



Did U Know?

Tapash Baisya (3/69) produced the best figures for Bangladesh against Australia, bettering Mohammad Rafique's two for 31 at Darwin in 2003.



Lennart Johansson

(UEFA president)
"Companies could make use of a sweaty, lovely looking girl playing on the ground, with the rainy weather. It would sell."
On his idea of bringing women's football into the 21st century.



BTV
NatWest ODI Series
Bangladesh v Australia
Live at 3:45 pm

ESPN
NatWest ODI Series
Bangladesh v Australia
Live from 3:45 pm up to 9:30 pm
FIFA Confederations Cup
First Semifinal
Germany v Brazil
Live at 9:55 pm

STAR Sports
Wimbledon Championships
Third Round
Live at 5:00 pm



BDR, BJMC Pepsi v'ball champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Rifles regained the men's title and BJMC retained the women's crown in the Pepsi National Volleyball Championship at the Mirpur Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium yesterday.

Bangladesh Rifles beat

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Singing for Saturday



AL-AMIN from Manchester

Saturday is not a day any Bangladeshi would like to consider a good omen. Rather it has always been related with something sad. But cricket fans in Bangladesh will hope for a same Saturday when Habibul Bashar's men take on Australia at Old Trafford today.

Bangladesh pulled off their biggest triumph in one-day cricket on June 18, which was incidentally Saturday, against world champions Australia at Cardiff.

The repeat clash against Australia will incidentally take place on Saturday, and a few things look very common, as it was a week ago. Bashar's men did not train the day before their game against Australia at Cardiff. They also enjoyed a rest day yesterday.

But there were reasons behind that and the team management rightly decided to give the cricketers a break before the back-to-back games with Bangladesh's next match against England at Headingley, Leeds on Sunday.

"We have been travelling a lot. So, we need some rest before two games in successive days," said Bashar. The whole team went to the mosque to offer jumma prayers near

Rou-shelm, the famous street in Manchester which is called the longest curry mile.

The wicket at Old Trafford is also a look alike of Cardiff.

"But I have not seen such a wicket with little grass on it anywhere in England. It will probably take a bit of spin and if the weather was not gloomy we could have easily decided to field Manzarul Islam," said Bashar while talking about the prospect of including a second spinner.

But Bashar played down the expectations revolving round Mohammad Ashraful after the little right-hander crossed every conceivable imagination with a magnificent hundred against Australia followed by a blazing 94 against England.

"I know people are expecting a lot from him. But at the same time it is an additional pressure on him," said the Bangladesh captain.

But the cricket world will definitely focus its attention on the 21-year-old genius who the coach termed an 'underachiever'.

Ashraful is now the mental strength of the team and like any other established sides the rest of the members are eager to prosper revolve round him. His two superb innings have certainly injected confidence among the team that there was nothing to be afraid the big names.

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PHOTO: FOCUSBANGLA.COM

MIGHTY ASH! Bangladesh star Mohammad Ashraful obliging an autograph hunter in Manchester on Friday. Bangladesh take on Australia in their fourth NatWest tri-series encounter here today.

ICC ANNUAL MEETING Subs coming soon



CRICINFO, London

When the International Cricket Council meets this weekend at Lord's, it will discuss the introduction of substitutes in one-day cricket, and the use of more technology to assist umpires in decision-making. Interestingly, the use of substitutes could come into play in the near future.

"There is a clear possibility it could come into force for the NatWest Challenge," an ICC spokesman is quoted as saying on

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PHOTO: STAR

Farashganj's Nigerian defender Adafa (L) and his compatriot Patrick of Arambagh are locked in a tussle during their Premier Bank Premier Football League clash at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Thursday.

Farashganj miss chance

SPORTS REPORTER

Promotees Farashganj Sporting Club failed to snatch the top position in the the Premier Football League when they were held to a goalless draw by Arambagh Krira Sangha at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Friday.

The old Dhaka outfit went into the match with the chance of topping the traditional powerhouses from summit but the day's outcome allowed Mohammedan Sporting Club to keep their solo lead intact.

Farashganj improved their tally to 13 points from six matches and share the second place with holders Brothers Union. Another title aspirant team Muktiyoddha Sangsad are one point adrift in third.

On the other hand it was the second draw for Arambagh who have five points from the same number of outings.

Farashganj, who have lost only one game, against Brothers, in five matches before yesterday's match, failed to produce same brand of eye-catching football.

Both the teams played a physical game. Arambagh enjoyed superior ball possession but failed to create a single opportunity to break the deadlock. They also suffered a big blow when their Kenyan striker Dominic left the field in the 26th minute after suffering an injury following an aerial tussle with the Farashganj custodian Zia who also could not return after the first half.

Farashganj only came alive with ten minutes to go and they had two good chances to cash in. But Arambagh goalkeeper Shakil foiled the attempts.

In the 82nd minute Farashganj's Nigerian striker Felix got inside the opponents' danger zone after receiving the ball from Arup but his left-footer was fisted away by Shakil who the denied Johnny's right-footer salvo.

Yellow cards: Johnny (Farashganj), Akram, Kallol and Rintu (Arambagh).

