

Pepsi Media cricket

UNB, Dhaka
The Pepsi Media cricket, organised by Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association (BSJA), began at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman inaugurated the six-day meet.

In the opening day's four matches, Dainik Matribhumi beat Bangladesh Television (BTV) by four wickets, Ekushey Television (ETV) defeated Bhorer Kagaj by 22 runs, ATN Bangla overcame the New Nation by 100 runs and Dainik Arthaniti outplayed Dainik Janakantha by 67 runs.

Europa Cup b'ball

UNB, Dhaka
Bangladesh Rifles beat Joshefights Club by 62-58 points in the Europa Cup Independence Day basketball at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium on Wednesday.

The winners led the first half 37-18 points.

MSC muscle

FROM PAGE 13
Taposh st Nadeem b Morshed 15
Anwar not out 1
Extras: (lb-4, nb-1, w-15) 20
Total: (For 6 wickets in 45 overs) 310

Fall of wickets: 1-55, 2-237, 3-262, 4-263, 5-287, 6-307.

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Lists bowlers like Tanveer, Haque, Kamal, Nayeem, Huda, Rana, Morshed, Iftikhar, Inran.

YOUNG CRICKETERS

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Lists young players like Sumon b Taposh, Inran c Anwar b Taposh, Nayeem b Taposh, Rana b Rafique.

Extras: (lb-1, nb-1, w-5) 7
Total: (All out in 26.5 overs) 71
Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-11, 3-13, 4-13, 5-13, 6-32, 7-33, 8-39, 9-65.

Result: Mohammedan SC won by 239 runs.

It's time to experiment



AP, London

Is there a new Zinedine Zidane out there?
The World Cup is just nine weeks away and all but two of the 32 finalists are in action this week to fine-tune tactics, assess the fitness of their top stars and maybe unearth a new one.

Even with time running out, there's a chance some new names could work their way into the final rosters.

France '98 made Zidane a household name worldwide even though he was a known talent beforehand, teen-age England striker Michael Owen scored a wonder goal against Argentina, and Davor Suker scored a tournament-high six goals to help Croatia mark its debut with a third-place finish.

Because injuries have robbed coaches of some of their most talented players - notably Brazil's Rivaldo, Italy's Alessandro del Piero, Germany's Sebastian Deisler, Portugal's Luis Figo and Robert Pires of France -- Wednesday's 19 friendlies will provide a platform for some newcomers.

Watch out for 19-year-old Brazilian Kaka, who is likely to be the backup striker for Ronaldo, Rivaldo and maybe veteran Romario. Coach Luiz Felipe Scolari could give the Sao Paulo teen-ager a game against Yugoslavia at the northeastern city of Fortaleza on Wednesday.

Argentina coach Marcelo Bielsa is likely to give 20-year-old Barcelona forward Javier Saviola a start against Cameroon at Geneva, especially with Gabriel Batistuta and Hernan Crespo not in the squad.

Cameroon goes to the World Cup having already captured the Olympic and African Nations titles. In striker Patrick Mboma, midfielder Geremi Njitap and defender Rigobert Song, the 'Indomitable Lions' could have some of the most eye-catching players of the finals.

Nigerian coach Adegboye Onigbinde left several experienced players off his roster to face Paraguay in London on Tuesday to try several younger players.

The west African nation, which has reached the second round in its two appearances, has an abun-

dance of talent and just needs to harness it effectively to make a bigger impact.

Spanish coach Jose Antonio Camacho had many top names to pick from as he faces non-qualifier Netherlands, even leaving Lazio midfielder Gaizka Mendietia off the squad because he's certain to include him for the World Cup. Camacho has added two new names to the squad, Athletic de Bilbao midfielder Roberto "Tiko" Martinez and Betis midfielder Jesus "Capi" Capitan.

Ireland manager Mick McCarthy has decided to give Clinton Morrison his first start against Denmark at Lansdowne Road.

"It is time Clinton started a game," McCarthy said. "He has had a few cameo appearances. He came off the bench and he scored on his debut against Croatia, but it is time he played from the start."

South Africa's new coach, Jomo Sono, has included just 10 players from the squad that performed abysmally at the African Nations Cup yet names just one newcomer, Jimmy Muleka of Free State Stars, against Georgia in Biflisi. The team will be led by experienced goalkeeper Hans Vonk.

