

DHAKA FRIDAY MAY 5, 2006



Did U Know?

West Indies fast bowler Jerome Taylor took 4 for 24 in the 2nd ODI against Zimbabwe on April 30. It was the first time that he has taken four wickets in a match.



Kevin Pietersen
 (England batsman)
 "If it wasn't for Shane Warne in that Australia team then we would have won the Ashes 4-1."
 Talking about England's monumental Ashes win last year.

What to WATCH
ESPN
 South Africa v New Zealand
 3rd Test, Day One
 Live at 1:30 pm

**School soccer
 2nd phase
 from today**

BDNEWS, Dhaka
 The second stage of the banglalink tiger trophy National School Championship begins at six venues - Comilla, Feni, Pabna, Sirajganj, Faridpur and Nilphamari - today.
 Eight teams will split into two groups and play at each venue with the group winners reaching the final. Six zonal champions will join the 16-team finals in Dhaka.
 Six schools have already qualified for the final round from the first phase.

**The Daily Star
 catches World
 Cup fever**

The FIFA World Cup Germany 2006 kicks off on June 9. While the whole world is preparing to watch the month-long gala event, we here at The Daily Star are no different. But although the showpiece is still more than a month away, we just can't wait for it to begin. In view of the enormous interest of our valued readers, The Daily Star Sport turns into 4-Page, two of them in colour, from today with extensive coverage on the 'beautiful game', leading up to the start and beyond. Furthermore, The Daily Star inaugurates its first-ever online World Cup Poll from today. The survey is aimed at letting all the people out there who love the sport express their opinion on a number of varying issues that shall arise in the build-up to the World Cup and during the festival of football itself. The World Cup Poll can be accessed by logging on to our website: www.thedailystar.net
 Express your opinions as you see fit and be sure to specify with your own comments. The first Poll runs for seven days.

Six matches still a puzzle



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Ali Asghar expressed his excitement at Bangladesh's hosting of the 2011 World Cup but also said that nothing has been decided yet on the number of matches to be held in Bangladesh.

"The 2011 Cricket World Cup is far away and nothing is finalised so far. A secretariat for the World Cup will be set up in Pakistan and everything will be decided later on," he told reporters at a press conference at a city hotel on Thursday.

"Series of meetings among the four co-hosting countries are to be held to settle everything."

Earlier, a BCB top official claimed that six matches would be held in Bangladesh but the BCB boss said it was just for the sake of presentation of the bid.

The Board president celebrated the successful bid by cutting a large cake.

BCB vice-president Aziz Al Kaiser, general secretary Mahub Anam, joint secretaries Reazuddin Al Mamun, Rafiqul Islam and CEO Mahmudur Rahman were present on the occasion.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman was supposed to attend the press conference. But BCB president informed that 'the state minister is sick and would be unable to attend the press conference.'

The BCB President, right after his speech, expressed his sorrow over the Chittagong incident during the second Test match between Bangladesh and Australia where the police brutally attacked and injured at least 20 journalists and photojournalists.

Asghar also revealed that Bangladesh will propose to host the opening or final of the ICC Cricket World Cup in 2011, which will be staged in four Asian countries -- Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The president, however, faced a volley of questions regarding his statement on reclaiming the Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS) for the course of the 2011 World Cup.

The BCB president sparked fresh debate on the BNS when he expressed his desire to get back the premier venue to host World Cup matches on his arrival at the airport from Dubai on Wednesday.

"If country's people want to see the World Cup matches at the BNS, we will host the matches at the this venue in the greater interest of country and the

cricket-loving people in general," he said.

He however maintained that they would require the BNS on "a temporary basis for the World Cup."

BCB general secretary Mahub Anam said that among the three venues, BNS would be an option because the teams participating in the World Cup would require the best conditions for practicing as well as playing practice matches.

But he didn't have much to say when asked about the thought of an alternative venue in their scheme of things when they had left the BNS for football back in October 2004.

He had a different view on the priorities of BCB, ahead of the premier event.

"We are more focused on improving the performance of the national over the next five years so that they can be one of the top teams when the World Cup is staged in Bangladesh," he said.

Asghar also reiterated his general secretary's views.

"Though Bangladesh have been playing well, but we will actually know where we will stand after the 2007 World Cup in the West Indies. From now on we have to be prepared to be group champions in the World Cup 2011 on home soil," he headed.

Rankings on SA's mind



AFP, Johannesburg

a win, rather than a draw.

"There is one more Test match left in the summer for us and we want to end the summer well," said captain Graeme Smith, who said South Africa only settled for a draw in the second Test in Cape Town because New Zealand batted on into the third day before declaring their first innings.

Hashim Amla, who scored a century on his recall to the side in Cape Town, said: "Our first objective is to win. If you go out just looking for a draw, you can very easily land yourself in hot water."

"So we will be playing positive

cricket, which has been the team's motto, and we are hoping to come away with a 2-0 series win."

New Zealand will have a selection dilemma ahead of a match to be played on a pitch likely to help seam bowlers. Off-spinner Jeevan Patel, who took three wickets on his debut and batted promisingly in Cape Town, could be left out to make room for an extra seamer, probably Kyle Mills.

New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming said after the Cape Town Test that he was disappointed not to have an opportunity to win the series but that his team would be

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BCB president Ali Asghar (C), along with other top officials, cuts a large cake on the occasion of Bangladesh's successful bid as the 2011 World Cup host at a local hotel on Thursday.

United we stand...



REUTERS, Madrid

by their national team? Part of the explanation is to be found in the powerful regional divisions within the country.

Many of its inhabitants see themselves as Basque or Catalan or even Galician rather than Spanish and practically every region has its own representative team that play at least one international friendly a year.

