

Column One

SPORTS TALK



Tim May

(Former Australian cricketer)
"I just feel sad about the whole issue."
Reacting to the life ban imposed on Salim Malik.

Boost sports WHIZZ KID

Competition-131
✓ Tick the Correct Answers
Post to The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes
Competition closes at 8 pm
June 30, 2000 and draw
shortly afterwards

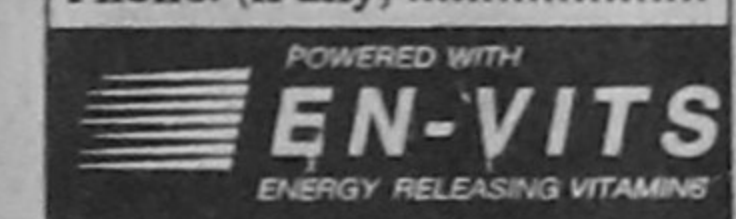
- Who is the number one women tennis player at the moment?
Hings Pierce Y Williams
- Who won the European Champions League?
M United Real Madrid Lazio
- Who won the UEFA Cup?
Valencia Galatasaray Fiorentina
- Who lifted national school cricket title?
St Joseph M Singh Zila Cig Khastag
- Who is the coach of Bangladesh football team?
Harrison Van Gaal Shaker

Name

Class Roll No.

School Address

Phone: (If any)



Asian Snooker C'ship from July 10

The 17th Asian Snooker Championship will be held from July 10 to 15 at Queen's Elizabeth Stadium, Hong Kong, says a press release.
A total of 40 participants from 19 countries are expected to take part in the six-day event.

The participating countries are Bangladesh, Brunei, China, China-Hong Kong, Macau, Chinese Taipei, India, Jordan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and United Arab Emirates.
The players have been divided in eight groups. The top-seeded players are Md Yousuf (Pakistan), Yasin Merchant (India), Ooi Chin Kay (Malaysia), S Kanthawang (Thailand), Saleh Mohammad (Pakistan), Chan Kwok King (Hong Kong), Chung Ming Hung (Chinese Taipei) and Chan Wai Tat (Hong Kong).
Besides, the 17th annual general meeting of the Asian Confederation of Billiards Sports (ACBS) is scheduled to be held on July 13.

BU's ad-hoc body formed

Brothers Union formed a seven-member ad-hoc committee replacing the executive committee at an emergency meeting with its president Mobashwer Hossain in the chair, reports BSS.

Hossain, who had tendered his resignation recently, revised his decision at the request of club members.

The ad-hoc committee members are: Mobashwer Hossain (convenor), Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Sadek Hossain, MP, Syed Abu Hossain Babla, Tapan Chowdhury, Afzal Hossain and Moinul Huq Manju.

Keep cricket out of politics

Syed Ashfaul Haque

An incurable and highly contagious 'cricket virus' is about to break out and spread throughout the country in no time today. Anyone unaware of the historic ICC (International Cricket Council) decision on changing of Bangladesh's status could have been forgiven for thinking the country has turned into a battle zone, as the scream and the boom of bomb-like crackers fill the night air. If there is any scream or a slogan in Bangladesh today it has to come out of sheer ecstasy.

When the ICC high-ups gather at Lord's on the concluding day for their annual conference, the whole country would be absolutely agog with a single expectation -- a declaration of Test status for Bangladesh.

Although a section of British press and a few ultra sceptical sports analysts are very active in wising up the ICC about the necessity of taking a hard-line approach on upgrading of a member's status, Bangladesh is almost certain to join the Ivy League of Test cricket.

Eight out of nine Full Members have already renewed their support for the Test application of the reigning ICC Trophy champions, who earned the one-day status in 1997. To attain the Test tag an aspiring nation needs to win at least seven votes of the Full Members. So far, all but England have pledged their support for Bangladesh, who came within two votes of being granted Test status the last time the issue was discussed in 1999.

A column of Scyd Berry in London's The Daily Telegraph on June 18 read: "If Bangladesh are granted Test status, as seems to be the forgone conclusion, it will be a scandal, and it will be done not for playing reasons but for political ones, to increase the size of the Asian power bloc from three out of nine to four out of 10, almost breakaway proportions."

So, the main reason behind their opposition is the politics of power, not their concern for cricket. The rise of Asian power in ICC, not the standard of Bangladesh game, is what bugs the self-proclaimed guardians of the game most.

The cynics are refusing to accept the reality that these days the heart of cricket beats in Asia. Former South Africa all-rounder Eddie Barlow has had a change of heart about the prospect of cricket here when he came to Bangladesh to take over the post of Director Development of BCB (Bangladesh Cricket Board) last year.

