

League resumes May 26

Sports Reporter

The First Division football league, which was suspended last April 28 to facilitate the Bangladesh under-16 and under-19 football teams' participation in Asian youth soccer qualifying competitions held earlier this month in Rajshahi and Kannur in India's Kerala state, will resume on May 26, Tuesday.

This was decided at a meeting of the Dhaka Metropolitan Football Association (DMFA) and the relevant club officials at the Bangladesh Football Federation offices last night.

Three matches will be played daily, one at the Mirpur Stadium and two at the Dhaka Stadium. On the day of resumption, Rahmatganj MFS will meet Dhanmandi Club at Mirpur, the match starting at 4:00 pm, while Victoria Sporting Club will face Arambagh KS and reigning champions Abahani Krira Chakra take on PWD SC at the Dhaka Stadium in games starting at 5 pm and 7 pm respectively.

The two-day delay in the resumption of the league, which was originally scheduled for tomorrow, Sunday has been attributed to various causes. It is reported that the DMFA had asked the National Sports Council for the Hockey Stadium ground to hold at least one game a day there but Thursday the NSC informed the football league committee that was not possible since the Bangladesh Hockey Federation

was about to start an intensive training camp for the national youth team which will take part in the Asian and World youth meet in Kuala Lumpur next September. Besides, some of the clubs taking part in the First Division league insisted on waiting until the return of their players who had gone to India with the two junior sides. While the under-19 squad, which failed to qualify for the final round of the Asian meet because of their second-place finish behind hosts India, returned to Dhaka Thursday, the under-16 players touring West Bengal with the Dhaka Mayor's team are expected back home today.

The DMFA and BFF officials face a serious time constraint to get over with the remaining 30 matches of the First Division league. They realise that they must complete the remaining matches by the first week of June because not only will the Eid-ul-Azha holidays be here, but also — and more importantly — a residential training camp will have to be started to prepare the national team for the 10th Asian Cup championship qualifying Group 5 competition which starts in the Thai capital Bangkok June 17. Bangladesh play their first of two games in the three-team meet — the Philippines having earlier withdrawn — on June 19 against South Korea. They play the hosts on June 23. The winners go to the finals, to be held in Hiroshima, Japan.

According to observers, the Bangladesh football authorities

are really up against it and must try hard to ensure that the First Division league programme — which is always so vulnerable to the whims and machinations of the two or three big teams — can be taken to its smooth, logical conclusion.

With Federation Cup winners Brothers Union failing to provide the expected challenge, the league championship has been reduced once again to a two-horse race between reigning champions Abahani Krira Chakra and their arch-rivals Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting Club.

Abahani lead the table with 31 points from 16 matches while Mohammedans have 29 from their 16 engagements. If the revised schedule for the remainder of the league programme is to be believed (i.e., unless it is further revised) then the two giants of the country's football will meet in the Dhaka Derby on Sunday, June 7.

At the other end of the league ladder, Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) whose officials relied on the young, inexperienced students of the Bangladesh Krira Shikshya Protisthan (BKSP) are to be relegated to Division Two next season because their position at the very bottom is now beyond redemption. The other relegation candidates, as of now, are newcomers Eskaton Sabuj Sangha, Police AC and Dhaka Wanderers Club. One of these three will join BJMC on the way down.

Mayor's booters return today

The Dhaka Mayor's under-16 football team, led by Dhaka City Mayor Mirza Abbas, returns home today after playing three exhibition matches in West Bengal, India, at the invitation of the Calcutta Mayor, reports HSS.

The Dhaka Mayor's team, which left for Calcutta on May 14, won two matches and lost one. They beat Calcutta Mayor's Eleven 2-0, 24-Parganas District Magistrate's Eleven 2-1 and lost to Bashirhat Eleven 0-1.

Gazza says he knows the score

LONDON, May 22: England international Paul Gascoigne said he had no fears about being singled out as a target for hard-tackling defenders when he plays for Italian club Lazio, reports Reuter.

"I know what to expect," said Gascoigne on Thursday. "I get kicked, I'll just get up and go on with it."

