

BFF-TFA camp on

SPORTS REPORTER
Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) and Tata Football Academy (TFA) of India have jointly organised a training camp for the top four finishers of this year's school football competition at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Dhaka that started on Friday.

Champions Laxminarayan Cotton Mills High School, runners-up Younis Ali High School, third-placed Salampur Dakhil Madrasa and fourth-placed Faridpur High School along with the coaches from the 16 schools that emerged as venue champions are participating in the camp.

BRAC BANK CUP Security breached

SPORTS REPORTER

Beximco Pharma annihilated Secorex by a massive 20-0 margin on the second day of the BRAC Bank Cup five-a-side football tournament at the International School Dhaka's (ISD) indoor facilities yesterday.

The security company were knocked for the record margin in only 20 minutes of play, which is the duration of play of the matches in the competition.

Meanwhile in the battle between mobile phone operators, GrameenPhone won comfortably against Banglalink 5-0.

Multimode Group, Aarong, Beximco Textiles, HSBC, Partex, Interspeed, Sheraton Hotel, Bitopi and Rahimafrooz also won their respective matches on the day while BRAC and Square played out a 3-3 draw.

Angola stay alive

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education here before they were being spent on arms. We're going to improve from now on."

The result leaves Group D in the balance with all four teams -- Angola, Mexico, Portugal and Iran -- capable of qualifying.

Portugal play Iran later on Saturday and meet Mexico in their final game on June 21, while Angola's last match is against Iran the same day.

Angola went down 1-0 to Iran in their first game while Iran were beaten 3-1 by Mexico.

WC BRIEFS

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days when David Beckham and company have a match.

"We want to support the team and can guarantee to fly the English flag at least a couple of times," a spokesman said.

German rose
Roses aren't red when it comes to the World Cup, but black, red and gold when it comes to an allotment in the western German city of Dusseldorf. There, keen gardener Werner Rehland has been cultivating roses in the German colours, RTL television reported. "It's my way of flying the flag," he laughed.

And that Jose Pekerman could afford to bring on the likes of Messi and Tevez with them sitting on a 3-0 lead is enough to show you the depth of the team. The icing on the cake was the second goal, however, which will, bar another special, be the goal of the tournament. Argentina strung no less than 25 passes (the 25th ended up in the Serbia and Montenegro net) with almost every player in the field touching the ball and some more than once. All that culminated in lovely interplay between Riquelme and Crespo to set up Cambiasso stab it home. It's a goal that will dominate highlight reels in the coming years and is arguably the best collective goal in the history of the World Cup.

Argentina played with an élan and panache that we haven't seen from them in a while. This was a special performance -- one that showed the best talents of this generation making their World Cup debut and coping with pressure in an amazing fashion. It was akin to a performance by their dominant youth teams and Pekerman it seems has successfully made the transition. Also to note is that the sorry Serbians conceded only one goal in ten quali-

fyng matches. As I have said before. The collective world, have been warned.

And if that wasn't enough, yesterday was also party to the Dutch facing the Ivory Coast in a thrilling encounter at Stuttgart as the Group of Death exploded to life. In a pulsating encounter the Dutch took the lead through a thunderous Robin Van Persie freekick before Ruud van Nisteroy put them two ahead. At one stage the Dutch looked likely to run away with it but Ivory Coast midfielder Kone scored a stunning goal to bring them back level. Had it not been for a moment of misjudgement by Didier Drogba the game may well have finished level at the half. As it was it stayed 2-1 to the end in spite of the generous proings by an Ivorian side that now leave the tournament with heads held high. They showed enough to suggest that they will be a force in years to come and players like Didier Zokora and Kone may well earn themselves blockbuster moves.

The Dutch too guarantee qualification and the next match against Argentina will now decide who goes through as champions of the group.

After such adrenaline pumping action, the final game of the night was an anti-climax that saw Angola earn their first ever World Cup point against a dispirited Mexico side that never really looked like winners.

