

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP KOREA JAPAN

37

days to go

Did U Know?

Rarely has the run-up to a FIFA World Cup been so filled with controversy as 1978 tournament, held in Argentina. Football, in fact, took a back seat as the powers that be debated whether or not to boycott the tournament in protest against General Videla's totalitarian regime and its violation of human rights. Finally, however, despite a widespread call to stay away, the world's footballing nations all made the trip to Argentina. "Minor" footballing nations such as Iran and Tunisia had their first outings and France was back in the world's top football competition after twelve years in the wilderness.

What to WATCH

ESPN

English Premier Football League
Arsenal vs Ipswich Town
Repeat at 9:00 am
Serie A
Highlights
Repeat at 11:00 am
Football Focus
Repeat at 12:00 pm
Pakistan vs New Zealand
Second ODI
Live at 2:25 pm

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TALK TURKEY

Ronaldinho
(PSG's Brazilian int'l striker)
"I notice that in Europe, in France in particular we are respected again."
On Brazil's improved form since the World Cup qualifiers.

Victoria finished ahead

SPORTS REPORTER



In a refreshing twist to the tradition Victoria Sporting Club yesterday finished ahead in the first round of the Grameen-Phone Premier League, leaving the two popular outfits Mohammedan Sporting Club and Abahani Krira Chakra battle for the third place.

The 'centenary team' of Victoria did half the job done in their pursuit for the coveted League title when they thumped down a nine-wicket defeat on Surjo Tarun Club to end the first phase with ten wins against a defeat at the hands of Bangladesh Biman.

Bangladesh Biman also recorded a comprehensive 45-run victory over Uttara Sporting Club at the BKSP ground in Savar to finish second in the 12-team first round.

While Victoria and Biman stamped their supremacy ahead of the final round, Young Pegasus surprised all by surging into the Super Six. The promotees defeated a big-spending City Club by 31 runs at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium to make a dream passage into the final phase as the last team by virtue of having better run-rate. They finished on equal points with traditional giants Brother Union.

The topsy-turvy League is also destined to write off the title chase for either of Mohammedan and Abahani even before appearing in the first Super League match.

Trailing Victoria by six points, both defending champions Mohammedan and their arch-rivals Abahani need a win at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today to keep their title hopes alive.

However, Victoria produced yet another professional show to roll up a youthful Surjo Tarun Club Tuesday.

Opting to bat first, Surjo Tarun could only manage 171 for nine in the stipulated 50 overs.

Victoria's little known Pakistani recruit Gauhar Ali rocked the Tarun top-order with three quick wickets including the prize scalps of in-form Hannan Sarker and Mazharul Huq to effectively dash the hopes of a big score. Only experienced right-hander Selim Shahed scored a gritty 52 off 107 balls.

Victoria toppled the modest total in only 32.4 overs with opener Parvez hammering an unbeaten 78 off 101 balls that included a dozen fours.

Parvez shared 117 runs for the first wicket with his more illustrious partner Al-Shahriar. The national opener scored a cracking 68 off 67 balls. Al-Shahriar clubbed nine boundaries and a six in his polished knock.

Jahangir Alam with an unbeaten 27 made sure Victoria win the match without further damage.

MAHMUD PILOT OF BIMAN

Experienced national all-rounder Khaled Mahmud kept up his rich

vein of form as Bangladesh Biman celebrated their ninth win at the expense of a lowly Uttara Sporting Club.

Mahmud scored a blazing unbeaten 69 off 47 balls to guide the national airline outfit to a fighting 255 for seven in 50 overs.

The gutsy right-hander set the field afire after Aminul Islam and Hasanuzzaman laid the foundation putting on 105 runs for the fourth wicket. Aminul scored a disciplined 50 off 75 balls and Hasanuzzaman top-scored with 73 off 94 balls.

They led the recovery operation after Biman were reduced to 38 for three in 10.5 overs.

Mahmud struck three boundaries and four massive sixes in his crack-ing knock.

The pocket dynamo then captured three wickets for 33 runs with his military medium pace to dismiss Uttara for 210 in 46.4 overs.

Uttara threw caution to the wind when opener Mahfuz and Dickens took the score to 141 in 29 overs. But once Mahfuz departed for 70 off 101 balls Uttara lost the way completely.

Dickens fought a lost battle with 58 off 76 balls.

PEGASUS VS CITY CLUB

At the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Young Pegasus rode on a brilliant unbeaten half-century from Rozel to record their sixth win.

Rozel scored a captain's knock of 75 as Pegasus, sent into bat, made 240 for five in 50 overs. It was Rozel's third fifty. He struck three boundaries and two sixes in his match-winning knock.

He also featured in a vital 44-run from the last five overs in company of Uzzal, who scored a 51-ball 34.

City Club, in their chase, were all out for 209 in 47.3 overs despite a superb 66 from Tushar Imran.

SCOREBOARDS

Scoreboards of the three GrameenPhone Premier Division Cricket League matches at different venues yesterday:

Surjo Tarun v Victoria SC

Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium.

