## JFA CUP Seven reach zonal final

#### BDNEWS, Dhaka

Gaibandha, Rangamati, Satkhira, Tangail, Manikganj, Bagerhat and BKSP moved into the zonal final of the JFA Cup Under-16 football tournament at different venues across the country yesterday.

Mahmudul Kabir netted all the four goals including a hattrick to take Gaibandha into the final with a 4-1 win over Panchagarh at the Gaibandha Stadium. Muktar reduced the margin.

At Rangamati Stadium, Rangamati blanked Khagrachhari 3-0 while Satkhira beat Jessore Education Board 2-1 at the Satkhira Stadium.

In other matches, Tangail thrashed Kishorganj 6-1 at the Tangail Stadium, Manikganj beat Faridpur 2-1 at the Manikganj Stadium, Bagerhat outplayed Narail 4-0 at the Bagerhat Stadium, BKSP beat Nilphamari by a solitary goal at the Kurigram Stadium.

## It's now Aktel

FROM PAGE 12

know the hearts and minds of the youth with the game. We have also decided to improve the infrastructures of the six venues in an effort to show that we are keen to be a longterm partner of the board in developing the game in the country," said Asif Iqbal, head of marketing of Aktel

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) general secretary Mahbubul Anam, who also attended the briefing, thanked Aktel for their support for the game.

"We have made positive discussions with some television channels for live coverage of some matches or at least show highlights. I think it will be a good exposure for them, said Mahbub.

He however conceded that it was a collective failure on the part of the board for not getting a sponsor before start of the league

"I don't want to blame any particular committee for the failure and as a general secretary I should accept it as a collective failure," he added.

Chairman of Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) Khondaker Jamil Uddin and Managing Director of Aktel Ahmed Ismail also spoke on the occasion.

## Indian safety

"He is a fine bowler and we FROM PAGE 12 wanted him to go and play some India at present are scheduled to domestic cricket after his recovery play a Test and a one-dayer in from his back problem," said Inzamam Karachi They are also due to play a one-

"He is definitely in our plans for the series against India and I would daver in Peshawar, a northern city like the selectors to invite him for the rejected by foreign teams in the past conditioning camp we set up from because of its close proximity to Januarv 6."

PREMIERSHIP **Owen prepares for** Anfield return

neighbours since 1979

touch in front of goal.

said.

ple more."

straight victories

in the country.

five for 31

Gul could be in

Pak side: Inzy

Baggies out of the League Cup.

semblance of pressure on Chelsea

was to rediscover their ruthless

used to going into games at Old

Trafford knowing we could be two or

three goals up after 20 minutes," he

often over the last couple of sea-

sons but if we do get an early goal it

really boosts our confidence and we

feel we can go on and score a cou-

Elsewhere fourth-placed

Tottenham will look to return to

winning ways against second-

bottom Birmingham after last

week's 3-3 draw against

Middlesbrough ended a run of three

used to being the best team in

London and one of the leading clubs

has slipped to eighth place in the

table and 20 points behind Chelsea

Spurs's arch-rivals Arsenal are

But this season a new-look side

The 21-year-old from Peshawar

is a fine controlled seam bowler who

has taken 25 wickets in five Tests

and another 19 in 15 one-dayers

employers PIA in domestic cricket

and Inzamam said that the more he

played the better he would become

after being out of the game for a

than a year with a stress fracture of

matches against England.

Umar was sidelined for more

with a best of 5 for 17.

more than a year.

"Down the years we have been

"We have struggled to do that as

Football

AGENCIES, undated Michael Owen will be hoping for a festive welcome when he returns to

Anfield with Newcastle on Monday. Liverpool's game with the Magpies is the pick of a full Boxing Day Premiership programme.

Owen will be making his first appearance at Anfield since leaving the Reds for Real Madrid in August 2004. The 26-year-old England for-

ward was hoping to reioin Liverpool this summer, but the Magpies' bid of 17m pounds secured his services. But few would bet against England striker Owen scoring against his old club and the man himself insisted: "If I score, I will

celebrate as joyfully as I did at West Ham United last Saturday. "I won't shy away or feel guilty or embarrassed, but nor will I be running over to the Liverpool bench and sticking two fingers up."

