



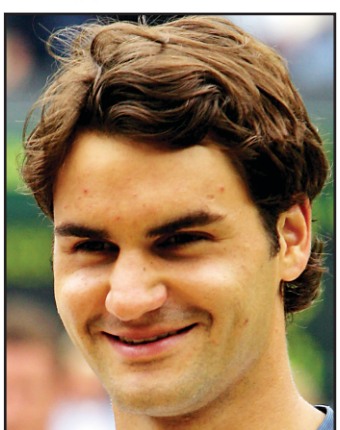
Did U Know?

The last married woman to win the Wimbledon women's singles title was Chris Evert Lloyd in 1981.



Premier Football League

Brothers Union vs Abahani (5:00 pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium.



Roger Federer

(World No 1 tennis player)
"The two Wimbledon trophies and the US Open are in my dining room, the (2004) Australian Open is in my office. Maybe this one is going to push out the US Open. I will put that in the lounge."
Joking with a reporter after winning his third Wimbledon title.

Bangladesh miss Olympic vote

Bangladesh was deprived of its right to cast a vote for the 2012 Olympics host city.

According to a high official of the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA), it did not receive an invitation to join the 117th IOC session in Singapore, which today would decide from five cities -- Paris, London, Madrid, New York and Moscow -- who would host the 2012 Summer Games.

How they vote

After months of campaigning five major cities -- London, Paris, Madrid, New York and Moscow -- will finally learn on Wednesday which has prevailed in the battle to host the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.

Their fate lies in the hands of the International Olympic Committee members, who may take less than an hour to reach a verdict. IOC members will vote in rounds, by secret electronic ballot, until one city has more than 50 per cent of the votes. The city with the least votes will drop out each time, so it may take four rounds to reach a final decision. Some 100 of the 116 members will vote to begin with. The session will, however, begin with the candidate cities' presentations, in the following order: 11.00am (Bangladesh Standard Time) Paris, 12.30 (BST) -- New York, 2.00pm (BST) -- Moscow, 16.30pm London (BST) and 18.00pm Madrid. Then at 19.15 (BST), IOC Evaluation Commission chairwoman Nawal el Moutawakel will present the Commission's report, which will be followed by the IOC members' vote. The announcement ceremony will start at 21:30pm with the result being announced thereafter by IOC president Jacques Rogge.

Muktijoddha sack Manik

Football
SPORTS REPORTER

In a sensational decision, the Muktijoddha Sangsad Krira Chakra board last afternoon sacked the club's football coach Shafiqul Islam Manik.

Manik's removal comes halfway through the ongoing Premier Football League with the club languishing in fourth. However, in another twist to the matter, Muktijoddha officials sat in the evening to discuss the Manik issue and have convened a meeting for today apparently under pressure to review the sacking.

In an official statement Muktijoddha Sangsad said that their long-serving and most successful coach was 'discharged from the coaching duties because of his indifference, negligence and disregard to official decisions and breach of club discipline.'

But it was learnt from sources close to the club that disagreement with the officials played little role behind the sacking. Rather, than players were reportedly frustrated and angry with Manik's strategy this season and put pressure on the club's high-ups to remove him.

When contacted Muktijoddha secretary Shah Alam Chowdhury also admitted that the players' disillusion with the coach's preferred tactics prompted the decision.

"All our members seriously felt that the players were not satisfied with his coaching style. There is no doubt that he is a very nice person



SHAFIQU L ISLAM MANIK

but I must say he has failed to do justice to his reputation. I must say discipline was also a major factor behind our action," said Chowdhury.

Manik has been instrumental in turning the Reds into a top force in domestic football since taking over in 1997. He won the Premier

League, National League and Federation Cup titles with the club.

"I don't want to underestimate his contribution but you must also respect the players' sentiments. We have roped in the best booters in the country but the quality of football the team had demonstrated under him has raised a lot of questions from every quarter and some have even alleged that he is destroying the careers of national players," explained Chowdhury.

Manik meanwhile was shell-shocked by the decision and blamed certain quarters for conspiring against him.

"I don't think any on-field matter prompted the decision. They did not even talk to me before taking the decision. I think my strong personality angered some officials," said Manik.

