

School cricket begins Apr 11

UNB, Dhaka

The Standard Chartered Young Tigers National School Cricket will begin across the country with the participation of under-15 school players on April 11.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) on Tuesday signed a three-year contract with sponsors Standard Chartered Bank at a local hotel.

Tournament sponsor Standard Chartered Bank will provide a total of Tk 150 lakhs in three years.

BCB vice-president Aziz Al Kaiser and Head of Corporate Affairs of Standard Chartered Bank Shah Masud Imam signed the contract.

A total of 328 school teams from Dhaka city, Rajshahi, Khulna, Chittagong, Barisal, Sylhet and Dhaka divisions would take part in 64 divisional and 10 Dhaka city venues.

The board will provide Tk 3,000 each for meals and transport to each participating team while quality cricket materials will be provided to each team in the final round.

BCB's game development committee chairman Khandaker Jamiluddin Ahmed disclosed this at a press conference.

Jamil said 192 talent scouts of the board would scour the tournament for players that can receive higher training under the board.

CHAMPIONS TROPHY India, Aus in same group

PTI, Dubai

India have been placed alongside Australia and England in Group A for the ICC Champions Trophy tournament slated to be played in India from October 7.

A qualifier from Sri Lanka, West Indies, Zimbabwe and Bangladesh would complete the Group A, an ICC press release said here on Tuesday.

South Africa, Pakistan and New Zealand have been placed in the Group B, which will also accommodate a qualifier.

Sri Lanka, West Indies, Zimbabwe and Bangladesh, the four nations ranked from seventh to tenth in the latest LG-ICC One-Day International rankings, will play round-robin matches to qualify for the main draw.

Two teams from the round-robin first round will join the six top teams in Group A and B in the second round.

The top two sides from each group will advance to the semi-finals and the final will be held on November 5.

Mujib Hall DU v'ball champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall lifted the men's title in the Dhaka University inter-hall volleyball competition when they defeated Shahidullah Hall in 3-1 sets at the University ground yesterday.

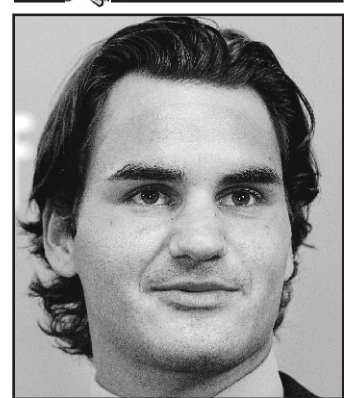
Shamsunnahar Hall beat Rokeya Hall in 3-2 sets in the women's final.

Pro vice-chancellor of Dhaka University Prof. AFM Yusuf Haider distributed the prizes among the participants.



Did U Know?

Yuvraj Singh of India scored 103 from 76 balls in the third ODI against England. It was his seventh century, first against England.



Roger Federer

(World No. 1 tennis player) "I'm extremely happy. To win back-to-back like this is unbelievable. I never thought I'd do it again. It really feels great."

After winning the Nasdaq-100 Open title.

Balanced on a knife-edge



AFP, Barcelona

Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard's normally calm Dutch demeanour could be tested to the full when the Spanish league leaders play out their Champions League destiny against Benfica on Wednesday.

After last week's entertaining scoreless draw in the quarter-final first leg at Benfica's Stadium of Light, Rijkaard will lead an injury-hit team out at the Nou Camp with more than one concern.

The former AC Milan defensive midfielder has spent the past two weeks wondering why the Catalan's goalscoring well has dried up just as the club look destined to go all the way in Europe's premier club competition.

Poor scoring form in the league continued on Saturday when they drew 1-1 at home to 10-man Real Madrid. Ronaldo's first-half penalty hardly gave Rijkaard cause for huge celebration.

If Rijkaard wasn't worried then, some late injury news on Monday will hardly have cheered him.

Argentine prodigy Lionel Messi is sidelined again following a medical on Monday which showed the leg muscle he injured against Chelsea has yet to fully heal.

Defenders Edmilson and Rafa Marquez, who also missed the first leg against Benfica through injury, are still sidelined.

And to rub salt into Barca's wounds, midfielder Thiago Motta joins the injury list after picking up a knock against Real.

Benfica coach Ronald Koeman, whose late freekick blasted Barcelona towards their only previous Champions League victory, in 1992, could see his status as a club legend disappear in the event of an aggregate win for Benfica.

Koeman has injury woes of his own, however.

Nuno Gomes, the top scorer in the Portuguese league with 15 goals, missed the first leg due to suspension and is out this time

India name new glovesman for Abu Dhabi ties

AFP, Goa

Wicketkeeper Robin Uthappa has been named in India's squad for two day-night matches against Pakistan in Abu Dhabi, a top official announced here on Monday.