Chelsea are nine points clear at the top of the table going into Monday's west London derby against Fulham and on course for a second successive title. The only cloud on their horizon is

that Ivory Coast forward Drogba and Ghana midfielder Michael Essien are both set to be away for up to a month when they travel to the African Nations Cup in Egypt, which starts in January. Chelsea, who have won their last

Cricket

Pakistan cricket captain Inzama-

mul Haq had some good news for

Umar Gul, the discarded young

medium-pace bowler, on Saturday.

Umar figured very much in the plans

for next month's Test series against

India and could be selected in the

Inzamam told the News that

CRICINFO. undated

Test squad.

ahead of their trip across London to five league matches, have injury doubts over Damien Duff (Achilles) Charlton, who have lost six of their and Asiar del Horno (leg) while 14th last seven league matches.

placed Fulham will be looking for "By the high standards we set their first victory over their near here at Arsenal, this is a pretty bad spell, I don't deny that," Arsenal Second-placed Manchester manager Arsene Wenger conceded. "But it's a bit of a transition United are at home to West Brom, having already knocked the period for us because it is a team that has changed.

The Red Devils have not lost at "It is about me rolling my sleeves Old Trafford in their last 10 matches up with the players to turn things but midfielder Paul Scholes said the around and not to make too much of only way they could maintain any a fuss about it."

Bottom of the table Sunderland's tally of five points is the worst total achieved by a team at Christmas in Premiership history and a victory at home against Bolton appears essential if they are to revive their already faint hopes of avoiding the drop.

Aston Villa and Everton are both just four points above the relegation zone and a win for either side at Villa Park would give the victors some valuable breathing space



Monday: (1500GMT unless stated): Aston Villa v Everton (1745GMT) Charlton v Arsenal (1245GMT), Chelsea v Fulham (1300GMT), Liverpool v Newcastle, Manchester United v West Brom, Middlesbrough v Blackburn, Portsmouth v West Ham, Sunderland v Bolton, Tottenham v Birmingham (1300GMT), Wigan v Manchester City

### Friendly football

#### BDNEWS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) XI outplayed Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) 5-0 in a friendly football match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium vesterday.

#### BCB seeks better FROM PAGE 12 Umar is currently playing for his

Although he did not elaborate, it was understood that the BCB was trying to accommodate at least three Indian visits including a tri-nation tournament in the next FTP.

"After the meeting with the two presidents we are hopeful of getting more support from the newly elected Indian board," he added.

the back after the Test against India and made a comeback to domestic Responding to another question cricket this season, but was not Mahbub said that they were not yet considered for any of the internasure whether the scheduled Afrotional games including the tour Asian "A Team" cricket tournament will take place on time in January in "Our strength lies in our pace Chittagong. bowling with all our bowlers doing

"We can't hold a farce of a tourreally well against England," said nament. India have already Inzamam. "But with Mohammad Asif expressed their unavailability and also having a good debut match we Pakistan also had earlier showed

## Di Stefano seriously ill

REUTERS, Madrid

SPORT

Real Madrid great Alfredo Di Stefano will require bypass surgery to deal with the serious consequences of the heart attack he suffered in the early hours of Saturday morning. Medical staff at La Fe hospital in

Valencia said the 79-year-old Argentine would only be able to undergo the surgery when his condition improved. "He has a circulation problem

and there are some arteries feeding the heart that have been seriously narrowed," head of cardiac surgery Anastasio Montero told a news conference on Sunday.

"We need to carry out a bypass to overcome this problem, but we will have to wait for his condition to improve before we can operate. He has had a heart attack and a pulmonary edema and if we operate now it will be in unfavourable circumstances.'

Di Stefano, a diabetic and smoker, was admitted to hospital in Sagunto after suffering pains in his chest in the early hours of Saturday. He was transferred to a nearby

hospital in Valencia on Saturday night where he underwent cardiad catheterism to assess the extent of the damage caused by the heart attack.



