

**13**  
DAYS TO GO

WORLD CUP SPECIAL

# Star Sport

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**'Give Klinsmann a break'**

"He is doing a good job. I have spoken with him a few times and chatted with Beckenbauer about Klinsmann. Some people don't like the fact that he has changed a lot. I think some people in Germany have a problem with the new developments over the past two years. Klinsmann gives the team a lot of self-confidence."

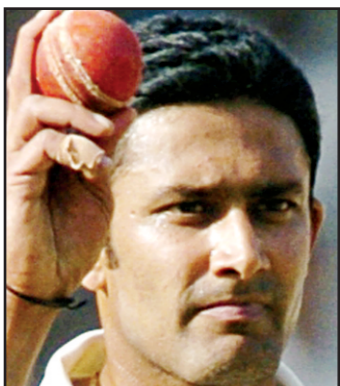
-- Brazil legend Pele

AFP, Berlin



**Did U Know?**

In 1962, when Mexican goalkeeper Antonio Carbajal played in his country's 2-0 loss against Brazil, he became the first player to take part in four consecutive World Cups. He went one better in England in 1966, playing in his fifth tournament to set a then new mark.



**Anil Kumble**  
(Indian master leg-spinner)  
"It is going to be a tough tour, but I'm looking forward to it. The last couple of (overseas) tours I've been on, we came close to winning the series but couldn't make it. Hopefully this time we should be able to do that."  
**On India's chances of winning the Test series in the West Indies.**

**What to WATCH**

**ESPN**  
England v Sri Lanka  
Second Test, Day 2  
Live at 4:00 pm

**Alim hits hat-trick**  
SPORTS REPORTER

Yunus Ali High School of Pabna hit five past a hapless Mominpur Secondary School of Meherpur in the second round of the banglalink tiger trophy National Schools Football tournament at the Pabna Stadium yesterday.

Alim of the Pabna school struck the first hat-trick of this round. They were complemented by one each by Ruhul and Shanto.

Sirajganj's Gaberpara Senior Madrasa won a close contest against Madarganj MB High School of Thakurgaon by a margin of 2-1.

Ehsan cancelled out a Jilhaj goal in the 25th minute. But Bari hit the winner in the hour mark for the Sirajganj school.

At the Comilla Stadium, Laxminarayan Cotton Mill High School of Narayanganj won by a solitary goal over Islamia Government High School of Mymensingh.

Chhagalnaiya Pilot High School put three past Hajiganj Pilot High School.

Riyad struck twice for the winners in the second-half.

**VOLLEYBALL TESTS**  
**Bangladesh in the lead**

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh swept aside Nepal 25-16, 26-24 and 25-17 in the first volleyball Test match at the Mirpur Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium yesterday.

Bangladesh lead the three-match series 1-0.

Four exhibition matches, followed by the Test series, will be played at Gazipur, Narail, Satkhira and Dhaka on May 29, June 1, 2 and 4.

The second Test of the series will take place on May 28.

Senior vice-president of Bangladesh Volleyball Federation (BVF) and executive director of Transcom Beverages Limited Golam Quddus Chowdhury were present at the opening ceremony.

## Rooney out of group stage



AFP, London

Wayne Rooney will travel with England to the World Cup despite being told that he will be unable to resume full training before June 14 at the earliest, four days after his country's opening match.

A scan on the Manchester United forward's broken foot confirmed the initial prognosis that, provided he suffers no fresh setbacks, he will need around six weeks to recover from the time that he suffered the injury, playing against Chelsea on April 24.

But United said Friday that England's most important player would only be given a green light to play in Germany if a full recovery was confirmed by another scan the club has scheduled for June 14, in Manchester.

If that goes well, Rooney could still be available to play for England in the knockout stages of the tournament and head coach Sven-Goran Eriksson confirmed that he would take the player to Germany on that basis.

Rooney will continue to work on his rehabilitation with United's

medical staff until June 5, when he will fly out with the rest of the squad to Germany before returning for the second scan nine days later.

"This is very encouraging news," Eriksson said. "I'm looking forward to Wayne joining up with the rest of the squad on Sunday. The fact that he is flying out to Germany with us will give everyone a huge lift."