In spite of the late night no-show it was perhaps the best day of the World Cup so far, as far as entertainment goes. And of course, the performances weren't too shabby come to think of it!

Six giant screens were temporarily put out of action by heavy rainfall in Berlin during the Ivory Coast-Netherlands match, although they were switched on again for Mexico v Angola at 1900 GMT.

USA team must improve: Rice
AFP, Washington
US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice doesn't know much about non-American football. But she does know the US side better raise its game if it hopes to stay in the World Cup hunt.

Tharanga ton boosts SL

Cricket

AFP, London

Upul Tharanga's one-day international best of 120 was the centrepiece of Sri Lanka's 257 for nine against England at Lord's here Saturday.

No other batsman managed more than 24 but Sri Lanka's total was boosted by England's record tally of 42 extras, including 23 wides. This surpassed the 41 extras they conceded against Sri Lanka at Delhi in 1989-90.

Fast bowler Stephen Harmison, who led the attack with three for 52, was the worst offender with eight wides in what was the opening encounter of a five-match series.

Sri Lanka had looked on course for a total in excess of 300 but tight bowling in the middle of the innings from all-rounder Paul Collingwood (two for 29) pegged them back.

After England stand-in skipper Andrew Strauss won the toss and fielded, Sanath Jayasuriya briefly threatened before he was caught behind for 11.

Meanwhile left-hander Tharanga, was severe early on anything short and wide outside off-stump as he began confidently towards his third one-day international hundred and first against England.

And when Harmison returned he too was off-target, Tharanga striking him for successive fours to go to a 44-ball fifty.

Off-spinner James Dalrymple, playing his first one-day international in England after a debut away to Ireland earlier this week, started tidily on his Middlesex home ground.

And he should had Tharanga stumped on 59, with Sri Lanka 114 for one in the 19th over, but wicketkeeper Geraint Jones -- much criticised for his glove work -- missed the chance.

Dalrymple, struck for six by Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene, and medium-pacer Paul Collingwood did stanch the flow of runs.

And it was Collingwood who ended a stand of 99 in 112 balls when Jayawardene (24) miscued to stump Sri Lanka 124 for two in the 22nd.

The middle-order then fell away before the 21-year-old Tharanga completed his hun-

dred in 128 balls with 13 fours with a single off Collingwood.

Tharanga, in sight of carrying his bat, hauled out to Dalrymple off fast bowler Sajid Mahmood in the penultimate over.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Sri Lanka innings in the one-day international against England at Lord's on Saturday. Includes SRILANKA and ENGLAND player statistics.



Sri Lanka's Upul Tharanga (R) raises his bat after reaching his 50 during the first one-day international of the NatWest series against England at Lord's in London on Saturday.

Imran leads from front

SPORTS REPORTER

Tushar Imran led from the front with a brilliant hundred as Bangladesh A made a bright start to the opening four-day match against Zimbabwe A at the Mutare Sports Club yesterday.

The dashing right-hander, who has played four Tests and 35 ODIs, scored 128 runs off 176 balls to guide his side to an impressive first innings total of 365 for eight in 90 overs.

Promising opener Nazmus Sadat was another notable scorer with a 110-ball 62 after the second string Bangladesh side decided to bat. Mehraj Hossain Jr. contributed 46 and Sakib Al Hasan added 24 runs.

Lara's plea ignored

AFP, St. John's

An appeal from West Indies captain Brian Lara for more teeth in his bowling attack has again fallen on deaf ears.

The West Indies selection panel, comprising convenor Joey Carew, Gordon Greenidge, Clyde Butts, and head coach Bennett King, have retained all but one of the players that formed the squad in St. Lucia for the second Test.

SQUAD

Brian Lara (captain), Ramnaresh Sarwan, Ian Bradshaw, Wayne Bravo, Shivnarine Chandernpaul, Pedro Collins, Corey Collymore, Daren Ganga, Chris Gayle, Runako Morton, Denesh Ramdin, Marlon Samuels, Jerome Taylor.

