

Pioneer football

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka Junior SC registered a massive 4-0 victory over Nazirabazar SC in an East Zone match of the Shinepukur Ceramics Metropolis Pioneer Football League at the Dhupkhola ground yesterday.

In the day's another match, Nasrin Sporting Club earned a solitary goal victory over Avijatric at the same venue.

At the Bashabo Tarun Sangha ground, Painadi Agragoti Jubo Sangsad defeated Shaheed Noor Hossain KC 3-2 in a Central Zone match.

RND recorded a 2-0 victory over Lalbagh Tarun Sangha in a West Zone match at the Dhammondi Club ground and other match between Golam Mostafa Lane KS and Dhaka Mohanagari ended in a 1-1 draw.

At Kamalapur, Tejgaon Nabataranga got walkover against Maghbazar Kishore Sangha while Gazipur Ekadosh also got walkover against Chaitali Club.

'ODIs will decide it'

CricInfo, undated

Sourav Ganguly has sought to end the debate about India's opening position by saying that performances in the forthcoming one-dayers would settle the issue.

While Yuvraj Singh is the most likely candidate for the slot -- he enjoys the confidence of the captain -- Virender Sehwag, the other opener, said that he would prefer a more defensive partner.

Ganguly told Press Trust of India news agency that there was plenty of time before the Tests against Australia and South Africa, and that personal opinions would not interfere with team decisions.

"There are still five-six months to go for the team to play a Test match," Ganguly said.

"Presently the team will play in the one-dayers. After seeing the form of the players in the one-dayers, we will decide on the second opener's slot. Whatever is best for the team, would be done."

Lara leads from front

AFP, Beckenham

West Indies captain Brian Lara made 68 as his side continued their preparations for the triangular one-day series against England and New Zealand starting later this week with a 91-run win over Kent.

West Indies overcame the frustration of seeing a 10-mile trip from their London hotel to the south-east ground take two-and-a-half hours because of traffic congestion to post 274 for eight.

Lara's fellow top-order batsman Ramnareish Sarwan (79) and Shivnarine Chanderpaul (60) were the other major contributors on a good pitch with Kent's England medium-pacer Martin Saggars taking five for 51.

In reply Kent could only manage 183, England batsman Ed Smith making 54 while paceman Jermaine Lawson led the West Indies attack with four for 59.

Left-hander Lara put on 100 for the fourth wicket with Sarwan, his 53 ball innings featuring one six and seven fours ending when he was caught at long-on off spinner James Tredwell.

West Indies' traffic problems meant the start was delayed and the tourists then lost two early wickets, Saggars bowling Chris Gayle with his second ball of the day before Sarwan and Chanderpaul righted the innings.

Kent, without four of their regular top six, never looked like chasing down the West Indies' total especially with Lawson and Ravi Rampaul using the new ball to good effect.

CJKS chess

CU CORRESPONDENT

The CJKS-Progati Insurance First Division Chess League will begin from July 9 at the CJKS gymnasium.

Interested players and clubs have been requested to register their names by June 30.

DRU sports on

SPORTS REPORTER

The Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) annual sports began yesterday at the DRU auditorium with the bridge competition.

National Sports Council secretary Masud Elahee declared the meet open.

Milad

FROM PAGE 13Xshir's father Farid Ahmed and his two other sons, however, stayed away despite being invited by the KDASA.

London

FROM PAGE 13 love of the 'beautiful game'.

Erica Shatford, a 23-year-old restaurant worker from Texas, watched the game in an England shirt and said: "I've really got into football since I've been over here. Obviously the 'cute' players from England help."



PHOTO: AFP

WHERE'S THE BATON? Zinedine Zidane (R) unable to hold a celebrating French ace Thierry Henry after his goal against Switzerland at Coimbra's stadium on June 21.

Making a Pele out of him!



AFP, Lisbon

Comparisons with Pele represent a burden of expectation that would make most 18-year-olds buckle at the knees.