The Swede added: "I spoke to Sir Alex Ferguson today and we had a really good conversation. Despite all the speculation, there has been a very positive dialogue with Manchester United all along."

"We are very grateful for the support that they have given Wayne and the England team. We're still hoping that the second scan will show further improvement and that Wayne can play his part in the World Cup."

United boss Ferguson, who has been sceptical about Rooney's chances of making the tournament, made it clear he would not sanction his player taking part if there was the slightest risk of him breaking down in Germany.

"Wayne has trained incredibly hard," Ferguson said. "We have continually supported Wayne with his fight to get to the World Cup but it is obvious that we have to be certain he is physically and mentally fit."

"The specialist has confirmed what we have always thought and we are confident in that assessment in that we are satisfied with Wayne's progress."

Ferguson's comments and a statement from United contradicted optimistic reports that Rooney could be training by the time England face Paraguay in their opening match on June 10.

"His injury is progressing as expected and we now hope to gradually increase his rehabilitation as planned," the club said in a statement.

"A further CT scan will be performed in Manchester on June 14 to assess further his recovery and a decision will then be made as to whether he can begin to participate in football training."

Although Ferguson recently described the chances of Rooney playing in the World Cup as a "wild dream," the United boss is also aware that his star player would be distraught at missing out after suffering an almost identical injury to the one that ended his involvement in Euro 2004.

That was the tournament at which Rooney announced himself to the world as a precociously talented 18-year-old before limping out in the early stages of England's quarterfinal defeat by Portugal.

## Murali puts brakes on Eng



AFP, Birmingham

Muttiah Muralitharan halted England's progress with a six-wicket haul after Kevin Pietersen's second hundred in as many Tests looked to be guiding the hosts into a commanding position at Edgbaston here Friday.

Pietersen's 142 was the centrepiece of England's 295 all out at tea on the second day of the second Test, still a healthy lead of 154, after they bowled out Sri Lanka for a meagre 141 in their first innings.

Pietersen, who equalled his Test-best 158 in the drawn series opener at Lord's, became the first

England batsman to score hundreds in successive Tests against Sri Lanka.

But just when it seemed as if England were on their way to an overwhelming position, Pietersen's exit sparked a collapse that saw the last five wickets fall for five runs in 29 balls.

Off-spinner Muralitharan was the destroyer-in-chief with six for 86, the 52nd time he'd taken five or more wickets in a Test innings and fifth against England.

At lunch, England were 193 for four with Pietersen 65 not out and Paul Collingwood unbeaten on 10 in what was the second of a three-match series.

Pietersen was seeing the ball well, cover-driving Farveez Maharroof for a stylish four and

repeating the dose off the first ball off Nuwan Kulasekara's new spell to go to 94, the Sri Lankan back-up seamers lacking the pace or movement to trouble the South Africa-born Hampshire batsman.

Then a boundary through mid-wicket off Kulasekara saw Pietersen to his fourth Test hundred in just 115 balls with one six and 16 fours.

The 25-year-old's progress after lunch was especially rapid, Pietersen needing a mere 31 balls, including seven fours, to go from 65 to 100.

But Muralitharan kept Sri Lanka going when he had Collingwood (19) caught off bat-and-pad by Upul Tharanga at short leg to end a

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## Old mistakes may haunt Spain



REUTERS, Madrid

For a country that prides itself on being one of the traditional powerhouses of European football, Spain has consistently disappointed in major tournaments.

Victory in the 1964 European Championship and runners-up spot in that tournament 20 years later are the country's only significant achievements on the international stage, while they have not got past the World Cup quarter-finals since 1950.

For the second time running Spain have had to take the playoff

route to qualify for a major tournament, but they did at least manage to book their 2006 World Cup place in style with a 6-2 aggregate victory over Slovakia.

The national side have historically played second fiddle to club football in a country where local and regional divisions abound, while the Primera Liga's strength is largely due to the presence of some of South America's top players.

That is not to say that there are not plenty of talented Spanish footballers around at the moment.

Players such as Barcelona midfielder Xavi, club colleague Carles Puyol, Real Madrid keeper Iker Casillas and Arsenal midfielder Cesc Fabregas would be valued by most national teams.

