

Corporate soccer on

SPORTS REPORTER
IDLC coasted to a comfortable 3-1 victory over Dhaka Sheraton in the opening match of the BRAC Bank Cup five-a-side football tournament at the indoor facilities of International School, Dhaka (ISD) yesterday.

BCB names U-17 squad

SPORTS REPORTER
Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) picked 19 players for the preliminary camp of the under-17 team for the tour of Malaysia.

The team is scheduled to tour Malaysia over July 7-16. The selected players are Mithun Ali, Amit Majumdar, Mahmudul Hasan, Iftekar Naeem, Sohag Gazi, Shahid Adnan, Nasir Hossain, Ashraf Aziz, Nadimuddin Mintu, Mokhtar Ali, Rumman Islam, Shafayat Hossain, Tapash Gosh, Sanjamul Islam, Zabid Hossain, Ariful Huq, Mohammad Manik, Raihan Anas and Islamul Ahsan.

Women's chess get a boost

SPORTS REPORTER
Bangladesh Chess Federation (BCF) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Begum Laila Alam on Thursday to hold a women's chess tournament. BCF general secretary Jamilur Rahman appreciated the initiative of Laila Alam -- an accomplished chess player.

To promote women's chess, the tournament will take place annually and attractive prize money has also been offered.

Ex-chess champ Akmol no more

SPORTS REPORTER
Former national chess champion Dr. Mirza Akmol Hossain died at his residence at Uttara early Friday morning. He was 66.

He was buried at the Army Graveyard at Banani after namaz-e-janaza at the Dhaka Cantonment Central Mosque. Two times a national champion Akmol, who was a physician by profession, had been suffering from lung cancer for the last few years.

Did U Know?

Sepp Blatter of Switzerland was elected the new president of world governing body FIFA in 1998, taking over from Brazilian Joao Havelange who had held the post for 24 years.

Talk Turkey



Jurgen Klinsmann (Germany football coach) "I was getting nervous and exploded at the end. It was one of the nicest moments in my brief managerial career." After beating Poland 1-0 in their World Cup match.



Managing director of BRAC Bank Imran Rahman cuts the ribbon to inaugurate the BRAC Bank Cup Football Tournament at the ISD indoor facilities yesterday.

WC wins over cricket

AFP, Southampton
Cricket is the new football. Well, some pundits in England were saying as much 12 months ago when Ashes fever gripped the nation.

Admittedly among those suggesting cricket was on the verge of overtaking football in the affections of the English sporting public were observers who, until the Test series against Australia got underway, thought short leg was some kind of physical problem rather than a fielding position. But a year on from England's dramatic 100-run Twenty20 win over Australia at Hampshire's Rose Bowl base, anyone turning up at the ground for Thursday's corresponding brief encounter with Sri Lanka would have been left in no doubt about the order of priorities.

Tobago in Nuremberg on the Rose Bowl's giant screens. "When the original fixtures were scheduled, the World Cup draw hadn't taken place," Hampshire marketing executive Jason Hill told AFP.

"As soon as we knew England were playing Trinidad and Tobago we saw it as a great opportunity to combine the two events and put on a great sporting extravaganza. "And, by starting later in the day, it meant our new permanent floodlights would be used to greater effect in their first match. As far as we're concerned, the combination with the football is wholly positive."

Mark Game, an insurance broker from Sidcup, south-east England, was typical of many spectators in that he was wearing a white England football shirt with a white England cricket sunhat. "I think it's a brilliant idea that they are starting this match later," he said. "I love my football and cricket but, if there had been a clash, I wouldn't have come and watched the football elsewhere."

For some spectators the chance to witness two sporting events in the one venue was an unexpected bonus. "My wife bought me a ticket for my birthday," said Matthew Wilson from Chelmsford, east of London, who turned 30 on Thursday. "I didn't realise the football was on as well," he added even though he was wearing a red England away shirt. "But I did," said Emma, his wife. However, the England cricket team couldn't match their footballing counterparts as they suffered a narrow two-run defeat in the Twenty20 clash.