Russia, which goes to Estonia, has two 19-year-olds in its squad -- striker Dmitry Sychev of Spartak Moscow and midfielder Anton Bober of Soviet Wings. Bober is considered an underdog for Russia's top player, Celta Vigo midfielder Valery Karpin, who was born in Estonia but plays for Russia.

German coach Rudi Voeller is missing 14 would-be World Cup players for the game against the United States at Bochum. He had hoped to give young Borussia Dortmund defenders Sebastian Kehl and Christoph Metzelder a game, but both joined Deisler and co. on the injury list. Alexander Zickler has been ruled out of the World Cup because of a lingering calf muscle injury.

Likewise, England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson faces Italy without two of the young players he hopes will make a mark at the finals -- Liverpool's Steven Gerrard and Newcastle's Kieron Dyer. Ashley Cole, another newcomer he sees as an attacking force down the left, is a doubtful starter.

France, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium and Italy appear to be relying on tried and trusted players with Jesper Blomqvist, a 1994 World Cup veteran, even making it back onto the Swedish lineup

against Switzerland at Malmö.

The only real newcomer on the French squad is forward Steve Marlet, who plays in England for Fulham under Jean Tigana. At age 28, he has plenty of experience at club level but has struggled to get into such a talented international squad.

In the absence of Pires, who tore knee ligaments playing for Arsenal on Saturday and will likely miss the World Cup, Marlet might start against non-qualifier Scotland. The Scots are playing their first game under the guidance of former German coach Berti Vogts.

The latest news on Pires is that he stands a 10 percent chance of playing in the World Cup, assuming he doesn't have surgery on his right knee.

"Despite the tear, the knee isn't unstable," said French team doctor, Jean-Marcel Ferret. "But that will still mean six weeks off the field."

He said there was a 10 percent chance of recovery without surgery, and that Pires would be re-examined in three weeks to determine whether an operation was necessary.

Several more of the World Cup finalists face each other on Wednesday -- Poland hosting Japan, Croatia welcoming Slovenia, Denmark going to Ireland and Uruguay traveling to Saudi Arabia.

Pires' dream as good as over



AP, Clairefontaine

The France team doctor said on Tuesday that there was a 10 percent chance Robert Pires will recover from a knee injury in time to play at the World Cup.

The Arsenal midfielder was ligamented Monday with a torn knee during a challenge from a Newcastle player in a weekend match and was told he would need surgery -- putting him on the sidelines for six months. The World Cup starts May 31.

But the French team doctor, Jean-Marcel Ferret, told The Associated Press there was hope Pires could recover without surgery, meaning he would be fit after six weeks.

Record breaking Pele's shirt

AP, London

The shirt worn by Pele in the 1970 World Cup final was sold at auction Wednesday for a record 157,750 pounds (US dollars 220,850) -- more than three times the expected price.

Pele's Brazil No. 10 shirt was bought by an anonymous bidder over the telephone in the sale at Christie's in London.

It had been expected to go for between 30,000 pounds and 50,000 pounds (US dollars 42,000 and US\$70,000).

The previous record for a soccer jersey was 91,750 pounds (US dollars 128,450) for the shirt worn by England's Geoff Hurst's at the 1966 World Cup final. His shirt was sold by Christie's in September 2000.

Pele's shirt was put up for sale by Italian international Roberto Rosato, who swapped jerseys with the Brazilian great after the final whistle of Brazil's 4-1 victory in Mexico City. Pele scored Brazil's first goal in the game.

Former Brazil national coach Mario Zagallo recently cast doubt on the authenticity of the jersey. He told the O Globo newspaper that he had the jersey that Pele wore during the first half of the final. Zagallo said team fitness trainer Admilo Chiról had the shirt worn by Pele during the second half.

Christie's said it was aware of the Brazilian report but was satisfied with the authenticity of the shirt.

All eyes on Ronaldo



AP, Rio de Janeiro

Ronaldo is back. Brazilians hope their team is, too.

After a two-year absence, the "phenomenon" is scheduled to return to Brazil's lineup on Wednesday for a friendly against Yugoslavia in the northeastern city of Fortaleza. How Ronaldo and his rebuilt knee perform could offer a clue to Brazil's chances to win its fifth World Cup title this year.

With the World Cup finals barely two months away, Brazil is struggling to get ready. A disastrous qualifying campaign rattled the team's confidence, and repeated changes in the roster and coaching staff has left it without style or personality.

"Samba soccer" has given way to a tentative two-step.

