Nigerian booter for MSC

SPORTS REPORTER

Nigerian footballer Ron Azinge arrived in Dhaka in the early hours of Monday to play for Mohamme-dan Sporting Club this season.

Club officials informed that the central defender is expected be joined by two more compatriots -- an attacking midfielder and a striker -- on Thursday. Nigerian coach Emeka, who played for Mohammedan in the eighties, is also due to arrive with the other players.

Mohammedan have tried three Korean players this year but sacked the last of them after the club failed to reach the Independence Day Cup final. Mohammedan, going through difficult times, have also changed coaches twice this season including Korean Man Young Kang.

Giles doubtful for Lord's Test

BBC ONLINE, *London*

England have called up Worcestershire spinner Gareth Batty as cover for injury doubt Ashley Giles ahead of the Thursday's first Test with Bangladesh.

Giles faces a fitness test on his troublesome hip on Tuesday to determine whether he can take part at Lord's.

He first suffered the injury in a county championship match at Hove on 10 May and the problem has flared up again.

An England team spokesman told BBC Sport: "Ashley will be reassessed when he reports to London on Tuesday."

Batty has played five Tests overseas, and his record is not one to write home about, with his 10 wickets costing 68.9 runs apiece.

He has had little more experience in the one-day international scene, playing only six matches since his debut in December 2002.

Comilla emerge zonal champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Comilla clinched the Zone A championship in the City Bank National Youth Volleyball qualifiers yesterday defeating Tangail 3-1 in the final at the Shaheed Suhrawardy National Indoor Stadium in Mirpur.

Earlier, Comilla eliminated Faridpur in straight sets in the semifinals while Tangail also won their last four game against Sherpur by the same margin.

Comilla, Tangail and Sherpur, who beat Faridpur in the third-place play-off, all qualified for the final rounds.

Meanwhile, the other two zonal qualifiers began in Khulna and Dinajpur. The top three teams from each zone will join hosts Rajshahi in the ten-team finals.

Women's handball

SPORTS REPORTER

Usha Krira Chakra stayed alive in the Tibet Women's Handball League when they ended their Super Three campaign with a comprehensive 43-30 win over Arambagh Krira Sangha at the Bangabandhu National Stadium handball court yesterday.

Usha, who lost to Mariner the previous day, led the first half 22-15. Bulu netted 17 goals for the winners and was adjudged player-of-the-match.

Neighbours Mariner and Arambagh meet in the last match of the Super Three today.

Nejmeh in city

FROM PAGE 12

"Yes, there is no effect of this match on the outcome of the group but we are determined to ensure hundred percent winning record," said Fadiahmad Al Yamani, head coach of the team, during a practice session in the afternoon at the Bangabandhu Stadium.

Former Bangladesh coach Otto Pfister was the main coach of Nejmeh but the German quit the job following the recent spat of bloodshed in the Middle Eastern nation.

"We have to win one more match and draw the other in our remaining two league encounters to retain our title that's why the victory here will be nice for us," added Yamani.

Despite missing four frontline players, he was confident to score another comfortable win against the Bangladeshi side as they have four national players and two Ghanaians -- Duah and Addo -- in the squad.

Premier Bank

FROM PAGE 12

The bank came forward out of the blue to rescue the BFF, which failed to convince two cellular companies who had initially showed interest.

"Actually one cellular company wanted more time to settle the issue but time is a big factor for us. So we reached the deal for a lesser amount than the previous years," Helal added.

For the last two years, the sponsorship money was worth Tk 25 lakh.

PHOTO: AFP

ON TRIAL! Russian President Vladimir Putin (R) shows off his footballing skills while CSKA Moscow's Brazilian striker Wagner Love watches during a courtesy call by the newly crowned UEFA Cup champions at the Novo-Ogariovo presidential residence outside Moscow on Sunday.

PRIMERA LIGA

Forlan dampens celebrations

Football

AFP, *Madrid*

Barcelona came out Sunday to a Nou Camp guard of honour from visitors Villarreal -- but that was where the respect ended for the newly-crowned champions as they scrapped their way to a 3-3 draw in their final home game, Diego Forlan netting a hattrick for the visitors.

The celebratory mood which had accompanied the handover of the championship trophy from Spanish Football Federation chairman Angel Maria Villar turned monentarily into a damp squib as Barca found themselves two goals adrift before Ronaldinho and Ludovic Giuly saved their blushes.