In the case of Wayne Rooney it is like water off a duck's back, at least if his England team-mates are to be believed.

Having watched Everton's enfant terrible terrorise France's world class defence then almost single-handedly destroy Switzerland and Croatia, Gary Neville believes all the talk about keeping the hype under control misses the point.

"We don't want to bring him down to earth. We want to keep him on a high," the Manchester United right-back explained.

"Normally I would be wary of putting too much pressure on him. It is just that I honestly don't think any of the praise bothers him."

England's manager, Sven-Goran Eriksson, evidently shares Neville's belief that Rooney is as immune to what is said about him as he has been to the attempts of some of Europe's best defenders to

shackle him.

It was Eriksson who suggested, in the wake of England's 4-2 win over Croatia on Monday night, that he could not remember any young player making such an impact on a major tournament since Pele announced himself to the world as a 17-year-old at the 1958 World Cup in Sweden.

Neville says the penny dropped after England's opening match here. "That was the eye-opener for me. The things he was doing to a world-class defence were fantastic. He is the real thing.

"Now we just need him to get his feet up and relax before we play Portugal in the quarter-final (on Thursday)."

Fears that Rooney, who was carrying a few spare pounds when he joined up with the England squad, lacked the fitness levels required to make a sustained impact on such a concentrated tournament have been dispelled by three high-energy displays.

Concerns over what is perceived as a suspect temperament also appear to have been overstated. A yellow card against Croatia would have ruled Rooney out of the quarter-final but there was never the remotest sign of him losing his cool.

"Being aggressive is a big part of

Wayne's game and the way he plays," said Chelsea midfielder Frank Lampard.

"It is just a question of keeping it under control and the more he plays at this level the more he will be aware of the little tricks players use to try and wind him up and the more he will be able to cope with them."

Steven Gerrard, the Liverpool midfielder who is Rooney's closest friend in the England squad, believes Portugal will be wary of facing a player he rates as the outstanding player in Europe on current form.

"His performances have been really mature. He's holding the ball up well, bringing people into play. He is getting forward and scoring goals. His all round game at the moment is spot on.

"He can definitely help us win it. He has helped us get to the last eight and I'm sure he'll help us to progress even more."

"Portugal are going to be tough. Obviously they are the host nation and they have got fantastic individuals. But we are confident that we can get over that hurdle. I don't think we are the under-dogs - I think Portugal will be fearing us. Looking at our performance against Croatia I think they will be quite worried about playing us."

STRAWBERRIES & CREAM



REUTERS, London

Wimbledon champion Roger Federer had an unusual confession to make after his first round victory on Monday -- his cow would always be the happier on grass. After becoming Switzerland's first ever winner of the men's title at Wimbledon last year, Federer went home to play at Gstaad, where the tournament organisers gave the bemused player a cow as a gift.

After he once again showed his delightful skills on the pristine lawns of the All England Club on Monday, Federer was asked if he was now even more comfortable on grass than his cow Juliette.

"I don't think so," Federer said.

"She should be more comfortable because she spends more time on it."

LUCKY HAWKS

British comedy writer Tony Hawks struck it lucky with an invitation to

Wimbledon's hallowed Centre Court on Monday -- but sadly there were no Moldovans to cheer on.

His fellow comedian Arthur Smith once bet Hawks that he could not beat all 11 members of the Moldovan soccer team at tennis. The loser of the bet had to appear naked on a London street and sing the Moldovan national anthem.

Hawks' riotous tale of his tennis crusade -- "Playing the Moldovans at Tennis" -- was a bestseller.

At Monday's opening day, Hawks was rewarded with a seat in the Royal Box -- but unfortunately there are no Moldovans playing at Wimbledon this year.

THREE GORANS

It took three Goran Ivanisevics to win Wimbledon in 2001 and three years later he is still drawing on all three sides of his personality to win tennis matches.