However, injuries to key players such as Raul, Xavi and Vicente

have disrupted preparations for the World Cup and are likely to mean significant changes in the first-choice XI.

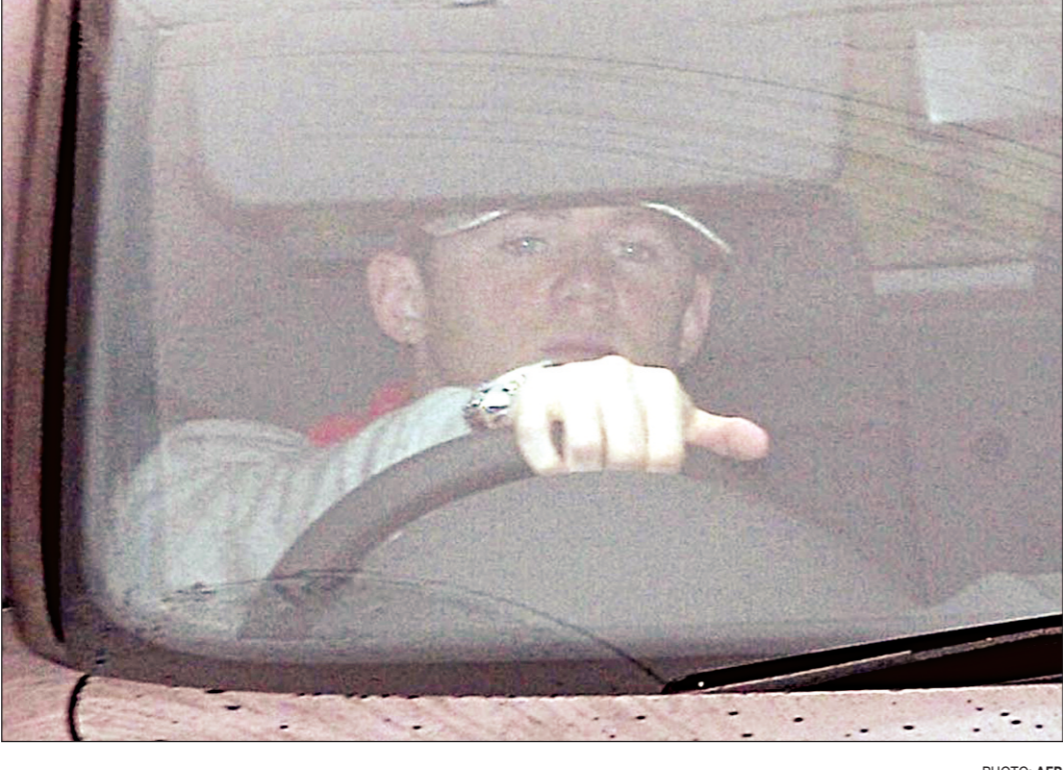
Although Spain are capable of playing attractive possession football they lack the killer instinct of the world's top sides.

Debates have raged for years as to why this should be so. Until a real answer is found, Spain will always flounder among the also-rans and never challenge for the crown.

On their day, of course, skipper Raul and fellow striker Fernando Torres are a match for anyone, but all too often they spurn seemingly straightforward chances.

Spain's patient build-up play also tends to give opponents too

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England star Wayne Rooney arrives at his club's Carrington training ground in Manchester on Friday.



Brazilian footballer Roberto Carlos (R) screams while teammate Ronaldo (2nd from R) looks on as they go through stretching during a morning training session in Weggis on Friday.

## Chess Olympiad Draw order of the day

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh men's team drew with Bosnia-Herzegovina in the fifth round games of the 37th Chess Olympiad at Turin, Italy yesterday.

The score was 2-2 after IM Abdullah Al Rakib beat IIM Dalibor, GM Ziaur Rahman drew with GM Bojan and IM Enamul Hossain drew with GM Borki. FM Mehdi Hahan lost to IM Ibro.

The women also drew with Indonesia 1.5-1.5 as Tanima Parveen beat Handayani Tri, Zakia Sultana drew with Lindiawati Evi and IWM Rani Hamid lost out to Kharisma Irene.