## seeks WC record

XINHUA, Rio de Janeiro Michael Ballack and Juan Roman Brazilian forward Ronaldo told Riquelme grow weary during this Brazilian television on Saturday that summer's gruelling, monthlong he wants to set a new World Cup goal record at the Germany 2006 tournament, these voungsters will be expected to carry their teams. They've already proved more



#### World Cup.

The current 14-goal record was set by Germany's Gerd Muller, who scored 10 goals in the 1970 Mexico World Cup and four in Germany's 1974 World Cup "Germany 2006 will be a unique

opportunity to enter history and set a record that will be hard for anyone to beat" said Ronaldo.

side which won the European Cup in The Brazilian scored four goals 1977, 1978 and 1981 into second. France in 1998 and e

# **Beauty in the Beasts**

DHAKA MONDAY DECEMBER 26, 2005

quarterfinals with his fearless, darting runs into the box and crisp finishing touch. After he hobbled off with a broken foot, the England team lost its confidence and limped to a loss at the hands of Portugal

And time and time again, the raw, explosive and uber-fit Schweinsteigera midfielder like Messihas penetrated defenses when Bavern Munich teammate Ballack's game has been off. He seems to think little of defense in general: when German defenders found themselves at Australia's mercy in June, he helped salvage a 4-3 win, and boldly declared, "If we give up seven goals, and shoot eight, then it doesn't pitch, his ability to sweep defenders really matter to me." Expect the 21aside truly Biblical. Zinedine Zidane, year-old to do the same in 2006,

Messi's side in Germany, he could find himself on the receiving end of a few more, at a much higher cost to his team. And Rooney's reputation for rage is already legendary. His frustration during England's appalling September loss to Northern Ireland earned him a yellow card, a onematch ban, howling headlines (wind him up, watch him go, read one) and a much-publicised locker-room spat with captain Beckham.

Barcelona, and if the ref isn't on

thing, it's talent. The once petulant Beckham, now a footballing elder at 30, recognizes the upside to Rooney's volatility. "At the end of the day, in a way it is good that you see



SUPERSTARS IN THE MAKING: Argentina's Messi (L) and Germany's Schweinsteiger have proved they are capable of carrying their teams.

when all the current media hype surrounding Ballack and striker Lukas Podolski translates into triple coverage and hacked shins for both of them.

Of course, with the exuberance of youth often comes a penchant for petulance. And at the World Cup, opposing players will do their best to provoke these headstrong youngsters. Schweinsteiger's weakness for cheeky fouls has already earned him several yellow cards. While Messi is generally regarded as calm and collectedat least in Argentina, where such terms are relativehe did receive a red card in his debut after trying to shake a defender who had attached himself to his shirt. He has also picked up several yellows at

sion." A wiser, more clearheaded 45year-old Maradona has asked the Argentine football association to allow Messiwhom the international press has actually taken to comparing to El Diegoto wear his retired No. 10 shirt in Germany. And Schweinsteiger has garnered tremendous praise from German legend Franz Beckenbauer. He may have a name that literally means "pig mounter." But expect him and his fellow tyros to prove in Germany that beauty is indeed in the eye of the beholder.

after the Northern Ireland match.

"You know they have a lot of passion,

and Wayne plays with a lot of pas-

#### **Brazil 'best ever'** Kallis in, Kemp FROM PAGE 12

lore.

2000.

1. Brazil 1970

2. Liverpool 1977-81

3. Real Madrid 1956-60

rest of the field.

marvellous experience to walk out Hughes entered English football folkand feel the buzz."