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BRAZIL V GERMANY

LIVE ON ESPN 9:55PM

Hosts fancy revenge

AFP, Nuremberg



Germany and Brazil have won the World Cup eight times between them and the two great footballing nations lock horns again here on Saturday in the semi-final of the Confederations Cup.

The game is a repeat of the 2002 World Cup final, when Ronaldo scored both goals to help Brazil win 2-0, and the German media are billing this match as a chance for revenge three years on.

"Everyone wants to beat Brazil," declared Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira. "All the teams that we play against produce their best game of the year."

Without the competitive edge of World Cup qualifiers hosts Germany are channelling their energy into the Confederations Cup but West Germany's 1974 World Cup winner, Franz Beckenbauer, is not sure Brazil are doing the same.

"From watching Brazil I sense they are not really taking this competition seriously," Beckenbauer said. "The will to win is not there and this is a great chance for Germany. I think our name is on the cup."

Germany have failed to beat Brazil since a 2-1 friendly win over Cologne back in 1993.

Manager Jurgen Klinsmann played in that game and hopes for a similar result to book a spot in the Frankfurt final on June 29.

"We are determined to reach the final," vowed Klinsmann. "Brazil are very technical and the current world champions but we have our own attributes."

Since Klinsmann took over as coach in July of last year Germany have lost just once - a 3-1 reverse against South Korea in December - with hungry, young players combined with a more attacking

approach.

"We cannot beat Germany if we play like they play, we must play the Brazilian way, the way we know how," said Parreira.

"We want to win this cup but have to consider the physical condition of our players. Some of them are shattered after long seasons."

Germany will want to play at a high tempo and prevent Brazil from probing for an opening with long spells of possession as Kaka, Ronaldinho and rising star Robinho are all capable of opening a defence on their own.

Germany will field their strongest team with captain Michael Ballack, who memorably missed the World

Cup final against Brazil through suspension, back after being rested for the 2-2 group draw with Argentina.

Bayern Munich team-mate Oliver Kahn, one survivor from the World Cup loss, will miss the tie with Jens Lehmann in goal as Klinsmann continues to rotate goalkeepers.

Bastian Schweinsteiger is the main absentee through suspension but Klinsmann is boosted by the return of Lukas Podolski who could partner Kevin Kuranyi in attack.

Kuranyi was born in Rio and lived there until he was 15 but Brazil's loss is Germany's gain.

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PHOTO: AFP

CAN WE HAVE GERMANY FOR DINNER? Brazil superstar Ronaldinho (L) and teammate Robinho taking dinner on Thursday in Bergisch Gladbach.

Aussie service resumes



AFP, Chester-Le-Street (England)

World champions Australia won their first match of the triangular series after beating England by 57 runs in Thursday's day/night one-day international here at the Riverside.

Australia's victory owed much to returning players Andrew Symonds and Brett Lee.

Symonds top-scored with 73 in Australia's 266 for five after a two-game ban imposed by Australia officials for being out late Friday saw him miss Saturday's shock five-wicket defeat against Bangladesh in Cardiff and Sunday's three-wicket loss against England in Bristol.

Then fast bowler Lee, making his tournament bow after a right shoulder injury, sparked a collapse that saw England slump to six for three.

Last-wicket pair Darren Gough

(a career-best 46 not out) and Stephen Harmison (11 not out) batted out the overs with a stand of 50 as England finished on 209 for nine.

"It was a pretty important win for us in the scheme of this tournament but, more importantly than that, I think it repays us for the hard work we've put in over the last few days, particularly after Saturday's loss," Australia captain Ricky Ponting told reporters afterwards.

"As I said at the time we improved a lot going into Sunday's game and if we improved as much in this game I said we'd be pretty hard to beat and that's the way it's worked out."

"The bowling early was fantastic, McGrath and Lee really led the way for us. But we know if we do the basics of the game well we are going to be right in every contest."

He added of man-of-the-match Symonds: "It's great to have him back. He's a match-winner. The most disappointing thing was hav-

ing him out.

Symonds, who put on 142 for the fourth wicket with Damien Martyn, 68 not out, said: "The important point for me is that a difficult week has finished with a win."

England stand-in captain Marcus Trescothick deputising as England captain for the injured Michael Vaughan (groin strain), admitted he may have erred in opting to field first.

"I don't think the lights had much effect but the wicket deteriorated more than I expected."

But he insisted no long-term damage had been done. "They bowled well but the confidence and spirit in the side goes deeper than one defeat and I don't think this will hurt us too much."

When England batted, Lee -- who finished with two for 27 -- immediately settled into a probing line and length.

Neither Trescothick or fellow left-hander Andrew Strauss looked

comfortable and Strauss played on to Lee for three.

Trescothick, meanwhile had struggled to get bat on ball at all and, when he did, flat-footedly edged a McGrath delivery angled across him to wicket-keeper Adam Gilchrist for a 15-ball nought.

It was a familiar sight from previous Anglo-Australian contests and perhaps a foretaste of things to come in the Ashes Test series.

Two balls later Paul Collingwood, returning to his Durham home ground 48 hours after becoming only the second man to score a century and take five wickets in the same one-day international, the 168-run win over Bangladesh at Trent Bridge, played on to a full McGrath delivery for nought.

England had lost three wickets for two runs in six balls.

Andrew Flintoff and Vikram Solanki then stanchoned the flow of wickets.

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