

Sport

Nat'l cricket

Comilla and Chaitapinawabganj were in comfortable position on the second day of their respective three-day zonal finals of the 24th national cricket championship yesterday, reports UNB.

In the Dhaka zonal final at Bangabandhu National Stadium, Mymensingh scored 108 runs for 5 in 28 overs in their second innings against Comilla.

Selim made 25 while Mohammad and Nasim were batting with 12 and 10 runs respectively.

Earlier in the day, Comilla ended their first innings making 206 for eight in 100 overs. Their overnight score was 47 without loss.

Anis scored 62 and Javed 60 runs.

Saiful Islam of Mymensingh claimed six wickets for 63 runs while Masud took two for 47.

At Bogra, Chaitapinawabganj were all out for 235 runs in 92.4 overs in their first innings in the zonal final against Tangail.

Jewel scored highest 68 runs while Sumon made 45. Ripon of Tangail picked three wickets for 42 runs and Babu took two in their second innings.

Earlier, in their first innings, Tangail were all out for 35.

In reply, Tangail were languishing with 21 runs for two in their second innings.

Earlier, in their first innings, Tangail were all out for 187 runs.

Fleming to miss Kiwi tour opener

WELLINGTON, May 14: Captain Stephen Fleming will miss New Zealand's opening tour match in Sri Lanka due to a meeting of Test cricket captains in London. New Zealand Cricket said Thursday, reports AP.

New Zealand departs Friday for a seven-week tour of Sri Lanka, but Fleming left Thursday for England, meaning he will miss the opening game on tour — a three-day match against the Board President's XI which starts in Colombo on Monday.

Fleming, who is scheduled to reach Colombo next Tuesday, said he is disappointed the International Cricket Council could not have scheduled the captains' meeting so that it did not conflict with his New Zealand duties.

"It was the only time they could get all the captains together," Fleming said. "It could have been worse though. The meeting was originally set down for two days before the first Test starts in Sri Lanka, but it has been rescheduled."

The meeting in England on Monday will deprive Fleming of the chance to gain some valuable bat time. But it should open the door for Central Districts batsman Craig Spearman to occupy a place in the middle order for the opening match.

The recalled Spearman will bat with incumbent Bryan Young to partner Matt Horne in the opening roles for the Tests in Sri Lanka.

Coach Steve Rixon has made it clear that form in Sri Lanka will determine the team for the opening match in the three Test series, in Colombo from May 27-31.

Butcher, Brown hit hundred

LONDON, May 14: Mark Butcher and Alastair Brown each hit centuries in front of newly-appointed England captain Alec Stewart to strengthen their national selection hopes as Surrey dominated the opening day of their English county championship match with Hampshire at Southampton on Wednesday, reports AFP.

Surrey finished the day on a commanding 434 for five.

They took command from the moment captain Adam Hollioake won the toss and decided to bat first in bright sunshine on a perfect batting strip.

Butcher and Stewart put on 118 for the first wicket, seeing Surrey through to lunch without loss in the process.

Elsewhere, too, England one-day and Test prospects dominated proceedings.

Devon Malcolm, who destroyed South Africa in the Oval Test on their last visit, took 6 for 54 for New county Northamptonshire as Yorkshire crumbled to 148 all out. Northants finished the day 10 runs ahead with six first-innings wickets intact.

At Canterbury, England all-rounder Mark Ealham held Kent's first innings together with a fine 73 out of 186. By the close, Lancashire were 90 for three in reply.

Pierce pulls out of German Open

BERLIN, May 14: Mary Pierce pulled out of the German Open on Wednesday with a thigh injury which could affect her chances at the French Open later this month, reports Reuters.

The Frenchwoman missed two match points against unseeded Austrian Barbara Paulus before retiring injured in the second round with the score at 4-6, 7-6, 3-1.

The sixth-seeded Pierce had been one set and 5-2 up against Paulus before the injury ended her chances of reaching her second successive final in Berlin and ensured that she would drop out of the world's top 10.

Pierce said her thigh muscles had been feeling tight at the start of the match and she appeared to strain them at 4-2 up in the second set.

Running hard for a drop shot, Pierce pulled up fast and said she felt a twinge as she changed direction.



