

## Bhola lifts GMG title

SPORTS REPORTER

Bhola Lal of Sonargaon Club retained the Premier Division title of the GMG Open squash tournament when he pulled off a 3-2 victory against Shawpan Parvez in the final at the Gulshan Club yesterday.

Raju Ram clinched the A Group title with a 3-0 win against Omar while Mohammad Dulal became champion in the B Group beating Mohammad Hamja 3-1 and Jintu registered a 3-1 win against Alam to secure the title in C Group.

## Six gives Guyana crown

CRICINFO, undated

A massive six off the penultimate ball of the match by Narsingh Deonarine earned Guyana the inaugural Stanford Twenty20 title, as they beat Trinidad and Tobago by five wickets in St John's on Sunday.

Chasing a target of 176, Guyana went into the last over requiring 14, but Ramnaresh Sarwan and Deonarine clubbed two sixes off Samuel Badree to seal a thrilling five-wicket win.

Sarwan remained unbeaten on 49, but the platform for the successful run-chase was laid by Travis Dowlin, the opener, who slammed 80 off 60 balls, with 11 fours and a six. His partnership of 110 in 14 overs with Sarwan put Guyana on course after they had lost two wickets with only 23 on the board.

Dowlin eventually retired hurt with back spasms, but Sarwan then took over, and though Guyana lost three quick wickets towards the end, they had just enough firepower to take them past the finishing line.

T&T's innings was earlier propped up by Daren Ganga's 34-ball 47 and a late blitz by Denesh Ramdin, the wicketkeeper, who blasted an unbeaten 48 off just 14 balls. William Perkins and Mario Belcon got them off to a good start, adding 44 for the first wicket in less than six overs, before Ganga took charge. Ricardo Powell fell cheaply, and after 16 overs T&T only had 110 on the board. Ramdin then walked in and provided the impetus, adding 61 with Ganga, who was dismissed off the penultimate ball of the innings.

**BRIEF SCORES**  
**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO:** 175 for 6 (Ganga 47, Ramdin 38 not out)  
**GUYANA:** 176 for 5 (Dowlin 80, Sarwan 49 not out)

## Asif, Naved

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The doctors and they have cleared him now from his groin problem," Bari said.

Bari said the team management would obviously look at the prevailing conditions and try out Asif and Naved in the nets before deciding selection.

Bari added there would be no team announcement for the five one-day internationals which follow the Twenty20 match against England and after consultations with the team management some players would just be sent home.

## Mourinho

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"We are in the beginning of the season, the team is not 100 percent fit and it was important to see all the squad. I think the work rate of the players was fantastic."

Riise said he could not believe how much space he was given to run into for the opening goal.

Breaking away from a Chelsea corner, the Norwegian charged into Blues territory before lashing in one of his trademark thunderbolt strikes.

"They had a corner and I just had a go on the counter-attack and kept running," he said.

Liverpool have not won the league title since 1990, but are determined to give Chelsea, the runaway champions for the last two seasons, a stiff challenge in their quest to make it a hat-trick.

"It's always nice to get a trophy and give Chelsea something to think about," said Riise.

## Pilot error

FROM PAGE 17  
apologised for the hurt he caused, but was banned for life from playing or coaching.

Widely admired as a clean-living and wholesome sportsman, Cronje was widely reviled for his self-confessed greed.

But at his funeral two years later mourners described him as a kind and virtuous man who had erred.

"Although he made a mistake, he was still the same old Hansie. A kind, loving husband, an honourable man and a genuine friend," his widow Bertha said at the time.

Cronje was a member of the South African cricket squad from 1992 to 2000 and captained the team for the last six years of that period. He played in 68 Test matches, 53 as skipper.

He led his country to victory in 71 per cent of the one-day internationals he captained and 51 per cent of Test matches.



The BCB National Academy team poses at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium prior to their tour to Pakistan yesterday.

## Rogers Federer's

Tennis

AP, Toronto

Roger Federer won his second Rogers Cup in three years Sunday, recovering in the second set and rallying past Richard Gasquet 2-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Federer won the event when it was last played in Toronto in 2004 but didn't defend the title last year. The top-ranked Swiss captured his 40th career title, 11th in the Masters Series. He also won his 54th straight match in North America -- and his ninth championship there -- since 2004.

"I couldn't believe I started the second set so bad," Federer said.

Federer improved his match record to 62-4 this year -- his only losses to Rafael Nadal. He's also reached the final of his last 17 tournaments since June 2005, one shy of matching Ivan Lendl's Open era record of 18 in 1981-82. Federer will defend his title next week in the Cincinnati Masters.

Gasquet, unseeded, was trying

to become the first French champ in the tournament's 125-year history. Federer lost to Gasquet last year in Monte Carlo but has since won five straight against him, including four this year.

