

Patriot games

Cricket

AL-AMIN from The Oval

There are about five lakh Bangladeshis living in England and from East London to Newcastle in the north or Penzance, a small town in the southeast at the foot of the Atlantic, they are unmistakably making their presence felt.

The Bangladeshi community, mostly from Sylhet, leads a simple life and generally is a close knit unit. However, with the Bangladesh cricket team visiting this part of the world, they came out of their shells.

And at The Oval on Thursday they made their spectacular presence felt with most of them waving the red and green national flag.

While the English fans considered the game as an ideal outing and enjoyed beer under glorious sunshine, the Bangladeshi section took it as a rare occasion to having fun in the open air.

And those who got the elusive ticket could consider themselves very lucky because if you are not

coming to the ground you have a little chance to enjoy the game on television. Live cricket in England is only shown on Sky Sports and not many British viewers can afford that high-priced pay channel.

In Bangladesh one might get access to as many channels as he wishes for a nominal price, but in England you need to pay for each and every channel.

There were a few thousand Bangladeshi supporters at The Oval, which was perhaps the highest gathering so far. When Bangladesh played their first-ever Test at Lord's a noticeable presence of Bangla-deshis was present.

But in the second Test at Chester-le-Street in Durham not many of them were around to cheer the Tigers on.

There might be a good reason why Habibul Bashar's men were not playing the kind of cricket to draw them into the ground, but the problem lies somewhere else.

Most of the games started either on Thursday or Friday and these are the days of the week that the Bangladeshi restaurants remain as

busy as England wicketkeeper Geraint Jones behind the wicket. In England you will find hundreds of thousands of Indian restaurants. But once you step inside you will discover it is a restaurant run by a Bangladeshi, who is often a Sylheti.

B'DESH V ENG SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Bangladesh innings against England in the opening match of the one-day triangular NatWest Series at The Oval in London on Thursday:

BANGLADESH	
Omar lbw b Lewis	13
Iqbal c Jones b Lewis	19
Ashraf c Flintoff b Lewis	0
Bashar c Jones b Harmison	19
Imran b Harmison	10
Aftab run out	51
Mashud c Jones b Harmison	1
Rafique c Harmison b Gough	30
Mortuza not out	29
Mahmud c Pietersen b Harmison	0
Nazmul c Jones b Gough	6
Extras: (lb-4, w-4, nb-4)	12

SEE PAGE 17 COL 8

Oval National Stadium!

AL-AMIN from The Oval

If you are coming out of The Oval Underground station on Thursday morning you could feel the same vive and atmosphere that you come across whenever a cricket match is played at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka.

It is only a three-minute walk from the tube station to the famous ground and the approach road was full of noise with ticket touts shouting as you went past them: "Tickets for cricket, 30 pounds for a 28-pound ticket."

Around the corner someone is selling horns with long nose.

"If you take one it's three pounds, take two it will be five pounds," screamed a youth in his 20s.

Just outside the venue five Bangladeshi cricket fans were sitting on the walkway.

"We are waiting for Fatik bhai. He is bringing the tickets."

Brett scare for Aussies

CRICINFO, undated

Australia's preparation for the NatWest Series suffered a further blow when Brett Lee, their strike bowler, injured his shoulder in the warm-up game against Somerset at Taunton on Wednesday.

Lee, who has been Australia's leading wicket-taker in the last two one-day tournaments, was forced to leave the field after bowling just four overs and was sorely missed in the rest of the innings as Sanath Jayasuriya and Graeme Smith plundered the Australian bowlers during their magnificent 197-run opening partnership.

Ricky Ponting, who was visibly angered with his team's performance, felt that Lee's injury was a major concern. "He said the second last ball of his spell that he bowled he felt a really sharp pain in the back of his shoulder," Ponting was quoted as saying in the ABC News website.

"I knew something was wrong the last ball of the spell he bowled -- I ran straight to him to see how he was and he knew he was in a little bit of trouble then. That's about where it is though -- we don't know any more. I think he's going to have scans on it at some stage so we'll know exactly what's wrong."



GENUINE RAFIQUE! Bangladesh all-rounder Mohammad Rafique blasting a straight six at the Oval on Thursday.

Victoria players, manager punished

SPORTS REPORTER

The Metropolis Football League Committee (MFLC) has disciplined two footballers and the manager of Victoria Sporting Club for assaulting a referee during their First Division Football League match against Badda Jagarani on Tuesday.

Victoria manager Saharul Islam Tuhin has been banned from entering the ground for the club's next two matches while players Kashem and Babu have been handed bans for three matches and one match respectively.

The MFLC has also imposed a Tk 5,000 fine on Kashem.

