

Pioneer football

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka Junior SC registered a massive 4-0 victory over Nazirabazar SC in an East Zone match of the Shindepur 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 Dhanmondi Club ground and other match between Golam Mostafa Lane KS and Dhaka Mohanagar ended in a 1-1 draw.

At Kamalapur, Tejgaon Nabaratanga 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 Ramnaresh Sarwan (79) and Shivnarine Chanderpaul (60) were the other major contributors on a good pitch with Kent's England medium-pacer Martin Sägers 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, Sägers 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 meetopen.

Milad

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

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 they 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 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.

"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.

"He is like a guru, like a healer. Not depressed. Imagine if he was 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."

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.

"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."

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