Gasquet started well by breaking twice to take the first set. Federer then started the second set 0-40 on serve but came back to hold and break in the next game. He soon led 3-0 and was on his way.

"That's the key moment of the match," Federer said. "But at the same time by giving yourself a love-40 you can also take away his confidence by coming back in that game and winning that game. Make him start doubting himself like that was maybe his big opportunity."

Gasquet agreed it was his big chance.

"I know with Roger, when you have some chances you have to do it," Gasquet said.

Federer broke Gasquet at 2-2 in the deciding set and that seemed to sap the 20-year-old Frenchman, who was broken again in his next service game. Federer had no trouble after that. He raised his arms

and smiled at the crowd when he closed the match in 1 hour, 47 minutes.

Gasquet took advantage of uncharacteristic mistakes in the opening set. Federer had a quick turnaround after Saturday night's semifinal win and looked as if he had a hard time getting used to Gasquet's pace and spin. Federer's footwork appeared off, leading to shanked balls and other mistakes.

Gasquet came out hard in the second set, pushing Federer to a triple-break point in the opening game. But that seemed to fire up Federer, who fought back to deuce before holding serve. In the next game, Gasquet double-faulted at deuce, and Federer took advantage to break and go up 2-0.

Gasquet watched the crowd of about 10,000 in the third game. He ran from the net past the baseline to make a backhand flip return, with his back to the net. But Federer was waiting, and he sent Gasquet running deep to the other corner before putting that return away.

## Shoaib has to wait

AFP, Shenley, England

Pakistan pace spearhead Shoaib Akhtar faces an agonising wait before he finds out whether or not he will play in the fourth and final Test against England at The Oval.

Shoaib, who hadn't played since January because of a stress fracture of his ankle, made a comeback here at the weekend but his hopes of impressing coach Bob Woolmer were washed away by heavy rain.

He managed just 11 overs and took one wicket in Saturday's one-day game against the West Indies A team before Sunday's second game was abandoned without a ball being bowled.

Woolmer now must decide if he should risk the 31-year-old Shoaib in the final match of a series Pakistan have already lost 2-0 or keep his key fast bowler fresh for the one-day series which starts on August 30.

"We saw enough of Shoaib on Saturday to hold on to him and we'll make a decision later on in the week as to whether we play him or not," Woolmer said.

"We're erring on the side of the caution. He did look very fit on Saturday but obviously short of match practice. Overall I thought he looked very good."

"Everything happens for a reason and maybe this is a sign that he is not ready to play in a Test match. But it's not just up to me, there's the captain involved and a whole medical team as well, not to mention Shoaib himself."

Woolmer must also keep the Champions Trophy in mind, the mini-World Cup tournament taking place in India in October where Shoaib could play a key role.

"The management think that if he is ready for the five one-day internationals then that would be the perfect scenario," Woolmer said.

"He'll have 10 overs a game and he can really start to get fit and then he's got the Champions Trophy."

## Tri-series

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"The mood within the team is tense. The situation seems to be getting worse too, if you watch the news and read the papers. We saw today that a truck full of explosives had been stopped just outside of Colombo."

"The final decision though will be made by our security men in consultation with the cricket boards. They're probably the best people to make a judgement."

Sri Lankan cricket officials went into a huddle soon after the opening match between South Africa and Sri Lanka was washed out due to heavy rain on Monday.

The match is scheduled to be played on Tuesday, weather permitting as a reserve day has been kept aside for all seven matches of the series that runs till August 29.

Indian team official Rajan Nair said the team was safe and confined to the cricketers' heavily-guarded hotel.

"There is nothing to worry," Nair told AFP. "The boys were in their rooms when the blast took place and did not even know that something had happened."

"We were due to leave for a practice session but it was cancelled because of the rain."

New Zealand abandoned their cricket tour of Sri Lanka in 1987 after a blast in Colombo's Pettah region, which houses the main bus and train stations, killed 110 civilians and two policemen.

The New Zealanders suffered another shock in 1992 when a blast outside their team hotel in Colombo killed the country's Naval chief Clancy Fernando. They, however, went ahead and played two Test matches and three one-dayers.

## 'Still hope for Beckham'

Football

AFP, Manchester

New England manager Steve McClaren has insisted that former captain David Beckham still has a chance of resurrecting his international career.

The former Middlesbrough boss axed 31-year-old Beckham from the squad for his first match in charge, Wednesday's friendly against Greece at Manchester United's Old Trafford stadium.

Goalkeeper David James and centre-half Sol Campbell, both in their 30s, were also dropped from the squad that took England to the 2006 World Cup quarter-finals.

But McClaren insisted Real Madrid midfielder Beckham could still hope to add to his 94 England appearances and join the elite club that own 100 caps.