The last time the two sides met in a Test at the MCG, a match in which Kallis was run out for 99 in South Africa's second innings, Australia won by nine wickets

the 1970 World Cup has been voted the greatest team of all time by BBC Radio ons of 1967. The Manchester United treblewinning team from 1999 finished sixth. The Brazil team beat the Liverpool ahead of the England rugby union team from 2003 and Arsenal's "Invincibles"

(0)

7. England Rugby World Cup winners 2003

8. Arsenal's 'Invincibles' 2003-04

9. Australia cricket team 1995-2005

10. England's Ashes winners 2005

(Football unless stated)

53 Infuriate

The two were some way clear of the

After Real's five-time European

champions and England's boys of '66 came Celtic's European Cup champi-A crowd of 70,000 is expected at the newly-refurbished ground for traditionally, the biggest day in

Australia's cricketing calendar. Paceman Glenn McGrath said "It's quite amazing being out in the

team's lagging strikers to emerge as the tournament's leading scorer. During Euro 2004, England's Michael Owen found himself cornered by defenders at every turn. Enter 18year-old striker Rooney, who lifted the teamand an entire nation's hopesonto his shoulders and into the

**INTERNET**, undated

born to Algerian immigrants in the

rough banlieues of Marseille, led

France to World Cup and European

championship glory. Even mega-

celebrity David Beckham was once

just a shy, mild-mannered kid from a

working-class neighbourhood in

Next summer's World Cup in

Germany is guaranteed to usher forth

a host of new heroes. And while the

pre-tournament hype will likely focus

on Brazil's exceptionally graceful

Kaka and Portuguese pretty-boy

Cristiano Ronaldo, it may well be a

trio of hardworking, hard-nosed ugly

ducklings who emerge as the swans:

England's Wayne Rooney,

Germany's Bastian Schweinsteiger

None older than 21, all three

possess the same vigour as the

young Maradona of the late '70s and

early '80s who took our breath away,

before cocaine and the temptations

of fame took his. And when the legs of

older teammates like Beckham,

than capable. In leading Argentina's

youth side to this summer's world

championship. 18-vear-old Messi, a

midfielder with a gift for the piercing

pass, stepped into the shoes of his

and Argentina's Lionel Messi.

Essex.

It's difficult to spot a diamond in the rough. It's even harder to see the beauty in, say, a pig. But footballknown as the beautiful gamehas, on occasion, transformed what some might consider rather ordinary beasts into priceless gems. A short, stout and cocky Diego Maradona emerged from the Buenos Aires slums to become a god on the

Still, if their elders respect any-

players react like that," said Beckham

England also refused to play in Peshawar but India played a one-

day game there on their last trip. The PCB said security arrangements for the Indian team had

already been finalised with the cooperation of the government.

"They wanted to make an inspection visit and we saw no problem with that but we are keen to have the itinerary officially released by next week," PCB director Abbas Zaidi said.

#### ROPOSED ITINERAR

Jan 5 Arrival in Lahore Jan 7-9 3-daver in Lahore Jan 13-17 1st Test in Lahore Jan 21-25 2nd Test in Faisalabad Jan 29-Feb 2 3rd Test in Karachi Feb8 1st ODI in Peshawar Feb 12 2nd ODI in Rawalpindi Feb 15 3rd ODI in Lahore Feb 18 4th ODI in Multan Feb 20 5th ODI in Karachi

### Laxman prepares

#### FROM PAGE 12

the last series. But I was left stranded on 79 in the third Test in Bangalore and was ninth out for 58 in the first Test in Mohali." said Laxman.

Pakistan won the final Test in Bangalore in March to level the three-match series 1-1. They went on to clinch the six-game one-day series 4-2. after being 2-0 down. Fortunes have improved for India

and Laxman since then.

The wristy strokeplayer scored a 140 against Zimbabwe in Bulawayo in September, ending a 14-Test century drought. He added another against Sri Lanka last week to help India to a 2-0 home series victory.

Pakistan come into the matches against India having beaten England 2-0 in a Test series and 3-2 in one-dayers.

But Laxman was encouraged by the depth in batting of India's Test squad.

"As a middle-order batsman, you definitely feel much more secure that you have got partners with you and that you won't get stranded like I have on more than one occasion," he said

Umar last played for Pakistan in are keen to develop a reservoir of April 2004 against India in the second Test at Lahore and set up a victory with a first-innings haul of

pace bowlers against India."

reluctance to take part. I can't say whether the tournament will take place or not." said Mahbub.