The men now have 11 points after the end of this round while the women have earned 8 points after same number of matches.

Bangladesh men will play against Finland and women play against Colombia today.

## 4 foreigners per match in PFL

BDNEWS, Dhaka

A maximum of four foreign players will be allowed to play in a match for any club in the Professional Football League (PFL) beginning in September after a decision was taken at a meeting between the league committee and the representatives of the participating 12 teams at Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) on Thursday.

After the meeting, committee secretary Abu Nayeem said that they decided to allow four foreign players in a match, but the matter of registration would be in the hands of the clubs.

The meeting, presided over by committee chairman Kazi Salahuddin, also decided that the players' registration would start on July 15 and end just a day before the kick off the league.

However, the starting date of the first-ever professional league is yet to be finalised.

## Seven more old boys caught

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) barred seven more players from participating in the Dhaka Bank Under-19 National Youth Cricket competition yesterday.

Two players each were expelled from Chandpur, Bagerhat and Tangail while one from Chittagong.

The number of disqualified players is now 40, accusing them of being over-aged.

Earlier, 33 players were found guilty of the same offence.

Tangail are set to take on Khulna, Chittagong will face Narayanganj, Bagerhat are to face Gaibandha and Chandpur fights it out against Barisal at different grounds in Dhaka on Sunday.

## Beware of voodoo!



AFP, Vogan, Togo

Dried, crushed animal parts are not yet outlawed as performance-enhancing substances in the sporting world.

But if voodoo priests in Togo work their charms on their nation's maiden World Cup campaign, they may soon be.

Togo will go to the World Cup as debutants -- and the 'Sparrowhawks' have been promised extra help in their bid to soar past their opponents by the numerous priests and millions of followers of voodoo.

Togo's first round elimination from the African Nations Cup in Egypt left a black mark which the tiny African country's voodoo priests are out to avenge.

"We were not at all happy with the Sparrowhawks at the African Nations Cup, that's why we're getting ready to accompany the team on its World Cup travels," said Togbui Gnagblondjro III, the presiding chief of Togo's voodoo priests.

"As we speak, all our magic charms are being prepared to make sure we perform better at the World Cup."

"We will watch over the Sparrowhawks and make sure they go far in the competition."

Popular perception of the religion evokes ritual dances, voodoo dolls,

sacrifices and the use of amulets and animal body parts -- all in the hope that mystical deities will intervene to achieve a certain result.

In some parts of Africa the use of voodoo under its various guises is widely recognised as influential, a fact the African Football Confederation (CAF) has in the past attempted to eradicate.

Despite CAF's efforts, fans across the continent believe the strategic placing or use of charms and fetishes can have devastating effects.

At the 2000 African Nations Cup quarterfinal between Nigeria and Senegal, a former official with the Nigerian Football Association was banned after he had run on to the pitch to remove a 'charm' that was lying in the Senegal net.

Senegal had been leading 1-0 with 15 minutes to play, and following a fruitless protest by the leaders Nigeria went on to score twice and win.

That, and similar incidents are unlikely at the World Cup where Togo will face South Korea, France and Switzerland in Group G.

However, a significant 50 per cent of Togo's five million population -- who are estimated to believe in and practice voodoo -- could be involved in a long-distance attempt to help the Sparrowhawks.

Togbui Gnagblondjro III and his followers have recently increased their prayer meetings with eating, dancing and calling on the numerous deities for spiritual intervention.

"We've decided to travel spiritually with Togo because the World Cup is a big competition and we do not want any more bad results," said one voodoo follower at the session here in Vogan, 100 km north of the capital Lome.

"We're in Africa, and will show the rest of the world the power of our prayers and our charms."

A Togo federation official admits they have little power in stopping popular beliefs.

"We're a secular state," he said. "But while the people with other religious beliefs pray for the Sparrowhawks in their own way, we can't prevent the followers of voodoo from doing the same." x

## Ankle scare for Ballack

AFP, Berlin

German international captain Michael Ballack suffered an injury scare ahead of the World Cup after picking up an ankle knock in a warm-up match in Geneva.

The 29-year-old Ballack was forced off in the 26th minute with an injury to his left ankle to give manager Jurgen Klinsmann a headache before the finals.

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