Leading scorers

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(Sweden), Messi (Argentina), Mohamed Kader (Togo), Nakamura (Japan), Neuville (Germany), Pauleta (Portugal), Pirlo (Italy), Robben (Netherlands), Saviola (Argentina), Tevez (Argentina), Van Nisteroy (Netherlands), Van Persie (Netherlands), Xabi Alonso (Spain), Zinha (Mexico)

Journo receives

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to each of the 32 participating nations, which are supposed to return unsold tickets to the German organisers so they can be sold to the general public. German organisers had advised all football fans to buy tickets through the official website www.FIFAworldcup.com and avoid all black market channels.

Lahm keeping feet on the ground



AFP, Berlin

Both Diego Maradona and Pele, arguably the two greatest ever footballers, have showered high praise on Philipp Lahm but the Germany left back vowed to keep his feet rooted to the ground for the World Cup.

Argentina's 1986 World Cup hero Maradona said Lahm 'could be the star of this World Cup', while Brazil's three-time World Cup winner Pele said he was Germany's stand-out player and did not get enough credit as he was a defender.

"I am not getting carried away. I did not even expect to play the first match after two weeks out through injury. It was emotional for me," Lahm said at a press conference.

"The main thing is to have fun playing football and then you can perform well."

In the month prior to the finals Lahm was out for two weeks and needed an elbow operation making his performances now even more remarkable.

Portugal break

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Ronaldo had a goal ruled out for offside on the whistle.

Portugal beat Angola 1-0 in their opening game while Iran went down 3-1 to Mexico.

The Portuguese also appeared in the 1986 and 2002 tournaments but failed to get past the first round. Portugal need only draw with Mexico on Wednesday to win the group.

Iran have won only one World Cup match in three visits, a 2-1 win over the United States in 1998, but they have a chance to rectify that when they meet Angola on Wednesday.

TEAMS

PORTUGAL: Ricardo; Miguel, Fernando Meira, Ricardo Carvalho, Nuno Valente; Costinha, Maniche (Peti 67); Figo (Simao Sabrosa 88), Deco (Tiago 81), Cristiano Ronaldo; Pauleta.

Yellow card: Pauleta (45), Deco (48), Costinha (61). IRAN: Ebrahim Mirzapour; Hossein Kaabi, Yahya Golmohammadi (Sohrab Bakhtiarizadeh 89), Rahman Rezaei, Mohammad Nosrati;

"We were delighted with Philipp's first two performances. We know all about his qualities," said manager Jurgen Klinsmann. "He is one of the best readers of the game and always manages to find a ball even when there are two or three players around him."

The 22-year-old Lahm, similar in style to France's 1998 World Cup hero Bixente Lizarazu with his speed and close control and who he ousted from the left back spot at Bayern, scored a brilliant opening goal in the 4-2 triumph over Costa Rica in the first group match.

He was then named man of the match after the 1-0 win over Poland in recognition for an action-packed display.

"I am grateful to the doctors, fitness coaches and the manager for helping me get back. It could not have gone any better," admitted Lahm, who made his debut for Germany in February 2004 against Croatia.

It has gone so well that English champions Chelsea are reportedly testing Bayern Munich's resilience to hang on to the player.

"The World Cup is my only concern at the moment," Lahm said. "I am not interested in what clubs may or may not be looking at

me. The finals are the main thing." Lahm, who says legendary Italian left back Paolo Maldini is his idol, admitted Germany had struggled defensively in the 4-2 win over Costa Rica and revealed there were lengthy discussions on how to tighten up.

"The back four talked a lot after the Costa Rica game. But we were not alone. The whole team talked about it," Lahm said.

"We received some criticism about the defensive errors but it was much better against Poland. We were more compact and that needs to continue."

After experiencing the disastrous Euro 2004 in Portugal, when Germany failed to win a match, Lahm is delighted to be in the last 16 of a major competition and says he would prefer to avoid England.

