

BFF's step to groom young booters

BDNEWS, Dhaka

In a bid to groom juvenile footballers across the country, the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has decided to organise long-term training camps for 12-14 age group...

Zola calls it a day

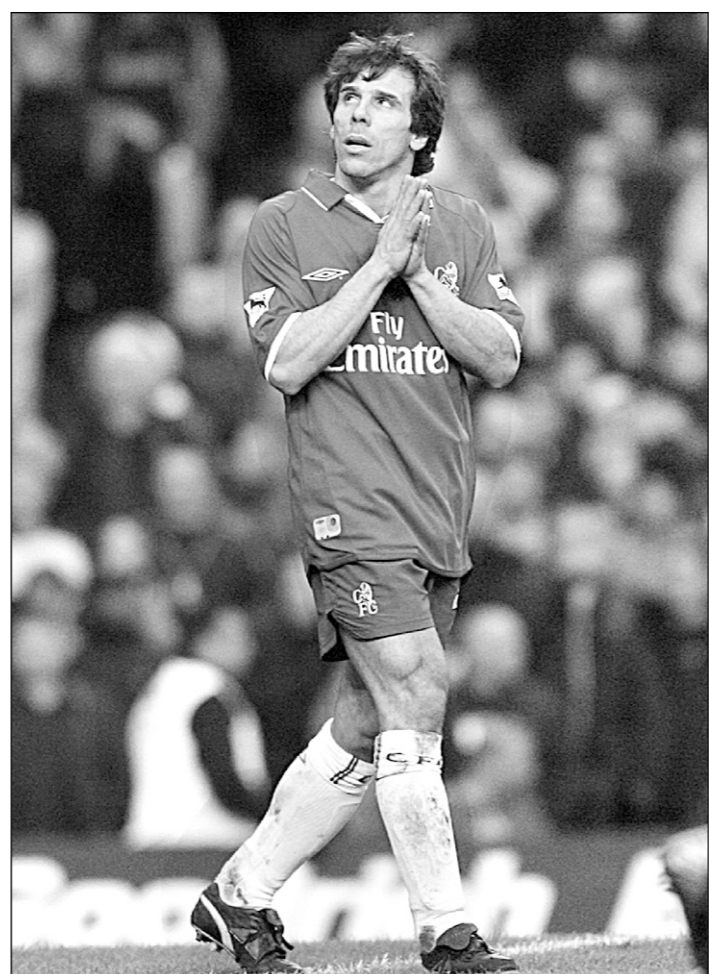
Football REUTERS, Milan

Italian forward Gianfranco Zola announced his retirement on Wednesday bringing to an end a 21-year glittering career that graced the English Premier League and Serie A.

best ever player in 2003 before he left to join Italian side Cagliari, helping them to promotion to the top flight.

He joined English premier league side Chelsea in 1996 to begin a seven-year stint in which fans came to adore him and opposition defences grew to fear him.

Team mates frequently commented on Zola's dedicated approach to training and personal fitness even in the final years of his career when he enjoyed most of his success.



GIANFRANCO ZOLA

A career which began in the regional leagues with Sardinian club Nuorese ended back on home soil with Zola helping Cagliari re-establish themselves in Serie A.

He scored 13 goals in the Serie B promotion campaign and then helped Cagliari to the semi-finals of the Italian Cup and a comfortable mid-table finish this season.

"Everyone knows that I came to Cagliari full of passion and with a dream - to give my help to the team in getting back to Serie A and staying there. We did it and that fills me with pride," he said.

His last appearance for Italy was in the goalless draw against England in a World Cup qualifier in October 1997 at Rome's Olympic stadium.

ICC includes 4 new members

REUTERS, London

Slovenia, Mali and the English Channel islands of Jersey and Guernsey have been granted membership of the International Cricket Council (ICC), the start of a journey that could one day pit them against the world's best.

The four will join nations like Iran and Panama as affiliate members who can compete in ICC regional development games and potentially qualify for the World Cup, cricket's one-day international showpiece.

The ICC also elevated Botswana, Japan, Kuwait, Belgium and Thailand to associate member status at its annual conference at Lord's on Tuesday, putting them on a par with Scotland and a notch down from full members such as Australia.

The leading lower tier sides compete for the ICC Trophy in Ireland next month with the five best teams from that competition qualifying for the 2007 World Cup in the West Indies.

The ICC has 54 affiliate, 32 associate and 10 full members.

Olympic champ Lewis retires

AFP, London

Denise Lewis, Olympic heptathlon gold medalist at the 2000 Sydney Games, has quit athletics.