"Under me Muktijoddha have already won two titles this season and we are still not out of contention in the league. So there is no scope to point at the performance. They have raised questions about discipline but unfortunately discipline to them is always saying 'yes sir'."

Some senior players of Muktijoddha on condition of anonymity meanwhile criticized the coaches ultra-defensive strategy. They pointed out to the treatment meted

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International Master Reefat Bin Sattar (L) and Mohammad Ali are engaged in a cerebral war during their first round game of the Greenwich University FIDE Rating Chess tournament at the NSC conference room yesterday.

BROTHERS V ABAHANI TODAY All to play for

SPORTS REPORTER

With two rounds left in the first-leg, defending champions Brothers Union will be pitched against Abahani in a crucial Premier Football League battle with both sides eyeing to consolidate second spot. The big match kicks off at 5 pm at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, after a three-day break due to inclement weather.

A win will guarantee both sides the second place but Brothers, on 16 points, can briefly take the lead ahead of table-toppers Mohammedan (17 points), who have an opportunity to keep their position by beating second-from bottom Youngmen's Club three days later.

The break has allowed the two local giants to bury their injury problems as well as giving rest to the tired legs. Masud Rana is expected to return to the Brothers backline apart from Moroccan midfielder Hicham Inani after miss-

ing out in the last game. On the other hand, the Sky Blues will be relieved to see Nizam back under the bar after absence in three games.

The men in orange, who began the league with four straight wins but suffered an upset 1-0 defeat to Arambagh and drew goalless with Mohammedan, revealed their real strength in their last match when they came from a goal down to crush Muktijoddha 3-1.

Taking inspiration from their scintillating second-half display against Muktijoddha, Brothers will no doubt go for the kill against Abahani, who have lost both their matches to the Gopibagh outfit earlier in the season.

"We were not playing well but conceding an early goal against Muktijoddha was the wake-up call we needed to find the rhythm," said Brothers manager Amer Khan.

There was more good news for Brothers as their Russian striker Victor Edwards, the top scorer last

year, was relieved of family problems.

"Victor has not been at his best. But I think he is prepared to flourish after knowing that his wife has given birth to a son on the night of our Muktijoddha match," Amer said adding that young striker Emily, who struck twice in the last game, will start as Victor's striking partner ahead of Khokon.

"There is always pressure when you play crowd-favourite teams like Abahani and Mohammedan. But the attendance is so low this season that we don't have to bother about any crowd pressure. As there is little difference between the top teams, I think performance on the given day will matter."

Having struggled throughout the season, Abahani were almost written off as title contenders when they took only two points from three consecutive matches -- draws against Arambagh and Mohammedan before losing 2-0 to Muktijoddha.

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FIDE RATING CHESS Reefat gets going

SPORTS REPORTER

Reefat Bin Sattar made a winning start in the Greenwich University FIDE Rating Chess Tournament in an attempt to gain his desired rating for the Grand Master norm.

Reefat won the first round board against Mohammad Ali at the National Sports Council conference room to share the lead along with ten other players.

In the day's other matches, Grand Master Ziaur Rahman beat Lavlu, Rajib beat Hasan, Rakib beat Sohail, Parag beat Uten, Javed beat Firoz, Shakil beat Anwar, Delwar beat Debraj and Rabin beat Lavlu. Amin got walkover against Monir.

A total of 90 players, splitting into two groups, are taking part in the competition.

Whatmore comes back on July 15

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh cricket coach Dav Whatmore will arrive in Dhaka on July 15 to start his next assignment for the Sri Lanka tour in September.

"He confirmed us over telephone that he will come on July 15," informed Ali Asif Khan, vice-chairman of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) cricket operations committee.

After his return, the national squad will be announced within a week for the three-match one-day and two-match Test series against Sri Lanka.

Whatmore had missed three one-day games in the NatWest tri-series in England as he had to fly back home to be with his ailing father who later passed away.

Globe-trotting Iranian in city

SPORTS REPORTER

Iranian cyclist Abbas Razaghi, now in Dhaka on a world tour, called on Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) officials yesterday.

Razaghi, whose mission is to spread the light of Olympism and extend the bonds of friendship

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England won't play Test in Karachi

Cricket

AFP, Lahore

England have refused to play a Test in the troubled Pakistani city of Karachi during their upcoming winter tour starting in October, a senior Pakistani cricket official said Tuesday.