Japan-South Korea World Cup in 2002, when Brazil won its fifth World Cup trophy.

## Sania looks to New Year

## Tennis

#### PTI, New Delhi

Having completed a fruitful training stint with renowned coach Tony Roche. Indian tennis sensation Sania Mirza is ready to return to the courts with renewed vigour.

The 19-year-old Indian ace, who hit the headlines with her aggressive brand of tennis past season, savs the three-week programme in Australia with the legendary Roche has whetted her appetite and she is keen to add more colourful chapters to her career that has had a fairy tale start.

Sania, who rose from 166 to a career high 31 in world rankings in 2005, will kick-start the season with a high profile exhibition event in Hong Kong from January 4.

The eight-player invitational event will feature the Williams sisters, Venus and Serena, and Kim Clijsters among others.

"Having been away from competitive tennis for a while, I am looking forward immensely to getting back on the circuit .... I am looking forward to playing the Big Girls," Sania told PTI from Sydney.

The Hyderabadi will then play the USD 600,000 tournament at Sydney from January nine before entering the Australian Open starting on January 16.

Sania, who reached the third round at the season's first Grand Slam last time when she played as a wild card, said she was aware of people's expectations following her breakthrough year.

"People have had expectations from me even when I was 10 years old. I try to switch off but you are right, it isn't always easy to do that because the expectations are really mounting," said the first Indian woman to win a Tour title. The stint with Roche should have

prepared her for the touch weeks ahead. She has spent five hours

each day on court with the 60-yearcomparing these coaches who are old Aussie, who won seven singles legends." the teenager said.

titles and recently coached men's "But the impression I got about world number one Roger Federer. Roche is that he is one who likes to She was under the direct superadd to a player's repertoire rather vision of Roche and had Australia's than change his or her style of play." Sophie Ferguson as hitting partner. SaniaEalso had a special trainer, 23-year-old Aussie Jade Hottes, to "He (Roche) worked on my overall



#### SANIA MIRZA

game with a special emphasis on work on her fitness during the stay in the serve and volley," Sania said. Sydney

So, how good was Roche after "I trained with her for an hour all? Was he better than Bob Brett? before morning session and another "I don't think I know enough hour after I finished the afternoon about the game to actually think of session. She was with me on court

too, attending to my niggling pains and aches and has been of great help," Sania said about Hottes who is scheduled to be with her till the Australian Open.

"It was hard work. Five hours on the court in temperatures of 38 degrees and then two hours of training in the gym or other workouts."

Sania said the back sprain that forced her to pull out of a Tour event in Bangkok in October was healed.

"Initially (during the programme) a little bit but it is standing up well now and I feel no pain. I would sav it is healed." she said.

Although it was a three week stay, Roche worked with her for a schedule of 15 days as he was off on weekends, when the flamboyant teenager also took time off to visit nearby places.

An interesting tennis personality accompanying Sania and her father Imran Mirza, who was with her during the programme throughout, was Bob Giltinan who reached the men's semifinals of the Australian Open in 1978.

"We had dinner with Bob Giltinan, who is my father's friend, in a riverside restaurant with his family. We went to Roche's house for a barbecue and also spent time with some Indian friends. And did some shopping with Lara Giltinan." Sania, thrilled with her stint with

Roche, hoped that this would not be the first and last time she worked with the legend. "As a person, he is very special

and an absolutely wonderful human being ... I hope to consult him as and when I feel the need, provided he can spare the time," she said.

And what did Roche have to say on her game? "He felt he did not need to work

too much on my ground strokes and is pleased with my improvement in the serve and volley. He feels that in order to go to next level, I need to get physically stronger."

ous

characte

Real Madrid's five-time European Cup winners (1956-60) were third, ahead of England's 1966 World Cup winners

The legendary Brazil side which won

Football

BBC ONLINE, undated

Five Live listeners.

The first non-football team was the England side which won the 2003 Rugby World Cup in seventh place.

