



Dream run for Thakurgaon

SPORTS REPORTER
Thakurgaon continued their impressive run in the Dhaka Bank Under-19 National Youth Cricket Tournament as they moved into the group final with a thumping 144-run victory over Kurigram at the Bogra Stadium yesterday.
Ahsanul scored an unbeaten 86 as Thakurgaon amassed 267 for seven. Arman then took six Kurigram wickets as they were skittled for only 123 runs.
Tangail also moved to group finals after they coasted to a 127-run win over Narsingdi at the Mymensingh Stadium. Imon hit a superb hundred, which included 10 fours and a couple of sixes, as Tangail posted a fighting 217 in 50 overs. Narsingdi, however, never looked in contention and they were eventually shot out for 90.
Gaibandha and Madaripur are the two other teams that moved to the finals of the group stage.

Narail toy with Shwarupkathi

SPORTS REPORTER
Al Mamun and Sabuj slammed hatricks as Pouro Secondary School of Narail romped into the zonal final of the banglalink tiger trophy National School Football Championship with a 9-0 thrashing of Shwarupkathi Pilot Secondary School of Pirojpur at the Narail Stadium yesterday.

Ulipur MF School and College of Kurigram rode on Sohel Rana's treble to move into the zonal final beating Gohali Islamia High School of Bogra by 5-0 at the Kurigram Stadium.
Monirul Islam was hero in Jodunath Pilot High School's 4-0 victory over Haji Ibrahim Alam Chand High School of Narayanganj at the Tangail Stadium, which confirmed their berth in the zonal final.
At the Natore Stadium, Jewel Rana scored the only goal of the match as hosts Salampur Dakhil



Did U Know?

For the first time, the World Cup was televised worldwide in 1954.



Pavel Nedved
(Czech Republic playmaker)
"I have a number of options, and retirement is one of them. I will be 34 in the summer (in August) and I will see what motivation I will have to play."



Croatia's Niko Kovac (front) runs while his teammates train in the background during the team's first training session in Brezice on Saturday. Croatia will play a friendly match against Austria on May 23.

Pigs out, Brazil in!



REUTERS, Switzerland

If Brazil's soccer team succeed in winning a sixth World Cup title in July, the lack of pig smells in a small Swiss village might just have something to do with it.
The 4,000-inhabitant lakeside resort of Weggis is preparing to welcome Ronaldinho, Kaka and the rest of the Brazilian squad on Monday for the start of a two-week pre-World Cup training camp.
Preparations in the village have included the building of a 5,000-seater practice stadium, an indoor training pitch, a gym, a media centre -- and the removal of around 300 pigs from a farm overlooking the stadium.
"It was actually my idea that the pigs should be removed," farmer Alfred Stoekli told Reuters on Friday as workers put the finishing touches to the new pitch below.
"Some Brazilian officials had already been here inspecting the

site. They didn't say anything about the farm, but I knew that the stench can be pretty bad when the wind is blowing, and I didn't want some tabloid paper writing that Brazil's World Cup preparations had been damaged by the smell of my pigs."
While the local council quickly agreed a 9,000 Swiss francs (\$7,350) compensation deal with Stoekli to ensure a pig-free stay for the footballers, other preparations have been on a larger scale, in fitting with the Brazilians' precise list of demands.
"If you compare what they've asked for with what it takes to win the World Cup, then I think you see that their requirements have all been set out with that goal in mind," says Philippe Huber, head of the sports marketing company responsible for bringing Brazil here in the first place.
"There are no demands for gold Bentleys or that kind of thing, but they do expect an exceptional training pitch for example, or the ability to have a gym built right next to that pitch."
According to Huber, there were originally around 800 venues vying to host the training camp, a number

that was reduced to 40 once the less serious bids were weeded out.
"I think the unique setting here helped our bid," Huber told Reuters. "There are the obvious attractions such as the beautiful lake and mountains but we also have a wonderful five-star hotel for the team to stay in, and the village has just one main access road which obviously helps with security."
There is also the simple incentive of money, with Huber's company shelling out \$1.2 million in cash to the Brazilian football federation just for having them turn up.
On top of that there is the \$1.31 million price-tag -- financed mainly by a locally-based coffee machine manufacturer -- of turning the local amateur soccer team's seat-less ground into a 5,000-seater stadium, built to precise World Cup specifications.
That includes from the size of the playing area to the type of grass used.
Accommodation, transport and security costs (the latter described by Huber simply as "very large") are also being met by the organisers