"I've been kicked by plenty of people in England and it will be no different."

Lazio assistant coach Giancarlo Oddi, in London to assess Gascoigne's fitness after a serious knee injury, said: "He (Gascoigne) will be the focus of attention all the time."

"He will have the same problems as men like Maradona, Platini and Van Basten — and it won't be easy because it's true that Italian tacklers are very tough."

"But it's also true that in the last two years the Referees' Association in Italy has given much stricter instructions about providing protection for players."

Stewart, Hick collar Pakistani bowling

England go 2-up at the Oval

Sports Reporter

England took a two-nil lead in their five-match Texaco Trophy one-day series against Pakistan when they beat the world champions by 39 runs in the second match at the Oval, London yesterday, according to BBC monitored in Dhaka late last night.

Set 303 for victory off 55 overs, Pakistan were all out for 263 in the 51st over.

England, who lost the World Cup final to Pakistan in Melbourne on March 25 last by 22 runs, had won the first limited-overs match of the series at Lord's on Wednesday last by 79 runs.

The remaining three one-dayers are scheduled for August, after the two countries play five Test Matches, the first starting on June 4.

AP adds: Neil Fairbrother defied a strained hamstring to contribute 63 and Graeme Hick scored an unbeaten 71 off only 54 deliveries as England made their biggest ever total against Pakistan in one-day games. The previous best was 295 at old Trafford, Manchester, in 1982.

Opens Aamir Sohail and Ramiz Raja found gaps in the England field and raced to 81 by the 14th over before their spectacular opening partnership ended. Left-arm spinner Richard Illingworth turned a ball inside Aamir's defence and bowled him for 32.

Ramiz and Salim Malik maintained the attack and kept the scoring rate at over five an over. The score reached 144 when Derek Pringle bowled Salim for 26.

Four runs later, Ramiz tried to pull a ball from Philip DeFreitas over the squareleg boundary but was caught by substitute for Mark Ramprakash for 86.

Inzamam-ul-Haq kept the score building before Pringle trapped him leg before wicket for 15. And captain Javed Miandad made 38 before Botham won another lbw decision with the Pakistan score on 220 in the 43rd over.

There appeared to an exchange of words between Botham and Miandad as the Pakistan captain walked off, and umpire Mervyn Kitchen also spoke to Miandad.



ALEC STEWART... maiden one-day ton

Naved Anjum was run out by Botham for six with the score on 232 and Asif Mujtaba was leg before to Illingworth in the spin bowler's last over for 29. That left Pakistan on 249 for seven, still needing 54 off seven overs with only three wickets remaining.

Meanwhile, Pakistan yesterday called up 17-year-old right-arm paceman Ataur Rahman to strengthen the bowling, weakened by Waqar Younis' absence and an injury to Wasim Akram, according to BBC.

Mushtaq Ahmed was eighth man out when he lofted a catch to Illingworth off Chris Lewis' bowling. He scored eight and the Pakistan score was 263 in the 50th over.

Two balls later, Lewis caught and bowled Moin Khan for 15 and Philip DeFreitas ended the Pakistan innings by bowling Tanvir Mehdi for no score.

Stewart's 103 was his first century in a one-day international. It came from 140 deliveries, included 10 fours and

He and Stewart had few problems against the bowlers and raced to 71 by the 16th of the maximum 55 overs before Gooch was brilliantly run out.

He went for a single after playing the ball wide on the right but Salim Malik, who plays for the same county team, Essex, hit the stumps with a direct 30-yard throw.

Robin Smith added only seven before he was bowled by leg-spinner Mushtaq and Allan Lamb missed the ball entirely when he went for a big hit off Aamir Sohail and was stumped for 11 by wicket-keeper Moin Khan.

That left England at 108 for three and Stewart and Fairbrother produced a fourth wicket stand of 94 with well-placed strokes. Fairbrother injured his leg going for a quick run and needed Smith to return to the field as his runner.

Not long after reaching his century with a three off debutante Tanvir, Stewart was out, bowled by paceman Aqib Javed.

Aqib greeted Hick with a bouncer but the Zimbabwean batsman cut loose with an array of shots that included a six and 8 fours.