But that's about to change, says coach Luiz Felipe Scolari. With Brazil at last near full strength, Scolari will have a chance to eliminate his lingering doubts about the

team, which he says is 90 percent defined for the World Cup.

The two-time FIFA Player of the Year hasn't played for Brazil since 1999, when he stopped for surgery on his right knee. A series of muscle problems postponed his return, and Internazionale coach Hector Cuper left him off the team in last Sunday's Serie A game with AS Roma.

Although he's expected to play only one period, Ronaldo is under pressure to show he deserves the No. 9 jersey -- or at least give Scolari good reason to hold the slot open.

"We need an idea, almost definitive, whether he can participate in the Cup with us or not," the coach said.

The 25-year-old striker admitted he was nervous about his return.

"That's normal for someone who hasn't played for two years," he said in an interview with Pele's Web site, www.pele.net. "All I can say is that I'm recovered."

If Brazilians had their way, Ronaldo's linemate would be veteran Romario, the league's top scorer last season. But Scolari has ignored a national campaign to bring back the 36-year-old striker for

a final World Cup, and the No. 2 spot is up for grabs among Luizao, Edilson and Ronaldinho.

A key absence will be Rivaldo. The Barcelona star was cut from the squad because of an ankle injury, although he is assured of a spot at the World Cup if he's healthy. The vacancy offers a new chance for Deportivo de La Coruna's Djairzinho and Sao Paulo's 19-year-old sensation Kaka, both fighting for the backup spot.

The new three-defender system Scolari has tried to implant also has been less than convincing. Flanked by World Cup veterans Cafu and Roberto Carlos on the wings, the heart of the defense has looked shaky in recent friendlies against modest adversaries like Bolivia, Saudi Arabia and Iceland.

Against Yugoslavia, Brazil will have to do better.

Coach Dejan Savicevic has drawn heavily on seasoned veterans from European clubs, including Lazio defender Sinisa Mihajlovic and Chelsea midfielder Slavisa Jokanovic. Leading the trio of attackers is 20-year-old revelation Predrag Mijatovic, currently a reserve on Fiorentina.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Remark re Yorick 5 Jessica of "7th Heaven" 9 Curse neighbor 12 Wash. E.'s supplier 14 Resistant unit 15 Its symbol is K 17 Dead heat 18 Cook's needs 19 Burger extra 21 Chess pc. 22 Centerfold, maybe 24 Fruit seeds 27 Heir, often 28 Other people 31 Berlin's "What'll --?" 32 List-end-ing abbr. 33 Stone or Space 34 Dines 36 Biblical verb suffix 37 Piccadilly street

Cryptogram grid with numbers 1-30 and letters B, R, D, X, T, H, Q, D, O, O, V, I, T, D, A, D, X, T, I, D, F, O, S, B, E, O, H, A, R, Q, B, A, T, S, Q, E, D, I, T, D, M, J, Q, V, M, K, U, T, D, A, M, V, U, O, D, F, K, J, B, A, R.

CRYPTOQUIP
B R D X T H Q D O O V I T D
A D X T I D F O S B E O H A R Q B A T
S Q E D I T D M J Q V M K U T
D A M V U O D F K J B A R

Yesterday's Cryptogram: IF AN UPTIGHT FILM DIRECTOR YELLS "CUT!", DO YOU THINK HE'LL STOP MAKING A SCENE?
Today's Cryptogram Clue: O equals S

The Cryptogram is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

TV GUIDE

Table with columns: Channel, Time, Program Name. Lists programs on BTV, CHANNEL 1, HBO, STAR GOLD, ATN, STAR PLUS, STAR WORLD.

Table with columns: Channel, Time, Program Name. Lists programs on ATN, HBO, STAR GOLD, ATN, STAR PLUS, STAR WORLD.

Table with columns: Channel, Time, Program Name. Lists programs on TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS, PICK OF THE DAY, STAR GOLD, STAR PLUS, STAR WORLD.

Table with columns: Channel, Time, Program Name. Lists programs on STAR GOLD, STAR PLUS, STAR WORLD, STAR VIJAY, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC.

Table with columns: Channel, Time, Program Name. Lists programs on ANIMAL PLANET, STAR MOVIES, AXN, DISCOVERY, ALPHA TV, BANGLA.

Table with columns: Channel, Time, Program Name. Lists programs on Chatujera, Planet, Discovery, Alpha TV, Bangla.