After early Barca pressure it was Villarreal who went in front with a superbly-executed 14th-minute drive from Diego Forlan, having a tremendous season in Spain after a miserable time with Manchester United, whom he left last summer.

Barca's Cameroon international striker Samuel Eto'o then drove a 20th-minute spotkick against the underside of the bar after Quique Alvarez had brought the African down in the box.

Eto'o was looking to add to his tally of 25 league goals at start of play to ensure he wins the 'pichichi' title of La Liga's top marksman.

Instead, that chance went begging and Forlan instead moved his total onto 22 from the penalty spot after young Barca defender Oleguer Renom fouled Jose Mari in the 29th minute for 2-0.

Ronaldinho headed in a Juliano Belletti cross from the right in the 32nd minute to bring renewed hope in the stands, which before kickoff had been smothered with "Barca, Barca, Barca" posters.

Another poster greeted the title win as being as significant as a papal election, bearing the legend: "White smoke - habemus Liga," for the first time in six seasons.

Barca, who left keeper Victor Valdes, just 26 goals conceded all season, on the bench to hand Albert Jorquera a rare start, then pulled level after 35 minutes when Ludovic Giuly scrambled home from close range.

Three minutes after the break, Giuly blasted home his tenth goal of the season to put the hosts finally in front, only for Forlan to complete an impeccable hattrick with a cute lob on 70 minutes.

The effort means the Uruguayan can yet draw level in the scoring stakes with Eto'o if he hits a double on the final day next week against Levante.

Earlier Sunday, Mallorca kept their hopes of survival alive with a storming 3-0 win at midtable Deportivo La Coruna.

The win moved the Balearic Island side out of the bottom three with just one match to go following a victory achieved with goals from Francisco Farinos and Juan Arango before the interval and Japanese international striker Yoshito Okubo 18 minutes after the break.

Mallorca moved a point clear with 38 points to Levante's 37 after a win at the Riazor stadium which gives Hector Cuper's men hope of avoiding the dreaded drop. Levante, who six weeks ago were 11 points clear of the Mallorcans, could only draw with Valencia.

On Saturday, one of Villarreal's rivals for a top four placing, Real Betis, beat Real Zaragoza 3-2 but are a point adrift of Villarreal.

Third and fourth place will be enough for a qualifying round spot in Europe's hugely lucrative top club competition.

Should Betis and Villarreal make it, they would have made the most of the disappointing seasons of traditional European qualifiers in Valencia, Deportivo La Coruna and Atletico Madrid.

Elsewhere Sunday, Seville saw their hopes of overhauling Villarreal, whom they trail by two points, and Betis take a knock after their goalless draw at modest-but-safe Getafe.

On Saturday evening, Atletico Madrid drew 0-0 at city rivals Madrid in a meaningless match for both teams, with Real assured of second spot and an automatic berth into the Champions League and Atletico in midtable.

TOP SIX

Spanish football league table after Sunday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Barcelona	37	25	8	4	73	29	83
Real	37	24	5	8	68	31	77
Villarreal	37	17	11	9	65	36	62
Betis	37	16	13	8	61	49	61
Sevilla	37	17	9	11	44	39	60
Espanyol	37	16	10	11	52	46	58

PHOTO: STAR

Action from yesterday's Tibet Women's Handball League match between Usha Krira Chakra and Arambagh Krira Sangha at the Bangabandhu National Stadium handball court.

Welcome to Istanbul

UEFA CHAMPS LEAGUE

It was a part of the magnificent Greek civilization; the Greeks called it Byzantium. Later, in 330 AD, Roman emperor Constantine named this place Constantinople and made it the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire.

Rome soon fell, but the eastern capital flourished for centuries. The magnificent Hagia Sophia (built in the 6th century; now a museum) still constantly reminds the people of the city's halcyon days. Crusaders in the early 13th century captured and ravaged the city; the Greeks vainly tried to take control after the World war I. Although the capital of Turkey was shifted to Ankara in 1923, Constantinople, named Istanbul in 1930 is still the heart of modern Turkey. Standing at a point where Europe meets Asia, it is a splendid blend of two different cultures. Another page to the history of Istanbul will be added on May 25th, as the city hosts the Champions League final between AC Milan and Liverpool FC.

