

Column One

SPORTS TALK



Nelson Mandela

(Former President of South Africa)

"Sport has the power to unite, inspire and it is the language of the youth of today understand."

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

1 Who is the number one women tennis player at the moment?
Hings Pierce Williams
2 Who won the European Champions League?
United Real Madrid Lazio
3 Who won the UEFA Cup?
Valencia Galatasaray Fiorentina
4 Who lifted national schools cricket title?
St Joseph M Singh Zila Crg Khastagi
5 Who is the coach of Bangladesh football team?
Harrison Van Gaal Shakir

Name

Class Roll No.

School Address

Phone: (If any)

POWERED WITH
EN-VITS
ENERGY RELEASING VITAMIN

WSG buys 2003 & 2007 cricket WCs rights

LONDON, June 28: London and Hong Kong-based international sports marketing firm The World Sport Group (WSG) announced on Tuesday that it had signed a seven-year deal with the International Cricket Council (ICC) for the commercial rights for the 2003 and 2007 cricket World Cups, reports AFP.

The ICC confirmed at meetings in London that WSG along with the Rupert Murdoch owned News Corporation had agreed to pay a minimum guaranteed sum of 550 million dollars for television, Internet and sponsorship rights.

"This is a tremendous boost for international cricket," said WSG chairman Seamus O'Brien.

There were a number of very attractive bids, but I'd like to think that ours stood alone because of our proven track record in promoting sports bodies across the world and building their properties," he added.

The 2003 World Cup is being hosted by South Africa with the 2007 event taking place in the West Indies with both countries hosting the extravaganza for the first time.

The deal also includes WSG and News Corporation covering four ICC Knock-Out Tournaments, two Under-19 Youth World Cups and two ICC Trophies.

B'baria cricket

From Our Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, June 28: Durbar Cricket Club defeated Titus Cricket Club by 20 runs in the Shalimar Freedom Fighter Ranji Mla Cricket Cup at Shalimar Junior High School playground here today.

Winning the toss, Durbar batted first and scored 160 runs for eight wickets in the stipulated 35 overs. Reaz made the highest 60.

In reply, Titus elected to bat first and scored 140 runs losing all wickets.

An apology to cricket

Sports Reporter

Come a sporting success, come the politics. The historic Paltan Maidan was oozing with a single expectation of celebrating a singular pleasure -- Bangladesh's Test status. Sadly though, once the programme yesterday got underway cricket buffs discovered themselves at a wrong place and for what seemed to be an altogether different cause, as they did in 1997 (ICC Trophy) and 1999 (World Cup) triumph over Pakistan.

The audience was understandably quite keen to hear some good words from our past and present cricket heroes and see those who worked selflessly to help Bangladesh reach the Ivy League of Test cricket get the recognition. But the whole programme eventually turned into an occasion for the ruling Awami League government to tell a tale of their success story.

There were six out of seven Bangladesh captains present at the podium. Two of them -- first Bangladesh captain Shamim Kabir and Akram Khan (sixth in the list) -- were allowed to speak for two minutes each. They were certainly not blessed with the gift of the gab. But then why deprive the other four of expressing their views, especially on an occasion when they should be the toast of the nation.

Saber Hossain Chowdhury, the president of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), did correctly say that it was not the success of a particular political party or a section of the society. But the buttoned-up BCB boss then went on to make a mockery of his earlier statement, claiming it was the success of

the present Board members. "It was a four-year strategic plan of my committee which is responsible for the success".

Saber, who is also the Deputy Minister for LGRD, even went to the extent of blasting his predecessors for their imagination, or the lack of it.

"For the last twenty years nobody applied for Test status".

It is true that Saber's dy-

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National flag waving cricket enthusiasts chanting slogans hailing Bangladesh's cricket during the celebration programme at the Paltan Maidan yesterday.

