

Badda invited to Indian soccer meet

Badda Jagarani Sangsad will leave for India on August 26 to take part in the All-India Kalinga Cup football tournament in Orissa.

Badda, who were promoted to the Premier Division last season, will play in the semifinals directly in the six-team meet.

The semifinal is scheduled for August 29 at Sambalpur.

The Orissa Football Association will bear all expenses. Badda will receive 25,000 rupees as participation money.

Clarke ready to cut down on bowling

Australia batsman Michael Clarke has said he is prepared to cut down on his bowling if it means helping him survive the back condition that is threatening his cricket career.

As well as forging a reputation as a dashing middle-order strokeplayer, Clarke has also shown himself to be a handy left-arm spinner, taking six wickets against India in Mumbai last year.

But after spending most of the three Ashes Test at Old Trafford receiving treatment for his back problem, Clarke said he was contemplating having to cope with the condition for a long time yet.

"I hope not but the reality is if it keeps happening, it's not going to be great for me," he said. "I think it's important we work out why it's happening, what I am doing for it to occur. If it means stopping doing something or not doing something as much, that's what I need to do."

Clarke left the field in the second over on Thursday at Old Trafford and was later said by Australian physio Errol Alcott to be suffering from lower disc irritation that had already been a problem for him in the one-day internationals earlier in the season.

"I just felt something go in my back. I wasn't sure, Ricky (Ponting, the Australia captain) came and grabbed me straight away and said, 'has it gone?'"

64 nominations

Mulla, MA Shamim Arju are the other candidates for the post of four vice-presidents.

There were four candidates -- Reazuddin Al Mamun, Rafiqul Islam Babu, Kazi Tabarukul Islam Arif, Iqbal Yousuf Chowdhury Miku -- for the post of two joint-secretaries.

A total of 39 nomination papers were submitted for the 20 members' posts.

The election commission will scrutinise nomination papers today. It will publish the final list of the candidates on August 21.

NZ win series

Fleming c Taibu b Mahwire 65

Table with columns: Name, Runs, Wickets, Overs, etc.

Bond b Mahwire 8

Martin not out 0

Extras: (b-6, lb-6, w-2, nb-18) 32

Total: (All out in 111.1 overs) 484

Fall of wickets: 1-34, 2-48, 3-185, 4-205, 5-292, 6-346, 7-439, 8-475, 9-484

Bowler O M R W

Streak 22 6 7 3

Mahwire 25.1 2 1 2 1 3

Mpofu 15 1 80 0

Cremer 24 1 1 1 1 0

Dabengwa 25 2 8 7 2

ZIMBABWE: Second innings

Ebrahim c Styris b Bond 2

Taylor c Vettori b Bond 77

McGrath warns England

Cricket AFP, London

Glenn McGrath warned Tuesday that the Ashes momentum has shifted back in Australia's direction after their successful rearguard action to save the third Test against England.

The tourists looked on course to suffer their second successive defeat to England during the closing stages at Old Trafford Monday with last pair Brett Lee and McGrath at the crease and with four overs to survive before the close.

But they scrambled to safety to ensure the draw and leave the series perfectly balanced at 1-1 going into next week's fourth Test at Trent Bridge.

Australia's scenes of celebration were in stark contrast to the despair they experienced just eight days earlier when they lost at Edgbaston by two runs.

But despite being dominated throughout the third Test they remain positive they hold the upper hand as series reaches its climax.

"We've not been surprised by England," said seamer McGrath. "We knew they were a quality team and they've proven that over the last 18 months."

"We've been a bit disappointed by our form. We've worked well in certain sections but we haven't really put a full Test match together."

"I thought the Lord's Test was as well as we've played since we've

been here and since then for whatever reason we haven't done it.

"But the one thing we can take out of the last two Tests is that we haven't been on the top of our game and they were two matches England should have won very convincingly -- instead of that they've walked away having just scraped a win at Edgbaston and got a draw at Old Trafford."