Records roll for Dravid

PTI, Kingston

For Indian skipper Rahul Dravid, the first ODI against West Indies provided more than one reason to be delighted.
Dravid, in making 105, became the first Indian to post three centuries against the West Indies in one-dayers.
Sachin Tendulkar and Krish Srikkanth have scored two centuries each against the Caribbeans.
The icing on the cake for the Indian captain was that he also completed 1,000 runs against the West Indies.
Dravid, who now has 1,014 runs from 28 matches at an average of 48.28, became the second Indian to do so after Tendulkar (1145 runs).
The Bangalorean added another record to his name -- becoming the first Indian batsman to register a hundred against West Indies in West Indies.
Sunil Gavaskar's 90 off 117 balls at Berbice, Guyana, way back in 1983 was the previous highest individual innings by an Indian in West Indies.
Dravid's 105 was his first away ton as captain and also the highest individual innings by an overseas player at Kingston.
Graeme Smith's 103 for South Africa versus West Indies last year was the only overseas centurion at this venue before Dravid.

Iran counting on Bundesliga stars



AFP, Tehran

Iran skipper Ali Daei believes the Asian powerhouses' contingent of German-based stars can lead his team into an unprecedented second round World Cup spot.
"Fortunately, many of our players are playing in the Bundesliga. So we are quite ready and accustomed to playing in Germany with no anxiety," said Daei, the world's top international scorer with 119 goals.
Currently Ali Karimi, Mehdi Mahdavia, Freyoun Zandi and Vahid Hashemian play in Germany with Bayern Munich, Hamburg, Hanover and Kaiserslautern respectively.

draw against Scotland.
Twenty years later the squad made it to France, scoring a lone but memorable win against arch-foe the United States.
"In football a lot can happen, but our number one goal is to make it to the second round. If this happens, then our goal will be to make it to the third round," said the confident captain, who enjoys superstar status in Iran.
"We'll also be relying on a lot of Iranians living abroad to come and support us and help us play better," Daei said, adding that the squad was also working well under Croatia coach Branko Ivankovic.
"His technical abilities and character has helped our team a lot. Branko is the coach that will take us

to the second round," said Daei, but added that he viewed Brazil and Holland as the best placed sides to win the finals.
Iran has had a tough time preparing for Germany, facing difficulties securing warm-up matches and under fire over their headline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad - who prompted calls for Iran to be barred from Germany after he said Israel should be "wiped off the map".
"I am not a politician, and never ever liked politics," was Daei's take on the controversy. "I am an athlete and I say what I want to say in the football matches."



ALI DAEI

Rooney might be fit for opener



AFP, London

Injured striker Wayne Rooney could be fit in time for England's World Cup opener against Paraguay, according to reports.
England's bid for World Cup glory this summer, 40 years after their unique triumph, was severely hit when the Manchester United star broke a metatarsal bone in his foot a few weeks ago.
It was thought the 20-year-old Rooney, who is considered England's most lethal front man, would miss most of their group matches.
However according to The Sun on Saturday Rooney's rapid progress in recent weeks has astounded the England camp so much that they feel he could make an appearance in their opener on June 10.
The Sun quoted an unnamed

England source as saying: "It is pretty well known in the camp Wayne is way ahead of schedule - but why tell the opposition?"
Rooney is set to have another scan on his injured right foot on Thursday, the result of which should confirm whether or not how fit he is to play.
In the meantime England manager Sven-Goran Eriksson will rely on Liverpool striker Peter Crouch and Newcastle's Michael Owen in the first group matches.
Arsenal youngster Theo Walcott was also named in the squad despite having yet to play a match in the Premiership.
Meanwhile Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard said he would be prepared to move up a notch from midfield to help plug the gap left by Rooney if so required by Eriksson.
Gerrard has been deployed in an advanced role for his club with mixed results this season, but feels it is a tactic that could prove useful.
"We did it a lot against Chelsea because we always wanted a man

against Claude Makelele, who starts a lot of their attacks," Gerrard told the Daily Telegraph.
"When I first played there I must admit it was a bit strange to receiving the ball so high up the pitch with my back to goal, having top defenders like John Terry and (Ricardo) Carvalho right behind."
"But I like to think that I'm at a stage in my career where I can learn quite quickly and adapt to certain situations."
Despite the apparent goods news on Rooney's rapid recovery, Gerrard admitted the player himself is still taking it one day at a time.
"He (Rooney) thinks he's got a chance of playing some part," said Gerrard.
"He told me that he doesn't want to target one particular game in case he doesn't make it, but he's really hopeful that he's going to be part of it."
"Sven's got to make a big decision on him but I'm just glad Wayne hasn't been ruled out completely."