When he won the men's title, the mercurial Croat said he was split between "the good, bad and the emergency" parts of his make-up. Following his emotional return

to Centre Court after injury kept him away from the last two Wimbledon, Ivanisevic explained how important the "emergency" Goran was to him.

"It's just good he's there in case these two get in a fight," he said. "The third one comes. It is like a referee in a box".

"He is like a guru, like a healer. Not depressed. Imagine if he being the depressed one. He being confused would be a disaster."

PRICES FROZEN

Strawberries and cream fans at Wimbledon can relax -- the price has been frozen again this year.

Wimbledon organisers were able to reassure British socialites who consider them essential fare at the height of the summer season.

"You still get 10 strawberries for two pounds a punnet," a spokeswoman said.

"We offer better value than at (the exclusive horse race meeting) Royal Ascot. They are always a crowd pleaser."

Henry gives France relief



AFP, Coimbra

Thierry Henry finally found his magic touch at Euro 2004 by scoring twice in France's 3-1 win over Switzerland here Monday to earn the defending champions a quarter-final date with Greece.

Jacques Santini's side were pushed hard by the Swiss before setting up a date with the surprise package of these championships in Lisbon on Friday by finishing top of Group B with seven points.

Santini made an inspired substitution when he sent Louis Saha into the action for David Trezeguet with the scores tied at 1-1. Saha's first touch of the match was a headed knock-on which allowed Henry to score his opening goal on 76 minutes.

"The Swiss gave everything and we had to go looking for the victory in the last quarter of an hour," Santini said.

"But I want to congratulate my players who have not only given pleasure to the coaching staff, they

Vonlanthen the youngest now

AFP, Lisbon

Switzerland's 18-year-old striker Johan Vonlanthen became the youngest ever scorer in a European championships finals, beating the



JOHAN VONLANTHEN

record set last week by Wayne Rooney, when he found the net against France here on Monday.

At 18 years four months and 20 days, Vonlanthen was three months and four days younger than Rooney who had established the new mark with his two goals against Switzerland last Thursday.

Vonlanthen entered the record books in Switzerland's 3-1 defeat to France after defender Mikael Silvestre gave the ball away, allowing Ricardo Cabanas to flick a pass through the French defence and Vonlanthen stroked the ball past goalkeeper Fabien Barthez in the 26th minute.

"It was something great, beautiful. But it would have been better if we'd won the game," Vonlanthen said.

"I didn't go on to the pitch thinking about it, the boss gave me the chance to play and I had the fortune to score."

But the teenager who plays for Dutch side PSV Eindhoven saw Switzerland's chance of a draw snatched away by two goals from Thierry Henry.

"We played really well to get back level. Then we became unbalanced due to Henry's individual skills," he said.

The son of a Colombian mother and Swiss father, Vonlanthen lived in Colombia until the age of 12.

He only made his international debut in Switzerland's last friendly before Euro 2004, a 1-0 victory over Liechtenstein.

Coincidentally, Rooney set the record in the same Coimbra City Stadium.

The Everton striker took over the honour from Dragan Stojkovic, who hit the net for Yugoslavia against France at the 1994 finals aged 19 years, three months and 16 days.

English fan stabbed to death

AFP, Lisbon

A 27-year-old England soccer fan died Tuesday after being stabbed by a Ukrainian pickpocket in central Lisbon during celebrations for England's victory over Croatia in the Euro 2004 football championship.

The killing in the early hours of the morning followed the group match in Lisbon in which England clinched a place in the quarter-finals of the championships with a 4-2 victory over Croatia.

Portuguese police said the attack happened during an attempted robbery.

The attacker was originally identified by the Lusa news agency as a Croatian fan but police later confirmed they had arrested a Ukrainian suspect who was already known to police.

PREVIEW Netherlands v Latvia

A matter of life and death



REUTERS, Oporto

Dick Advocaat puts his job on the line when his under-achieving Netherlands team meet Euro 2004 surprise package Latvia in their final Group D match in Braga on Wednesday.