"They must be wondering what they have to do to beat these guys, which I guess is good from our point of view because they are playing some very good cricket and we've got a bit of a way to go to improve."

McGrath and Lee, both rated as doubtful for the Old Trafford Test through injury, should be fitter while captain Ricky Ponting's defiant innings of 156 on the final day has given a clear indication to the rest of the team how best to approach an innings in English conditions.

Should they need any further advice they could also turn to McGrath, whose ankle injury a year ago provided the catalyst for his vast improvement as a batsman after years of being regarded as a figure of fun.

"I've been into Ricky quite a bit this series about moving up and when I came off I actually asked the rest of the boys what it's like to get out in this series," smiled McGrath who has been undefeated four times in the series.

"I've been working pretty hard on my batting and I feel reasonably confident in the middle, which is something that's quite new to me."

"When I had the ankle operation I was probably having two sessions of batting a week just facing the bowling machine -- I probably faced 500 balls a week and in the past 500 balls was probably two years worth of practice."

"When you start practising regularly you can improve and I feel comfortable with the technique I've got out there at the moment and I feel I'm watching it a lot better than I used to and the head's a lot stiffer -- it's amazing when you actually watch a ball you can actually see it a lot better."

Lee is also confident of producing an improved display at Trent Bridge having spent the build-up to Old Trafford in hospital for two nights being treated for an infection in his left knee.

"It wasn't the best preparation for a Test match, to have two nights in hospital and then basically come straight out, have a two-hour drive and then go straight into training and play the next day," added Lee, who still managed to claim five wickets in the match and survive for 44 minutes at the crease to save the match.

"I bowled 40 overs and I feel like I haven't even bowled a ball which is a really good sign. Maybe I was well rested from not having two days of training, but the body feels really good and the knee feels fantastic and it would be great now to fine tune it for this next Test coming up."

Asia put brakes on Africa XI

FROM PAGE 12

match with nine South African players, called on a tenth player from the host nation when all-rounder Justin Kemp was brought in as a substitute, batting at number ten, in an attempt to bolster a poor batting performance.

It meant Kenyan fast bowler Thomas Odoyo was taken out of the match before making an appear-

ance. But the switch did not pay off because Kemp was leg before to Shoab for four.

On the other hand, the Asian side named Bangladesh's Mohammad Ashraful as its substitute. The other Bangladeshi in the squad, Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza was not even considered for the match.

The innings ended with boos from a sparse crowd when home

town player Dale Steyn, batting at number 11 on his one-day international debut, was struck on the right arm and chest by two high full tosses by Akhtar, generally acknowledged as the world's fastest bowler.

The pitch proved helpful to both seam and spin bowlers, who were able to make the ball deviate off a course, grassy surface. The hastily-arranged series is being played during the South African winter and the Centurion outfield was brown from winter frost.

With the day-night match starting at the unusual hour of noon South African time to suit Asian television, the ground was only about a quarter full in chilly conditions.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard table with columns: Team, Name, Runs, Wickets, Overs.

AFRICA XI: De Villiers lbw b Akhtar 24, Dippenaar c Sehwal b Zaheer 14, Kallis c Nehra b Zaheer 4, Ontong lbw b Zaheer 0, Prince not out 78, Tikolo c Sangakkara b Nehra 0, Boucher lbw b Muralitharan 42, Pollock b Kumble 2, Boje c Sangakkara b Afridi 3, Kemp (sub) lbw b Akhtar 4, Steyn run out (Nehra) 3, Extras: (lb-7, nb-6, w-11) 24, Total: (All out in 44.3 overs) 198, Fall of wickets: 1-39, 2-44, 3-44, 4-53, 5-57, 6-141, 7-152, 8-164, 9-174, Substitute: Odoyo (did not bat).

ASIA XI: Inzamam, Sehwal, Sangakkara, Youhana, Afridi, Razaq, Kumble, Zaheer, Akhtar, Muralitharan, Nehra. Umpires: Billy Doctrove (West Indies) and Steve Davis (Australia).

