

Russian booters in the city

Sports Reporter Four Russian booters arrived in the city to take part in the forthcoming Star First Division football league...

Abahani face PWD in the opener

Sports Reporter Retaining Star First Division football league champions Abahani Krishna Chakra will take on Public Works Department (PWD) in one of the two inaugural matches...

Works Department (PWD) in one of the two inaugural matches of this year's 'twinned' Senior Division football league...

Bangladesh Boys and one time Senior Division outfits East End Club are the two teams who won the rights to rub shoulders with the less privileged equities of the Star First Division football league...

The ten Premier League teams are Abahani, Mohammedans, Brothers Union, Arambagh Krishna Sangstha, Rahmatganj MFS, Agrani Bank, Victoria Sporting Club, Warik Club, Muktiyoddha Sangsad and PWD SC.

IOC h'ball course from June 8

An Olympic solidarity course for the handball coaches begins at the conference room of National Sports Council on June 8, reports UNB.

Old foes square up on green

AMMAN, May 31: Long-time enemies and political rivals are set to do battle on the soccer field as Asia's qualifying campaign for the 1994 World Cup finals heats up...

FIFA attempt to make WC taky

LONDON, May 31: FIFA are expected to decide this week to award three points for a win in first round World Cup finals matches in a bid to make the showpiece event more attractive...

Sepp Blatter, general secretary of soccer's governing body, is in favour of changing the points system for next year's World Cup finals in the United States...

Blatter is on record as saying he believes three points for a win would encourage more entertaining play and reward teams that play attacking soccer.



SEPP BLATTER

Iraq on course for WC finals

IRBID, Jordan, May 31: Iraq scored a vital 1-0 win over China in their World Cup Asian qualifying Group A match on Sunday to put themselves firmly on the march to the finals in the US next year...

Iraq, playing in their first soccer tournament since the Gulf War three years ago, went two points clear of Yemen at the top of the group standings at the end of the first round of matches in this northern Jordanian town.

More importantly, the win put Iraq three points clear of China, who will host the second round of games next month and now have to rely on one of the group's three other teams - Jordan, Pakistan and Yemen - to halt Iraq's progress to the final round of Asian qualifiers.

Captain Ahmed Radt, who missed a myriad of first-half chances, scored the only goal two minutes after the break, shooting into an empty net after China's goalkeeper Xu Tao had lost a chase for a loose ball with Iraqi midfielder Monder Khalaf.

Blatter cited the recent Group E qualifiers in Lebanon, which has only just emerged from a long civil war. The tournament provided an opportunity for Christians and Muslims to come together in support of their national soccer team, he said.

Bima KS, Bangladesh Boys and East End Club are the ten First Division league teams. This year's league looked jeopardised few months back when players and DMFA got involved in a wrangle regarding the announcement of players' transfer...

Predictably DMFA buckled under the cumulative pressure of the club officials who at one stage rustled up under the signboard of the Dhaka Metropolitan Club Association to press forward their demands.

Although DMFA's yielding was a foregone conclusion the consensus among the officials helped germinate a salubrious decision to arrest the mega-inflation in country's soccer market.

Fakirerpool Youngmen's Club, Farashganj SC, Dhanmondi Club, Dhaka Wanderers Club, BRTC, Eskaton Sabuj Sangha, Adamjee SC, Sadharan

Warne, May reign at Leicester

LEICESTER, England, May 31: Australian leg spinner Shane Warne snapped up two wickets with consecutive deliveries to start a Leicestershire collapse on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Warne and off-spinner May sent the county tumbling from 104 for two to 149 for seven on the rain-interrupted second day of their three-day cricket match.

Robust batting by Peter Hepworth, who struck six fours in an unbeaten 37, lifted Leicester to 168 for seven at the close, the Australians having declared at the overnight 323 for three.

Warne later dismissed Paul Nixon to end the day with three for 31 from 12 overs, bringing his tour haul to 16 first-class wickets, while May had three for 62.

Warne's first victim was opener Time Boon, lbw to a delivery that kept low, while his second dismissal accounted for James Whitaker and came during a phase in which three wickets fell with the total 104.

