

Azad return top flight hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Azad Sporting Club confirmed their promotion to the Premier Division in style with an emphatic 5-0 victory over Shishu Kishore Sangha in a Green Delta First Division Hockey Super League match at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

Nannu Miah fashioned the easy win blasting four goals, twice in each half. Iqbal Nadir scored the other for the winners.

They led 3-0 at the breather.

It was Azad's ninth straight win that raised their tally 27 points. They will take on their nearest rival Wanderers in their last Super League match on July 31.

TODAY'S MATCHES

Dhaka Wanderers vs Victoria SC (2:15pm) Bangladesh SC vs Sonali Bank (4:15pm)

School football

SPORTS REPORTER

Khilgaon High School blanked Rahmatullah Model High School 2-0 in a final round match of the Dhaka Metropolitan inter-school football competition at the Dhaka University ground yesterday.

The match was postponed on Friday due to heavy rain.

Sharif and Roman scored for Khilgaon High School.

In the day's other matches, Kamarpara High School earned a solitary goal victory over Nabakumar Institute and Matuail Bahumukhi High School also registered 1-0 win against Dolaipar High School at the Outer Stadium.

Sohel netted for Kamarpara School and Rajib Khan struck the all-important goal for Matuail School.

Bandarban unsure

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

The participation of last year zonal champions Bandarban in the Pepsi Cup 16th national men's handball competition seems uncertain due to the non-cooperation of the local sports authority.

Team manager Ching Sa Pru Kesi blamed district sports association (DSA) for the situation while talking to The Daily Star yesterday.

The DSA didn't take any initiative about the Bandarban's participation although they requested both the team manager and coach last month to prepare for the 28-30 July tournament.

Nine teams have qualified to play in the meet.

Ali doing fine

SPORTS REPORTER

National junior champion Mohammad Ali earned six points after the tenth round games and was sharing the 7th position along with six others in the 26th Asian Junior (Under-20) Chess Championship in Colombo on Friday.

He won his 10th round game against Dehigana Chan Tez Wei of Malaysia after winning against Sunther Kumar in the round before on Thursday.

Mariner misery

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winner when Rajib Ahmed had only to beat a helpless Mariner custodian Ashiqul Haq Rinku. But his powerful hit slightly missed the target.

The draw enabled both Mariner and Ajax to collect their first point after two games. Ajax suffered a 0-2 loss to Usha KC in their first match.



PHOTO: STAR

BIG TIME SOCCER RETURNS TO BARISAL: Jhenidha Mohammedan players practise at the Barisal Stadium yesterday.

Smith humbles

FROM PAGE 13

Table with 4 columns: Player, Runs, Wickets, Overs. Includes names like Rudolph, Gough, Flintoff, Harmison, Giles, Butcher, Vaughan.

Did not bat: Peterson, Pretorius, Ntini, Willoughby

Table with 4 columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Includes names like Anderson, Gough, Flintoff, Harmison, Giles, Butcher, Vaughan.

ENGLAND: Marcus Trescothick, Michael Vaughan, Mark Butcher, Nasser Hussain, Anthony McGrath, Alec Stewart, Andrew Flintoff, Ashley Giles, Stephen Harmison, Darren Gough, James Anderson

SMITHBOX

Factbox on Graeme Smith, who scored a South Africa record 277 in the first Test against England at Edgbaston on Saturday.

Born: February 1, 1981, Johannesburg. Left-hand opening batsman and South Africa's youngest-ever captain.

Test debut v Australia, Cape Town, March 2002. 11 matches, 914 runs, av 65.28, two double centuries and one century, two 50s. ODI debut v Australia, Bloemfontein, March 2002. 34 matches, 1,202 runs, av 37.56.

Tall and powerfully built. Can also bowl off-spin. Love watching films has seen Rocky more than 20 times. Single, regarded as South Africa's most eligible bachelor.

Replaced Shaun Pollock as captain, aged 22, after hosts South Africa were knocked out of the 2003 World Cup at the first hurdle.

Scored half-century v Australia in his first Test and gave as good as he got after being constantly sledged. Oct 2002, made 200 in his third Test against Bangladesh in East London.