A batting failure at Lord's where he scored only three, he cruised to his half century off only 44 deliveries as he picked up the pace of the scoring.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the second one-day (55 overs) cricket international between England and Pakistan at the Oval today.

ENGLAND:

Gooch run out	25
Stewart b Aqib	103
Smith b Mushtaq	7
Lamb st Moin b Aamir	11
Fairbrother b Tanvir	63
Hick not out	71
Botham not out	2
Extras: (lb-8, w-9, nb-3)	20
Total: (for five wickets — 55 overs)	302
Fall of wickets: 1-71; 2-81; 3-108; 4-202; 5-295.	
Did not bat: C Lewis, D Pringle, P DeFreitas, R Illingworth.	
Bowling:	O M R W
Aqib Javed	10 0 70 1
Naved Anjum	9 0 37 0
Tanvir Mehdi	11 0 72 1
Mushtaq Ahmed	11 0 47 1
Aamir Sohail	11 0 52 1
Asif Mujtaba	3 0 16 0

(Incomplete)

Barcelona welcomes its heroes

BARCELONA, Spain, May 22: Barcelona collapsed on Thursday into joyful chaos as tens of thousands of supporters turned out to welcome the city team home from their European Cup victory over Sampdoria of Italy at London's Wembley Stadium, reports Reuter.

Police battled, mostly in vain, to keep the coach carrying the Barcelona team and the European Cup trophy moving even at snail's pace through the city centre on the triumphal 15 km trip from the airport.

If we can cope with this, we can cope with the Olympic Games," said one weary policeman accompanying the noisy convoy.

Loudest cheers were reserved for manager John Cruyff and fellow Dutchman Ronald Koeman, Barcelona's hero of Wembley whose 112th minute goal narrowly avoided the match extending from extra-time into a penalty shoot-out.

Most spectators had tears in their eyes and some were openly weeping as the team



JOHAN CRUYFF

were welcomed home through clouds of ticker-tape, bearing Europe's premier club soccer trophy for the first time in the club's history.

The team were hugged and kissed as they made their first stop, at the Basilica of Mercy church in the Gothic Quarter of the city, where the city's victorious teams traditionally give thanks to Barcelona's patron saint, Our Lady of Mercy.

The brief dedication ceremony inside the church, during which the Cup was placed before the altar, was all but

drowned by the crowds outside.

CATALAN COLOURS ONLY

The team boarded their coach, emblazoned with the team crest and a sign reading "We are the champions" for the short journey to the City Hall and to the seat of the regional government of Catalonia, of which Barcelona is capital.

The square separating the two administrations was a sea of Barcelona's maroon and blue colours and of the red and yellow Catalan flag.

Not a Spanish flag was in sight to celebrate the club which identifies itself more closely with the Catalan autonomous region than with the rest of Spain.

Some of the thousands who packed the square outside the City Hall had to receive medical treatment after being crushed against the police barricades.

Barcelona ended their day of triumph when they returned to their home ground, the 120,000-seat Camp Nou, to receive the adulation of thousands of supporters.



PAUL GASCOIGNE

"As well as referees being more severe against those who commit bad tackles, we will help Gascoigne learn how not to react to those sort of challenges. He will have to behave in a normal way like other Italian players."

The volatile Tottenham midfielder flies to Rome today for further medical checks. If he comes through then his 5.5 million pounds sterling transfer is expected to be finalised in London on Tuesday.

Barcelona joins chase for £ 8m David Platt

LONDON, May 22: Newly-crowned European Cup champions Barcelona are reported to have joined the eight million-pound chase for Italian-based England international David Platt, reports AFP.

A representative of the Spanish giants was said by Friday's Today newspaper to have made an approach for the Bari midfielder star.

They join a list of three Italian teams chasing the 25-year-old, namely Sampdoria, Juventus and Parma.

Parma have already had a cash offer of eight million pounds accepted by Bari, but the relegated Serie A club are also known to be keen on a player-exchange deal, which the two other Italian sides are negotiating.

One England international already transferred is striker Paul Walsh, who has agreed to a 400,000-pound switch to Second Division Portsmouth.