Awesome Argentina

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latter released Messi, who stormed into the box and rifled it underneath the keeper. That concluded by far the best team display of the tournament. Possibly of any tournament.

TEAMS ARGENTINA: Roberto Abundantieri; Nicolas Burdisso, Roberto Ayala, Gabriel Heinze, Juan Pablo Sorin; Maxi Rodriguez (Lionel Messi 75), Javier Alejandro Mascherano, Lucho Gonzalez (Esteban Cambiasso 17); Juan Roman Riquelme; Javier Saviola (Carlos Tevez 59), Hernan Crespo. Yellow card: Crespo (37) SERBIA - MONTENEGRO: Dragoslav Jevric; Igor Duljaj, Goran Gavranic, Mladen Krstajic, Milan Djudic; Ognjen Koroman (Danijel Ljuboja 49), Dejan Stankovic, Albert Nadj (Ivan Ergic 46), Predrag Djordjevic; Mateja Kezman, Savo Milosevic (Zvonimir Vukic 70). Yellow card: Koroman (7), Nadj (27), Krstajic (42) Red card: Mateja Kezman (65) Referee: R Rosetti (Italy) Attendance: 52,000

Wary of backlash

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true character. "This is the moment to shine, to step up and show what you're about," he said. "I think they are ready to give a good effort." Giving no hints of the line-up changes he plans for Saturday's match, Arena said he expects his players to answer their wake-up call. "All we did was lose a game. The challenge in any sport is how you respond," he said.

"Naturally there is over-reaction in the short term. If there is any kind of quality in the team, they'll bounce back." With Arena threatening to wield the axe, competition for places in the USA team has been fierce. "Guys who weren't on the field want to be on it, guys who were want to prove they should stay on it," said midfielder Bobby Convey. "Everyone knows we have to do better. Everyone was excited in training. The coach said he is going to make changes. That gives everyone an opportunity, and when you get an opportunity you have to take advantage of it." Landon Donovan and DaMarcus Beasley are expected to retain their places for the Americans, despite being publicly criticised by Arena. Italy, who won the World Cup in 1934, 1938 and 1982, have played the United States eight times, winning six and drawing two. The teams met in the first round of the 1990 World Cup, with tournament hosts Italy winning 1-0 in Rome.

Maria eases thru'

Meanwhile, world number one Roger Federer was made to work hard by Richard Gasquet before he reached the quarterfinals of the Gerry Weber Open in Halle.

Federer edged out the unseeded French teenager 7-6 6-7 6-4 to chalk up his 38th consecutive win on grass. He next face Olivier Rochus after the Belgian seventh seed rallied from a set down to beat Russia's Marat Safin, last year's beaten finalist, 4-6-6-4-6-1. Federer is unbeaten on grass since the first round at Wimbledon in 2002. If he captures his fourth straight Halle title, he will equal Bjorn Borg's professional era record of 41 consecutive wins on grass. "It was very close," said Federer after edging past Gasquet. "It was a grass court match played from the baseline, and that was difficult for me. I thought he was playing better from the baseline."

Strauss not too worried

Interim England captain Andrew Strauss has refused to see England's Twenty20 defeat to Sri Lanka as an omen for the one-day series which begins on Saturday.

"We're not going to get too concerned about what went on here," he said. "It's very different to the 50-over version and there's no reason why we can't go out and win on Saturday." "Twenty20 produces games like these and it was a great day's cricket -- I'm just a bit disappointed to come off on the losing side." Strauss paid tribute to opening partner Marcus Trescothick's well-paced 72 but pointed to his run out, with 12 runs needed of nine balls, as the turning point. "We looked like we were going to win it when Tres was smacking them around at the end but that run out was probably key," he said. Strauss also conceded that Ed Joyce's fielding injury in the second over of the match affected the side's morale.

There were fears that he might have dislocated his ankle but x-rays later showed it was only a bad sprain. Opposite number Mahela Jaywardene believes his side showed key skills they can take into the 50-over game at Lord's in two days' time.