When Catalunya play, the Nou Camp is filled to the brim in an emotive display of nationalist sentiment and it is the same when the Basque select are on display at San Mames.

But the Spanish national team have not dared play at the Barcelona stadium since 1987 and last visited the Basque country 20 years before that. It would simply be too much like playing an away match.

It is hard to imagine another country where a debate could occur about whether or not a footballer might want to play for the national team because of his political views, but that is the case with Barca defender Oleguer, a self-professed Catalan nationalist.

The Spanish flag carries so much

political baggage with it that Chelsea's Basque defender Asier del Horno was reported to be concerned about being photographed next to it when he won his first call-up for the national side.

It is perhaps a blessing in disguise that the present Spanish national anthem has no words as singing it would be fraught with danger for some players.

"Because there is no consensus over the nature of the Spanish state, there is no consensus over the national team," says El Pais sports correspondent Diego Torres.

"Spanish players are not as proud as other national team players when they pull on the national shirt and that pride is a fundamental ingredient in the success of any national side."

Regional divisions are inextricably linked to the unchallenged supremacy of club over country in Spain with both Barca and Real drawing far more interest than the national team.

"In all countries there are strong clubs, but here the clubs also represent powerful political interests and that is the key," says Torres.



The Barcelona players celebrating on the top of their team bus after retaining the Primera Liga crown on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

STANCHART NAT'L SCHOOL CRICKET

**BKSP, Kalindi
 in zonal final**

SPORTS REPORTER

Kalindi High School and BKSP both won convincingly to reach the finals of Dhaka Metro in the Standard Chartered National School Cricket tournament yesterday.

At the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Kalindi High School defeated Dhaka Ideal High School by eight wickets. Batting first, Dhaka Ideal managed only 130 runs. Hossain took 3 for 16, while Sagar picked two wickets.

Sajib was unbeaten on 38 as Kalindi High romped home in just 23 overs.

BKSP also maintained their brilliant run in the tournament, as

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**Titu to skipper
 hockey team**

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) yesterday announced an 18-member squad for the Asian Games hockey qualifiers to be held in Dhaka from May 11.

The Asian Games will take place in November in Doha, Qatar. Playmaker Shahidullah Titu has been named captain of the squad, which take on Indonesia in their pool opener.

To make the tournament a success, an inter-ministerial meeting was held yesterday at the secretariat with State Minister for Youth

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Barcelona retain Liga title



REUTERS, Madrid

Barcelona retained their Primera Liga title on Wednesday after second-placed Valencia lost 2-1 at struggling Real Mallorca while they went on to beat high-flying Celta Vigo 1-0 in the evening's late match.

Leading striker Samuel Eto'o scored his 25th goal of the season to earn Frank Rijkaard's side a victory that left them with an unassailable 11-point lead over their rivals who have just two games left to play.

Barca, who have a game in hand, top the table on 79 points, Valencia have 68 from 36, two ahead of Real Madrid who visit struggling Racing Santander on Thursday.

Osasuna, who won 1-0 at Atletico Madrid, occupy the final Champions League place a point further behind Real and five ahead of Celta.

It is the Catalan club's 18th league title and they are the first team to successfully defend the crown since they won back-to-back titles in 1998 and 1999 under another Dutch coach Louis van Gaal.

Rijkaard's team have the chance to cap a brilliant season with a European triumph as they play Arsenal in the Champions League final in Paris on May 17.

"This is the most important prize for the club," Barca president Joan Laporta told Canal Plus television. "It is a reward for hard work and

consistency throughout the season. "Now we can approach the Champions League final with less tension. This team is making history."

Barcelona's players were told they had won the title as they left the pitch at halftime against Celta and the substitutes celebrated by throwing water over each other.

At the same time in Barcelona, fans of the club began to stream out on to the streets to celebrate the triumph.

The team emerged for the second half in the bizarre position of knowing they had won the title, yet with 45 minutes of their game left to play.

But in an impressive demonstration of the sort of motivation that has helped Barca dominate the Primera Liga for the past two seasons, Rijkaard's side managed to step up a gear and see off their rivals.

Suitably enough it was leading scorer Eto'o who grabbed the winner when he juggled the ball past two defenders and tucked it inside the post after a surging run by Mark van Bommel.

The Cameroon international was enveloped by all his teammates who bounced up and down in celebration of the goal and the league title.

Rijkaard then took the opportunity to replace Ronaldinho, Van Bommel and Giovanni van Bronckhorst and give Edmilson, Xavi and Silvinho a chance to share in the victory.

Celta's Jesus Perera hit the bar in the closing minutes and Barca keeper Victor Valdes had to make a great reflex save to deny the striker an equaliser just before the final whistle but the visitors held on to win.

Valencia waved goodbye to their remote chances of depriving Barca of the title as they went down at relegation-threatened Mallorca.

Mallorca were rewarded for their ambitious approach when Venezuelan striker Juan Arango steered past Santiago Canizares after Victor burst through two defenders in the ninth minute.

Valencia recovered from the shaky start to equalise eight minutes later when midfielder Miguel Angel Angulo steered in from 12 metres after David Villa's neat cut-back from the byline.

But Italian defender Cristiano Doni earned the islanders a vital win two minutes into the second half when he volleyed home on the turn after defender David Cortes clipped a pass into the area.

Alaves secured renewed hope of avoiding the drop with a 2-0 win over fellow strugglers Real Betis while Athletic Bilbao beat Real Zaragoza 1-0 at San Mames to ease their relegation worries.

Already-relegated Malaga, who lost 2-1 at Villarreal, bring up the rear with 24 points, Cadiz have 33 and Alaves 36.

Another six teams are within four points of the congested relegation zone.



A man walks past a large digital watch in a shape of a football displaying the countdown to the World Cup 2006 at a shopping center in Bangkok on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

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