

# National team beat MSC in friendly

## Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh national football team, under the guidance of Argentine coach Diego Cruciani, made their first home appearance yesterday. They were not totally convincing but looked impressive in a 2-1 win over Mohammedan Sporting Club in an exhibition match at the Army Stadium.

On the day Cruciani used all 25 members of his squad except Hassan Al Mamun and Feroz Mahmud Titu, who have been suffering from minor foot injuries.

The core with which he intends to form his first eleven for next month's SAFF Championship in Pakistan, were fielded in the first half and showed better control and enjoyed superior possession than the second-string which came off the bench after the breather.

There were none of the usual dashes down the flanks or aerial crosses and instead it was all one-to-one play throughout the game.

The national team took the lead after 26 minutes when skipper Joy headed home a corner by Arman.

Mohammedan, armed with four Africa-based booters, levelled in the 79th minute when Nigerian booter Francis struck after a cross from his compatriot Emeka Christian.

Cruciani's boys showed the desperation to win and midfielder Abul's header from a Parvez Babu corner made the difference six minutes later.

Cruciani, however, was not satisfied.

"They lacked penetration and I was not happy with their possession at times," said the 41-year-old Argentine.

"Maybe they were a bit tired after a week's hard work. I think they will show more improvement in the next week," he hoped.



PHOTO: STAR

A Mohammedan defender tries to shield the ball from national forward Rokonzuzzaman Kanchan during their friendly match at the Army Stadium on Thursday.

## AFC Challenge Cup draw held

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

The draw for the Asian Football Confederation Challenge Cup is to be held in Nepal and Bangladesh between March 25 and April 9 next year.

The tournament features 16 "emerging" footballing countries, divided into four groups. Groups A and B will be played in Nepal while the matches of Groups C and D will be hosted by Bangladesh.

Match schedules will be issued at a later date.

**Group A:** India, Taiwan, Philippines, Afghanistan

**Group B:** Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Brunei

**Group C:** Palestinian territories, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Guam

**Group D:** Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Macau

## Sweet and sour

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batting," he added gracefully.

In reply to a question, Akram said that he did not show discontent over the decision of his dismissal, but had talked to the umpire about ignoring a lot of short deliveries and not calling them wides. He had stood at his crease after being declared caught behind and was seen speaking to the umpire on his way to the pavilion.

Epyllion skipper Tushar Imran thought that his own dismissal was the turning point of the game.

"I think we had a chance to win but our tail could not provide the support to Ararat after I was run out. It was a call from my partner (Yasir Ararat) and I started late," said Tushar.

"We also missed Nabil Samad. Had he been with us, we could have restricted them to 240. That would have been an interesting match," Tushar said about the Under-19 left-arm spinner who is touring India on national duty.



## Did U Know?

South Africa, with their five-wicket win in the first ODI against India on November 16, have now played 20 ODIs without losing their longest undefeated run. Only Ricky Ponting's Australians, with 21 matches between 2002-03 and 2003, have a better record.



### Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi

(Former Indian captain)

"Competition for a berth in the Indian team has now drastically increased. And it is all the more difficult to return once you are out of the team. I am not saying that (Sourav) Ganguly is not successful, but he will have to be really among the runs to stake a claim in the team."

## England U-19s lose tour opener

BDNEWS, Bogra

The Bangladesh High Performance (HP) Squad defeated the England Under-19s by 28 runs in the first limited-overs match at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium here on Thursday.

Batting first, the local boys made a modest 219-9 in 50 overs. HP opener Raqibul Hasan hit highest 61 off 81 balls with nine boundaries.

James grabbed three for 17 for the visitors.

The tourists were bundled out for 189 in 47 overs. Moeen Ali top scored with 72 off 83 balls with six boundaries and two sixes.

Mosharaf Hossain bagged five wickets for 39 while Sirajullah and Farhad Reza took two wickets each.

The second match of the five-game series will be played here today.

## Special Chess on

SPORTS REPORTER

The seventh Special National Chess Championship for the Visually Impaired began at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall-room yesterday.

Standard Chartered and Sight Saver are sponsoring the meet, organised by the Bangladesh Braille Chess Association. A total of 78 players including ten women are taking part in the 7-round Swiss League.

In the first round, 38 players won their respective matches.

Earlier, State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharrar Hossain Shahjahan declared the four-day meet open.

## Olympic Day Run today

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The Bangladesh Olympic Association will organise the Olympic Day Run today in the capital as part of celebration of the International Olympic Day across the world.

The Run, scheduled to be held last June, could not take place due to inclement weather.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman will be present as chief guest while BOA president and the Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Moeen U Ahmed will be present.

## Yousuf uncertain for next Test

Pakistani batsman Mohammad Yousuf may be unable to play in the second Test against England, starting on September 20 in Faisalabad.

Yousuf reportedly injured his shoulder during the first Test. Although a MRI scan is said to have come out clear, he has complained of discomfort during fielding.

APCB official said a decision would only be reached after Yousuf has the opportunity to practice in the nets.