"We cannot pick who we want in the last 16. We have had big games against England in the past and we would rather play them later on," Lahm said.

Midfielder Thomas Hitzlsperger, formerly of Aston Villa, agreed with his team-mate.

"England have good individuals and a real togetherness. We would rather avoid them," confessed 24-year-old Hitzlsperger.

ICC refutes Asian claim

REUTERS, Kuala Lumpur

The International Cricket Council (ICC) is offended by claims it is biased against Asian countries, chief executive Malcolm Speed said on Saturday.

Speed stressed instead that the Indian sub-continent is cricket's "unique selling point". Asia's four Test-playing nations -- India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh -- are major commercial players in the global game, Speed said, and that was one of the reasons the ICC moved its headquarters to nearby Dubai.

Speaking at an Asian Cricket Council seminar on the future of regional cricket Speed said: "The ICC is sometimes criticised, and we read this from time to time and we get very offended by it, that we are biased against Asia and somehow we are alleged to be racist."

"We moved to Asia. It was a deliberate move and there are good reasons to move to Asia. We are only a few hours from Delhi, Karachi, Colombo or Dhaka. We are not far from here (Kuala Lumpur) or South Africa, England, Australia or New Zealand. We can get where we need to be."

BITS AND BOBS

which I have so little expertise, as soccer, or European football," she told reporters.

But the top US diplomat, an avid fan of American football, could not resist a comment on her country's lackluster performance in its 3-0 loss Monday to the Czech Republic in a Group E opener.

"Obviously, I would like to see the United States do well," she said. "But even I, a pure novice in watching soccer, knows that they will have to play a lot better than they did."

The Americans are back in action later on Saturday taking on Italy in what has become a must-win game for the quarter-finalists of four years ago.

Hitzlsperger doesn't fear England
INTERNET, undated
Germany midfielder Thomas Hitzlsperger says he is not worried about the prospect of facing England in the second round of the World Cup.

If one side finishes first in their group, and the others finish second, the pair will meet in the last-16 of the tournament.

"If you compare England to us, I think we can safely say we are playing better," said Hitzlsperger.

"They are supposed to be one of the favourites, but have yet to play very well."

"We are at least on their level."

But he added: "If we did go head to head in the next round, it would be hard."

"I would prefer to avoid them because, on their day, they are very hard to beat."

"England have not been convincing yet, but they have many good individuals."

'Messi must play'

INTERNET, undated

Following Messi's impact on his World Cup debut, after coming on as a late substitute, El Diego has declared that the prodigious Barca forward must start.

"Due respect to Pekerman, but this boy must play," said Maradona on Pekerman's decision to bring Messi on only towards the end of the game.

"He has something more than the others."

Messi came on as a substitute for Maxi Rodriguez late in the game, and while his first few touches looked rusty, what was to follow left a big impression.

The youngster surprised the already sorry looking Serb defense with his pace and skill.

His first big contribution was the assist for Crespo, by sliding one through a defender's legs and across the face of goal, following a brisk run.

But it was to get even better. Another brisk run, keeping the ball glued to his feet with consummate ease, followed by a cool finish, saw him score on his World Cup debut.

Maradona could be seen cheering the team on, as he has been for both of Argentina's matches, but was even more delighted with Messi's entrance, and later his goal.

Ronaldinho hints at long-term plan

INTERNET, undated

Facing the press on Thursday, three days before their second Group F match -- this one against group co-leaders Australia -- Brazilian star Ronaldinho hinted the team's goal is to peak in the latter stages of the tournament.

"No I think we played with very good rhythm," said the Barcelona star, commenting on Brazil's close win over Croatia.

"Obviously we need to improve game by game. Our target is to grow toward the more difficult games toward the end of the tournament," he admitted.

"It is all part of our training plan. Anyway, at the moment we are just thinking about the next game."

Watch out for Crouch: Mellberg

INTERNET, undated

Sweden defender Olof Mellberg believes Peter Crouch could be his side's biggest threat ahead of the Group B game with England next Tuesday.