Jan 2003, made 151 v Pakistan in Cape Town in eighth Test, sharing 368 opening stand with Herschelle Gibbs, a South Africa record and fourth biggest of all time.

Shock omission from World Cup but was called up during the tournament after Jonny Rhodes was injured. July 2003, put on 338 with Gibbs, the

highest opening stand against England and the sixth highest of all time. It was the pair's 10 innings opening together. His 277, beating the 275 scored by Darryl Cullinan and Gary Kirsten, spanned nine hours, 373 balls and contained 35 fours.

Brazil meet

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five-time world champions meet Mexico today.

Even without the likes of superstars Ronaldo and Roberto Carlos, the young Brazilians eliminated holders the United States 2-1 in a tense semifinal that required a dramatic golden goal by Diego on Wednesday.

The impressive Mexicans joined Brazil after beating Costa Rica 2-0 on Saturday. The Central Americans have yet to concede a goal in their four matches.

BCB to interview

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"We will receive the names of two or three persons very soon then we call them to appear for interviews next month," he said.

The Sports Employment Australia (SEA) for the past two months has been trying to produce candidates for the Board to choose from and also try and provide a qualified Under-19 team coach.

Indo-Pak cricket

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of Bangladesh.

That will be followed by a four-nation Under-19 tournament in Pakistan from November 1-9 and then a tri-nation event for "A" teams in India in December this year.

"Through these tournaments the ACC wants to prove to both the governments that atmosphere is congenial for the revival of cricket between Pakistan and India," said Huq, who is also a former secretary of Bangladesh Cricket Board.

"Since both the boards of Pakistan and India are keen and sincere in reviving the ties I foresee cricket happening between Pakistan and India on regular basis."

Raul rejects move to Chelsea

AFP, London

A Chelsea bid to sign the darling of Real Madrid Raul has come to nothing after his agent said the player did not want to join the English Premiership club.

The Spanish striker was asked whether he would consider a transfer to the Stamford Bridge club, who inherited instant wealth when Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich bought up Ken Bates' majority shareholding recently.

But Raul turned Chelsea down flat, insisting he would never leave the Primera Liga champions to join the Blues.

Raul's agent, Gines Carvajal, said: "FIFA agent Marc Roger, on behalf of Chelsea, asked me if Raul would be interested in entering negotiations for a transfer to Chelsea."

"I spoke to Raul, my client, and he said 'no'. He's not interested in leaving Real Madrid. Raul's buy-out clause is 180 million euros (207 million dollars)."



Raul, whose current contract expires in June 2005, is currently on tour with Madrid in the Far East.

US refuses Kluivert entry

REUTERS, Madrid

Barcelona's Dutch forward Patrick Kluivert was denied entry to the United States on the club's pre-



season tour and forced to fly straight back to Spain because of a visa problem.

According to reports by journalists travelling with the team, Kluivert was turned away at Boston's Logan airport as he was not in possession of a special visa required because of a prior conviction.

In 1996, Kluivert was found guilty by a Dutch court of causing death by dangerous driving, ordered to perform 240 hours of community service and given a three-month jail sentence, suspended for two years.

Barcelona are playing three matches on their tour of the United States, starting with a game against Juventus in Foxboro on Sunday and continuing against AC Milan in Washington on July 30 and against Manchester United in Philadelphia on August 3.

Kluivert will definitely miss the first of those but could play in the remaining two games if he acquires the visa and returns to the United States.

Gunners plug keeper gap

REUTERS, London

Arsenal have completed the signing of German goalkeeper Jens Lehmann from Borussia Dortmund to fill the breach left by David Seaman.

The 33-year-old German international passed a medical in London on Friday to complete his move, an Arsenal spokeswoman said.

The club did not disclose any contract or transfer fee details. Lehmann had one year remaining on his Dortmund contract.

His signing ends Arsenal's search for a replacement for long-serving goalkeeper Seaman, who joined Manchester City in June.

"I am delighted to be joining Arsenal," Lehmann said in a statement issued on Arsenal's official website.

"They are one of Europe's great clubs and they have many fantastic players. Hopefully I will impress the club and its supporters and I'm also very much looking forward to playing in the English Premier League."

