



## Did U Know?

Volleyball was invented by William George Morgan of Holyoke, Massachusetts in 1895.



**Dion Nash**  
(Former New Zealand fast bowler)  
*"I'm looking forward to working with some pretty strong-minded guys. I imagine there will be some long meetings. It will be the chance to put our egos aside and work together for the good of the game."*  
**After being named a national selector.**



**BT**  
Bangladesh vs England  
NatWest Series, First ODI  
Live at 3:45 pm  
**ESPN**  
Bangladesh vs England  
NatWest Series, First ODI  
Live at 3:45 pm  
**FIFA Confederations Cup**  
Brazil vs Greece  
Live at 12:40 am (Friday)  
**STAR Sports**  
Sportsline  
Live at 8:00 pm  
**FIFA Confederations Cup**  
Japan vs Mexico  
Live at 9:55 pm

**DAY'S EVENT**  
  
**Premier Football League**  
Youngmen's Club vs Farashganj SC  
(5:00 pm)  
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

# Tigers think about own game



AL-AMIN from London

It was raining in London on Wednesday morning, the day before Bangladesh launch the second part of their demanding England tour at the grand old Oval which also boasts holding the first-ever official Test on English soil way back in 1880.

Bangladesh's opening game against England in the NatWest tri-series on Thursday will be their first appearance at this ground. The beautiful venue, which is the home of English county Surrey, will also see a landmark 100th ODI appearance for England opener Marcus Trescothick, who started his career on this very ground five years ago.

Trescothick and England are however less focused about Sunday's match since a victory for the home side is almost a forgone conclusion given Bangladesh's showing in the two-Tests and demoralising defeats in two

Champions Trophy games in England last September. Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar is also least concerned about the outcome of the match despite admitting the fact that this particular one-day tournament that also involves Australia would be the biggest challenge for his side.

"We are not thinking how big the opponent is. At the moment we know we will be playing six matches and our target is very simple -- going out in the middle and enjoying the game and play as hard as we can," said the Bashar while talking to Bangladeshi reporters at the Oval on Wednesday.

The Bangladesh captain was also not interested to talk about how devastating a combination Kevin Pieterman and fellow power-hitter Andrew Flintoff could become in the slam-bang cricket of white ball and coloured clothing.

Flintoff alone destroyed Bangladesh in three one-dayers in 2003, but Bashar believes in his own strength. The compulsive stroke-maker, who scored a 34-ball

50 in the second innings of the second Test at

Chester-le-Street said that his team has possessed some players who had the ability to change the face of a game.

"We have six players who are quite good and if even three of them click on a given day I think we can put up a decent total if not a winning one," said Bashar without elaborating.

But Bashar feels that the problem with his side is the shot selection and showing respect to names rather than what is coming at them. "It's always difficult to play in England where the ball bounces more and

moves a bit. But Tushar (Imran) with a confident display in the first practice match against Derbyshire showed that there was no devil in the wicket," said the 32-year-old.

Bashar however disagreed that inconsistency in batting was worrying him.

"We also bowled left and right in the two Tests and the ground fielding was not at all inspiring. So, we

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## Refreshing fanatics

SPORTS REPORTER

Diehard supporters gathering in numbers around team buses after an Abahani-Mohammedan football clash is not a common scene these days. But after a long time, domestic football witnessed a rush of fans who showed both anger and euphoria after Wednesday's Premier League match between the perennial foes.

The traditional rivalry had desperately lacked the enthusiasm of old times during the last three years with fans becoming increasingly apathetic. But many were pleased to get a flavour of the good old days at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in the giants' 1-1 draw.

Wednesday's turnout of nearly 25,000 was not only the biggest in size this season but the loyal supporters also lived up to their image with their action during and after the match. It also proved that the passion still lives despite the once most popular game playing second fiddle to cricket these days.

The Mohammedan supporters, whose wounds from the 5-1 defeat to Abahani in this year's Federation Cup has not healed yet, showed their anger towards goalkeeper Biplab for conceding the goal after the game by crowding around the players' exit. Long-time visitors to the stadium interpreted that reaction as a positive sign for football.

"Without diehard supporters football means nothing. It is really exciting to see fans showing their disappointment in such a way. It was like this in football's hey days," commented an aged fan.

The picture was the same when Abahani players were getting out of

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PHOTO: STAR

**THAT'S NOT A FILE PHOTO:** The largest crowd in recent years witnessed the Abahani-Mohammedan clash at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Wednesday. Such show of passion for football was reminiscent of the good old days of the game.

# Arch rivals' exciting stalemate

SPORTS REPORTER



A 46th minute strike by Ghanaian striker Audu Ibrahim helped Abahani

salvage one point against arch-rivals Mohammedan in the Premier Football League on Wednesday.