SURJO TARUN

S Shahed lbw b Kapali	52
Salauddin c Jahangir b Gauhar	26
Hannan lbw b Gauhar	4
Mazharul c Enamul b Gauhar	1
Ashraf c Masud b Kapali	10
Iqbal st K Mashud b Masud	31
Sohel b Masud	14
Elahi c Monjurul b Masud	12
Ahmed c Jahangir b Enamul	2
Saikat not out	3
Shafiq not out	4
Extras: (lb-2, nb-1, w-9)	12
Total: (For 9 wickets in 50 overs)	171
Fall of wickets: 1-50, 2-54, 3-60, 4-85, 5-131, 6-136, 7-160, 8-162, 9-166.	

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PHOTO: STAR

Victoria's Parvez pulls during the GrameenPhone Premier League cricket fixture against Surjo Tarun at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Calypso looking to Lara



AFP, Port-of-Spain

Brian Lara sustained the West Indies' hopes of successfully chasing a stiff 313-run target with an unbeaten 40 in the second Test against India here on Monday.

The prolific left-hander batted comfortably against the Indian pace-spin combination to help his team reach 131-2 at stumps on a fourth day of fluctuating fortunes at the Queen's Park Oval.

Skipper Carl Hooper was the other not-out batsman on one when bad light stopped play 19 overs before stumps.

The hosts now require 182 more runs with eight wickets in hand to win as the match heads for an exciting finish on a slow pitch of variable bounce.

The West Indies were indebted to pacemen Mervyn Dillon (4-42) and Cameron Cuffy (3-53) for bouncing back into the game after conceding a 94-run lead.

Dillon and Cuffy shared five wickets to trigger a sensational Indian collapse that saw the tourists lose their last six batsmen for just 13 in 10 overs.

India were all out for 218 in their second innings after being strongly placed at 205-4, with skipper Sourav Ganguly top-scoring with an impressive 75 not out.

The West Indies initially faltered against pace, losing opener Stuart Williams (13) before being steadied by Lara, Ramnaresh Sarwan (41) and Chris Gayle.

Veteran fast bowler Javagal Srinath provided the breakthrough when he had Williams caught by Rahul Dravid at first slip.

India then had to wait for more than three hours for the next wicket

as Sarwan batted confidently with Gayle and then Lara.

The left-handed Gayle (21) retired hurt due to cramps in his left hand, but there was no respite for India as Lara and Sarwan looked in good form.

Sarwan was well-set when he threw away his wicket, edging off-spinner Harbhajan Singh to lone-slip David while attempting to steer. He struck five attractive fours in his 109-ball knock.

Lara played a solid rather than spectacular innings, patiently waiting for the loose deliveries to punish.

The West Indies looked to Lara to drive home the advantage given by Dillon and Cuffy early in the day.

Dillon took three wickets in his six overs and Cuffy two off successive deliveries during their incisive spells with the second new ball after

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BLAST FROM THE PAST



PHOTO: STAR FILE

Argentina captain Daniel Passarella (C) with the 1978 FIFA World Cup trophy. One of the many security guards (L) also samples the delights. Security measures at the 1978 World Cup in Argentina were stringent, in and around the stadia.

LATEST

Windies need 113 runs, India six wickets

INTERNET, Port of Spain, Trinidad

The tone of the day was set when West Indies superstar Brian Lara gestured over to the Trini Posse Stand to turn off the music as he needed to concentrate on the cricket. He did, with 182 needed for victory on the final day of the second Test at the Queens Park Oval.

He couldn't however, perishing for 47. Hooper followed Lara back into the dressing room less than two overs later. Thanks to Shivnarine Chanderpaul (26 batting) and Chris Gayle (40 batting), West Indies were just about in the hunt at 210/4 at lunch on the final day.

Girls School b'ball BTS lift title

SPORTS REPORTER

Basketball Training School (BTS) emerged champions in the inaugural Girls School Basketball tournament with a 30-11 win over Scholastica in the final at the Dhanmondi basketball gymnasium yesterday.

The winners leg the first half 10-4.

Reefat caged in highest 18 points for BTS while Faria Ali scored five points for the losers.

Wasim Parveen, the Principal of Scholastica, witnessed the final as chief guest and distributed prizes.

Nazia Nazmul of Mapel Leaf was named as the best player of the tournament.



GrameenPhone Premier Cricket League

Abahani KC v Mohammedan SC
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

Nitol-Tata National Football League

Chaturanga Sangha v Khulna Abahani (4 pm)

Venue: Sylhet Stadium.



PHOTO: STAR

(L) Abahani coach Sarwar Imran giving some finer points on bowling to his charges while (R) Mohammedan captain Minhazul Abedin (C) chats with his teammates during the practice session yesterday.

Arch foes clash today to stay in contention

SPORTS REPORTER

Holders Mohammedan Sporting Club meet arch-rivals Abahani Krira Chakra in a GrameenPhone Premier Division Cricket League match of extreme importance at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

The match is scheduled for a 9 am start.