Third Eye

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with very few minutes remaining on the clock to send the Paraguayans packing. It was a just result for Sweden though as they had dominated the play for most of the match. And for Paraguay coach Anibal Ruiz, it is a time for some soul-searching as his defensive tactics left Paraguay with almost no imagination to feed their considerable strikeforce of Valdez and Santa Cruz. The second poorest nation in the World Cup, the Paraguayans will unfortunately not have much to smile about.

The AOL Arena in Hamburg though entertained an Ecuador side that dispelled all notions of a flash in the pan with a stellar performance to see off Costa Rica by 3-0. It was a just result and both Carlos Tenorio and Augustin Delgado got on the scoresheet. The Germans will have to be wary of the tough South Americans as they will now have to win their clash to win the group. For Ecuador a draw will be enough since they have a better goal difference. It was another spectacular day of football as minnows or teams known by such shone on the world stage.

Sweden relieved

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"In that way, the team would be able to find renewal, young people who can make a positive contribution to the game," Acuna said.

The 34-year-old Deportivo La Coruna player, known as 'The Bull', said he would concentrate on club football but would still be available for the national side if required. After losing their opening match 1-0 against England, Paraguay coach Anibal Ruiz had promised a more attacking approach against Sweden, but they were unable to penetrate a solid back line and were largely reduced to long range efforts. "Paraguay football needs to be reorganised, there are a lot of young players out there," defender Denis Caniza said. Striker Roque Santa Cruz, who did not produce an effort on target and was substituted in the 62nd minute, was unable to fathom why Paraguay could not reproduce the form that secured qualification for their third straight World Cup. "It is difficult to know why we have gone out because we weren't bad in either game," the Bayern Munich forward said. "The players' confidence was there. The team is sad because we feel that we have done enough in the game."

Costly miss

BDNEWS, Dhaka
Hundreds of football fans in Kaunia upazila in Rangpur attacked the local power office as they could not watch the match between Argentina and Serbia and Montenegro due to electricity outage Friday evening. The locals became angry and staged demonstration in front of the office and damaged various materials. A tense situation was prevailing in the area. Additional police forces were deployed there to avert further untoward incident.

BD A take on Zim A today

SPORTS REPORTER
Bangladesh A cricket team launch their Zimbabwe tour with a four-day match against the local A team at the Mutare Sports Club from today.

Dashing middle-order batsman Tushar Imran will lead the strong second-string Bangladesh side against a comparatively weaker opponents. During the month-long trip, Bangladesh A will play two more four-day matches before playing a five-match one-day series against the home team. BANGLADESH SQUAD Tushar Imran (captain), Alok Kapali, Nafees Iqbal, Nazmus Sadat, Mehrab Hossain Jr, Sakib Al Hasan, Forhad Reza, Sahagir Hossain (wicketkeeper), Abdur Razzak Raj, Enamul Haque Jr, Mahmud Ullah Ryiad, Tapash Baisya, Hasibul Hossain, Mahbulul Alam and Mohammad Sharif.

Ganguly set to face Pak heat

AFP, London

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly will begin a short-term stint at Northamptonshire on Monday and is set to face Pakistan when they visit the English county at the end of next month. Ganguly, who lost the captaincy of India last year and has since been sidelined from the team, is being brought in as cover for Chris Rogers, who will be on Australia A duty between June 17 and July 26. He will be unveiled as a Northants player at a press conference on Monday and is expected to make his first appearance in a C&G Trophy one-day match against Nottinghamshire on June 25th. Ganguly, who has scored 5,221 runs in 88 Tests for India and more than 10,000 runs in one-day internationals, will get his chance to remind the Indian selectors of his class when Pakistan visit Northampton for a four-day match on July 20-23. The 33-year-old has previously played for Lancashire (2000) and Glamorgan (2005) in the County Championship.