Although the 1 - 1 result cost Mohammedan the lead in the table after four rounds, the biggest crowd of the season at the Bangabandhu National Stadium enjoyed every moment of the most riveting local fixture which was shifted to Wednesday after rain prevented any play the day before.

Sierra Leone forward Donald Robert had put the Black and Whites ahead on his Dhaka debut before a 25,000-strong attendance

but they failed to hold onto the first half lead and slipped to second position with ten points.

Defending champions Brothers Union have solo lead with maximum 12 points while Abahani slumped to fourth place with eight after their second successive draw.

The Sky Blues absolutely dominated the first 25 minutes reviving memories of their possession play in the 5-1 drubbing of Mohammedan two months earlier in the Federation Cup. But despite splitting the rival defence almost at will, they failed to break the deadlock.

Farhad and Ibrahim complemented each other with nice passes but the striking pair wasted three sitters in as many minutes. Farhad, who placed a centre by Ibrahim wide from handshaking distance in the 12th minute, saw his scorching

volley from 30 yards sail inches over the crossbar. In between, an unmarked Ibrahim mishit the ball from six yards with only goalkeeper Biplab to beat after Farhad had set him up.

Farhad then pushed a weak shot straight to Biplab from close. Shortly after, Hassan cleared the diminutive forward's low cross from the goalmouth.

After the half-hour burst, the tired Abahani midfield lost the tempo and Mohammedan -- who came into the game on the back of three consecutive wins including a 1-0 defeat of Muktijoddha took the lead against run of play in the 34th minute.

Like in the previous three matches when defensive errors saw them concede goals, Abahani again let one in. Midfielder Zahed mistimed a clearance and Moha-

mmedan medio Rony intercepted the ball and immediately released it to Donald whose powerful low drive from 20 yards took a wicked deflection off Rony giving no chance to custodian Nizam.

Mohammedan, who had suffered a setback when a struggling Matur Munna had to be substituted after only 23 minutes, did not let that affect them and captain Alfaz in dazzling form, put the inexperienced Abahani defence to test. The veteran striker set Rony free in the 40th minute but Nizam's spectacular save from a one on one situation kept Abahani in the game. Abahani almost conceded a suicidal goal in the next minute but they were relieved to see Alfaz's placing shot going wide after a deflection off rightback Obaidur.

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## BRAZIL V GREECE

LIVE ON ESPN 12:40AM BST

# A study in contrast

AFP, Leipzig



World Cup holders Brazil meet surprise European champions Greece in their first match of the Confederations Cup on Thursday which should provide a fascinating contrast in styles.

Cynics would say it is a case of Beauty and the Beast - the silky skills and vibrant individualism of Ronaldinho and his teammates against the defensive straitjacket of the Greeks who will seek to score on the occasional counter-attack.

Yet Greece's standing in world football went through the roof after their unexpected victory at Euro

2004 in Portugal and they are relishing their first meeting with Brazil in 31 years.

"This is a once in a lifetime competition for us," said star midfielder Georgios Karagounis of Inter Milan.

"For us it is like a World Cup, with Brazil and Argentina who have brought their main players, and Mexico who have also played in most World Cups."

Both Greece and Brazil slumped to defeats in World Cup qualifiers last week, yet the Greeks' 1-0 reverse against Ukraine was more damaging than Brazil's 3-1 drubbing by Argentina.

Greece now lie third in their qualifying group behind Ukraine and Turkey and may have to rely on

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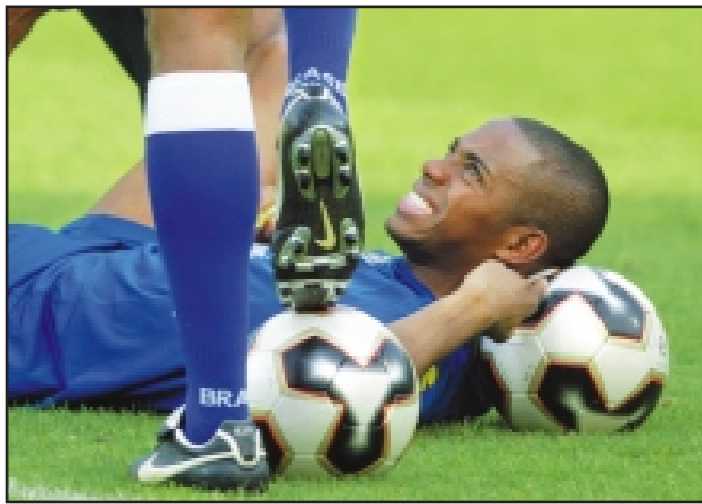


PHOTO: AFP

**WHO NEEDS A PILLOW?** Brazilian sensation Robinho rests his head against a football during a training session at the BayArena stadium in Leverkusen on Tuesday.