He has hurt the same shoulder, which resulted in him returning home from the West Indies earlier this year.

If Yousuf is unable to play, bench strength means an opening will be provided for either Shahid Afridi or Hasan Raza.

--Internet Source

## A night

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whose low shot from 10 yards found the back of Norway's net with goalkeeper Thomas Myhre diving in vain. It was Rosicky's 15th goal in his 52nd international appearance.

### SPAIN-SLOVAKIA

With a big lead from the first leg, Spain wasn't troubled in Bratislava.

Filip Holoski put Slovakia ahead seven minutes into the second half. But David Villa extinguished any hope of a big comeback by tying it with 20 minutes to go.

"I'm happy for my players, for my country and for myself. Spain has always qualified for the last 30 years, so there's not a lot to celebrate. But I'm content, we've done the job," Aragones said.

### TURKEY-SWITZERLAND

In Istanbul, Switzerland forward Alex Frei gave his team the lead with a first-minute penalty kick, but Tuncay Sanli scored twice and Necati Ates converted a penalty kick to make it 3-1 for the Turks.

Marco Streller scored the decisive goal in the 84th minute, making it 3-2 and putting the pressure on the Turks to score two more goals. Tuncay soon got his third goal, but the Swiss held on.

"All football fans, and those who might become fans, are feverish with impatience for the World Cup next summer," Swiss President Samuel Schmid said.

Players from both teams fought in the tunnel on the way to the locker room following the game and one Swiss player was reportedly hospitalized.

Defender Stephane Grichting was taken to Acibadem Hospital following the scuffle, the Anatolia news agency reported.

# Blatter threatens Turkey after tunnel bust-up



AFP, Geneva

FIFA president Sepp Blatter has threatened to come down hard over the trouble which blew up after Switzerland knocked Turkey out of the 2006 World Cup on Wednesday.

"I can tell you this, not as a Swiss, but as the president of FIFA that we will act here and we will act tough," Blatter told a news conference.

FIFA will decide on sanctions before the 2006 World Cup draw on December 9.

Penalties could range from a warning to a ban for individual players or countries.

Earlier in the day Blatter had threatened to ban Turkey from the qualifying competition for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

Switzerland lost a dramatic second leg 4-2 in Istanbul on Wednesday but advanced to 2006's finals thanks to the away goals rule.

Swiss players left the pitch under a hail of objects thrown by the crowd

and players from both sides clashed in the tunnel.

Reports said Swiss defender Stephane Grichting was taken to hospital with a perforated urinary tract.

Switzerland coach Kobi Kuhn was also hit by coins and press officer Pierre Benoit said the incidents would be reported.

Tuncay Sanli scored a hat-trick for the Turks, who finished third in the 2002 World Cup, but Marco Streller's 84th minute goal put the Swiss through.

However, the match ended with tempers frayed and television footage showed Swiss player Benjamin Huggel kick a member of the Turkish coaching staff as he ran off the pitch.

Then former Aston Villa defender Alpay aimed a kick at Streller as the goalscorer went down the tunnel towards the dressing rooms and the trouble erupted.

According to reports, Grichting was taken to Istanbul's Acidem Hospital after being kicked in the groin.

However, TRT television reported that he was in good condition and the

Istanbul hospital told AFP they had treated no one by that name. The Turkish media blamed Huggel's kick for sparking the trouble.

And Turkey striker Halit Altintop, with German team Kaiserslautern, played down the clashes.

"A few of our players overreacted after the match but I am happy there were no serious incidents," he said.

"I was in the Swiss locker room and talked to the players I knew from the Bundesliga. They said everything was fine."

The Swiss bus had been pelted with eggs when they flew in on Monday and the Swiss national anthem was whistled during Wednesday's pre-match ceremony -- as the Turkish anthem had been in Bern.

Violence is not rare in football-mad Turkey.

But the 43,000 fans at the Sukru Saracoglu stadium in Istanbul were relatively well-behaved after appeals by cabinet ministers for calm.

The worst case of violence came in 2000 when two English fans were stabbed to death before a UEFA Cup match between Galatasaray and Leeds United.

## INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLIES

# Ivory Coast hold Italy

## Football

REUTERS, London

Argentina enjoyed a 3-0 victory away to Qatar on Wednesday as several qualified nations for next year's World Cup finals squeezed in warm-up friendlies.

Italy, who like Argentina will be strongly fancied in Germany next year, were given a fright in Geneva where they were held 1-1 by the fellow qualifiers Ivory Coast.

Twice world champions Argentina, still smarting from their 3-2 defeat by arch-rivals England on Saturday, scored three times in four second-half minutes.

Midfielder Juan Roman Riquelme broke the deadlock after 70 minutes before substitute Julio Cruz and defender Roberto Ayala put the gloss on their performance.

"I am surprised by Qatar's display," said Argentina coach Jose Peckerman, who handed a start to Barcelona teenager Lionel Messi who missed the England match through suspension.