Salauddin Ahmed (R), the first prize winner of The Daily Star World Cup Quiz '98 Round One, receives a twenty-inch Philips colour TV from the distinguished guests of the Round 3 draw at the Jatiya Press Club auditorium yesterday.

Stars tell Blazevic not to worry

UNDATED, May 14 (AFP/Internet): Croatian coach Miroslav Blazevic will probably be the only coach at the World Cup who will know the result before the matches have even kicked off.

The bespectacled 60-year-old chain smoker is a keen follower of astrology. And thanks to the stars, he has no worries about his future in charge of a Croatian team making its first ever appearance at a World Cup final.

"I will be coach of this team as long as I live. It is written in the stars," he insists. So convinced is Blazevic of the powers of astrology he consulted the star gazers before his side's final World Cup qualifiers. He says he new the results before the games began, that Croatia would beat Ukraine 2-0 in their nail-biting final match. But his success is due to more than just listening to astrologers.

Never a star as a player, Blazevic, as coach, is a great tactician with an ability to get the best out of his players. But he knows he is taking a gamble by ignoring some of Croatia's experienced foreign-based players, instead relying on basing his team around local league players.

"Croatian players are the most gifted in Europe. They are the Brazilians of Europe," says Blazevic. "I am convinced we are ready for something big and it will happen in France," he adds.

However there is one worrying note for Blazevic. An astrologer has told him that he might suffer a heart attack while sitting on the bench during the World Cup. But the attack loving Blazevic will no doubt reduce the odds by watching his side play-standing up.

Taxing time for Batistuta

Buenos Aires, May 14 (AFP/Internet): Argentina's star striker Gabriel Batistuta is under investigation for alleged tax evasion and had 50,000 dollars of his assets frozen by the Argentine authorities on Tuesday.

The latest big name to fall victim to the Argentine government's tough financial crackdown, Batistuta allegedly failed to pay 124,564 dollars relating to his 1991 transfer from Boca Juniors to Fiorentina.

The action has no bearing on Batistuta's preparations for the World Cup, in which Argentina meet Japan, Jamaica and Croatia in the first round.

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MANCHESTER, May 14 (AFP/Internet): Manchester United are continuing with their bid to entice Cameroon international midfielder Marc Foe from French champions Lens.

Manager Alex Ferguson sees Foe as an ideal addition to his squad as he seeks to reclaim the English Premiership title from Arsenal and launch another assault on the European Champions' League. Club secretary Ken Ramsden said: "We haven't confirmed a deal with his club yet so there is no progress there. It is still on-going." Lens players and officials are currently enjoying a post-season break in Martinique to celebrate their first championship victory.

WC hockey from May 21

Pillay drafted in Indian team

NEW DELHI, May 14: Three injured Indian players, including captain and ace striker Dhanraj Pillay, have been retained for the field hockey World Cup starting in the Netherlands later this month, reports AFP.

Pillay and fellow striker Ravi Mishra, nursing leg injuries, and half-back Baljeet Singh Saini, recovering from a broken bone fracture, were kept in the squad after fresh fitness trials.

"All three will be fit by the time we play our first match on May 21. Indian Hockey Federation chief Kunwar Pratap Singh Gill said. As a precautionary measure, striker Devinder Kumar and half-back Sukhbir Singh have been added to the original 16-man squad, Gill said.

The tournament runs in the Dutch city of Utrecht from May 21 to June 1. Rules allow teams to name their final list one hour before the first match.

Ajitpal Singh, who led India to its only World Cup title in Kuala Lumpur in 1975, was appointed manager, Gill said.

Former captain Zafar Iqbal will act as advisor to chief coach Vasudevan Bhaskaran.

Eight-time Olympic champions India have been drawn with hosts Holland, Germany, South Korea, New Zealand and Canada in Group A or the preliminary league.

The other group comprises defending champions Pakistan, Australia, England, Malaysia, Spain and Poland.

GOALKEEPERS: Jude Meenez, Jagdish Ponnappa.

FULL-BACKS: Dilip Turkey, Barua Barua, Anil Aldrin.

HALF-BACKS: Baljeet Singh Saini, Mohammad Riaz, Ramandeep Singh, Thirumal Valavan, Sukhbir Singh.