And as if to keep up with the city's tradition of both glory and gloom the finalists have seen the highs and lows. Milan have won the European Cup six times. They won back-to-back Cups in 1989 and 1990. The nineties were a golden era with four Scudettos and the European Cup in 1994. Their last triumph came in 2003.

With 18 League titles and six F.A. Cups, Liverpool are a big force in English football. They became a major power in the sixties, under the guidance of Bill Shankly. But it was under his successor, Bob Paisley, that they became a superpower.

Three of Liverpool's four European titles came under his management (in 1977,78, and 81). Their last success was back in 1984. But it was in Europe that the first major tragedy involving the club's fans took place. The club lost the 1985 European Cup final to Juventus at Heysel, Belgium. Yet, the football on that night was overshadowed by the death of 39 people, mostly Italian supporters before the game as a result of violence between rival fans.

Milan were comfortable winners of Group F with 13 points from six games. In the next stage they ended Manchester United's challenge. The quarterfinal featured a mouth-watering tie between the Milan giants. Milan won the first leg against Inter 2-0. The second leg had to be abandoned with 19 minutes to go because of crowd trouble. The biggest scare came in the second leg of the semifinal, against Dutch side PSV Eindhoven.

Milan were leading 2-0 from the first tie. But PSV won 3-1 at home and Milan only went through on the away goals rule.

Liverpool had to come thorough the qualifying rounds. Little known Austrian team Graz AK gave them an early scare winning 1-0 at Anfield although Liverpool won over two legs (2-1). It was in the knockout stages, that the Reds found their form. After seeing off Germany's Bayer Leverkusen, they were pitted against Juventus in the quarterfinals.

For the first half an hour Liverpool played their best football of the season against Juve in the first leg. They were leading 2-0 but Juve got a vital away goal in the second half. The Liverpool defence held out in the second leg to gain a goalless draw and passage to the semis against Chelsea. They managed to contain the Blues. The only goal of the two legs came at Anfield.

Well, what about the final itself? Big finals often produce scrappy games. With too much at stake defence rather than attack seems to get the priority. Also, with the brilliant defensive record of both the sides, can't expect too many goals. The overall quality of Milan should help them prevail over the 90 minutes. But, then, not too many people gave Benitez's side much of a chance against Juventus.

Contributed by Rafiqul Ameer through email

Spaniard to referee Cup final

AFP, *Istanbul*

Spain's Manuel Enrique Gonzalez will take charge of the Liverpool v AC Milan European Champions League final here on Wednesday, UEFA announced.

The 40-year-old Gonzalez has been a referee in the Spanish top flight since 1995 and in international games since 1999.

Earlier in the tournament he was the referee for Liverpool's 3-1 win over Olympiakos at the group stage and for AC Milan's 1-0 win over Manchester United at Old Trafford in the last 16.

UEFA also announced that Liverpool would play in their traditional red shirts with AC Milan in white instead of their usual red and black vertical stripes.

The Italians had the choice of which shirts to wear and opted for the white outfit which they wore the last four times they won the trophy in 1989, 1990, 1994 and 2003.

Liverpool wore red each time they won the European Cup in 1977, 1978, 1981 and 1984.

Manzarul shines

FROM PAGE 12

make an impression was teammate paceman Gazi Alamgir with a haul of 3-28.

Earlier, BCB Green led by Alok Kapali, were all out for 155 in 42.4 overs after electing to bat first in the match reduced to 45 overs a-side.

For both sides, extras topped the scorecards with Reds collecting 46 and their rivals 45.

The two teams will play a three-day match from today at the same venue.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BCB RED: 155 all out in 42.4 overs (Nasiruddin 21, Farhad 14, Manzarul 23, Shahin 14, Alamgir Kabir 16, extras 45, Tareq 1-34, Shahzada 3-25, Shafaq 1-28, Mushfiq 2-26, Razzak 2-23, Nabil 1-7).

BCB GREEN: 117 all out in 28 overs (Nazimuddin 19, Razzak 24, extras 46, Alamgir Kabir 2-20, Alamgir 3-28, Manzarul 4-9).

Lloyd urges radical changes

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, *Undated*

Clive Lloyd says West Indies cricket needs radical changes if it is ever to get out of its current slump.

The former West Indies great, in an interview with BBC World Service, said the domestic structure needed improving and called for more A team tours.

He said: "We have one or two good little guys but too many are learning the game on the job, so to speak."

He also bemoaned the fact that so few current players were being given the chance to perform in county cricket.