Real disappointment

Football

AFP, Kunming

Real Madrid and their newest star signing David Beckham disappointed hundreds of expectant fans when the Spanish league champions failed to show for their first official practice session here Saturday morning.

The club, due to start their first full day of training during their week-long stay in the southwestern city of Kunming, waited until an afternoon press conference to explain the no-show.

"It was a communication problem or misunderstanding from the local organization or whoever, but from the Real Madrid side it was never in our plans to hold a training session this morning," Real's newly appointed head coach Carlos Queiroz told reporters.

Chinese organisers said the side was recuperating from jet-lag but would gather for practice beginning at 5:00 pm (1000 GMT).

"They're tired and recovering from jet-lag," said government official Duan Lian.

Real, which also includes Brazilian star Ronaldo, Portugal's Luis Figo and France's Zinedine Zidane, kicked off their Asian tour Friday at the Hongta Sports Centre, the Chinese national team's winter training grounds in Yunnan province.

Saturday's no-show upset hundreds of Chinese fans, who came from far-flung Chinese provinces to watch the side strut their stuff before it heads to Beijing to face a Chinese all-star side on August 2.

"I'm kind of disappointed," said 17-year-old student Li Bingjie, clad in a T-shirt imprinted with the British flag.

Li and two friends had travelled more than 24 hours by bus from the southern province of Guangxi to see their favourite footballer Beckham, paying a 350-yuan (42-dollar) entrance fee, equivalent to half a month's salary in this part of

China. Another disappointed young student donned full Real Madrid regalia, including a bandana and pictures of Beckham pinned to his shirt.

"I'm kind of angry. Why didn't they tell us? They should have told us," said the 13-year-old from the southeastern city of Xiamen.

A group of eager fans braved heavy rain to stand outside the team's gated villa complex in

new signing Beckham, as part of a major push to boost its brand and increase revenues in Asia through the sales of replica shirts and other commercial rights.

With the English captain now lacing up for Madrid, the club hopes to unseat merchandising king Manchester United, Beckham's former team.

Real is also slated to earn millions from upcoming friendlies in

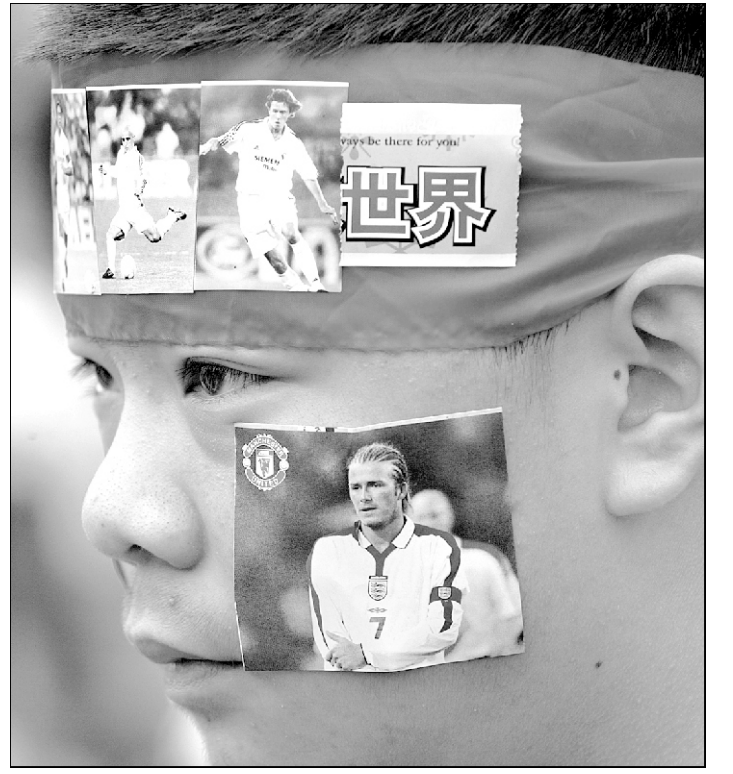


PHOTO: AFP

A young man, with a photo of David Beckham on his face, waits for Real Madrid to arrive for training at the Hongta Sports Centre in the southwestern city of Kunming yesterday.

hopes of catching a glimpse of their favourite footballer, many of them chanting Beckham or Figo.