FORWARDS: Mukesh Kumar, Sabir Varkey, Dhanraj Pillay, Rajesh Chauhan, Samir Dad, Rajiv Mishra, Harbhajan Singh, Devinder Kumar.

Crisis in champs' camp



TERESOPOLIS, Brazil, May 14 (Reuters): Brazil's World Cup preparations began ominously on Wednesday as a bout of influenza, a spate of injuries and club commitments reduced the first training session to just nine players.

It quickly became clear that coach Mario Zagallo, who had hoped to start preparing his team in earnest this week, would have to wait until the team arrived in France before getting down to any serious work.

Central defender Marcelo Santos was dropped from the squad because of a pulled muscle on Wednesday while other players were either getting over injuries, still at their clubs or sniffing in the gymnasium.

Team doctor Licio Toledo said Marcio Santos had been given the bad news after injuring himself while playing for Sao Paulo against Corinthians in Sunday's Paulista championship final.

"It's not a serious injury but he will not be able to train with the ball for two or three weeks," Toledo said. "We need all our players to be match fit so we can train the team as whole and for this reason we had to drop him."

Andre Cruz of AC Milan, who himself has suffered an injury-plagued year, was named as the replacement.

Midfielder Falvio Conceicao, who is still with Deportivo Coruna, striker Romario and Cesar Sampayo are the others on the injured list, although only Falvio Conceicao runs the risk of missing the World Cup.

"He was supposed to send us a magnetic resonance image of the injury and he hasn't," Toledo said. "He's supposed to play for his club on Friday but if he doesn't know where we stand."

"He turned up for last month's match with Argentina with

the injury which he didn't tell us about and he had to be sent home," he added.

Romario, who limped out of a club game last week with a pulled muscle, spent the morning in the gymnasium alongside Bebeto, who, like coach Mario Zagallo, was suffering from influenza. Cesar Sampayo was sent down to Rio de Janeiro for a closer examination of his injury.

The Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) has reluctantly agreed to allow European-based players Cafu, Leonardo, Ronaldo, Flavio Conceicao, Roberto Carlos and Aldair to join the squad in France next week.

But they also gave in to the demands of local clubs.

Reserve goalkeeper Carlos Germano and midfielder Denilson were missing after playing in a Brazilian domestic match on Tuesday night and it was reported that Germano's club Vasco da Gama wanted him to play in another club match today.

That left Taffarel, Dida, Dunga, Ze Roberto, Rivaldo, Giovanni, Junior Baiano, Doriva and Goncalves as the only players on the field on Wednesday morning at the CBF's luxurious site in the mountain resort of Teresopolis, some 100 kilometres from Rio.

Denilson turned up in the afternoon.

Brazil, who face Scotland in their opening World Cup match on June 10, will stay in Teresopolis until June 21, when they leave for France on a chartered and specially painted Varig Brazilian airlines plane.

A smaller Varig plane, chartered for the duration of the cup, will carry the team when they are in France.

SQUAD

Revised Brazil World Cup squad after Andre Cruz replaced injured Marcio Santos on Wednesday.

Goalkeepers: Taffarel (Atletico Mineiro), Carlos Germano (Vasco da Gama), Dida (Cruzeiro).

Defenders: Cafu and Aldair (Sao Paulo), Goncalves (Botafogo), Junior Baiano and Ze Roberto (Flamengo), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid), Andre Cruz (AC Milan).

Midfielders: Dunga (Juventus), Doriva (Porto), Rivaldo (Barcelona), Leonardo (AC Milan), Denilson (Sao Paulo), Flavio Conceicao (Deportivo Coruna), Cesar Sampayo (Ana Sato Kogyo), Giovanni (Barcelona).

Forwards: Romario (Flamengo), Edmundo (Internacional), Bebeto (Botafogo), Ronaldo (Inter Milan).