Orient Bread h'ball

Bangladesh Rifles, Rajshahi City Corporation, Bangladesh Police and Narinda Progoti Boys Club yesterday moved into the semifinals of the Orient Bread Cup handball tournament.

Both semifinals will be held on Thursday at the outer stadium handball ground.

Rifles defeated Dhaka Mariner Youngmen's Club 36-19 to become group champions. Police outplayed Narinda Progoti Boys Club 36-26 in the last match of the day.

But it is a measure of how things have changed that while there was a sense of what might have been in the home camp, Australia were delighted to get away with a draw after England's equally dramatic two-run second Test win at Edgbaston.

And whatever else happens in the series, England have at shown that their all-conquering opponents are human.

There was a telling moment on Sunday when the umpires intervened to tell Shane Warne to stop time-wasting while he was bowling.

Warne was only doing what many players from other sides would have done, but that was the point. It just seemed 'un-Australian', in much the same way that former captain Steve Waugh banned the use of night-watchmen because it smacked of weakness.

England loving

Now, under Ponting, Australia have reverted to both practices, although they remain a fine team. But Australia are being put under pressure in what is turning out to be the most exciting Test series since their 2000-01 series in India, where the hosts -- thanks mainly to Venkatsai Laxman and Harbhajan Singh -- overturned a 1-0 deficit to win 2-1 in a three-match encounter.

Meanwhile the likes of fast bowlers Stephen Harmison and Andrew Flintoff have made life tough for Australia's batsmen who, Ponting's innings at Old Trafford apart, have struggled.

And the continual pastings England have handed out to fast bowler Jason Gillespie, who only bowled four overs in the second innings, have led Australia to reassess his future with the uncapped quick Shaun Tait waiting in the wings.

But will England be deflated by Old Trafford when the next Test starts in Nottingham on August 25?

Vaughan is adamant they would be inspired.

"I really do hope the final two games are as good as the last two because I think the series deserves that."

"Trent Bridge should be another classic, turn up."

'I'm no leader'

AFP, Montpellier

Zinedine Zidane returns to the French national team on Wednesday as skipper but insists: 'I'm not a leader'.

The 33-year-old Real Madrid midfielder, who quit after France's exit from Euro 2004 last year, recently had a change of heart and came out of international retirement to help rescue France's flagging World Cup qualifying campaign.

But despite being named captain for the 12th time in his career as France face Cote d'Ivoire in a friendly on Wednesday, Zidane admitted he's not a natural leader.

"For me, a leader is someone who talks a lot on and off the pitch," said Zidane.

"Someone like Didier Deschamps for example but this isn't me."

One of his teammates, Newcastle defender Jean-Alain Bounsang, said he understands why Zidane has been handed the armband.

"Zizou has returned, he is captain, it's normal and everyone respects that. He's not a shooter but he is respected and listened to."

Zidane's first match as skipper was a 1-1 friendly draw against Tunisia in August 2002; the last time was France's 1-0 defeat to Greece in the quarter-finals of Euro 2004 which turned out to be his last appearance.

FIFA RANKINGS

AFP, Paris

The latest FIFA world rankings (Teams, points, change from last month):-

Table with columns: Rank, Team, Points, Change.

Curran new Zim coach?

AFP, Bulawayo

Bowling supremo Kevin Curran said here Wednesday he is replacing West Indian Phil Simmons as Zimbabwe's cricket coach after a disastrous year for the team.

Curran said he was appointed on Tuesday. He is a popular Zimbabwe former player and his tenure will be well received by the Zimbabwe-contracted players.

He said he planned to organise practise games ahead of the one-day series, which begins in Bulawayo involving Zimbabwe, India and New Zealand next Wednesday.

Gillespie must

Trent Bridge next week and The Oval next month.

"A word of warning to the English -- write off Australia at your peril," he said. "Most sides are at their most dangerous when they are down. If Australia find the form they displayed (in the first Test) at Lord's they'll soon be back on top again."

Gatting is anticipating an England victory in Nottingham.