"I get worried about the exclusivity thing that goes on. Cricket is very much a traditional English, white kind of game. Where is it developing most? In the subcontinent," remarked the coach in an interview before he suffered a stroke in April. "If and when Bangladesh come in, the balance of power will swing and your so-called founder nations will start being outvoted."

However, Berry, who went at length to elaborate

Bangladesh's dismal performances in New Zealand without mentioning their commendable showings against West Indies and England A at home, wrote: "Bangladesh have every prerequisite for Test status -- crowds, sponsors, money -- except one: a team anywhere near international standard."

One must not forget the fact that Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, New Zealand and even the West Indies did not appear good enough when they were first granted Test status. On the other hand, India took 32 years to win their first Test match while the 'father of cricket' England have occupied the bottom of world rankings for the last few years.

Putting aside the Asian power factor, the ICC should choose a more relevant yardstick, that is whether Bangladesh has got a strong enough base from which a genuine Test nation could one day emerge.

"I have no axe to grind with Zimbabwe, but the future of Bangladesh compared to Zimbabwe is unlimited. I might even put New Zealand into that category," preached Barlow once.

Bangladeshi youths have started showing their hunger for the game, and if it is the success then we think tomorrow's infant of Test cricket will soon be on its way to the top.

Give Bangladesh the Test status. They will definitely grow up in defeats.

'Whites' wary of Asian-bloc

LONDON, June 25 (AFP/AP): The International Cricket Council's (ICC) summit moved to Paris on Saturday, focused on cleaning up the game.

After addressing the routine world issues of the previous 48 hours, the ICC's executive board will study progress reports on the Pakistan and South Africa match-fixing inquiries as the controversy to hit rumbles on.

England and Wales Cricket Board chairman Lord MacLaurin is calling for hard-line measures.

"We must deal with this in a strong way," he insisted.

"The game has to remain bigger than any individual -- this scandal has got worse and worse. The ICC meeting has to be strong and root this out. I think there is more to come, who knows what is going to come out?"

Lord MacLaurin asked an interim meeting of the ICC member countries last month for a common response to the allegations of match-fixing.

An ICC Code of Conduct Commission report will be heard this weekend, including the update on the appointment of the anti-corruption investigation.

India have filed a complaint against South Africa's chief executive Dr Ali Bacher over his match-fixing allegations concerning last year's World Cup.

Dr Bacher alleged that India's victory over Pakistan at Old Trafford was rigged, yet the top-ranking South African official had not made this public at the ICC's emergency meeting in May.

Lord MacLaurin added: "There are a lot of whispers at the moment, but we need concrete proof. I hope England are not tainted by this but if we are we will take a strong view on it. Players should be banned for life if they have discredited our game."

The delegates return to London on Monday to discuss the promotion of Bangladesh to full Test nation status, but the 'white' countries are afraid of allowing a power-bloc of four

Asian nations to be formed. They are also doubtful of the standard of cricket that is played in what used to be East Pakistan.

Also, there is sure to be much debate on the television rights for the next two World Cups, with the threat of a breakaway if some companies do not secure rights and stage their own international competitions and matches.

The topic of a World Cup tournament every two years is on the agenda, therefore reducing the number of one-day internationals, and the possibility of a World Test Championship will also be given an airing.

A resolution will be tabled that the 2003 World Cup will comprise the 11 countries with one-day international status (Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, Kenya, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, West Indies and Zimbabwe), plus the three top countries from the 2001 ICC Trophy.



Francesco Totti, the Italian star, is ecstatic after scoring against Romania at Brussels on June 24. — AFP photo

Totti, Inzaghi carry Italy

BRUSSELS, June 25: Italy booked their place in the Euro 2000 semi-finals here on Saturday night with a 2-0 victory over 10-man Romania, as George Hagi ended his international career with a sending-off, reports AFP.

Francesco Totti and Filippo Inzaghi caught the Romanian defence flat-footed in the 33rd and 43rd minutes, but there was a humiliating end for 35-year-old Hagi, the greatest player in the history of Romanian football and who plans to retire from the national side.

Playing his first game after a one-match suspension, Hagi was booked for a scything tackle on Juventus skipper Antonio Conte, who was stretched off, and then shown a red card in the 59th minute for a dive in the area.

Italy did not emerge un-

scathed from the battle, with Conte's twisted right ankle and a left thigh injury for skipper Paolo Maldini putting both men in doubt for their next match at Amsterdam, between either Holland or Yugoslavia.