Real Madrid is eager to showcase its prolific talent, especially

Tokyo, Hong Kong and Bangkok. While in Kunming the squad is scheduled to practice twice daily until July 31.

No Becks, Figo rivalry

Football

REUTERS, Kunming

Real Madrid's new coach Carlos Queiroz, trying to fit right-sided midfielders David Beckham and Luis Figo into the same team, says he hopes the team's current tour of Asia will help solve the puzzle.

Queiroz, who spent a year with Beckham as assistant coach at Manchester United before following him to Real, sought to defuse media speculation that a battle for the position could evolve between the two midfielders.

"They belong to the midfielder area, but now the most important (is) they belong to the same team," Queiroz told reporters on Saturday in the southwestern China outpost of Kunming.

"We hope after four games during this tour we'll find the right solution to make both players play at the same time."

The addition of Beckham to a star-studded squad has spawned speculation about how Real's

dream cast will work and live together. And the Figo-Beckham relationship is one of its most curious sub-plots.

On the field, they have similar qualities. Off it, they share a common language to build on. Figo is one of the few Real players who speaks solid English, while Beckham's Spanish is currently limited to a few phrases.

One of China's leading sport tabloids, Titan Sports, explored the subject on Saturday in a cover story entitled, "Friends and Rivals."

It featured two sharply contrasting photos from Friday: one of the two gazing seriously at each other during their first practice session together, and another of them laughing while strolling side by side out of a dining hall, Figo's arm wrapped around Beckham's shoulder.

"Whatever role they (are) playing, what is important to understand (is) they'll be there to serve Real Madrid and not to serve themselves," added Queiroz.

One answer to the line-up conflict would be to switch Figo to the left flank, the position he

played when Queiroz coached the Portuguese youth side and Sporting Lisbon.

The Portuguese international frequently switches wings for Real and is considered much more versatile than Beckham.

As director of one of the most impressive collections of individual talent ever assembled, Queiroz faces intense pressure to get results. His predecessor Vicente del Bosque was dismissed despite leading Real to their 29th Spanish league title last season.

The eloquent English speaker was in characteristically philosophical form when asked about his mission.

"Our responsibility is all about inspiration, excitement," said Queiroz. "It's all about imagination and trying to find, with work, the right solution."

He declined to comment on del Bosque's departure. "But, what I know in life is you're born and you die. And it is not because when you're born you know you're gonna die that you stop living."



PHOTO: STAR

Action on yesterday's Green Delta Premier Division Hockey League encounter between Mariner Young's Club and Ajax Sporting Club at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 39 'Monopoly' corner 1 Chats 5 Cuzco 9 denizen 9 Suitable 12 Actor LaSalle 13 Tidy 14 Miss Piggy's word 15 Choice list 16 Show chutzpah 17 Wrestling venue 18 Long story 19 One of the Gershwins 20 Peeved 21 Scott Joplin's style 23 Online abbr. 25 Texas city 28 Projects 32 Texas landmark 33 Jenna and Barbara's mom 34 Whodunit author Dorothy 35 Type of scent 37 Picnic invader 38 Exploit



CRYPTOQUIP

W G A U V A H J Y J R G I V D A C U F A N G I P V T H P V D D A V W J R T A D T U E U O J E U E

A H O W Y Y J A W E W N Yesterday's Cryptoquip: JEWELRY ITEMS WHICH ARE ALWAYS WORN IN SENATE MEETINGS ARE CONGRESSIONAL EARRINGS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: A equals T

The Cryptoquip 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.

Darren delighted

FROM PAGE 13

We haven't discussed it as yet.

"(Bangladesh) have shown signs of playing good competitive cricket. We've had to work hard to get our runs and work hard to get our wickets which makes for a good Test match."

Birmingham

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Christophe Dugarry from the Blues' line-up.

John made up for his horrendous missed shot at an open goal in the dying stages of Birmingham's 2-1 loss to Newcastle United on Thursday when he opened his team's account in the eighth minute with a powerful right-foot strike from outside the penalty box.