Lloyd said almost every other Test nation was well represented in the English domestic game, except West Indies.

"Maybe [the counties] don't think their cricket is good enough," he said.

"Something our players should think about is being a winner - then you win all round.

"When we were winning everyone wanted our players, now we are not winning anything, nobody wants our players.

"Winning, like losing, is contagious and nobody wants to be involved in West Indies cricket if we're not winning.

"When playing in different conditions against different types of bowlers, you learn to be more professional and have more discipline - that's what county cricket is all about."

But there were also solutions closer to home, he insisted.

"We need to be working towards some more A team cricket and we have to strengthen our domestic cricket," said Lloyd.

"We need to get coaches who have a good track record into our game and singing from the same hymn sheet."

Rating chess

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master Enamul Hossain Rajib won the eighth round board against Amin to keep his top slot in the Open FIDE Rating Chess Tournament at the federation hall room yesterday.

Rajib raised his tally to 7.5 points while two other IMs Reefat Bin Sattar and Abdullah Al-Rakib followed the leader with seven points each.

National junior champion Mehdi Hasan Parag, FM Rezanul Haque and Imran Ali Elin were in the third position securing 6.5 points each.

Seeds sail

|FROM PAGE 12

Hantuchova defeated Michaella Krajicek 6-3, 6-1.

Moya, the 1998 champion, rallied past Alberto Martin 5-7, 6-1, 6-4, 6-2. Stepanek beat Paradorn Srichaphan 3-6, 6-3, 6-1, 6-1.

Ancic defeated Marcos Daniel 6-2, 6-1, 7-6. Grosjean swept Juan Monaco 7-5, 6-3, 6-1.

Div I soccer

SPORTS REPORTER

Badda Jagarani Sangsad recorded their second victory in the First Division Football League when they beat BRTC SC 2-0 at the Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Nazrul and Angur scored one each for the winners.

It was second consecutive defeats for BRTC.

Kent rope in Kemp

BBC ONLINE, *Undated*

Big-hitting South Africa all-rounder Justin Kemp has joined Kent as the club's second overseas player.

"I'm naturally very excited at the prospect of playing for Kent," said the 27-year-old, who will be available for Wednesday's match against Surrey.

"At this stage in my career it is important I play competitive cricket at the highest level."

Kemp has played for South Africa in three Tests and 24 one-dayers, and starred against England this year.

WI look to Lara

Cricket

AFP, *Gros Islet (St Lucia)*

West Indies have named batting superstar Brian Lara, left-handed opening batsman Devon Smith, and fast bowler Reon King, as the three changes to their 13-member squad for the first Test of two against Pakistan, starting on Thursday at Bridgetown.

Joey Carew, convenor of the West Indies selection panel, disclosed that Xavier Marshall, Dwayne Smith, and Pedro Collins would all be omitted from the squad that was selected for the three one-day internationals against the Pakistanis.

"This is a new Test series and the team has to begin concentrating on getting the winning habit, so we are looking forward to a successful series," said Carew.

Carew noted that he expected a renewed approach from the side, and believed that Lara, who was rested for the ODI series against the Pakistanis, would add another element to the team.

"He is rested and will doubtlessly return invigorated," Carew said.

"As the senior player in the team and the leading personality in world cricket, he will also inject a deeper sense of professionalism."

Smith, 23, returns to the side after playing in the recent first Test of four against South Africa, and the 29-year-old King is recalled after losing his place following the third Test against the Proteas.

The 30-year-old Bradshaw, who has played 30 ODIs, has been named in a West Indies Test squad for the first time, while Corey Collymore holds on to a place after not being considered for the preceding series against South Africa.

The second Test at Kingston opens on June 3.

SQUAD

Shivnarine Chander-paul (captain), Courtney Browne (vice-captain), Ian Bradshaw, Dwayne Bravo, Corey Collymore, Fidel Edwards, Chris Gayle, Wavell Hinds, Reon King, Brian Lara, Daren Powell, Ramnaresh Sarwan, Devon Smith.

Laxman feels honoured

Cricket

PTI, *Hyderabad*

Venkatasai Laxman termed it an "honour" to work under new cricket coach Greg Chappell who, he said, had been his idol since childhood.

"It is certainly a honour to work under him. He has been my idol since my formative years in cricket. I used to read and read a lot of him," Laxman who still carries the tag of being a Test match player, told PTI on Monday.