The tourists would decide in 10 days' time whether to play two one-day internationals in the southern city, which has a history of religious and ethnic violence, Pakistan Cricket Board official Saleem Altaf said.

"England have refused to play a five-day Test in Karachi and they will reply in 10 days to our proposal to play two back-to-back one day internationals there," Altaf told reporters in the eastern city of Lahore.

Two English experts have spent the last week assessing security at various grounds and a two-member England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) delegation arrived in Pakistan on July 3.

The England team's provisional schedule on the tour from October 25 until December 22 had included three Tests in Karachi, Faisalabad

and Lahore. It also included one-day games in Lahore, Rawalpindi and Karachi. The northwestern border city of Peshawar has already been ruled out due to its close proximity to Afghanistan.

Karachi has been rocked by a series of deadly shootings as well as a suicide bombing at a mosque and the burning down of a KFC restaurant in recent months.

In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, foreign teams like Australia and the West Indies have refused to play in Pakistan over security fears.

Karachi has been rejected as a Test venue by South Africa and India since a bomb blast outside the New Zealand's team hotel in May 2002 killed 14 people including 11 French naval engineers.

The tour will be England's first since 2000 when Nasser Hussain's team won their first series in Pakistan for 39 years. England won a Test in Karachi on that tour.

Reuters adds from Islamabad, "England are not willing to play a Test in Karachi because of security concern for their players," Altaf told after meeting ECB officials.

SA judge to hear Ganguly ban dispute

REUTERS, New Delhi

The International Cricket Council (ICC) named South African judge Albie Sachs on Tuesday to hear a dispute over a six-match ban on India captain Sourav Ganguly.

Ganguly was banned for six one-dayers in April for his team's slow over rate in two consecutive games during a 4-2 one-day series defeat at home to Pakistan.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Sunday asked the ICC for arbitration, its initial appeal against match referee Chris Broad's decision having been quashed by appeals commissioner Michael Beloff.

Although ICC rules say the commissioner's decision is binding, the BCCI said it had contested some of the rules as well as the procedures adopted by Beloff.

ICC president Ehsan Mani said in a statement the issue would go before the Disputes Resolution Committee with the South African Constitutional Court judge hearing the case.

Justice Sachs would decide on the format and timeframe for the hearing and his decision would be final, the statement said.



WELCOME TO NEW YORK: Legendary boxer Muhammad Ali is received by New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg at the Ritz-Carlton hotel on Tuesday, a day before the IOC votes in Singapore who will earn the right to host the 2012 Games.

London or Paris IOC decides 2012 Games host city today

OLYMPICS

AFP, Singapore

The five-city race to capture sport's most glittering prize -- the right to host the Olympics -- has been reduced to a battle of two cities IOC sources said here Tuesday.

Only 24 hours before the rank and file members of the IOC will decide the winner of the 2012 Games, IOC sources have said it is down to London and Paris.

"Nearly all the members have already made up their mind and it has come down to Paris and London," one senior IOC member said.

If he is correct, it will be a bitter blow to Madrid, Moscow and New

York who have been frantically trying to woo the 99 members who will be voting.

Former First Lady Hillary Clinton flew in here in a private plane before dawn on Tuesday and after breakfast immediately began contacting IOC members to push the case for the 'Big Apple'.

But it is not clear how much she will be able to do. As she walked through the IOC hotel's lobby trying to talk to members she was surrounded by photographers and camera crews as well as her personal bodyguards.

"It's all a bit of a circus," admitted one bid official.

While the Paris bid greeted the afternoon arrival of French President Jacques Chirac, British Prime Minister Tony Blair continued

to hold private face-to-face talks for a second day with IOC members in a private suite at the Raffles City Convention Centre.

"He was very pleasant," one European IOC member told AFP after visiting with Blair and bid leader Seb Coe.

"He is very effective and I can think of some members who could perhaps be swayed to vote for London. After all he is the Prime Minister."

Blair has also been using his contacts with other world leaders in a bid to boost London's chances of upsetting the French capital who have been the front runner.

He is hoping foreign leaders sympathetic to Britain will convince their own IOC members to switch their support to London.

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