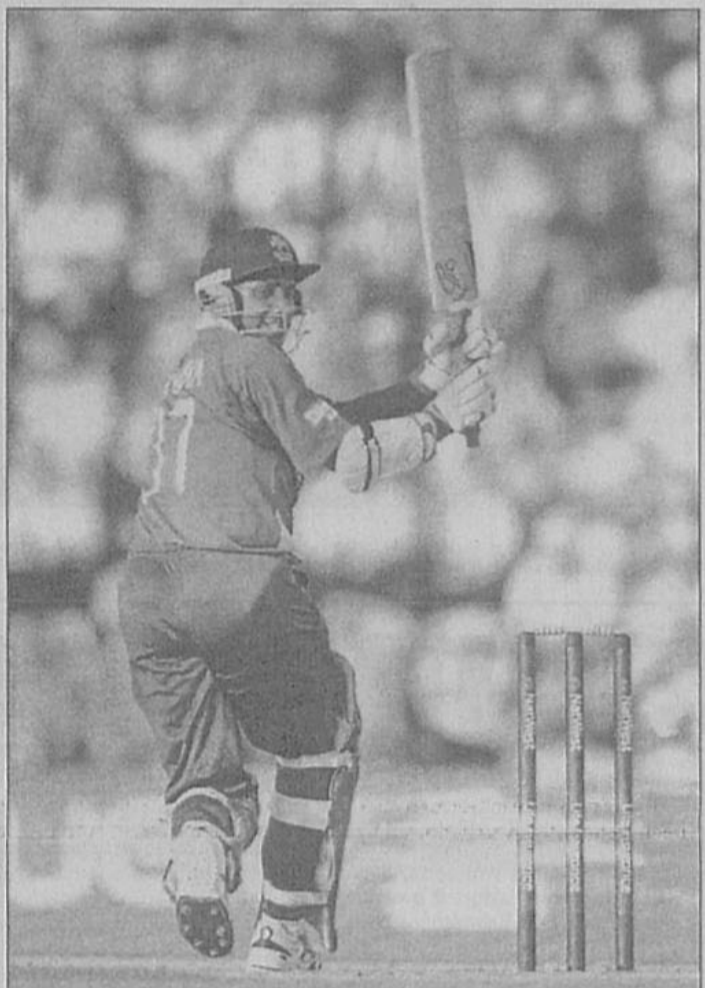
SL win a thriller

AFP, Southampton

Sri Lanka kept their nerve to beat England by two runs at the Rose Bowl here Thursday in what was the tourists' first Twenty20 international. The visitors, dismissed for 163 after winning the toss, held England to 161 for five from 20 overs. England's Paul Collingwood, with four for 22, returned the best figures in the seven-match history of Twenty20 international cricket but it was not enough to give his team a win. Opener Marcus Trescothick then took England to the brink of victory with 72 off 57 balls including one six and nine fours. But when he was alertly run out by wicketkeeper Kumar Sangakkara, England still needed 12 off eight balls. That became nine off the final over, bowled by paceman Dilhara Fernando. The target ultimately came down to five off one ball with Tim Bresnan, on his senior England debut, facing. It was too much for the 21-year-old Yorkshire bowler, who finished on

six not out with wicketkeeper Geraint Jones unbeaten on 14. Arguably more concerning for England, was the ankle injury sustained by batsman Ed Joyce in only the second over of the match. Irish-born Middlesex left-hander Joyce, going for a catch at third man after man-of-the-match Sanath Jayasuriya uppercuted a Stephen Harmison delivery, slipped as his right ankle gave way underneath him. Joyce, clearly in pain, signalled immediately for help and play was held up for 12 minutes while he received treatment. Sri Lanka, who had been 75 without loss, collapsed after a rapid opening stand between Jayasuriya (41) and Upul Tharanga (34), before Collingwood struck. The Durham all-rounder, the hero of England's 100-run win over Australia in the home team's only previous Twenty20, at the Rose Bowl last year, when he took two for eight and top-scored with 46, saw his return Thursday beat England teammate Jon Lewis's four for 24. But it was Jayasuriya who produced the all-round heroics this time, taking two for 32 with his left-