Italy coach Dino Zoff said: "For us this was a very difficult game but we kept to our task very well and earned our reward."

"I had faith in my players before this match and I have faith in them now. We're in the semi-finals. And I think that we've silenced the critics. The only negative things this evening were the injuries. I hope they are not too serious."

Looking ahead he said: "Playing Holland when they are at home is going to be particularly difficult."

As for Hagi's red card, he said: "I wasn't near, so I couldn't say. All I do know is that instead of getting a penalty, we lost a player."

Hagi, who insisted that he should have had a spot-kick, denied it was a sad end to his career. "I'm not sad," he said. "Romania have played well and done well at these championships."

Italy, who came into this match after three consecutive victories, kept to their winning formula at Euro 2000 - soaking up pressure, holding possession in the middle and then delivering a clinical finish in front of goal.

Italy's new midfield star Stefano Fiore, who has struck up an immediate understanding with Totti, created the first goal - hooking a desperate clearance back over the Romanian defence.

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Asian U-16 hockey Bangladesh runners-up

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh were thrashed 5-2 by India in the final of the Asian Hockey Federation Cup (under-16) in Singapore yesterday, according to a faxed message received here last night.

India led the first half 3-1. Bangladesh, who also lost to India 1-0 in the first round, conceded their first two goals as early as the 3rd and 6th minutes. They pulled one back in the 15th minute.

When Bangladesh were trying hard for the equaliser, India effectively took the match beyond their reach with the third goal in the 31st minute.

In the second half, they added two more to their score in the 39th and 45th minutes while Bangladesh got their second goal in the 43rd.

This was the first time Bangladesh reached the final in an international meet. However, luck did not favour them at last.

The team, consisting of of BKSP boys, will return home tonight.

Hussain injured, Stewart skipper

LONDON, June 25: England captain Nasser Hussain will miss the second Test against West Indies beginning at Lord's on Thursday because of a broken thumb, reports Reuters.

Hussain, who suffered the injury playing for Essex against Nottinghamshire yesterday, was forced to pull out of the 14-man squad shortly after it had been announced today. He has been replaced by Yorkshire's Michael Vaughan.

Hussain said he expected to be out of the game for up to a month. The side will be led in his absence by Alec Stewart who lost the captaincy to Hussain last year.

All-rounder Dominic Cork has been recalled by England after a 20-month absence.

Cork took 7-43 on his Test debut against West Indies at Lord's five years ago but injuries, domestic problems and internal club wrangles have blighted his England career.

The Derbyshire captain has taken 98 wickets in 27 Test appearances and at his best in one of the best swing bowlers in the English game.

Cork said he was "a lot fitter and mentally a lot stronger" than he had been in the past.

England were trounced by an innings and 93 runs in the first Test at Edgbaston but the only new face in the squad is Yorkshire fast bowler Matthew Hoggard.

Vaughan apart, the batting personnel remains the same despite the fact that England managed a total of 304 runs at Edgbaston.

SQUAD

Alec Stewart (captain), Michael Atherton, Mark Ramprakash, Graeme Hick, Nick Knight, Andrew Flintoff, Dominic Cork, Robert Croft, Andrew Caddick, Darren Gough, Craig White, Matthew Hoggard, Ed Giddins, Michael Vaughan.

Ambrose to skip one-day tourney

LONDON, June 25: Curtly Ambrose will be missing from the West Indies side for next month's Triangular Tournament against England and Zimbabwe, it was confirmed Saturday, reports AFP.

The strike bowler will be returning home for a three-week break after the second Test against England, which starts at Lord's on Thursday.

Ambrose gets the opportunity to rest because the West Indies selectors continue to pursue a policy of not picking both him and Courtney Walsh together in a limited-overs tournament.

Opening batsman Sherwin Campbell will also be returning to the West Indies following the Lord's Test.

He travels back to be with his wife for the birth of their child and will miss the opening one-day clash against Zimbabwe at Bristol on July 6 -- but he will return in time for the England duel three days later.

Meanwhile, the Windies had to settle for a draw against New Zealand A at Chelmsford on Saturday, the Kiwis finishing on 206 for six after being set a target of 421.

Mark Richardson was the main reason New Zealand escaped defeat. The opener scored 74 in four-and-a-quarter hours before he was caught at slip pushing forward against leg-spinner Ramnaresh Sarwan.

Richardson's task was made slightly easier by the continued absence of fast bowler Franklin Rose, who is still receiving treatment for a strained hamstring.

Rose will not be fit enough to play in Sunday's one-day game against Hampshire at Southampton but officials are hopeful he will be ready to turn out at Lord's.