The matches will be held on April 18 and 19 to raise funds for victims of last year's devastating earthquake in Kashmir.

Uthappa, 20, replaced opener Gautam Gambhir in the squad currently playing a one-day series against England.

"If we win the series against England and we think some players have to be rested then we may consider other names also," said Indian cricket board secretary Niranjan Shah.

The same 15-member squad will play the remaining four matches against England, who are trailing 3-0 in the seven-match series following their 45-run defeat in the third game here.

SCUAD Rahul Dravid (captain), Virender Sehwag, Yuvraj Singh, Mohammad Kaif, Suresh Raina, Mahendra Dhoni, Irfan Pathan, Venugopal Rao, Munaf Patel, Shantha-kumaran Sreesanth, Harbhajan Singh, Ajit Agarkar, Ramesh Powar, Rudra Pratap Singh, Robin Uthappa.

Wickets go down like ninepins

FROM PAGE 12 by a delivery from Abdul Razzaq that nipped back sharply.

All rounder Farveez Maharoof (one) went lbw and Tillakaratne Dilshan (11) edged to wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal to give Asif his second five-wicket haul of the match.

Tailenders Nuwan Kulasekera (six) and Malinga Bandara (four) were dismissed by Razzaq, who finished with three for 20 when bad light stopped play four overs early.

Resuming on 267-8, Sri Lanka added just 12 runs before Nuwan Kulasekera (13) was bowled by Asif and Lasith Malinga (nine) was caught in the covers off leg spinner Danish Kaneria.

Stand-in opener Akmal - promoted after Shoaib Malik pulled out of the match with a fever - and Farhat gave the tourists a solid start with a 57-run opening stand.

However, Sri Lanka struck twice in the final half hour of the morning as Pakistan reached lunch on 71-2.

After the break, Mohammad Yousuf (17) and Younis Khan (35) shared a 50-run partnership for the third wicket before Muttiah Muralidaran struck for a second time.

He bowled Yousuf trying to force an off break through the off side. Yousuf was then caught at slip off pace bowler Maharoof before Muralidaran trapped Faisal Iqbal lbw for five and bowled Razzaq for four. Muralidaran took five for 39 from 16.4 overs.

following a knee injury picked up 15 minutes into Benfica's 2-1 away win over Belenenses at the weekend.

Koeman is expected to call on either France's Laurent Robert or Brazil's Geovanni to replace Gomes and join the two other likely forwards, Simao Sabrosa and Fabrizio Miccoli.

But for Barcelona's Portuguese playmaker Deco, Gomes' absence could be decisive.

"I don't see anyone capable of scoring as many goals at Benfica as him," he told private Portuguese



Benfica coach Ronald Koeman waves to supporters upon his arrival at the Barcelona Airport on Tuesday.

television SIC on Monday.

Benfica should be quietly confident of scoring a precious away goal having ousted defending champions Liverpool from the competition with a 2-0 second leg win at Anfield.

Nevertheless Miccoli admits that they will first have to respect Barcelona to beat them.

"We have to arrive in Barcelona and really concentrate because they are a really strong team. Anything is possible though," Miccoli told private radio TSF.

Despite Barcelona's setbacks, midfielder Giovanni van Bronckhorst said they are confident of chasing away their scoring

demons.

"The main thing is to create chances. The squad is not worried," the Dutchman told the club's website www.fcbarcelona.com.

"On Wednesday we have the chance to change this bad luck. We have the dream of winning the Champions League and so we want to beat Benfica."

The key to a place in the last four of the competition in this tie could come down to the respective tactical decisions of Rijkaard and Koeman.

While Barcelona are expected to unleash an offensive volley at their visitors, Benfica could come to defend, soak up the pressure and strike on the counter-attack.

Van Bronckhorst is only too aware they have left themselves potentially vulnerable, and will have to play well in every position.

"In the Nou Camp, we're used to teams that defend and look for the counter-attack," he said.

"Benfica can play that way, as we saw against Liverpool. That should serve as a lesson for us."

"We create a lot of chances but we also have to be very focussed in defence."

Brazil president backs 2014 WC bid

AFP, Brazil

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has given his backing to a bid by his country to host the 2014 World Cup, Brazilian football federation (CBF) chief Ricardo Teixeira announced Tuesday.

After a meeting with the president Teixeira said that Lula had agreed "that after 64 years Brazil met all the criteria to organise the World Cup and promised his backing because Brazilian football and the country deserve it."

Brazil are the most successful World Cup nation with five titles in 1958, 1962, 1970, 1994 and 2002. But they have only once organised the tournament in 1950 when they lost the final 2-1 to Uruguay.