Both teams need to win to go through to the quarter-finals and hope that three-times champions Germany do not beat the already qualified Czech Republic, the only team with maximum points in the tournament.

Advocaat's team were unimpressive despite coming from behind to draw 1-1 with Germany in their first game and a controversial substitution handed the Czechs, then 2-1 down, a lifeline from which they built a 3-2 victory on Saturday.

The Dutch coach has a contract with the national team until the 2006 World Cup in Germany but there is a clause for a review after Euro 2004 which his side will depart on Wednesday night if the Latvians spring another surprise.

"It wasn't the substitution that turned the match, individual errors led to the Czech goals," Advocaat said, defending his decision to take off Arjen Robben for the more defensive Paul Bosvelt.

Midfield dynamo Edgar Davids said: "Now we depend on what the Czechs do and we don't like that."

Fit Warne eyes mark now



AFP, Sydney

Shane Warne has pronounced his fitness to play the Sri Lankans in Australia's north next month and spoke of his plan to make full use of Murali Muralitharan's absence.

The Australian leg-spinning great was given the all-clear of a broken left hand and declared himself a starter in the two-Test series starting in Darwin on July 1.

The series offers 34-year-old Warne the chance of overtaking Murali's world record 527 Test wickets in his two matches.

Warne has 517 Test wickets and gets probably his best chance to claim the record, albeit if briefly, after Muralitharan pulled out of the tour for undisclosed personal reasons.

Warne said he would have to take full opportunity in Darwin and Cairns, as his spin rival's age, work rate and schedule meant he was unlikely to be No.2 for too long.

"He's only (32), so he's probably going to play for another five or six years and if he keeps taking 70, 80 wickets a year he's going to be pretty close to 1,000 (when he retires)," Warne said of Muralitharan on Tuesday.

"I don't think I'll get anywhere near 1,000."

"So I might have to jump on this opportunity in the next couple of Test matches and get some wickets."

Warne broke his left hand batting for English county Hampshire this month and was told at the time the break would take three weeks to heal fully.

By the time the first Test starts, it will have been 20 days since he suffered the injury.

But after consulting with Australian doctor Troy James and specialist Greg Hoy, Warne is

Robert Pires' corner from the right for his third goal of the championships.

France then won a clutch of corners but somehow the Swiss defence held firm and six minutes later they equalised through 18-year-old Johan Vonlanthen, who became the youngest ever scorer in a European championships.

Ricardo Cabanas pounced on an error by French defender Mikael Silvestre and threaded the ball through to Vonlanthen whose angled shot nestled in the left hand corner of Fabien Barthez's net.

Vonlanthen had been introduced to replace the out-of-form Stephane Chapuisat while team-mate Alexander Frei, embroiled in a spitting incident, was withdrawn before the match.

The Swiss, who had suddenly found some punch, had an early scoring opportunity when Lilian Thuram was caught up for handball but Hakan Yakin's freekick was tipped over the crossbar by Barthez at full stretch.

Henry, who has enjoyed an indifferent Euro up to now, was booked for diving after a tackle by Murat Yakin at the start of the second half.

"We have to be focused and concentrate against Latvia because we know they did well against the Czechs and also against Germany."

Advocaat is expected to start with the same team that lost to the Czechs apart from suspended defender Johnny Heitinga, who



DICK ADVOCAT

was sent off in the match in Aveiro. Michael Reiziger will probably take his place.

Latvia are equal on points with the Dutch, having led the Czechs before losing narrowly 2-1 and then holding Germany 0-0, their biggest footballing achievement to date.

Progressing with each match, Latvia believe in their chances of an even greater upset, a victory which would take them into the quarter-finals of their first major tournament.

Santini, who left Marcel Desailly on the bench, made one change in the interval, bringing on William Gallas for Willy Sagnol as he attempted to shore up his backline.