Round-3 correct answers

Questions

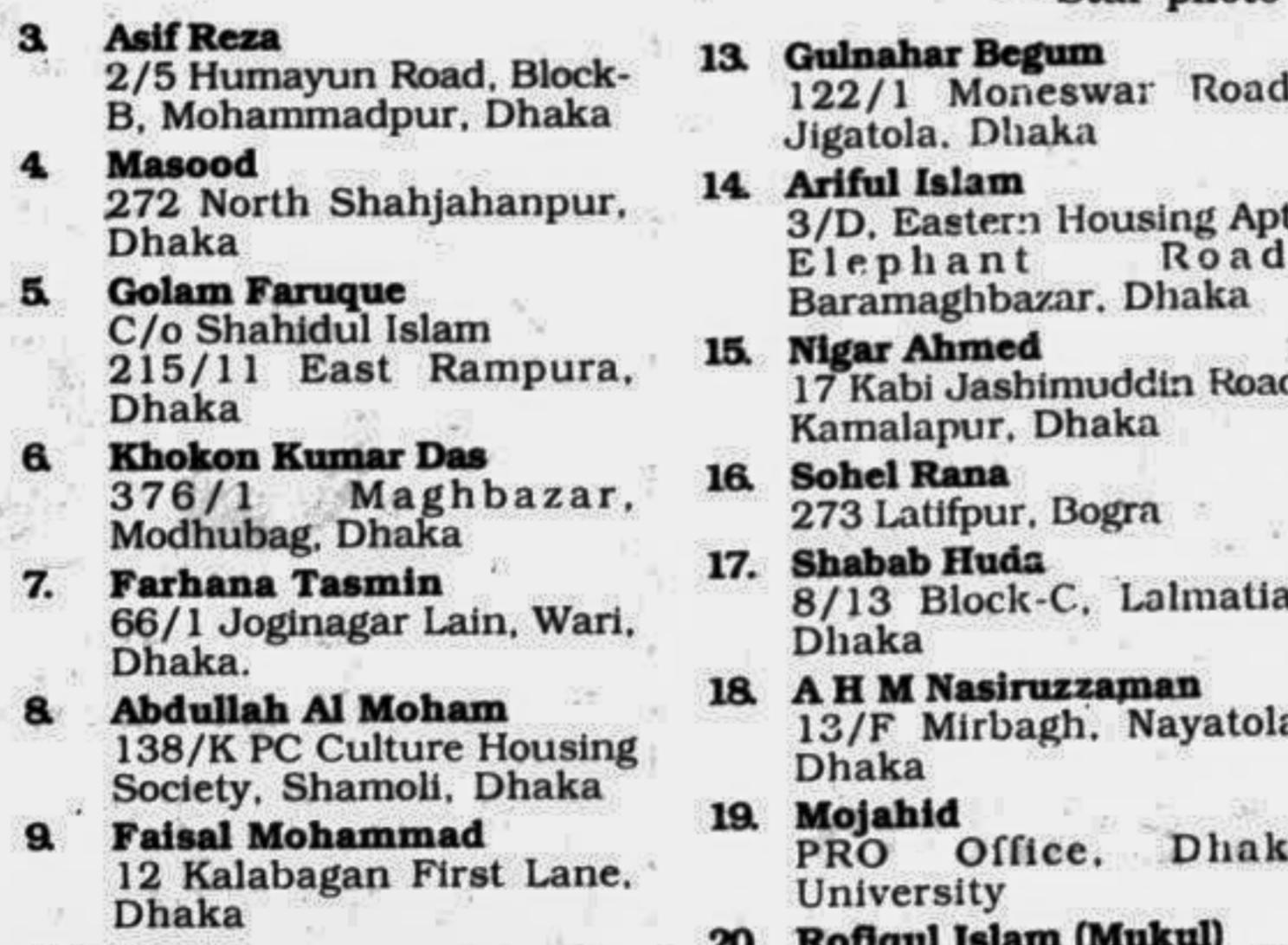
1. Which WC championship was decided in a tie-breaker? 1994 Uruguay
2. In the 1950 WC, the hosts lost the final to Uruguay
3. Highest goals in any WC finals match was by Hungary
4. All-time highest scorer Fontaine is a Frenchman
5. Who is kissing the Cup? Tardelli

Answers



Former national football player Golam Sarwar Tipu (above) holds the entry form of the first prize winner while Aly Zaker (below left), a prominent TV personality and former ace striker Sheikh Mohammad Aslam speaking at The Daily Star World Cup Quiz '98 Round 3 draw yesterday.

— Star photo



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