World soccer governing body FIFA's executive committee have already ruled the 2014 event will be held in South America.

During the meeting Teixeira presented a letter from FIFA president Joseph Blatter, thanking the Brazilian government for their support in the fight against racism.

"FIFA congratulated Brazil because Lula was the only head of state to request measures be taken against racism. Blatter asked me to give him a personal letter," added Teixeira.

Police earn full points

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Police defeated Dilkhusha Sporting Club in straight sets on the second day of the United Commercial Bank Limited Premier Volleyball League held at the newly built Volleyball stadium yesterday.

In the day's other matches, Water Development Board and Power Development Board also won in straight sets.

Tajikistan almost

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Sri Lankan Chathura Siyaguna fired the ball over the bar in the 10th minute and Bhutan custodian Jigme Singye parried away a 30-yard scorcher from the midfielder in the 32nd minute.

Bhutan went on the offensive after the break but Channa Edirbandanage's freekick hit the crossbar in the 47th minute. Galbodapayagalage could have doubled the advantage for Sri Lanka at the hour mark when he had only goalkeeper Jigme Singye to beat but failed to do so.

BRUNEI-NEPAL Adil Mohammed Salleh put Brunei ahead after 10 minutes while Rywandi Wahid doubled the lead in the 42nd minute to give the side a 2-0 lead at the break. Nepal reduced the arrears in the second-half through Tashi Tsering's goal on the hour-mark.

Bangladesh

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"We will go all out and try to win the match and group because we don't want to face Tajikistan in the quarter-finals," he added.

BANGLADESH LINEUP Aminul, Siraji, Faisal, Nazrul, Wali, Zahid Parvez, Arman Aziz, Rintu, Asad, Kanchan and Topu.

Australia

FROM PAGE 12 Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-33, 3-198, 4-228, 5-229, 6-237, 7-258, 8-275.

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SRI LANKA: First innings (over-120) Tharanga c Younis b Asif 10 Jayasuriya b Asif 14 Sangakkara c Faisal b Kaneria 7 Jayawardene c Farhat b Asif 4 Samaraweera b Asif 65 Dilshan c Akmal b Kaneria 22 Maharoo c Younis b Kaneria 7 Bandara c Akmal b Asif 43 Kulasekera b Asif 13 Malinga c Razzaq b Kaneria 9 Muralidaran not out 1 Extras: (lb-4, w-1, nb-2, pen-5) 12 Total: (All out in 91.2 overs) 279

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Magath livid at Klinsi

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich coach Felix Magath on Tuesday hit out at German national counterpart Jurgen Klinsmann's policy of rotating goalkeepers before making a final selection for the World Cup.

Magath complained that their campaign was suffering by the duel between Bayern Munich custodian Oliver Kahn and Arsenal's Jens Lehmann.

"This affair is not only annoying but is holding Bayern back," Magath told Bavarian television.

A howler by Kahn at the weekend allowed tailenders FC Cologne share the spoils 2-2 at runaway league leader's Bayern.

Magath added that a decision on the future of Bayern midfielder Michael Ballack, whose contract is up at the end of the season, should be made shortly.

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Gunners on the verge



AFP, Turin

Arsene Wenger has vowed that Arsenal will seek to add to their two-goal first leg advantage as they seek to kill off Juventus in the second leg of their Champions League quarter-final on Wednesday.

An irresistible display of Wenger's exhilarating brand of football allowed the Gunners to outclass the Italian giants at Highbury last week, and their manager understandably is loathe to change the approach that delivered a famous 2-0 win.

"There was a third goal in that first game and it is a regret that we didn't get it," Wenger said.

"The positive side is that we can completely focus on 2-0 not being enough of an advantage. Sometimes you don't prepare yourself to be positive and you don't get out of your own half."

One away goal for Arsenal would make life extremely difficult for Juve and, on the evidence of last week's performance, the Serie A leaders will struggle to contain opponents who managed to make some of the world's most experienced defenders look like novices at Highbury.

"We have no real choice in our attitude," Wenger added. "You can only go there and try to play to be positive to win the game. We cannot

play another game.

"In this match we know it is down to us. Juventus is a big club, big team and it will be nothing like 'come on my friends go forward at us'. It will be a big tie again and we need exactly the same performance as last week."

The chances of that have been boosted by the faster-than-expected recovery of teenage midfielder Cesc Fabregas from a foot injury that had threatened to rule him out of the trip to Italy.

Defender Emmanuel Eboue, also injured in Premiership action at the weekend, has likewise been cleared for duty on Wednesday night, offering Wenger the opportunity to field an unchanged side.