"It was purely a football decision, like David James and Sol Campbell, I will never close the door on anybody. It would be foolish of me to do that," McClaren told BBC radio.

"It would have been a hard decision for me if I didn't have a

relationship with David -- if I didn't have the respect I've got for him. It was a big decision. It was a decision that I had to make for the future.

"I phoned David up, I had a chat with him, made my plans known and that he wasn't part of them. I told him I wanted the team to go into a different direction and to look at new things and different players."

"David's reaction, as I expected, was to fight for his place. His passion and his love for England will always be there. That's his decision. It is not my decision or any England manager's decision, to totally end anybody's international career."

"It is up to the individual when they close the door. I'm not doing that now."

"I will be monitoring the situation in Madrid as always. I will never say never. His reaction has been a positive one -- a fighting David Beckham. I will not close the door."

McClaren's words will be of some comfort to a disappointed Beckham, who stepped down as captain in July after England's disappointing World Cup exit at the hands of Portugal.

Chelsea centre-half John Terry has been named by McClaren as Beckham's successor, with Liverpool midfielder Steven Gerrard as his deputy.

However, the new England boss believes Manchester United striker Wayne Rooney has the necessary qualities to wear the armband in the future -- despite his notoriously fiery temperament.

Asked whether Rooney was captain material, McClaren replied: "Most definitely. He's a fantastic character and still very young."

"But he wants to be the best player in the world, the best on the park and ultimately I know he will want to be captain of England one day and that is a possibility."

McClaren said he felt ready for the strain of managing England.

"There's no fear. Whenever you manage, play, whenever you coach or are involved in sport, anyone would be a liar to say there wasn't a little bit of fear and trepidation before going into any situation," McClaren added.

"But I have confidence in my ability, I feel I can cope and deal with everything that can come at me at this level."

## Russia reign supreme

Athletics

AFP, Gothenburg

Russia consolidated its position as the second leading power in world athletics after the United States by dominating the medals table at the European Championships here.

While the competition in Gothenburg might be remembered for sprint doubles in both the men's and women's events and the performances of home stars, Russia ended the seven days with a massive medal haul of 12 gold, 12 silver and 10 bronze from 47 events.

The Russian performance was built on the solid and experienced women's team, who claimed 11 gold, 9 silver and 8 bronze.

Their dominance is underlined by the tally of second-ranked country Germany, which claimed just four gold, three silver and two bronze.

Russians aside, Francis Obikwelu of Portugal and Kim Gevaert of Belgium provided the glamour in the sprints, both claiming double gold in the 100m and 200m events.

Obikwelu, the Olympic silver medalist, simply outclassed his rivals in admittedly weak fields, clocking 9.99sec and 20.01sec for his winning times despite a series of incredibly slow starts for the first men's double in 28 years.

Gevaert had to work harder

against a host of Russian rivals, and her true grit shone through in the 200m when under pressure coming off the bend into the home stretch.

Belgium had the added bonus of seeing Tia Hellebouts winning gold in the women's high jump from home favourite and Olympic and world champion Kajsa Bergqvist, one of the biggest upsets of the week-long competition.

The showdown between Obikwelu and Dwain Chambers, whose gold medal in Munich four years ago was handed to the Nigerian-born sprinter after the Briton failed a drugs test and received a two-year ban, never materialised.

Chambers made the 100m final but finished well out of the medals, his performance mirroring that of many of the British athletes on show.

There was hope, however, for one of the former powerhouses of world athletics, with five silvers and five bronzes won.

Michael Rimmer, Mohammed Farah and Andy Turner look very sound medal contenders for the 2008 Olympics in Beijing in the men's 800m, 5000m and 110m hurdles respectively, as does Rebecca Lyne in the women's 800m.

As it was, Britain had to wait until the seventh and final day of the competition for a gold medal, and that from their 4x100m relay team.

Celebrations were marred, however, when veteran sprinter Darren Campbell refused to join a lap of honour, the reasons for which were not immediately clear.

Sweden's hopes of a handful of gold medals from the experienced quartet of Stefan Holm and Bergqvist (high jump), Christian Olsson (triple jump) and Carolina Kluff (heptathlon) didn't quite work out.

The high jumpers both went home with bronze medals. But victories by Olsson and Kluff were boosted by an unexpected gold medal in the women's 100m hurdles from Susanna Kallur.

Meet organisers cleverly spread the events featuring Swedish medal contenders throughout the week with the result that there was a daily average of more than 38,000 spectators packing into the Ullevi Stadium and an average 1.5 million domestic television viewers.

There were also lucky enough to see Jamaican-born Merlene Ottey, now a naturalised Slovenian citizen, running in the women's 100m at the remarkable age of 46.