The West Indies suffered a scare when opening batsman Chris Gayle, who has a mild heart condition, complained of chest pains after diving to stop the ball at mid-wicket.



Abu Yusuf (L), coach of the under-19 football team, talking to his charges before leaving for practice at the BKSP in Savar yesterday. — Star photo by Amran Hossain

BFF commits a blunder?

Lenin Gani

Changing coaches is nothing new in the world of football.

Bangladesh has had its fair share of coaches from the early 80s right up to the 90s. The impressive list included Oldrich Soab of Switzerland, Otto Pfister from Germany, a South Korean named Man Young Kang and of course the temperamental former Iraqi World Cupper Samir Shakir.

Samir who inspired the national team to glory at the last South Asian Games in Kathmandu, and to a certain extent Pfister under whom Bangladesh won a tournament in Myanmar, the other gentlemen failed to take the country forward during their brief tenures.

The last incumbent was Englishman Mark Simon Harrison. Barely four months into the job, the 39-year-old former goalkeeper decided to end his spell while on holiday in Britain.

According to Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), financial hardship prompted Harrison's decision to tender his resignation.

Harrison, appointed through the Asian Football Confederation, had never coached at the international level. His experience was limited to instructing a number of British clubs after retiring from the game in the mid-eighties although he did spend time in Turkey and South Africa.

Harrison's first assignment after taking over from Shakir was the four-nation Silver Jubilee Tournament in the Maldives in May.

The outing proved to be a

disaster for the reigning South Asian Games champions. Two successive lacklustre draws and a defeat sent the boys packing.

No sooner had the team arrived home Harrison requested for some time off to spend with



SAMIR SHAKIR

his family. That was the last we heard of him.

On June 10, the BFF received a fax in which he explained that the Asian Football Confederation's financial package amounting to 3,000 dollars a month was insufficient for him to educate both his 14-year-old son and daughter (aged nine) at the prestigious American School in Gulshan. It was the Daily Star Sport that broke the news of Harrison's departure three days later.

Hard to believe that Harrison would actually use such a

lame excuse to quit the scene after just one campaign.

When he took up the position he was interviewed by this correspondent. He was full of confidence and accepted the challenge to coach an international team with great enthusiasm. When asked about the terms of his contract he said it was a pretty standard one and he had no complaints. He also had good reason to think that the Maldives campaign was just an outing.

When Harrison took over he had only 10 days to work with his boys. So, instead of building their stamina he opted to improve their technical skills. During the tournament he tried to emphasise the importance of playing a 4-3-3 and not the traditional 5-3-1 method.

Faced with the prospect of being without a coach during the tour of England in mid-July, the BFF had to swallow their pride and ask Shakir to assume control knowing full well about his reckless conduct.

The Iraqi has a history of walking out on the team. But what really matters is that his salary will now have to be borne by the federation, not by the AFC, since he does not have a proper coaching credentials.

It would have been wiser for the BFF to at least appoint an acting coach for the England trip and then approach the AFC about a full-time coach sponsored by the organisation. Otherwise, one would not find it hard to predict the imminent outcome -- an all too familiar Shakir walkout. The question is have the BFF learnt their lesson by now?

Portugal fly into semis

AMSTERDAM, June 25: Two goals from Nuno Gomes earned Portugal a 2-0 victory over 10-man Turkey in the Euro 2000 quarter-finals here on Saturday to equal their best ever performance at this level, reports AFP.

The 23-year-old Benfica forward scored in the 44th and 56th minutes in a match Portugal dominated with Turkey's cause not helped by the sending off of Alpay Ozalan and by Arif Erdem missing a penalty - both those incidents were in the first period.

Portugal, with Barcelona star Luis Figo continually causing mayhem among the Turkish defence, have now equalled their best ever performance in the European championships in 1984 - they also reached the last four in the 1966 World Cup.

Their semi-final defeat to hosts France was generally

considered the match of the tournament in 1984. But a repeat of that match could be on the cards again as the Portuguese now face either a match with the world champions or an all-Iberian clash with Spain in the last four.

Portuguese coach Humberto Coelho said afterwards: "It was an easier match than I thought when you consider (Vitor) Baia stopped a penalty and the Turks had a player sent off."

Turkey were just not able to give us any problems playing with 10 men. Of course it's an important victory and we are already thinking about the next game."

He added with a smile he would prefer to play France in the last four because he had a French wife.

"This victory is the result of a long-term job. We enjoy our job working as a group and a lot of people have contributed to it."

When asked if Portugal were



Portuguese striker Nuno Gomes scoring his second goal against Turkey at Amsterdam on June 24. — AFP photo