The Frenchman nevertheless faces a tricky selection dilemma with Sol Campbell ready for a return to his starting line-up.

Campbell has declared himself ready to start his first match since walking out of Highbury in despair after making two bad mistakes in the first half of a Premiership defeat by West Ham on February 1.

Wenger however may be reluctant to disrupt the centrecback pairing of Philippe Senderos and Kolo Toure to accommodate the England defender, even if Eboue has to be replaced at right-back.

Toure has performed well in that role in the past but he was outstanding in the middle during the first leg as Arsenal shackled the attacking threat

of Zlatan Ibrahimovic and David Trezeguet.

Juve's creative edge should be sharper in the Stadio delle Alpi with Czech playmaker Pavel Nedved due to return after missing the first leg through suspension.

But coach Fabio Capello must do without the midfield muscle of Patrick Vieira and Mauro Camoranesi and first-choice right-back Jonathan Zebina, all of whom are suspended this week.

"We know what we have to do and that is create some problems for them," Capello said after watching his side labour to a goalless draw with Treviso at the weekend.

"Arsenal have a great counter-attacking system with quality and pace. Its a difficult task, but it depends on how things go. We must go forward and be wary of their ability to hit us on the break."

The concern Juve feel about Arsenal's unrivalled counter-punching qualities was reflected in even starker terms by Nedved.

"We know that we cant make any mistakes at all, not one error," said the Czech.

"But if Arsenal want to qualify then they are going to have to work very hard for it on Wednesday night. Juventus are a side who always battle. We believe that we can still make it through to the semi-finals."

Success will convince Henry



AFP, London

Arsenal managing director Keith Edelman is hoping success in the Champions League will help persuade Thierry Henry to sign a new contract with the club.

Spanish side Barcelona are linked with a move for the 28-year-old French striker whose contract runs out at the end of next season.

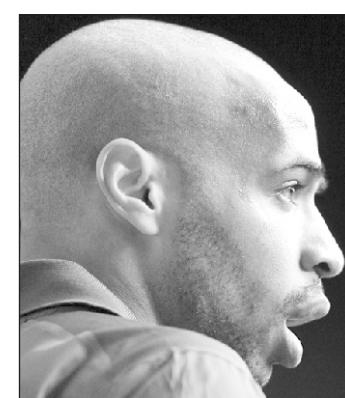
Although Arsenal have struggled in the Premiership this season, Henry has skipped a young side to impressive performances against Juventus and Real Madrid in Europe.

With the club moving to a new stadium at Ashburton Grove next season, Edelman feels winning in Europe could help persuade Henry to commit.

"I think that would help," he said. "We all want Thierry to stay at Arsenal Football Club. We've made him a very good offer, we'd love him to stay and we hope he'll make that decision before the end of the

season.

"I think it's over 50 percent probability he will stay with us because we've got a new stadium to go to



THIERRY HENRY

and we've got a great group of youngsters who show we're a team for the future.

"I think Arsene (Wenger) has developed another great team and you're seeing it develop in front of your eyes. When you watch that and play with that it's very exciting. I think he will stay."

Edelman admitted the financial rewards for doing well in Europe were great.

"It would be worth a lot of money if we progressed in the competition," he added on BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

"Just for beating Juventus we'd earn over 4 million pounds, if we got to the final but last week we'd increase our revenue by 8 million pounds, and if you go all the way it's about 12-13 million pounds extra revenue. So it is a lucrative competition.

"We've been lucky because over the last few years we've automatically qualified, so when we did our budgets in the summer we knew exactly what we'd earn and we assumed we would go through all the group stages to the first knock-out stage.

"That's how we've done our budgets traditionally but we also do what is known as a 'downside scenario' when we look at our business assuming we are not in Europe over the longer term, just to make sure we have our finances in shape."

Hohns quits



AFP, Sydney

The long-time chairman of Australia's national cricket selectors, Trevor Hohns, announced his resignation Tuesday after coming under increasing criticism over a series of controversial team choices.

Cricket Australia said Hohns was quitting after a decade as chairman of the selectors' panel to devote more time to his business interests.

"The change has come due to Hohns' increasing business commitments, which will occupy a lot more of his time due to the pending retirement of his business partner," it said in a statement.

No information was given about a replacement for Hohns to head the panel, though Cricket Australia said it expected to announce an appointment quickly.

During Hohns' time on the selectors'

panel, Australia had a phenomenal Test record of 35 series won, five drawn and just six lost.

During the same period, the selectors brought 39 players into the Test team and 46 into the one-day squad.

But over the past year, there has also been growing criticism of the panel's choices.

Among the controversial decisions under Hohns was the failure to make more use of spinner Stuart McGill during last year's Ash