Ottey, who won a 200m bronze medal at the 1980 Moscow Olympics for Jamaica, missed out on a place in the final by only 0.03sec -- and vowed to carry on running.

## New order begins today

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France coach Raymond Domenech has handed his team's captaincy back to Inter Milan midfielder Patrick Vieira following the retirement of Zidane for the trip to Sarajevo.

"He was captain before the return of Zinedine Zidane, so it's logical. He has proven that he's capable and he will prove it again," said Domenech.

Fifteen members of the World Cup squad return but there is no place for Claude Makelele, Lilian Thuram or former Marseille goalkeeper Fabien Barthez.

Germany, too, have a new coach with Joachim Low having succeeded Jurgen Klinsmann, who took the team to the semi-finals of the World Cup.

Low has already been handed his first headache with captain Michael Ballack having to miss Wednesday's friendly against Sweden with a hip injury sustained in Chelsea's 2-1 defeat to Liverpool in the Community Shield on Sunday.

Low will hope Ballack recovers in time for the first Euro 2008 qualifier against Ireland on September 2.

Dutch coach Marco van Basten has also wielded the axe with striker Ruud van Nistelrooy and midfielder Mark van Bommel both left out of his squad to play the Republic of Ireland in Dublin on Wednesday.

Brazil coach Dunga has omitted Ronaldinho, Ronaldo and Kaka from Wednesday's clash against Norway in Oslo.

The 1994 World Cup winning captain - who replaced Carlos Alberto Parreira following the World Cup quarter-final exit at the hands of France - explained that several of that squad were only now returning to training.

"One has to take into account that a lot of players are just returning from holidays and resuming training with their clubs," said Dunga.

"Those who have been selected will have the chance to show the qualities they possess."

## Rained off

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More inclement weather caused by the south-western monsoon has been forecast over the next few days.

The series is scheduled to run till August 29 with each team playing the other twice in the league before the final.

An outdoor practice session for the Indian team at the Sinhalese sports club was also called off on Monday due to the weather.

## German players

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Germany captain Michael Ballack was also absent after injuring his hip in Chelsea's 2-1 Community Shield defeat to Liverpool on Sunday.

Goalkeeper Oliver Kahn, who retired after the finals, injured Borussia Dortmund midfielder Sebastian Kehl and Chelsea's Robert Huth were the other absentees.

Germany face Sweden in a friendly match on Wednesday as they prepare for Euro 2008 under new coach Joachim Low who was Klinsmann's assistant at the World Cup.

## IAAF to tackle age issue

Athletics

AFP, Beijing

The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) is stepping up its crackdown on over-age athletes competing at its junior championships, IAAF president Lamine Diack confirmed on Monday.

Diack, giving the opening address at what he expects to be the biggest World Junior Championships with 180 nations having entered, said: "If we find athletes here that have exceeded the age limit, then they will lose their medals."

The 11th edition of the World Junior Championships, where many modern legends of the sport such as British hurdler Colin Jackson and Ethiopia's distance great Haile Gebrselassie first tasted global success, start on Tuesday and continue until Sunday.

European athletics federations have complained consistently since the Championships started in 1986 that some African and Asian nations

have been cheating and sending athletes who are clearly over the age limit to 20.

Until recently, the IAAF effectively ignored the problem, repeatedly stating that it couldn't do anything other than accept at face value government-issued documents.

However, earlier this year the IAAF finally decided to investigate its own investigations as evidence has mounted that some countries have sent athletes to recent championships with falsified passports.

"We have 10 cases under investigation at the moment, at least three of the athletes we are looking at are entered here," admitted IAAF general secretary Pierre Weiss on Monday.

Weiss would not name names but IAAF sources have confirmed to AFP that among the countries under scrutiny is Bahrain, who have in recent years signed up a number of African athletes to compete in its colours.

Mansoor Ali Belal and Mubarek Taher Tareq, two Kenyan-born athletes who won at the 2005 World Youth Championships, were both arrested but later released when

they tried to leave their native country in July, accused of being in possession of falsified Bahrain passports.

Eye witnesses have testified that the Ali Belal, formally known as John Yego, was competing in senior races in Kenya as far back as 2000, when he would have been just 12 according to his current passport.

Weiss would not confirm whether there were plans to disqualify athletes retrospectively beyond last year's World Youth Championships, although even the IAAF's own statistics document athletes who were overage when they competed in World Junior Championships.

Other world junior champions have publicly admitted that they were overage when they won their titles.

Qatar's 2004 world junior 800 metres champion Majid Saeed Sultan, who was also born in Kenya and went to school there, revealed that he was at least 21 when he won two years ago after giving details of his academic history.



Participants of the Prime Bank Golf tournament are seen with the chief guest at the Jessore Golf and Country Club on Saturday.

PHOTO: COURTESY