Nowotny the key to German youngsters



AFP, Pula

Veteran German defender Jens Nowotny will be key to how the younger German players perform at the World Cup finals claimed national coach Jurgen Klinsmann on Saturday.
The 32-year-old was a surprise selection in Klinsmann's squad having not played for the national side since Euro 2004 and a long-standing knee injury had kept him out of action till February this year.
However Klinsmann insisted that 45-times capped Nowotny, who is leaving Bayer Leverkusen as he

says he wants to finish his career playing abroad, merited his place.
"Jens is not only an important player in terms of his experience, but also in his influence on the squad," said Klinsmann, speaking at a training camp for the team.
"Along with Oliver Kahn, Jens must pass on his experience and his advice to the younger players. He knows exactly what role he must play around them."
However Klinsmann said that did not mean Nowotny would be a certain starter when the hosts get their finals underway on June 9 against Group A rivals Costa Rica in Munich.
"Everyone must show during the training sessions and the warm-up matches that they deserve their place in the team," said the former German international striker, who

won the World Cup as a player with the then West Germany.
Kahn, who has been displaced as first choice 'keeper by Jens Lehmann, agreed with Klinsmann over Nowotny.
"It is very important that Jens should be there, he can bring stability and security to our young defenders," said Kahn, who was goalkeeper in the 2002 World Cup final defeat by Brazil.
Nowotny was out injured from 2002 to 2004 with a serious knee problem - which he suffered in the 2002 Champions League semi-final with Manchester United and meant he missed both the final and the World Cup finals.
He still took the club to court claiming unpaid wages and an

WORLD CUP 2007 Proteas plan well ahead

BBC ONLINE, undated

South Africa have unveiled their blueprint for success at the 2007 World Cup by naming a 25-man squad to undergo specialised training and coaching.
Former player Jonty Rhodes has been appointed as a coach with specific duties to help with one-day cricket.
Cricket South Africa chief executive Gerald Majola said: "This plan is aimed at leaving no stone unturned to give the Proteas the very best preparation."
A special executive committee will oversee the build-up to the tournament.
That committee comprises Majola, skipper Graeme Smith, coach Mickey Arthur, chief selector Haroon Lorgat and professional cricket general manager Vince van der Bijl.
They want every conceivable person involved in South African person - including groundstaff - working on a "single-minded focus."
Every single member of the 25-man squad will receive individual training programmes from Proteas trainer Adrian le Roux.
WC TRAINING SQUAD
Graeme Smith, Boeta Dippenaar, Herschelle Gibbs, AB de Villiers, Jacques Kallis, Justin Kemp, Mark Boucher, Shaun Pollock, Robin Peterson, Andrew Hall, Makhaya Ntini, Loots Bosman, Ashwell Prince, Nicky Boje, Roger Telemachus, Charl Langeveldt, Garnett Kruger, Dale Steyn, Johan van der Wath, Andre Nel, Justin Ontong, Alfonso Thomas, Johan Botha, Monde Zondeki, Albie Morkel.

Footballers' camp starts

SPORTS REPORTER

The national football team's month-long residential camp for the South Asian Games to be held in Colombo next August got underway at BKSP yesterday.
A total of 23 players out of a selection of 27 took part in the fitness training under the supervision of Argentine trainer Ariel Colman on the first day.
Four players -- Emily, Tapu, Siraji and Tareq -- didn't appear on the first day as they just returned home yesterday after playing the AFC Cup match for Brothers Union against India's Mahindra United.



Football legend Diego Maradona controls the ball during a Showball match against Colombia in Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina on Friday.

The Daily Star ONLINE POLL

Which team will be the biggest miss in this year's World Cup

Turkey	24.3%
Uruguay	23.7%
Cameroon	18.3%
Nigeria	16.8%
Greece	08.5%
Colombia	06.2%

I think that the Nigeria team is a powerful one. Most of the teams in this World Cup have to fear Nigeria- **Hafizul Haque.**
 I think the biggest miss is Turkey because they were in the semifinal of the last World Cup. I am really missing Davala and Hasan Sas - **Shadiqur**
 Greece- the European champions. But they will miss the World Cup. It's a shame really- **Zarif.**
 I miss Belgium because this is the first World Cup they will miss since 1986. They played well against Brazil last time- **Solaiman Palash.**
 The biggest miss for this year and for many years