The 32-year-old had been expected to compete at both the World Championships in six weeks and chase a third title in the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne next March.

Lewis claimed her first major title at the 1994 Commonwealth Games and retained the title four years later in Kuala Lumpur.

The victory in Malaysia came only weeks after winning the European title in Budapest and the following year, as she shrugged off injury problems, she finished runner-up at the World Championships.

Then came her Olympic Games success in Sydney, where she was battered against a recurring Achilles injury which at one stage looked like preventing her from completing the competition.

Lewis has been hit by injury since and it was three years before she contested her next competition, finishing fifth at the World Championships.

She has not competed this year and although she claimed she wanted to compete in August's World Championships, she had not attained the qualifying standard of 6,100 points.

"I don't come to major decisions quickly, especially when they are life-changing," she said Wednesday.

"I have thought it through and I am clear. I am sitting here and I am happy. I am thinking about my future and it is a future that does not include participating in athletics."

First point

FROM PAGE 12

Henry's shot before an Dipali's foreign recruit Idris Mutubi saw his header go inches wide of the target.

The newcomers finally cashed in on a rival defence lapse to break the deadlock in the 83rd minute. Wanderers defender Mustafizur fumbled to clear a poor goalkick from their own custodian Indrajit and Ugandan Idris, who snatched the ball, made no mistake to score his third league goal with an angular shot.

But the joy was short lived as only two minutes as wanderers midfielder Jalaluddin equalised with a left-footer into the far post after meeting a back pass by Patrick on the top of the box.

Wanderers, however, were denied by woodwork twice in the second session as a Henry right-footer hit the crosspiece before Masud Alam's effort also came off the post.

Meanwhile, today's Premier League match between Abahani and last year's runners-up Sheikh Russel Kirra Chakra has been postponed due to daylong hartal called by the Opposition. The match has been rescheduled for tomorrow.

BRIEF SCORES

AUSTRALIA: 261 for 9 in 50 overs (Symonds 74, Hussey 45, Martyn 36, Ponting 34; Gough 3-70, Harmison 2-38, S Jones 2-53)

ENGLAND: 37 for 1 in 6 overs (Strauss 25; McGrath 1-24)

Result: Match ended as no-result.

Tigers want

FROM PAGE 12

The one-day series has been one of great disappointment for paceman Mashrafe bin-Mortuza, who has got only one wicket so far despite bowling very well.

"The luck has not been with me in the series. This is the one last chance for me and I want to forget the bitter days with some wickets against Australia," said Mashrafe.

Ashrafual was watching the washed out game between Australia and England at Edgbaston at a pub on Tuesday. He wanted England to beat Australia for a different reason.

"The match should go on and I want England to beat Australia because it will give us an opportunity to defeat Australia again and finish on equal wins with them," said the exciting right-hander.

It was definitely a high expectation to beat Australia twice but Ashrafual certainly has the ability to devastate any bowling in the world and he has shown it in the tournament.

"I don't know whether to start the same way I did against them in the last two games. It will all depend on how many runs the openers put on the board. Luck has been on my side against them and if I can get a start I will definitely play a big innings," said Ashrafual who considers Glenn McGrath as the toughest bowler in the world to hit.

The first Bangladeshi

FROM PAGE 12

in Dhaka or indeed how long he lived in Dhaka before he was shipped off to public school in Rugby. But it does not take much to imagine a young English lad playing cricket, perhaps with his native chumps, in the dusty lawns of his fathers' bungalow in pre-mutiny Dhaka.

One of the things that I love about cricket is its unique sense of tradition, history and nostalgia. It is a sense which I find sadly lacking in Bangladesh though, as epitomised by the surrender to football of the Bangladesh National Stadium, scene of not only our first Test match but also of seven Test matches during the Pakistan era. If we are to become the best in the game, not only must we perform on the field, but we must also continue in the best traditions of the game.

With this thought in mind, I would like to propose that the trophy for the rubber in Test match cricket between Australia and Bangladesh should be named after BB Cooper. And while such a proposal is considered by the powers that may be, I shall dream of the day when the Bangladesh cricket captain holds aloft the BB Cooper Trophy after securing the series rubber against Australia at the MCG! Who knows, with the likes of Mohammad Ashrafual, Aftab Ahmed, Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza and the ones to follow, that day may be sooner than one thinks!!

- The author is a

WORLD YOUTH U-20 CHAMPIONSHIPS

Argentina see off arch rivals

Football AFP, Utrecht

Argentina scored a goal three minutes into injury-time to condemn arch-rivals and holders Brazil to a 2-1 defeat here on Tuesday in the World Youth Under-20 Championships semi-finals.