Top clubs condemn TV deal

LONDON, May 22: The managers of England's top soccer clubs, including Manchester United, Liverpool, Leeds and Arsenal, are planning action to protest the £547 million TV deal announced this week for the new Premier League.

League officials have signed a five-deal agreement with British Sky Broadcasting and the British Broadcasting Corporation. The arrangement will be that the BBC screens edited highlights while the satellite BSkyB shows live games, including some on Monday nights.

That arrangement has angered some of the big clubs in the 22-club league, especially those who will be scheduled to play in European competitions on Wednesdays.

Liverpool chief executive Peter Robinson, whose team will be in the European Cup Winners Cup next season, said on Wednesday he was one of six Premier League managers

to vote against the deal.

And on Friday, Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson, Howard Wilkinson, who is in charge of league champion Leeds and Arsenal's George Graham issued a joint statement condemning it.

"We will meet to discuss this stamped deal as soon as possible," Ferguson said. "It is the most ludicrous and backward decision that football has taken."

"We managers must seriously question its wisdom. There is an absurd handicap to teams that do well in the domestic cups or European competitions," said the Manchester United Manager whose team will be in next season's UEFA Cup.

Ferguson said the managers would meet to draw up plans to contest the TV coverage. They could refuse to play on Mondays or even field weakened teams in certain games.

"There is the absurd handicap in prospect of being expected to play on a Sunday or Monday in February or March

Hamstring sidelines Richards

SWANSEA, Wales, May 22: Viv Richards, former West Indies cricket captain, could be out of action for up to a month after pulling a hamstring while fielding in an English county championship match on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Richards, who plays for Glamorgan, was attempting to cut off a firmly hit cover drive by Warwickshire all-rounder Neil Smith when he pulled up sharply deep in the outfield.

Glamorgan physiotherapist Dean Conway rushed to the player's aid and Richards, hobbling badly, was helped from the field.

Conway said: "It looks a bad one. The full extent of the damage will not be known for a further 24 hours or so. There is always a chance it could turn out to be just a tweak and show a big improvement overnight."

"But I am not optimistic and I fear Viv could be out of the game for three or four weeks."

Imran explains why he isn't there

LONDON, May 22: Imran Khan, Pakistan's World Cup winning cricket captain, says lack of personal motivation and a team row have ruled him out of playing for his country during their current tour of England, reports Reuter.

The 39-year-old all-rounder, who pulled out of the team because of a shoulder injury, arrived in Britain this month and there has been persistent speculation that Pakistan could still call him up.

But Imran said in an article in Friday's Daily Telegraph that he would not have been able to play until at least the middle of June.

"Under normal circumstances I would not have thought twice about going because it is a long tour and I believe that if one is really determined one can will injuries to heal," he said.

"However, after a week in Lahore I discovered that I had run out of all motivation to play cricket."

Imran said for the past two



IMRAN KHAN

years he had played international cricket only to help his campaign to build a cancer hospital in Pakistan.

"A section of our press attributed the initial poor performance in the World Cup to myself not taking enough interest in the team but simply promoting my hospital instead," he said.

"The second reason that convinced me to make myself unavailable was the misconception of a few senior players who, after the World Cup, began to feel that the money that ought to be going to them was instead going to the cancer hospital.

"I am still baffled as to how they came to that conclusion. I do not know how anyone who wants to contribute to the fund would give that money to the players' kitty. Or, for that matter, vice versa."

An earlier report said: Imran Khan insisted on Thursday he would play no part in Pakistan's cricket tour of England despite the tourists' 79-run defeat in the opening one-day international at Lord's.

"I've absolutely no intention of playing on this tour," said Imran.

"I won't need an operation on my injured shoulder and it is getting better. But I am not physically or mentally prepared to play at the moment," Imran added.

"I would need to do a lot of training to get fit and I am not going to. I made myself unavailable for the tour and I am sticking to it."

Stephenson's fine double for Essex

LONDON, May 22: Essex opener John Stephenson hampered his second unbeaten century in two days against Somerset on Thursday, reports AFP.