—Star photo

Tribute from neighbours

From Our Correspondent

CALCUTTA, June 28: While Bangladesh has been in a festive mood since its elevation to Test status, former cricket stars and organisers here came forward to hail the newest member of the elite club.

Three former India cricket stars -- Pankaj Roy, Arun Lal and Gopal Bose -- said that granting Test status to Bangladesh by the International Cricket Council has been the right decision. They are of the opinion that this will only help in giving the game a boost in Bangladesh. In fact all the three, who opened for India at one time or the other said, that

they felt that Bangladesh has a potential.

"Why not," asked Gopal Bose after being requested to comment on the timing of the decision. "It took New Zealand to win their first Test 26 years after they were granted official status. Sri Lanka won the World Cup 15 years after being granted Test status. So, Bangladesh will definitely achieve some distinction if you give them similar time span."

However, both Bose and Lal said that it would be wrong to expect miracles from them. "They will not be able to defeat any Test-playing country immediately now. However, at times, they can provide stiff

competition," said Lal and Bose.

Lal went on to add, "Even though I have been out of touch with Bangladeshi cricket for sometime now, I feel that there are quite a few talented cricketers in Bangladesh. Cricketers who can blossom into talented players if they have the right kind of exposure."

Pankaj Roy also said that he supported the decision by the ICC. "When cricket is being globalised, the decision is a right one," said Roy. "This will spur them onto greater heights. Unless you play against better opposition, you will never improve. The Test status will help Bangladesh to play against tougher opponents frequently

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SEMIFINAL PREVIEW

Holland v Italy: It doesn't get any bigger than this

AMSTERDAM, June 28: Two schools of thought in world soccer will collide in the Euro 2000 semi-finals here on Thursday, when Holland's goal-happy 'total football' comes up against the gritty realism of Italian defending.

The Dutch football has been influenced for decades by the attacking wizardry of Johan Cruyff and the swashbuckling style of play he later transferred at club level to Barcelona in a prestigious coaching career.

That line continued with Marco Van Basten and Ruud Gullit, who guided Holland to the European title in 1988, and the old school tie has been in evidence again at Euro 2000 on the likes of Dennis Bergkamp and Patrick Kluivert.

The demolition of Yugoslavia in the quarter-finals showed just how much damage Frank Rijkaard's side can wreak against a side who are sloppy at the back and overrun in the middle of the park.

Kluivert, ditched by AC Mi-

lan in 1998 after a miserable debut season, scored a hat-trick. Bergkamp was omnipresent in his playmaking role and Marc Overmars again used his speed and ball skills down the flank.

The Dutch may have put Yugoslavia's defence through the shredding-machine, but they will not find it so easy to do the same with the likes of Paolo

Rijkaard, who as a player won two European Cups and two Italian league titles in a five-year stint with AC Milan, has an insider's understanding of Italian football and knows the problem he has to crack.

Two of the men he will try to foil on Thursday - Maldini and Demetrio Albertini - are former team-mates.

But although he knows that Italy will be waiting for Holland to leap for the jugular - and therefore expose themselves to a potentially fatal Italian strike on the break - there is little he can do.

Holland cannot change their approach to football just for one match.

"We want to play our own offensive game, but the Italians

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Italy have an enviable generation of flair players in Francesco Totti, Alessandro Del Piero and midfielder Stefano Fiore, but solid defending and counter-attack has been the basis of Italy's success at Euro 2000.

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Timing of the 2nd

SEMIFINAL

Italy v Holland

10 pm BST (Thursday)

* Live coverage on Ekuhsy TV and DD Sports

Maldini, Alessandro Nesta and Fabio Cannavaro.

Holland may have been attacking at full tilt since the 1970s but Italian defences have been weathering storms for a lot longer than that.

And the nation who gave football the word "catenaccio", for a gridlocked defensive system, has not betrayed its ancestry at Euro 2000 - conceding just

one goal in 12 matches.

Their defensive system has been tested by the likes of Paolo

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