On the new coach, Laxman said that Chappell excels in all departments of the game including planning, chalking out strategies and tactics and "I love to play under such an experienced player."

Laxman also showered praise on Chappell for his technique and style in which he led his country and "working with such an experienced man will be an honour."

The solid batsman, who created a fear psychosis among the Australians prompting captain Ricky Ponting to label him the one Indian batsman they feared most, denied reports that he might play in the English county championship this summer.

"Earlier I thought of playing but now it's not that way. I am not playing for any county, or for any club. I will be here only," Laxman said.

Inamdar Kenyan cricket boss

AFP, *Nairobi*

Samir Inamdar, a Mombasa-based solicitor, who waged a long war against the Kenya Cricket Association was on Sunday elected the new chairman of the trouble-ridden national body.

The 46-year-old defeated his sole challenger Salim Dhanji in a close-fought race during elections supervised by African Cricket Association (ACA) officials.

Former Kenya national captain Tom Tikolo withdrew after failing to get proposed for the seat.

Inamdar, who also served as a member of the government-backed Cricket Kenya, set up to replace the disbanded KCA board in February said his committee would work to correct the mess created by the outgoing officials.

CROSSWORD *By Eugene Sheffer*

ACROSS

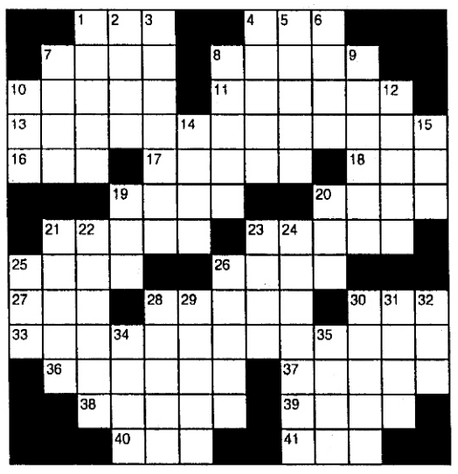
1 — -relief
4 Frequently
7 Lummox
8 Coarse wool cloth
10 Farewell
11 Recoils
13 2005 Oscar recipient
16 Keep tabs on
17 Spree
18 Macabre master
19 Driving-range target
20 Cattle group
21 Hosiery description
23 Type of albatross
25 Ruth's husband
26 Keep grlplng
27 Springtime abbr.
28 Daily meals
30 Ostrich's kin
33 2005 Oscar recipient
36 Newbie on the force
37 Horned critter
38 Singing family?
39 Troubadour's instrument
40 Preceding
41 Gridiron meas.

DOWN

1 Nightclub
2 Sheltered
3 Five o'clock shadow, plus
4 Due (to)
5 Sell hot stuff
6 — support (computer aid)
7 Decisive time
8 Nasality
9 Bore more
10 Expert
12 A yarn ...
14 ... and its teller
15 Bill's co-adventurer
19 "That '70s Show" role
20 Make like a frog
21 Deep sleep
22 Disturb profoundly
23 "Young Frankenstein" cast member
24 Hospital staffer
25 Emeril's expletive
26 Outdoorsy eateries
28 One of a tub trio
29 Cat-tails link
30 Sends forth
31 Lion's pride?
32 Popular card game
34 Name on a butterfly ballot
35 Barak of Israel

Solution time: 21 mins.

W	E	L	D		G	B	S		S	O	L	D		
O	L	I	O		E	E	K		O	L	E	O		
R	I	L	L		T	R	A	I	L	I	N	G		
M	A	I	L	I	N	G		F	E	N	D	S		
			A	D	O		U	N	I					
D	E	A	R	S		J	A	I	L	I	N	G		
O	R				T	A	R			V	I	A		
W	A	I	L	I	N	G		F	R	E	T	S		
			A	C	T		E	R	E					
A	B	C	D	E		S	A	I	L	I	N	G		
Q	U	A	I	L	I	N	G		I	D	O	L		
U	R	G	E		L	O	L		S	E	R	A		
A	R	E	S		E	W	E		H	E	A	D		



CRYPTOQUIP

K ABLLDAX NJQN EXQTTO PQG LDXRA VDBTG PX VDWAKGXEXG EJORXA NJQN NEO RXW'A ADBTA.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I TAKE IT THAT ASIA'S FINEST WOODWORKING TOOL IS CALLED THE GREAT AWL OF CHINA.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G equals D

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.