In the 76th minute Henry finally got the goal he's been aching for, the Arsenal attacker tapping in after being fed by a knock-on from Saha's head just seconds after the Manchester United player had come on for Trezeguet.

Zidane almost added a third when Pires crossed but his header was safely gathered by Jorg Stiel in the Swiss goal.

It was to fall to Henry to put the match beyond doubt as the Premiership's top scorer last season stormed in from the left to shoot right-footed past Stiel.

It was a memorable night for Henry - and despite Switzerland's elimination, they have the consolation that Vonlanthen, at 18 years four months and 20 days, takes over as the championships' youngest ever scorer by three months and four days from England's Wayne Rooney.

Rooney owned the record for just four days after scoring against Switzerland at Coimbra last Thursday.

"If the first dream of reaching the finals came true why shouldn't a second dream come true," said their impressive striker Maris Verpakovskis, who almost scored against Germany and might have had a penalty.

Coach Aleksandrs Starkovs, the man responsible for putting Latvia's number one sport ice hockey temporarily in the shade, said: "We lost to the Czechs and drew with the Germans. All that's missing is to win."

Starkovs is almost certain to keep the same starting line-up for the third successive match with English-based Marian Pahars again on the bench.

Live on ESPN at 12:40 am (Thursday)

PROBABLE TEAMS

Netherlands (4-3-3): 1-Edwin van der Sar; 2-Michael Reiziger, 4-Wilfred Bouma, 3-Jaap Stam, 5-Giovanni van Bronckhorst, 20-Clarence Seedorf, 8-Edgar Davids, 6-Philipp Cocu; 7-Andy van der Meide, 10-Ruud van Nistelrooy, 19-Arjen Robben
Latvia (4-4-2): 1-Aleksandrs Kolinko; 7-Aleksandrs Isakovs, 2-Igor Stepanovs, 4-Mihails Zeminskis, 6-Olegs Blagonadzins, 8-Imants Bleidelis, 14-Valentins Lobanovs, 3-Vitalijs Astafevs, 10-Andrejs Rubins; 11-Andrejs Prohorenkovs, 9-Maris Verpakovskis

Referee: Kim Milton Nielsen (Denmark)
Linesmen: Lens Larsen (Denmark), Jorgen Jepsen (Denmark).

Watch out for Ronaldo!

AFP, Lisbon

Arsenal left-back Ashley Cole has spiced up the build-up to England's Euro 2004 quarter-final clash with Portugal by claiming tough tackles are the way to stop Cristiano Ronaldo.

The Manchester United winger's trickery embarrassed Cole at times during meetings between the two clubs last season but the England defender believes he has now got the measure of the Portuguese star.

"It will be a tough experience playing against him because he looks to be playing with a lot of confidence," Cole admitted.

"But I'm looking forward to it. Last season they gave him the ball in the first 10 minutes, he did his tricks and I slipped over a few times. After that, though, I gave him a hard tackle and he was gone, to be honest."

"He's difficult to mark because he can go inside, outside. You don't want to be too close to him because he will do a stepover and go past you."

"Hopefully, we can defend well as a team and get a result. It's not just a one-man team because they have many good players but we're confident."

Although Ronaldo is usually deployed on the right by Manchester United, Portugal have been starting him on the left and then switching him regularly with Luis Figo, whose mantle as the undisputed star of the Portuguese team is under threat from the 19-year-old.

While Cole was bullish, his fellow England full-back Gary Neville has seen what Ronaldo is capable of at close quarters and struck a decidedly more circumspect note about his United teammate.

"All I know after training with him every day as a club-mate is that Cristiano Ronaldo isn't going to give me a single second's rest for 90 minutes," Neville admitted.

"I think he is going to be a world-class player and me and Ashley are going to have to be at our very best against him and Figo. Both of them can go either way, inside or outside you, with left or right foot and that is very hard to defend against."