It will be a do or die outing for the traditional giants of local cricket as they battle to stay in the title race. Both Mohammedan and Abahani are now jointly sharing the third spot with 14 points from 10 matches.

The two popular outfits have found themselves in this tricky situation with Victoria Sporting Club's emergence as the pace-setters this season. Victoria have already finished the first round with highest 20 points followed by Biman with 18 points.

While Mohammedan will field a full strength side with their star Kenyan batsman Steve Tikolo back in the fold after missing five games due to national commitments, Abahani have to bank on their local players after dependable Pakistani all-rounder Mohammad Hossain left last week to play in the English Minor County cricket.

Ispahani Cricket Mr Sundries' day in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Elite Paint Recreation Club and Ochi Club won their respective matches of the CJKS Ispahani Cricket League yesterday.

At the MA Aziz Stadium, Elite Paint beat Star club by 2 wickets in a close battle at the stadium venue, thank to the generosity of opponent bowlers, who conceded 34 extras, ironically the highest contributor of the match.

Batting first, Star scored 119 runs in 32 overs with opener Dalim retiring hurt. He was taken off the field after getting injured in the very first delivery he faced. His opening partner Russel topscored with 38 off 78 balls.

Chasing the paltry total, Elite Paint were lucky enough to survive the loss of five wickets early in their innings. Apart from extras, opener Masud (27), Prince (21 no) and Sharif (16 no) were other notable scorers. Elite reached their target losing 8 wickets in 34.4 overs.

In the day's other match at the Medical ground, Ochie Club handed a 5-wicket defeat to Custom Sports club, with bowler Jahir (3/15) and Seejan (3/24) evenly sharing six wickets.

Custom club were bowled out 101 in 26.2 overs. Raju (30 off 47 balls) and Faruque (17 off 25 balls) were their leading scorers. Ochi club scored 102 for 5 wickets in only 20.1 overs. Incidentally, highest contribution also came from extras in this match also. Only Morshed with 24 no off 42 balls showed some batting talent.

Italy unite for Baggio



REUTERS, Milan

Roberto Baggio's two-goal return from injury has prompted a huge wave of support across Italy for the idea of the 35-year-old being handed a place in Giovanni Trapattoni's World Cup squad.

Baggio has not played for Italy for three years and his 20 minute substitute appearance for Brescia on Sunday was his first game back after a three month lay-off from a knee injury - but few in Italy appear to care for such details.

"Baggiomania" is gripping the country with everyone from politicians and celebrities to current and former players and coaches expounding their views on whether the 'Divine Ponytail' should be given a chance to play in his fourth successive World Cup finals.

In the 48 hours since his stunning return to action, Baggio's popularity has been compared to Nelson Mandela and words such as "miracle", "resurrection" and "messiah" have been used to describe his rapid and successful recovery from a cruciate knee ligament injury.

The weekly magazine Guerin Sportivo featured a front cover on Tuesday with Baggio pictured in the shirts of the other 31 nations who will compete at the World Cup finals in South Korea and Japan.

"Trap, are we really sure that Italy

still doesn't need him?" read the cover headline.

A group of conservative parliamentarians have asked Italy's minister of sport to put pressure on Trapattoni to take Baggio to the World Cup which starts on May 31.

Baggio, a practising Buddhist, scored within four minutes of entering play in the 70th minute of Sunday's Serie A game against his old club Fiorentina and then sealed Brescia's 3-0 victory with a second goal three minutes from the end.

"He did something supernatural," said Perugia coach Serse



ROBERTO BAGGIO

Cosmi. "It's impossible not to pay attention to someone who can achieve such things. I would think very hard before leaving him out."

Fiorentina coach Luciano Chiarugi said he was stunned by what he had witnessed at Brescia.

"Someone who returns to action

with such incredible speed and then straight away scores two goals leaves you with an open mouth," said Chiarugi.

Trapattoni appeared to rule out a Baggio call-up last week when he said he couldn't rely on a player who had been out so long with injury.

After the two-goal return Trapattoni dodged questions about a call-up merely saying he was delighted to see Baggio back in action.

But former Italy coach Arrigo Sacchi said it was unfair for pressure to be put on Trapattoni.

"When I was coach of Italy it really annoyed me to read the comment's of other coaches suggesting this player or that. I have always thought that is out of order and shows a lack of respect," said Sacchi, who was coach of Italy when Baggio missed a decisive penalty in the 1994 World Cup final against Brazil.

Baggio himself has clearly not given up hope of making the World Cup squad.

"The road that leads towards my being able to demonstrate I deserve a call-up is still long," said Baggio, who admitted he will again be limited to a second half appearance against his former club Juventus on Sunday.

But for Giancarlo Antognoni, an Italian World Cup winner in 1982, even such a limited role would merit a place in the squad.

"Baggio can change a match in any moment and I would take him as the 23rd man," said the former Fiorentina midfielder.