The Swedes need a point to be sure of qualification, and Crouch's former Aston Villa team-mate Mellberg said: "I have to say I am a bit surprised at how far he has come since we were team-mates. He was on the bench a lot of the

time at Villa and didn't make many starts at all.

"He ended up going to a smaller club, in Southampton, to get games, and obviously from there has done really well to get a move to Liverpool and now into the England side. It has been a very strange career for him. He even had a spell on loan with a small club in Sweden. But he has improved incredibly well over the past couple of seasons."

Van Persie upbeat

INTERNET, undated

Holland forward Robin van Persie believes his side are capable of going deep into the World Cup finals.

Van Persie was on target as the Dutch qualified for the second round with a 2-1 win over Ivory Coast on Friday.

"We started the first half well with fine combination football but after that the whole team worked hard to bring home the win and that makes me proud," he said.

"It is hard to explain but from the first days something is growing in our squad."

"The atmosphere is great and that pays off on the pitch, where we not only try to play good football but also work very hard."

"I believe we can achieve something in this tournament."

On Friday's game, midfielder Mark van Bommel added: "Until leading 2-0 we had played well, then we lost it. We played badly but we have to learn from it. Ivory Coast was strong opponents. They were always dangerous."

Kahn-tastic for autograph hunters

AFP, Berlin

Uzbekistan may not be playing at the World Cup but two fanatical football fans completed a remarkable 6,500 kilometre bike journey to Berlin to get the autograph of their hero Germany goalkeeper Oliver Kahn.

According to the Sudanese Zeitung, Akram Marufshonov and his friend Musadshon Chornidov, both 58, embarked on their journey from the Uzbekistan capital Tashkent on March 8.

The autograph hunters braved

rain and snow as they cycled to Germany via Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus and Poland, doing part time jobs to pay for food.

"Our hands and faces were blue at times it was that cold," Akram revealed. "But I am not leaving without Kahn's autograph."

The Uzbekistan duo watched the World Cup curtain-raiser between Germany and Costa Rica on June 9 at the Berlin fan mile located next to the Brandenburg Gate and on Friday they got their wish granted.

Bayern Munich goalkeeper Kahn was pictured smiling as he signed his name to make Akram and Musadshon's dreams come true.

"My heart is racing I am overjoyed," confessed Akram.

Kahn, who turned 37 on Thursday, admitted their story had touched him, saying: "I can not believe it. It is incredible."

Spider celebration gets nod from FIFA

AFP, Berlin

Ecuador's troublesome striker Ivan Kaviedes will not face punishment by FIFA over his celebrations after he scored the South Americans third goal in their 3-0 victory over Costa Rica on Thursday.

The 28-year-old - who has had 10 different clubs in 11 seasons - put on a Spiderman mask in tribute to former international team-mate Otilino Tenorio, who was killed in a car accident aged 25 in May 2005.

Tenorio was nicknamed Superman as he had a habit of putting on masks of famous comic book heroes after scoring.

"I do not know of any law forbidding such a gesture," said FIFA's head of communications Markus Sieglar.

"Obviously, we don't want this happening too often," he added.

FIFA do punish players who take their shirts off after scoring, with referees being instructed to book them.

Ecuador face hosts Germany on June 20 to see who finishes top of Group A, with the South Americans, who went out at the first hurdle in their only previous appearance in the 2002 edition, leading them on goal difference.

Their second round opponents will be either 1966 winners England or 1958 finalists Sweden.



Did U Know?

Argentine star Diego Maradona joined the long list of great players to miss a penalty when he failed from the spot during his country's 3-2 penalty shoot-out win over Yugoslavia in the 1990 World Cup.



TALK TURKEY



Raul (Spain's star striker) "It's a great victory for the start of the World Cup, but we have to go step by step. It will boost our confidence, but let's not get carried away. It's just the start." After beating Ukraine 4-0 in their World Cup match.