"I feel England still have the momentum in this series," he said.

"England continue to go from strength to strength -- the key to England's domination at the moment being that the whole team has made a valued contribution.

"I think this England outfit is capable of killing off the Aussie resistance at Trent Bridge and taking a 2-1 lead to The Oval."

Alfaz gets

Biplob had half cleared an Adafa free-kick.

TEAMS MOHAMMEDAN: Biplob, Nazrul, Hasan, Peter Odaf, Kamal, Arman Aziz, Asad, Faisal Mahmud (Khokon), Matur Munna (Ronny), Alfaz and Donald.

FARASHGANJ: Zia, Khaled, Faisal, Rajib (Manu), Arup, Apu, Amirul, Kabir, Pavel (Ronny Islam), Felix and Adafa.

Yellow cards: Arman Aziz (Mohammedan), Adafa (Farashganj).

Referee: Tayeb Hasan.

'Ponting graduates'

greatest need," wrote Peter Roebuck in a commentary.

"After languishing for four days, (Ponting) redeemed himself with a performance so defiant and skilful that it deserves a place alongside the finest of its type," Roebuck said.

"Heavens, it might have been Steve Waugh out there, or Allan Border."



Veteran Iran striker and captain Ali Daei, (below) is taken down by Japanese defender Yuji Nakazawa at Yokohama stadium yesterday.

Japan's sweet revenge

AFP, Yokohama

Asian champions Japan avenged the only loss of their World Cup qualifying campaign with a 2-1 victory over Iran Wednesday to finish top of Group B.

Ryo Kagi scored his first international goal and Masashi Oguro rounded off the win for Japan in a match important only for bragging rights with both teams already qualified for Germany 2006.

Japan leap-frogged Iran to finish Asian final qualifying Group B on 15 points after six games, two ahead of Iran. Third-placed Bahrain, who were playing pointless North Korea, will play

off against the team finishing third in Group A.

Taji's goal came from a Keiji Tamada cross which beat both Oguro and 'keeper Ebrahim Mirzapour, leaving an empty net. Oguro made it 2-0 in the 76th minute before Ali Daei pulled one back with a penalty three minutes later.

The victory was revenge for Japan's 2-1 reverse in Tehran in March, their only loss of the qualifying campaign.

The Japanese took control from the beginning, repeatedly threatening the Iranian goal.

Oguro and Tamada failed to cash in on some goalmouth confusion in the 12th minute, and Tamada and Brazilian-born Alessandro "Alex"

Santos both tested Mirzapour with shots soon afterwards.

Scoring chances were few and far between for the visitors although skipper Daei, the world's top international goalscorer, hit the right post from outside the area just before half-time.

Oguro was credited with heading Japan's second but there was a suspicion his effort was blocked on the line by defender Hossein Kaebi before being turned in by Mirzapour.

Daei, who in November 2004 he became the first man to reach 100 goals in international football, finally pulled one back when he was brought down by Yuji Nakazawa in the area, and he duly netted with 11 minutes to go.

Saudis take Group A

AFP, Seoul

Saudi Arabia beat South Korea 1-0 Wednesday in a nail-biting final Asian zone group-A World Cup football qualifier.

Both countries are already through to the finals in Germany next year but the outcome crowned the Saudis as winners of the group with an unbeaten record ahead of the South Koreans.

It was the home side's second World Cup qualifying round defeat this year to Saudi Arabia, who inflicted a 2-0 reverse in March.

This time the deficit was narrower and the Saudis were fortunate to escape with a win against a side down to 10 men for the last 15 minutes.

Midfielder Kim Dong-Jin was sent off for a vicious tackle on 20-year-old striker Mohammed al-Anbar.

The visitors took the lead after four minutes when al-Anbar found space in the penalty area and headed past goalkeeper Lee Woon-Jae from a centre by Saleh al-Saqri.

It was a perfect start for the Saudi team but they had to cling on to the advantage for dear life as South Korea erupted in a frenzy of attacking football.