The England hopeful held together his country's first innings with a skillful 113 on Wednesday and he doubled the agony for Somerset bowlers a day later at Taunton.

After Dutch teenager Adrianus Van Troost surprised Essex by taking six for 48 in the first innings, Stephenson and his teammates took control this time.

He carried his bat through the innings again and was on 103 at the close.

Somerset had collapsed from a handy 139 for one overnight to 275 all out.

Glamorgan were also suffering after finding out that former West Indies captain Viv Richards could be out of action for a month with a pulled hamstring.

Richards, who hit 127 in Glamorgan's first innings 346 for five declared against Warwickshire, pulled up sharply in the field and had to be helped off.

It's the second injury blow for the Welsh country. Captain

Alan Butcher underwent knee surgery last week that will keep him out of the game until late June.

England 'A' spinner Robert Croft returned a career best six for 103 as Warwick were dismissed for 248, 98 behind.

At the close Glamorgan were 78 for two, 176, ahead with a day to go.

Jack Russell, discarded by England because of his lack of runs, scored a match-winning 72 as Gloucestershire beat Worcestershire by three wickets at Gloucester with a day to spare.

Chasing 210 to win, Gloucestershire looked in trouble at 169 for seven until Courtney Walsh (30 not out) joined Russell in the middle.

The pair put on the 41 needed, Russell battling away for 159 minutes at the crease. But it was Walsh's big hitting which clinched it, Damien O'Leivtra going for three massive sixes from the West Indian fast bowler.

Worcester spinner Richard Stemp took five for 79 to finish with 11 for 146 but couldn't bowl his side to their first championship win.

A stubborn eighth-wicket stand of 62 between Martin Bicknell and Neil Kendrick foiled Hampshire's bid for a

win inside three days over Surrey at Southampton.

Acting captain Malcolm Marshall polished off Surrey's first innings for 184, taking six for 58, and the visitors followed on.

England 'A' spinner Robert Croft returned a career best six for 103 as Warwick were dismissed for 248, 98 behind.

At the close Glamorgan were 78 for two, 176, ahead with a day to go.

Jack Russell, discarded by England because of his lack of runs, scored a match-winning 72 as Gloucestershire beat Worcestershire by three wickets at Gloucester with a day to spare.

Chasing 210 to win, Gloucestershire looked in trouble at 169 for seven until Courtney Walsh (30 not out) joined Russell in the middle.

The pair put on the 41 needed, Russell battling away for 159 minutes at the crease. But it was Walsh's big hitting which clinched it, Damien O'Leivtra going for three massive sixes from the West Indian fast bowler.

Worcester spinner Richard Stemp took five for 79 to finish with 11 for 146 but couldn't bowl his side to their first championship win.

A stubborn eighth-wicket stand of 62 between Martin Bicknell and Neil Kendrick foiled Hampshire's bid for a

Leicester's first innings 248. When the home side followed on 219 behind, he hammered another 58.

But Leicester look doomed to defeat. They resume today at 161 for five, needing 58 to make Middlesex bat again.

Ian Salisbury spun Sussex into a strong position at Trent Bridge, taking five for 69 as leaders Nottinghamshire were dismissed for 249, 116 behind.

Notts were 138 for six and looked likely to follow on before Bruce French (46) and Kevin Evans (50) put on 84 for the seventh wicket.

Sussex reached 112 for four in their second innings, 228 ahead.

Derbyshire recovered from 127 for five at Blackpool to declared at 300 for nine, in reply to Lancashire's 327 for seven declared.

Chris Adams top scored with 72, with support from Steve Goldsmith (60 not out) and Peter Bowler (53). Lancashire reached 79 without loss at the close, a lead of 106.

An unbroken stand of 96 between Craig White (63 not out) and Peter Hartley (61 not out) helped Yorkshire save the follow-on against Kent at Canterbury.



Pakistan wicketkeeper Moin Khan dives to catch England's Robin Smith off Aaqib Javed in the first one-dayer at Lord's on Wednesday. Smith survived and went on to topscore with 85. Pakistan lost the match by 79 runs. —AFP photo