Argentina - for whom first goal scorer Lionel Messi was outstanding - will meet Nigeria in Saturday's final here after they trounced Morocco 3-0.

While Brazil had the first scoring opportunity, a 30 metres freekick from Roberto which was well held by goalkeeper Oscar Ustari, it was Argentina who took the lead through Barcelona's 18-year-old Messi in the seventh minute who unleashed a fierce 20 metres left foot shot that beat Brazilian goalkeeper Renan.

The Brazilians dominated the first-half without really threatening their rivals goal and it was the Argentines who hit the back of the net a second time only for it to be ruled out for offside against Neri Cardozo.

However Brazil finally levelled in the 66th minute when a Renato freekick took a deflection off Pablo Zabaleta to beat Ustari.

Justice was done, though, when Zabaleta sealed the Argentines place in the final late in injury-time who put away a fine centre from Aguero.

Argentinian coach Francisco Ferraro praised both sides for what he termed a great match fit for the 15,000 spectators.

"It is always special to beat Brazil especially in this classic match," he said.

"And even more so because it saw us get to the final.

"I would like to congratulate both teams for such a great show.

"Unfortunately there had to be a loser and happily it wasn't us."

His viewpoint could hardly have been more different from that of his Brazilian counterpart Rene Weber, who didn't take defeat squarely on the chin and reverted to the usual defence of a loser that it was the referee's fault.

"The Argentines committed a lot of fouls that weren't punished with yellow cards in the first-half while the referee penalised us."

"Certain anti-sporting gestures by the Argentines also went unpunished.

"The Argentinians defended too much to make it a great match and waited for us to make mistakes," he moaned.

Ashrafual a possibility

ICC World XI to be named on July 2

Cricket

ICC MEDIA RELEASE

The names of the 20 leading international cricketers selected for the International Cricket Council World XI Test and ODI squads for October's Johnnie Walker Super Series will be announced by the ICC on July 2.

Sunil Gavaskar's selection panel of former greats is set to meet in London to tackle the challenge of which stars to leave out of the initial squads of 30 players named in May.

"We're all aware just how difficult it's going to be to leave out 10 players from each squad when every one of them is either a proven, outstanding performer or a young player who has shown great promise in making it into our initial squads," said Gavaskar, the ex-India captain who chairs the six-man selection panel.

Adding to the complexity of the task will be the panel's commitment to review the performances of all

international players between meetings. This has the potential to result in new players from outside the first squads of 30 being included if the panel believe performances demand it.

"Current form has to be taken into consideration and so players involved in recent series in the Caribbean and those playing in England will naturally come under our scrutiny," said Sunil Gavaskar.

Players with claims in this category could include West Indies captain Shivnarine Chanderpaul, who has been in outstanding batting form since taking over as skipper from Brian Lara. The Guyanese left-hander is averaging 77.52 in his last 13 Tests and has a career average of 42.5 against Australia.

Another captain, Sri Lanka's Marvan Atapattu, may also come into the reckoning with 899 runs from his last 10 Tests at 52.88 including four centuries.

In the one-day game, South Africa's Boeta Dippenaar has staked a late claim with more than 300 runs at 105 and a strike rate of 92, in the recent series in the

Caribbean.

With the ability to perform against Australia being a major factor, English and Bangladeshi players have had a stage on which to parade their talents. Mohammad Ashrafual's outstanding century against Ricky Ponting's side and his follow-up 94 against England in the NatWest Series may put him in contention for the one-day squad.

Steve Harmison's 5-33 against Australia in the same competition will remind selectors of his limited-overs credentials, which could see him challenge for the one-day squad, to go with the Test berth he currently holds.

In keeping with the tradition of naming a captain from within a squad of players, the skipper or possibly skippers, of the ICC World XI teams will not be named until the final squads are selected in mid-August.

The squads will be supported by a specially selected coaching and management team, with key positions likely to be filled by individuals already holding similar high profile positions in the international game.

Federer, Hewitt in last four

WIMBLEDON

AFP, London

Roger Federer and Lleyton Hewitt, who have monopolised the Wimbledon title in the last three years, will clash in a potentially epic semifinal showdown on Friday.

The match-up will be the latest in a long-running series of bruising

encounters stretching back to 1999 and featuring 16 clashes with double defending champion Federer ahead 9-7.

Federer, the winner here in 2003 and 2004, reached the semifinals by racking up a 34th successive grass court win courtesy of a 7-5, 6-2, 7-6 (7/2) win against Chile's Fernando Gonzalez.

Hewitt, the 2002 champion, booked his place in his second

career Wimbledon semi-final seeing off Spain's Feliciano Lopez 7-5, 6-4, 7-6 (7/2).