Chances came thick and fast but the malady of the South Koreans in recent months -- poor finishing -- surfaced again to frustrate their best efforts.

Dutch coach Jo Bonfrere, whose position has been in doubt recently, was justified in bringing back some of

the stars of the 2002 World Cup to bring stability to the side.

The recall of Ahn Jung-Hwan, the 29-year-old who joined French club Metz in July, appeared to be a master-stroke by Bonfrere. The striker posed all sorts of problems for the Saudi defence in the first half.

But even the composed Ahn failed to hit the target although he came close on several occasions.

The game could have turned out differently if a brilliant shot by Baek Ji-Hoon, a relative newcomer at 20, had found the target and given South Korea an equalizer just eight minutes into the match.

His finishing was perfect but he was frustrated by a save of rare quality from Saudi goalkeeper Zaid Mabrouk.

Rooney to behave

Football

AFP, Copenhagen

England star Wayne Rooney has vowed he will curb his quick temper while playing for both Manchester United and his country.

Rooney turns 20 in November and he knows that the moment of madness he has shown in his teenage years need to be left behind if he is to realise his full potential.

On duty for England against Denmark in a friendly here Wednesday, Rooney said that he was determined to behave himself.

"Moving to a club like Manchester United was always going to benefit me a lot, playing with the players I'm playing with and working with Sir Alex (Ferguson)," he said.

During his first year at Old Trafford,

after leaving Everton, Rooney was criticised for repeatedly swearing on the pitch, with the argument that he was setting a bad example to youngsters.

"I've learnt a lot and I think I've matured a lot, both on and off the field. I think I had to move on (from Everton), for myself, and I think it has really benefited me," Rooney added.

He is increasingly aware of the responsibility on his shoulders from a sporting and disciplinary perspective.

"I'm looking to mature a lot more than I have done in previous seasons," he said.

"I want to make sure I don't get booked for dissent. If you look at any match, every player's doing it. But it gets highlighted a lot more because of who I am."

"I'm looking to cut out the silly bookings." Rooney launched himself onto the

international stage in superb fashion during Euro 2004, but there were plenty who felt Ferguson had paid too much for him when he pressed him away from Everton following intense competition from Newcastle.

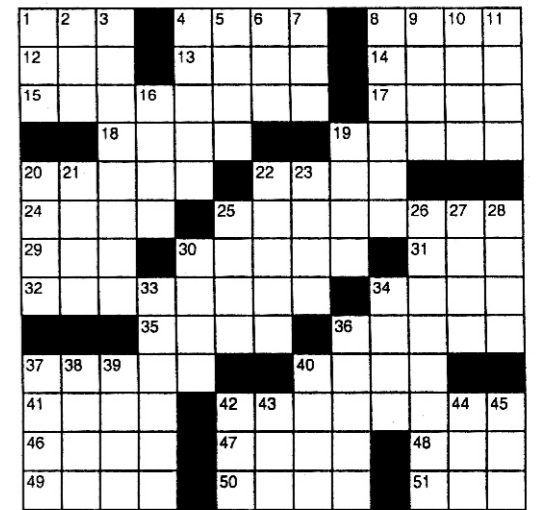
The 27 million pounds fee was partly repaid by 17 goals in his first season at United, and he has no regrets about choosing Old Trafford over Chelsea, despite Jose Mourinho's team winning the Premiership title.

"Obviously Chelsea have a lot of money and some players see that as a good opportunity to do whatever, but I chose United because it was the best move for me. I really didn't fancy going to live in London."

"I wanted to stay close to home (in Liverpool). Once I knew United were interested, there was only one place I was going."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and answers.



CRYPTOQUIP SZ UEN FNU SX " L TSON TYAI," SZN ASYTM FKKNTI FKI UEKU NONWICSMI LZOSTONMEKMCKKTT. Yesterday's Cryptquip: I LIKE TO NEATLY STACK AND STRAIGHTEN MY CASH ROLLS. THUS CREATING A TIDY SUM. Today's Cryptquip Clue: T equals L