arm spin. Sri Lanka's victory was all the more creditable as they had omitted their two most experienced bowlers in off-spinner Muttiah Muralitharan and left-arm quick Chaminda Vaas, the heroes of their 1-1 drawn Test series against England concluded earlier this month. England were behind the rate at 92 for one at half-way, lost three middle-order wickets in quick succession, including Kevin Pieterse (17), on his Hampshire home ground, and Collingwood (five). Approaching the finish, England needed 32 off 16 balls. Trescothick gave them hope with three successive fours off Lasith Malinga before falling late on. This fixture was the curtain raiser to a five-match one-day series between England and Sri Lanka, which starts at Lord's on Saturday. BRIEF SCORES SRI LANKA: 163 all out in 20 overs (Jayasuriya 41, Tharanga 34; Collingwood 4-22) ENGLAND: 161 for five in 20 overs (Trescothick 72, Strauss 33; Jayasuriya 2-32) Man-of-the-match: Sanath Jayasuriya. Result: Sri Lanka won by 2 runs.



Sri Lanka opener Sanath Jayasuriya watches in relief that the ball is missing his stumps during the Twenty20 international against England at Southampton on Thursday.

Italy ready

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play our game to bring home three points. Gilardino added that he thought "Johnson was only referring to the competitive aspect of war." Johnson was asked whether he was comparing a sporting event to a war. "Yeah," he responded. "Whenever you put your jersey on and you look at your crest and the national anthem's going on, and you're playing against a different country, it's like you do or die, it's survival of the fittest) over 90 minutes-plus. We're going to go out there and do whatever we've got to do, make tackles, do the things when the referee's not looking... to get three points." The war in Iraq was widely unpopular in Italy and new Italian Premier Romano Prodi is working out a timetable for pulling Italy's troops out of Iraq by year's end. Previous premier Silvio Berlusconi, a strong ally of President Bush, sent in some 3,000 troops to help with reconstruction after the ouster of Saddam Hussein. More than half that number of Italian soldiers are still in Iraq. "We know they'll be watching and want to do well for them, too," Gilardino said. Extra security is being prepared for the game. "I hope it's not a game at risk, the stadium will be full and our families will be there, too," Gilardino said.

BITS AND BOBS

US team moved to air base
AP, Hamburg
The U.S. soccer team decided to spend two nights at Ramstein Air Base because of safety concerns with the designated FIFA hotels in the Kaiserslautern area.

here on Thursday, police said. Eight other supporters seen as potential trouble-makers were held for the duration of the match and released afterwards, police said.

Group B," said team manager Bierhoff. "But then again a big win early in the knock-out states could give us a major confidence booster for the remaining matches."

Police said given the numbers, they were happy that the match went off without serious incident in a largely peaceful atmosphere. "If you look at the numbers, we can say that it was a good party, without too much trouble," police spokesman Franz Stieglbauer said.

Frankfurt police have put up warnings telling fans not to leap into the River Main or risk a 50-euro (60 dollars) fine. It's for their own safety, police insist.

British officials had expressed concern that England's once notorious fans could make trouble at the Nuremberg match given the city's central role in Germany's Nazi past.

England beat Trinidad and Tobago 2-0.

Several fans had jumped in after England's 1-0 win over Paraguay last week in the city.

Golden sunset
AFP, Berlin
They have made headlines with their goalkeeping prowess but the World Cup will not see Ecuador star Agustín Delgado or Costa Rica's Paulo Wanchope on the top stage again after these finals.

Both men, twins on target already, say this is their final fling. But Delgado at least has the chance to show off his skills in the second phase where he will plot the downfall of England or Sweden.

Bierhoff: Lets avoid England
INTERNET, undated
Former Germany striker Oliver Bierhoff says he hopes his country is not paired with England in the second round of the World Cup.

If both sides win their final group game, they will definitely not be pitted against each other, but any slip-up could see a last-16 shootout between the sides. "I would prefer to play Sweden or Paraguay rather than England, who remain favourites to win

English fans arrested
AFP, Nuremberg
Twenty-five supporters, many of them English, were arrested after minor scuffles broke out at the World Cup match between England and Trinidad and Tobago

Empty cases
AFP, Berlin
Heineken brewing group has taken out an advert in the Dutch press calling on clients to bring their empty cases back as stocks run down to crucially low levels. Fans have been hanging onto the cases which hold two dozen bottles of the beverage as they make excellent improvised seats for those watching the World Cup action on giant screens. Heineken said it was down to its last two days supply.