Australia's willingness to get out into the field, despite the wintry conditions and subsequent lack of atmosphere, showed their eagerness for a final match practice before next week's opening Ashes Test at Old Trafford.

Viv shrugs off bitter memories

TAUNTON, England, May 31: Viv Richards admitted he thought "long and hard" before agreeing to bury the hatchet with Somerset, who presented him with an honorary life membership on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Richards and his fellow ex-West Indies teammate Joel Garner were sacked by the English county amid great acrimony at the end of the 1986 season, with Ian Botham subsequently leaving the club in protest.

But the trio have now accepted honorary life memberships, and Richards was the first to receive his commemorative plaque during a presentation ceremony at the Taunton ground.

Richard, Garner and Botham were instrumental in Somerset's five trophy triumphs between 1979 and 1983 - the only successes in the club's 102-year history.

Rowdy PSG fans mar Marseille's day

MARSEILLE, France, May 31: Fourteen people were injured in the riots that marred Marseille's victory over Paris St Germain that won them a fifth consecutive French league title on Saturday, security sources said on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Paris fans hurled smoke bombs and missiles into sections of the Marseille supporters 15 minutes before the end of the game in Marseille.



Germany's Marc Goellner prepares to serve against Andrei Medvedev of Ukraine during their fourth-round encounter in the French Open yesterday. Goellner went down fighting in a four-setter.

England name three rookies

LONDON, May 31: England announced a major overhaul of their bowling attack Monday, naming three uncapped arms for the team to face Australia in the first 'Ashes' Test, reports AP.

But the top of the batting lineup, which failed in four Test defeats over the winter, remained intact.

Essex pair Mark Ilett and Peter Such and Somerset's Andy Caddick lead the rookie contingent, along with Kent's Alan Igglesden, who has just one brief appearance in Test cricket.

The first 'Ashes' Test begins Thursday at Old Trafford in Manchester.

Among specialist bowlers, only Chris Lewis and Phil Tufnell remain from the team that was swept by India and Sri Lanka during the winter tour.

But by retaining the six batsmen, led by captain Graham Gooch, the selectors found no place for veterans David Gower and Ian Botham.

Gower's omission from the India tour prompted protests from within the cricket community, and led to a special meeting to debate the selectors' decision.

The 12 selected are: Graham Gooch, Michael Atherton, Robin Smith, Mike Gatting, Graeme Hick, Alec Stewart, Chris Lewis, Alan Igglesden, Andrew Caddick, Mark Ilett, Peter Such, Phil Tufnell.

Werder set up a nail-biting German Bundesliga finale when they crushed Hamburg 5-0 to overtake Bayern at the top on a goal difference of one.

Werder's fifth goal was scored in the last minute by Austrian Andreas Herzog.

Bayern, who beat Bochum 3-1, appear to have the easier final match, away to 10th-placed Schalke. Bremen, strong at home where they have only dropped three points all season, visit outgoing champions VfB Stuttgart.

Berlusconi, Capello hit back

ROME, May 31: AC Milan's title celebrations had a bitter-sweet taste about them as club owner Silvio Berlusconi and coach Fabio Capello hit back at critics who have labelled them an ageing side, reports Reuter.

Milan's success in claiming their 13th league title on Sunday and becoming the first team to successfully defend the Italian Championship since 1982, was marred by last week's defeat by Marseille in the European Cup final.

Said Berlusconi: 'Unfortunately for us we arrived in Munich in poor condition with too many important players such as (Ruud) Gullit, (Dejan) Savicevic and Marco Simone unavailable because of injury and having to send out unfit players such as (Paolo) Maldini, (Jedn Pierre) Papin and (Marco) van Basten, who himself admitted that he was only 50 per cent fit.'

'Nonetheless, Milan have played very well and have achieved results and records that will be difficult to emulate.'

Table with 5 columns: Country, Goals, Points, etc. for World Cup qualifying.



Former German international Pierre Littbarski (R) of Ichihara JEF United dribbles the ball past Takuya Jinno of Yokohama Marinos during the J-League soccer match in Yokohama on May 29. Littbarski scored once and assisted two other to lead JEF United to a thumping 5-0 victory.