"I played a great match today," said Federer who hasn't lost to Hewitt since a 2003 Davis Cup tie where the Australian came back from a two-set deficit.

"It's my third semifinal in a row and Wimbledon has been good to me so far."

Federer beat Hewitt here in the quarterfinals in 2004 but the third-seeded Australian is relishing renewing his rivalry with the Swiss world number one.

"It's great to reach my second semifinal here. The last time I went on to win the tournament so hopefully that's a good omen," said Hewitt.

"It will be a tough match against Federer, he's the world number one, it will be like a final. I'll play my game and see what happens."

The 24-year-old Gonzalez, the first Chilean to reach the last eight here since Ricardo Acuna in 1985, came into his third appearance in a Grand Slam quarter-final as the only player in the tournament not to have dropped a set in the four previous rounds.

But he was quickly in trouble against Federer. He dropped his serve in the fourth game but hit back to level at 4-4.



PHOTO: AFP

Roger Federer of Switzerland celebrates after winning a point against Chilean Fernando Gonzalez at the Wimbledon Championships yesterday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Scenery 41 Garbage 51 Jarrai 25 — barge ball Na Na chever 45 Prolonged 6 Where 26 Score units battle the (Abbr.) 7 Rue the 28 Featherly access-ory for one 8 Shape 30 Slangy shifter? 9 — 31 Lemieux millieu 32 Pirouette pivot 33 Monopolist's desire 36 Picnic hamperer 37 Affixed an X 40 Spanish queen 42 Chocolate source 43 "G.W.T.W" surname 44 White — 45 Bedazzle 46 Early birds? 48 "The Practice" practice 49 Equi- 50 Basketball setting 51 Weed whacker 47 Make coffee, maybe 48 Undeniably 49 Make hamperer 50 Affixed an X 51 Spanish queen 52 Chocolate source 53 "G.W.T.W" surname 54 White — 55 Bedazzle 56 Early birds? 58 "The Practice" practice 59 Equi- 60 Basketball setting 61 Weed whacker

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CRYPTOQUIP

R Q S S Q X Q I R H L T S P F W X

W Q F S P A Q K C A Q L T Q I P P

A Q Q B : " S T P W P F S S T H K L F

H K O H Y P C B P Y O P C . "

Yesterday's Cryptquip: AT FIRST PA DIDN'T LIKE TO POLISH FURNITURE ONE BIT, BUT HE SOON TOOK A SHINE TO IT.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: Q equals O

The Cryptquip 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.

Bangladesh's Mr

FROM PAGE 12

Cup debacle in South Africa. His technical input has hardly been addressed to the cricket fans and Nasu was quite enthusiastic to bear his soul to this reporter during Tuesday's training session at the St. Lawrence cricket ground in Canterbury.

"Basically, I use two software, one for practice and the other for matches. My first job is to take ball by ball videos in a match. Suppose a bowler is bowling, I need to fill about 35 boxes of different queries programmed in the software. For instance I have to follow where the ball was pitched, the batsman who played the shot, how many runs had been scored of that delivery and so on. Believe it or not I have to complete these between every delivery."

"Sometimes it is very tough for me when a fielder misfields on the boundary. Beside, when the spinners operate, it becomes hellish. I only enjoy when it is a dot ball," said the 43-year-old Nasu.

He said that he also has to ensure video clips of Bangladesh's next opponents so that the coach and the captain get all the answers in advance going into a series.

"Our next series is against Sri Lanka and I have already made arrangements to record their games against the West Indies so that I can later analyse the style of batting or bowling of every Sri Lankan players," said Nasu.

Nasu is busy in England giving his input to the cricketers because of the non-availability of Sky Sports, which is the only sport channel covering cricket, at the team hotel.

Skipper Habibul Bashar after being dismissed early in a match thought his head was down while playing that particular shot. So, he went straight to Nasu just to confirm whether his fears were correct.

Nasu's software provides super slow motion of an action and can be used as still picture. At times, that helps to solve arguments.

"Javed got out playing across the line against England and the coach argued that he should have played the shot in a way similar to the attempt that had brought him a boundary in the same over. Javed said that he had played exactly that shot. I played the replay and it was discovered that Javed was very much correct and the only difference was that his head was not as down as it was in the previous shot."

Nasu has every answer to every query and the cricketers find it a great help like every other cricket team does. Now they can not think of a day without the laptop that once evoked a lot of humor when an innovative Woolmer first used it.

Advertisement for 'The First Bangladeshi' featuring a crossword puzzle grid and a list of clues for the crossword.

Barrister