Chelsea's Didier Drogba scored after 69 minutes as the Ivory Coast threatened

to inflict a first defeat in 15 matches on three-times world champions Italy.

Drogba, who helped the African nation qualify for their first finals, controlled a low ball before lashing it into the roof of the net.

Italy were spared defeat four minutes from time when Sampdoria midfielder Aimo Diana latched on to a cross from Gianluca Zambrotta to poach an equaliser at the far post.

Japan, coached by former Brazilian great Zico, edged out first-time World Cup qualifiers Angola 1-0 in Tokyo thanks to a last-minute goal from substitute midfielder Daisuke Matsui.

Japan's neighbours South Korea also raised optimism for next year's finals with an impressive 2-0 victory over first time World Cup qualifiers Serbia & Montenegro in Seoul that maintained their unbeaten run under new coach Dick Advocaat.

The 2002 World Cup semi-finalists opened the scoring in the fifth minute when defender Choi Jin-cheul rose to meet Lee Eul-yong's free kick with a glancing header.

South Korea went 2-0 up early in the

second half thanks to a superb solo effort from striker Lee Dong-gook who raced the length of the field before slamming in a low drive.

Tunisia, who will be appearing at their third consecutive World Cup finals, enjoyed a 2-1 victory over north African rivals Egypt.

Poland were 3-1 winners over Estonia while European champions Greece, who failed to reach the finals, scrambled a 2-1 victory at home to Hungary.

Cyprus beat Wales 1-0 in Limassol, a Welsh performance coach John Toshack described as: "the worst international performance I have ever witnessed. I was embarrassed by what I saw and feel sorry for our fans who came out to Cyprus to support us."

## 20 NFL games

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will host four matches each instead of the previously scheduled five, it was finalised in BFF's executive committee meeting last night.

The tournament, however, will not start on November 20. The BFF will give a fresh schedule soon.

# Maradona speaks



AFP, Doha

Wayne Rooney could inspire England to World Cup success in Germany next summer, Argentine legend Diego Maradona said here on Thursday.

The retired superstar took in the Manchester United striker's starring role in England's 3-2 win over his country in Geneva last week and believes he is one of the players who could make the difference.

"Argentina have a very good chance (in Germany) but they have to improve in many aspects," he said.

"England won't be the game but

history could be different. That game was useful as a reference but the World Cup finals are different.

The 45-year-old Maradona said there was not much to choose between the two bitter World Cup rivals and he pinpointed Rooney as one of the key players to watch.

"He is a great player -- very powerful and his technique is very good, but he needs guidance, he needs leadership," he said.

Speaking in the Qatari capital Doha where he was attending the opening of the Aspire Sports Academy complex, Maradona said he expected it would be a case of the usual suspects for the title in Germany.

"Brazil, Argentina, Germany,

England and Italy. I expect them all to have a chance. The finals usually are

down to the same teams," he said.

Asked to name the player most likely to dominate the finals, Maradona had no hesitation in naming Brazilian maestro Ronaldinho.

But he knocked on the head any talk of him playing a major role in the Argentine set-up for Germany.

Following his recent rehabilitation from drugs use and weight problems, Maradona has staged something of a comeback, starting in his own television show back home and commenting on Argentina's World Cup hopes.

But, asked if he was about to return to the fore, Maradona was adamant.

"The coach is (Jose) Peckerman and he will remain so," he said.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**  
1 Seaman's assent  
4 Practices pugilism  
9 Wield a needle  
12 Fa's neighbor  
13 Moderate purple  
14 William Tell's canton  
15 Recapitulate  
17 Wire measure  
18 Eggs  
19 Canine coat?  
21 Fate  
24 Sister of Pygmalion  
25 Columbus sch.  
26 Gun the engine  
28 Minimal change  
31 Flaccid  
33 Conk out  
35 Jacob's twin  
36 Oppositionists

**DOWN**  
1 Foolish one  
2 Thee  
3 Shade source  
4 Drool  
5 Plagiarized  
6 "The Greatest"  
7 Demolished  
8 Picturesque  
9 Process server's papers  
10 A Great Lake  
11 Volition  
16 Off-tattooed word  
20 "Zip--Doo-Dah"  
21 Caffeine-rich nut  
22 "The doctor --"  
23 Full amounts  
27 By way of  
29 Receive  
30 Seeks restitution  
32 Actor Brad  
34 Celestial event  
37 Nap  
39 Winery employee  
42 Salsiccia  
44 Old coin  
45 Time of prosperity  
46 Pavarotti solo  
50 Frenzied  
51 Sapporo sash  
52 Grecian vessel  
53 Blue



### CRYPTOQUIP

O U L B Q P L Z W L Q U O F A B

L F L W Q O I O Q Z M D R K I D B

A K O F X . O B E V V K B D O Q ' B

P O X M Q E V M O B L R R D Z .

Saturday's Cryptquip: MIGHT YOU CALL WORDS LIKE "TRANSGRESSION," "WICKEDNESS" AND "UNGODLINESS" SIN-ONYMS?

Today's Cryptquip Clue: V equals P

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.