Pepsi national volleyball from June 20

SPORTS REPORTER

The Pepsi National Volleyball Championships (22nd men's and 17th women's) will begin in the city on June 20.

A total of 16 teams including seven women's teams will participate in the four-day competition at the Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor National Stadium in Mirpur.

The teams are: Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Navy, Bangladesh Air Force, Bangladesh Rifles, Bangladesh Police, Khulna, Dhaka, Kushtia and Rangpur (men's) and BJMC, Pabna, Rajbari, Tangail, Rajshahi, Khulna and Gazipur (women's).

U-10 chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Twelve players were sharing the lead with maximum two points after conclusion of the second round games of the Under-10 boys and girls chess tournament yesterday.

The are: Tanveer, Aniruddha, Asif, Mohaimen, Soumik, Rabbi, Naim, Imtiaz, Rafin, Reza, Sudipta and Nayeem.

In the second round matches at the BCF hall-room, Tanveer beat Samiha, Aniruddha beat Tamzid, Asif beat Hedayet, Mohaimen beat Ashfaq, Soumik beat Hilali, Rabbi beat Apu, Naim beat Ashiq, Imtiaz beat Rezwan, Rafin beat Nazmul, Reza beat Shajal, Sudipta beat Lagan and Nayeem beat Emon.



PHOTO: COURTESY

TIGERS IN NUMBERS: Bangladeshi fans liven up the Oval on Thursday

Boom, boom Gilchrist

AFP, London

Adam Gilchrist has been voted the most destructive and intimidating batsman in international one-day cricket.

A poll of leading bowlers -- carried out by the Wisden Cricketer magazine -- identified the Australian as the man they fear most, ahead of the likes of Brian Lara, Shahid Afridi, Virender Sehwag and England's Andrew Flintoff.

South African bowler Makhaya Ntini described the left-hander as, "just unbelievable sometimes," while New Zealand spinner Daniel Vettori admitted: "I would never say any batsman is frightening, but there are some that you are less interested in bowling to than others -- that would be Gilchrist."

Pakistani Azhar Mahmood added: "Gilchrist -- I don't want to bowl to him, man."

Gilchrist played down the accolades with characteristic modesty. "I guess it is an honour in a strange

SEE PAGE 17 COL 4

F'ganj move to fourth

SPORTS REPORTER



Farashganj Sporting Club climbed to fourth place in the Premier League table with a 2-1 win over bottom-table Youngmen's Club Fakirerpool at the Banga-bandhu National Stadium on Thursday.

Goals from midfielders Kabir and Adafa on either side of the break secured the old Dhaka outfit's third win in four games to push their collection to nine points. Robin pulled one goal back for Youngmen's who suffered their fourth straight loss.

Farashganj, who began their league campaign with a stunning solitary goal victory over last year's runners-up Sheikh Russel KC, took the lead after 24 minutes when Kabir outpaced rival goalkeeper Shiplu on a low cross by Amirul from the right and placed the ball home.

Farashganj dominated the rest of the first half but Nigerian duo Felix and Adafa and captain Walid squandered easy chances.

Youngmen's, who suffered the worst Premiership defeat in history

this season when they went 10-0 down to Sheikh Russel, equalised four minutes into the second half. Robin, taking a through from fellow striker Baten, dashed down the middle before going round the keeper and pushing the ball into an open net.

Walid should have scored in the 57th minute when Youngmen's goalie Shiplu lost a cross from his grip but the Farashganj forward's weak placing shot on the rebound was cleared by Ariful almost from the goalline.

Adafa finally made it 2-1 in the 79th minute with a clinical finish when he placed a neat left footer past the far post after being set up by substitute Rony.

Farashganj had two more chances but Shiplu denied close range shots by Felix in the last five minutes.

Yellow cards: Khaled, Adafa (Farashganj) and Saikat (Youngmen's)

TEAMS
FARASHGANJ: Zia, Khaled, Scylla, Faisal, Apu, Arup, Kabir, A d a f a

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

AINING NATWEST SERIES FIXTURE

Date	Match	Venue
June 18	Australia v Bangladesh	Sophia Gardens, Cardiff
June 19	England v Australia	Bristol
June 21	England v Bangladesh (D/N)	Trent Bridge
June 23	England v Australia (D/N)	Riverside
June 25	Australia v Bangladesh	Old Trafford
June 26	England v Bangladesh	Headingley
June 28	England v Australia (D/N)	Edgbaston
June 30	Australia v Bangladesh	Canterbury
July 2	Final	Lord's

Note: Day matches start at 3:45 pm and day/night matches at 7:30 pm (all Bangladesh Standard Time)

Greg wants others to use the opportunity

Cricket

AFP, Bangalore

India's new cricket coach Greg Chappell said Thursday the absence of batting maestro Sachin Tendulkar from the team provided an opportunity for a new hero to emerge from the ranks.

