - and none of his teammates on Primera Liga's top team.

Chelsea is set to face Barcelona in the Champions League next month in the beginning of the knockout stage of the competition, but Ronaldinho ignored the talents of his teammates and chose a handful of players from the Premiership champions instead.

Ronaldinho picked Czech Republic goalkeeper Petr Cech, England center-half John Terry and midfielder Frank Lampard, French anchorman Claude Makelele, and strikers Didier Drogba and Eidur Gudjohnsen to appear in his fantasy selection.

Barcelona is running away with the Spanish league but the Brazilian decided there was no room for his teammates - preferring to heap the plaudits on their forthcoming opponents.

"Cech has proved at Chelsea that he is the best young goalkeeper in Europe," Ronaldinho said. "In defense, John Terry is my first choice because he is Chelsea's leader and has developed into a very sound defender. I chose Makelele simply because he is quite simply the best holding midfielder player in the world and I chose Lampard because of his incredible (soccer) vision."

Ronaldinho even elected to have Gudjohnsen and Drogba as partners for Milan's Andrei Shevchenko attack.

"Shevchenko is very special," Ronaldinho added. "His individual class, quality as well as speed set him apart and make him the world's most dangerous attacker."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Cryptogram puzzle grid with letters and numbers.

CRYPTOQUIP
RS W UZAUPD FWC UV CV
TVJD ADSZDPRHN R
TZOOVTD FJRNFTUVO
WUWTFDPP TUWURVH
Yesterday's Cryptogram: WHEN YOU WRITE A SMALL NOTATION IN THE MARGIN, ARE YOU GETTING A WORD IN EDGEWISE?
Today's Cryptogram Clue: V equals O
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.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Participants of the seventh Square Golf Tournament are seen with chief guest and Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Moeen U Ahmed (M) during the inaugural ceremony of the two-day meet at Kurmitola on Thursday.

Back to the drawing board for Africa's WC minnows

REUTERS, Cairo



Africa Cup of Nations EGYPT 2006

World Cup finalists Angola and Togo are going back to the drawing board after poor performances at the African Nations Cup finals.

Both Angola coach Luis Oliveira and his Togo counterpart Stephen Keshi expressed disappointment as their teams continued a winless streak at the tournament on Wednesday.

Togo were eliminated from the competition after a second successive loss, going down 2-0 to Cameroon, while Angola are on the cusp of missing out on the quarterfinals after a goalless draw

with the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"We were unlucky," said Oliveira Gonçalves after picking up their first point of the campaign, "but now our future in the tournament depends on others."

Togo's Keshi said the losses were a setback, but at the same time invaluable experience in their preparations for the World Cup which begins in Germany in June.

"I hope to have a lot of friendly matches to put them right between now and the World Cup. I have to work on the mental attitude, whatever it takes," said the Nigerian, who was captain of his country at the 1994 World Cup finals in the US.

Asked about the possibility of losing his job because of Togo's failure to get past the first round,

Keshi said that decision was not his to make. "That is in the hands of the Togo football federation."

Togo midfielder Adeganmi Olufade said the tournament had been a disappointing experience.

"But we now know what our mistakes are and we can work on rectifying it," he told Reuters.

Angola had also expected more from the tournament in Egypt and would make adjustments in the coming months, said Oliveira Gonçalves.

But he added: "Angola are not a candidate to win the World Cup, we are going there to fly our flag and display our soccer. We are a country who has emerged from suffering decades of civil war and to go to the World Cup is a great achievement for us."

EUROPEAN CUPS TIES

MU, Milan and Madrid win

Football

AGENCIES, undated

Several of Europe's big clubs were involved in domestic Cup ties on Wednesday night. In England, Manchester United made it into the final of the League Cup with a 2-1 win over Blackburn Rovers at Old Trafford taking them through 3-2 on aggregate.

In a highly-charged tie Dutch striker Ruud van Nistelrooy fired the home side into an eighth-minute lead but Steven Reid levelled just past the half-hour.

Brad Friedel dived to his right to superbly beat away Van Nistelrooy's penalty just before halftime but was beaten on 51 minutes when French striker Louis Saha volleyed in Wayne Rooney's cross.

In Spain, Robinho's superb strike earned Real Madrid a 1-0 victory over holders Real Betis at the Bernabeu and sent them into the semifinals of the Spanish King's Cup.

Real, who also won the first leg 1-0, were joined in the last four by Espanyol who completed an emphatic 3-0 aggregate win over Cadiz with a 2-0 victory at Montjuic, midfielder Jofre scoring both goals.

But the evening's action was marred by events during the game between Valencia and Deportivo Coruna which was called off after the Argentine was hit by an object thrown from the crowd at the

Mestalla.

The official was cut on the forehead moments after Valencia striker David Villa put the home side ahead to level the tie 1-1 on aggregate just over a minute before halftime.

Alberto Gilardino scored four minutes from time to give AC Milan a 1-0 win over Palermo in the first leg of their Italian Cup quarterfinal. The match played at San Siro in freezing conditions appeared to be heading for a goalless draw but the deadlock was broken when substitute Kaka outpaced Giuseppe

Biava down the left wing and crossed to give Gilardino an easy tap-in from two yards out.

The biggest result of the night though came in the German Cup where St Pauli reached the semifinals for the first time in their history with a sensational 3-1 win over Bundesliga giants Werder Bremen.

Regional side St Pauli took full advantage of a difficult snow covered pitch to eliminate five-time winners Bremen who were left with a sour taste in their mouth at being forced to play in the icy conditions.



PHOTO: AFP

Manchester United's Louis Saha (R) celebrates with fellow striker Wayne Rooney after scoring against Blackburn Rovers in their English League Cup tie at Old Trafford on Wednesday.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Ministry of Agriculture. Barind Multipurpose Development Authority. Office of the Executive Engineer. Naogaon Region-2, Patnitala, Naogaon. Invitation for Tenders. Table with 19 items including Ministry/Division, Agency, Procuring entity name, Tender No., etc.