Two cricket teams made the top 10, with the all-conquering Australia cricket side of the past decade edging out December. England's 2005 Ashes victors for ninth place.

The winning Brazil team contained legendary figures such as Pele, Rivelino, Jairzinho, Gérson, and Tostão. They beat Italy 4-1 in what is consid-

ered the best World Cup with Pele, who scored one goal, setting up Carlos Alberto for the stunning final effort.

Liverpool's three-time European Cup winners were the stand-out side in an era when English clubs dominated European football.

Under the astute guidance of manger Bob Paisley, the likes of Kevin Keegan, Kenny Dalglish and Emlyn

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer ACROSS 36 Thick DOWN 25 Trouba-1 Piercing 38 i air 1 Wile E.'s dour tools 40 Mardi supplier 27 Frenzied Gras VIP 5 Toy-shop 2 Tyler or 29 Away 41 Roe employ-Taylor from ee? provider 3 Pro-SSW 43 Zero 8 Overcontracted 30 Driver's fident 45 Garb 4 Tried for license 12 Comes-47 Remarks à homer datum 5 Brief to the 32 Unisex tibles 13 Apiece audience witticism casual-14 Galileo's 51 Ironside 6 Meadow wear homeportraver 7 Sassv 34 Sackcloth 52 Conventown 8 Angel and 15 Tiny ience 9 Labyrinth ashes details beast 37 Listening store 54 "Yeah, 17 "The ---10 Dealt with device lama, he's right!' 11 Guys' 39 From a 55 Mythical a priest" cohorts specified 18 Christmas monster 16 Loathtime, 56 Ms. quaff some one in law 19 Churchly Fitzgerald 20 --- Kippur 42 Little 57 Solidifies 23 Koppel or councils devil 21 Needle-58 Born Kennedy 44 Scurvy fish 59 Crystal 24 Keatsian preven 22 Emcee gazer opus tives 23 Huck's 45 "You're ----Solution time: 21 mins pal Boy 26 Hoover Now" e.g. 46 Squeez-28 Expresse able pain container 31 Tend texts 48 Evans 33 Treasure or Earnhardt seeker's aid 49 Perry's 35 Mystericreator 50 Luminary

from the 2003-04 season.

middle there. I can only imagine After the Australia and England what it will be like with a capacity cricket teams came the Sir Steve crowd. Redgrave-inspired coxless four which "Last year when they hadn't won Olympic rowing gold in Sydney finished the stand it was a bit of a

strange feeling bowling at the MCG. Five Live listeners ranked their top five "Now with it completed it will be teams from a list of 32 selected by a panel something pretty awesome." of experts between 17 November and 1

TEAMS AUSTRALIA (from): Ricky Ponting

(captain). Matthew Havden, Phil Jaques, Brad Hodge, Mike Hussey, Andrew Symonds, Adam Gilchrist, Shane Warne, Brett Lee, Nathan Bracken, Glenn McGrath, Stuart McGill SOUTH AFRICA (from): Graeme 4. England's 1966 World Cup winners 5. Celtic European Cup winners 1967 6. Manchester United treble side 1999

Smith (captain), AB de Villiers, Jacques Kallis, Herschelle Gibbs, Jacques Rudolph, Ashwell Prince, Mark Boucher, Shaun Pollock Andre Nel, Charl Langeveldt, Makhaya Ntini, Stuart MacGill.

Umpires: Asad Rauf and Steve Bucknor.

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
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	1	41	$\top$	1	42		43	-	44		1	
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54		1	1		55	$\uparrow$	1		56	$\top$	1-	T
57		1	1		58				59	1	+	$\uparrow$

EI XAFHARH PHCH WHCL PHZBSGL UTS RHWHC DBHZRHV GEFXHBI, E XTKKAXH GH'V UH IEBSGL CEDG Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN I SAW THE BARRACKS FILLED WITH STACKED BEDS, 1 SHOUTED "THAT'S A LOT OF BUNK!" Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals B The Cryptoquip 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.