The 56-year-old Australian cricket legend, who took over for a two-year term from New Zealander John Wright, also defended out-of-form skipper Sourav Ganguly and

said he would evolve a new coaching format to suit India.

Chappell said the absence of Tendulkar, who has been ruled out of international action for four months following elbow surgery, was a cause for concern.

"The best thing that can happen to Sachin and Indian cricket is for him to get fit. That is a process that will take many weeks," Chappell told reporters in Bangalore.

"It also becomes an opportunity for someone else (to) come up to be the next champion cricketer for India. He may not have got an opportunity so far since Sachin was there," Chappell said. "It might turn out to be a blessing in disguise."

Tendulkar is the fourth-highest scorer in Test cricket with 10,134 runs in 123 matches. He is also a world record holder in one-day cricket with 13,642 runs in 348 matches, including 38 hundreds.

The swashbuckling batsman is recovering from elbow surgery in London last month.

The tennis elbow had been troubling Tendulkar for nearly a year, forcing him to skip three major one-day tournaments and two home Tests against Australia last season.

Chappell, the former captain and selector of Australia, has taken charge at a time when captain Ganguly is struggling to overcome the worst slump of his career and pacemen are either reeling with injuries or out of form.

Coaching India has never been for the faint-hearted, considering the inflated expectations of hundreds of millions of fans and an ever-probing media.

But Chappell, appointed until the 2007 World Cup in the West Indies, said he was up to the task.

SEE PAGE 17 COL 2

Hosts win without ease

AFP, Frankfurt



Hosts Germany got off to a winning start in the Confederations Cup but their 4-3 victory over Australia was far from convincing.

It was Jurgen Klinsmann's first competitive match in charge of Germany and the 1990 World Cup winner was given the perfect start when Kevin Kuranyi opened the scoring after 18 minutes.

But Australia are not short of fighting spirit and twice came from behind with Josip Skoko (21) and John Aloisi (31) levelling after Per Mertesacker had restored Germany's lead on 23 minutes.

Four goals in 13 crazy minutes summed up the match and there was more goals to come in the second half.

Michael Ballack scored a 60th minute penalty and then Lukas Podolski clinched the match rendering Aloisi's late goal nothing more than a consolation.

"When you score three goals you expect to win," bemoaned Australia manager Frank Farina.

"The referee made some poor decisions throughout the match and now it will be very difficult for us as we need to win both remaining group games."

Germany now sit top of Group A with Argentina, who beat Tunisia 2-1 earlier on Wednesday, but the shaky defence concerns manager Klinsmann.

"The defence is very inexperienced and is going to make mistakes," said Klinsmann.

"We just have to be happy to start with a win and have to improve as the competition goes on."

His opposite number in the dug-out Farina will also be keen to shore up an Australia rearguard that looked uneasy throughout.

With just 40 seconds gone Podolski almost put Germany in front but his fierce shot went inches wide of Mark Schwarzer's post.

Kuranyi then did put Germany ahead in the 18th minute guiding in a shot from Arne Friedrich with Schwarzer left wrong-footed.

Australia may have feared the worst but took 180 seconds to draw level with Skoko drilling a free-kick under a dreadful German wall after Robert Huth produced a cynical body check outside the area.

They say teams are most vulnerable after scoring and Australia were dormant in the 23rd minute

when Mertesacker restored Germany's lead with an accomplished volley.

It was Mertesacker's first goal for his country but he did not have long time to celebrate with Aloisi levelling after 31 minutes with a left-footed drive.

German goalkeeper Oliver Kahn was celebrating his 36th birthday but could not have anticipated his defenders gifting Australia so much space for their two equalisers.

After some heated challenges, which suggest both these sides are taking the tournament seriously, Klinsmann's side forged ahead for the third time on the hour mark.

Arne Friedrich was judged to have been felled in the area and the

reliable Michael Ballack stepped up to convert the spot-kick.

"We cannot score four in every game," declared Ballack. "We need to be much better at the back."

Meanwhile, Australia captain Craig Moore could not contain his rage at the penalty kick.

"It was a soft penalty," said Moore. "When the third goal went in it was always going to be difficult."

"The referee continued to make some strange decisions too which did not help."

Podolski scored two minutes from time but Aloisi struck again in stoppage time before the final whistle brought an end to a scintillating match.



PHOTO: AFP

LEADING FROM THE FRONT: German captain Michael Ballack about to score from the penalty spot against Australia at Frankfurt on Wednesday.

DAY'S
EVENT

Premier Football League
Brothers Union v Arambagh KS
(5:00 pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium