

26 DAYS TO GO

WORLD CUP SPECIAL

Star sport

SPORTS@THEDAILYSTAR.NET

DHAKA SUNDAY MAY 14, 2006

'We need to fix successor'

"A successful World Cup and an agreement with Klinsmann would be perfect. But if for some reason Klinsmann does not want to carry on after the World Cup we need to have someone in mind. If the team crashes out of the tournament early on with a disappointing performance then questions have to be asked."

— Franz Beckenbauer, president of World Cup Organising Committee.

AFP, Berlin

Two new faces in nat'l fold!

SPORTS REPORTER

The Under-19 players are all set to move up to the senior fold and a couple of them were under serious considerations to win a place in the preliminary camp for the national team.

The national selectors along with captain Habibur Bashar and coach Dav Whatmore met yesterday to discuss on the two separate teams for the upcoming Zimbabwe tour.

Bangladesh A team is expected to leave Dhaka on June 12 to play three four-day and as many limited-over matches against their Zimbabwean counterparts but the national side visit was yet to confirm.

"We are yet to confirm about the schedule of the national team's visit to Zimbabwe. We have a plan to start the national camp for May 22 but it may defer by a week if the tour will not precede as per schedule in July," said chief selector Faruque Ahmed.

The former national skipper said that they will announce the A team within three days.

"It is likely to be an 15-member side but we are yet to decide. It would be a mixture of Test and Under-19 cricketers. We definitely consider the Under-19 players if they deserved the call up," said Faruque without elaborating.

Although Faruque declined to comment on the national side selection, it was learnt that it would be an 18 to 19 member squad where two new faces are not unlikely.

There are every chance to see all-rounder Sakib Al Hasan and Farhad Reza in the national team camp.

Sakib has proved to be a dependable left-hand batsman and a more than part-time left-arm.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8



Did U Know?

Egypt became the first African nation to compete in the FIFA World Cup (1934) when they replaced Uruguay.



Raymond Domenech

(France football coach)
"There are not many players like him. He is a striker, a winger and a left midfielder. You can't just replace him like for like."

On Thierry Henry.

What to WATCH

ESPN
 England v Sri Lanka
 1st Test, Day Four
 Live at 3:30 pm

TEN Sports
 West Indies v Zimbabwe
 7th ODI
 Live at 7:30 pm

DAY'S EVENT

Asian Games Hockey Qualifier
 Singapore v Sri Lanka (2:00 pm)
 Bangladesh v Iran (4:00 pm)
 Venue: Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium



Iran national team players warm up prior to a friendly match in Spiez, Switzerland on Friday. Iran are preparing for the World Cup with a training camp in the Bernese Oberland from May 8 to May 18.

The men the World Cup missed

Football

INTERNET, undated

Pele, Maradona and Cruyff, arguably the three greatest footballers of all time, achieved footballing immortality after parading their genius on the biggest stage.

All three cemented an indelible place in the hearts of countless millions of football followers after mesmerising a global audience when it mattered most, at the World Cup finals. The biggest show on earth has made legends of others. Puskas, Garrincha, Eusebio, Charlton, Beckenbauer, Kempes, Rossi, Platini, Ronaldo, Gascoigne, Zidane and Ronaldinho, to name only a few.

But the beautiful game has spawned players who, for reasons beyond their control, never had the chance to showcase their skills at the main event. Had they done so, the 'greatest' list might well have

read differently.

So who is the best player never to have played in the World Cup finals? Among those still playing, Czech Republic playmaker Pavel Nedved, of Juventus, Manchester United's Dutch predator Ruud van Nistelrooy and Ukrainian goal-machine Andrey Shevchenko, of AC Milan, would top the list. But all three will appear at Germany 2006, barring late injuries, and will probably write some new headlines too.

Of the legends who have missed out on the greatest stage, two names that surely head the list are George Best and Alfredo Di Stefano - two true greats in anyone's language. The incomparable Best played only 37 times for Northern Ireland and scored an unimpressive 10 international goals, but won two league titles and the European Cup with his beloved Manchester United while lighting up British football like no other before or since.

Voted European player of the year in 1968 after helping United lift the European Cup, Best was by no means a big man, but was nevertheless the complete footballer. The man the Spanish media lauded 'El Beate' after running Real Madrid ragged at the Bernabeu Stadium in the semi-finals of the European Cup, had supreme balance, the dribbling skills of Stanley Matthews on fast-forward and two magical feet.

He could head the ball better than most and was ferocious in the tackle. There was nothing he couldn't do with the ball. Best, arguably, was the world's first footballing superstar and, undeniably, one of the greatest entertainers. Off the field Best's hell-raising lifestyle was equally spectacular - alcoholism accounted for his early retirement in 1974 - but for a decade his light shone brighter than any other. Pele once named Best the greatest and who could argue?

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

Oman win a classic

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Oman brightened their chance to book their place in the final round with a stunning 5-4 victory over favourite Hong Kong while Sri Lanka beat Iran 2-0 in the Jamuna Bank Asian Games qualifying round tournament at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

The Middle East country, which started their campaign with a hard-fought 3-2 success against Singapore in the opening match, dominated the first half 3-1.

Hong Kong bounced back strongly to the match after an unimpressive performance in the

first session but it was not good enough as Basim Khatar struck the winner for Oman with just two minutes from the final whistle to confirm their second successive win in the competition.

Musain Abdullah opened the scoring for Oman when he converted a penalty corner in the 16th minute and then Basim Khatar took only two minutes to score his first field goal to increase the lead to 2-0.

Hong Kong, which won their first match against Iran by 4-1, were brought back into contention by Arif Ali when he converted a penalty corner in the 26th minute to reduce the margin.

But Husain Ayad extended the lead for Oman beyond the breather (3-1) scoring a field goal in the

32nd minute.

Though Amjad Siddiq furthered their lead after the break (4-1) with a 38th minute strike, Hong Kong scored three goals in a row within 16 minutes to level the margin (4-4) thanks to Swailkh Mohammed, Ali Asghar and Arif Ali who scored one goal each.

Hong Kong striker Arif Ali was adjudged man of the match.

In the first match, Sri Lanka recovered from their 3-0 defeat against hosts Bangladesh to blank Iran 2-0 after leading the first half 1-0.

Captain Wickramasinghe gave Sri Lanka the first lead in the 19th minute capitalising a penalty corner while Abeyrethne doubled the margin in the 40th minute also from a penalty corner.



Iran goalkeeper Fatah acrobatically saves a shot from Sri Lanka vice-captain Mohideen during their Asian Games Qualifying Round match at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium on Saturday.

Jupiter spins into action

SPORTS REPORTER

Bagerhat cruised to a comfortable 116-run win against Jhenidah in the Dhaka Bank Under-19 National Youth Cricket Championship at the Khulna Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Jupiter Ghosh slammed an unbeaten 103 to help Bagerhat reach 249 for 5 in 50 overs. Then he bowled a tight spell to take two wickets when Jhenidah batted and were bowled out for 130 runs.

There was a lot of drama at the Barguna Stadium as Patuakhali endured the heartbreak of losing by virtue of a toss of coin against Pirojpur, after rain prevented them from chasing 163 runs.

Meanwhile, Sylhet became champions of their division when they sailed to an eight-wicket win over Moulavibazar at the Habiganj Stadium.

Mehdi set the stage for Sylhet when he took three wickets as Moulavibazar were bowled out for just 73 runs.

Sylhet reached the target in just 12 overs.

Away at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium, a century by Jahid enabled Chandpur to reach 215 for 3 against Rangamati.

Then Jahid claimed five wickets, as Rangamati were dismissed for 178 in 43 overs.

The parabola method was used to determine the rain-affected match between Jessore and Narail at the Magura Stadium.

Narail eventually won the match by 2 wickets after being set a revised target of 169 to win in 35 overs.

Thumbs up from ten teams

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Ten teams including big guns Abahani, Mohammedan and Brothers Union have yesterday consented to take part in the first-ever professional football league. A Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) official confirmed that the top three apart Sheikh Russel, Arambagh, Farashganj and Youngmen's Fakirpool are the other Dhaka-based clubs who have expressed an interest to go pro.

Chittagong Mohammedan, Chittagong Abahani and Chittagong City Corporation are the other clubs who also have responded positively, while Muktiyoddha Sangsad KC showed their interest verbally, but are yet to confirm officially.

As prescribed by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), BFF are now determined to introduce the home and away basis pro-league in September, participated by ten to twelve teams across the country.

The federation will take its final decision on the league in its executive committee meeting on

SEE PAGE 18 COL 7

ERRATUM

Dear readers, due to technical difficulties, The Daily Star World Cup Poll could not be published in its proper form yesterday. We regret the inconvenience.

Scars of history run deep



AFP, Berlin

The past is another country, as the saying goes, and nowhere is that more true of Germany as it gears up to host next month's World Cup, 32 years after hosting it for the first time.

When the tournament last came to Germany in 1974 the country was brutally divided in two by the Cold War and the matches took place on the western side of a border bristling with military hardware.

West Germany meanwhile was still reeling from the Palestinian attacks on Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics, the hostage-taking raw in the minds of spectators at the 1974 final who sat just a few minutes' walk from where the tragedy unfolded.

When the German team run out in the futuristic new Munich stadium on June 9 to face Costa Rica in the tournament-opening match, the 2006 finals will begin in a reunited Germany, although one still struggling under the burden of sewing its two halves together.

Chancellor Angela Merkel, the first woman leader in Germany's

history, will attend the match, signalling another sea change over the past three decades.

In 1974, the teenaged Merkel was studying physics at Leipzig University, behind the Iron Curtain.

Politics were impossible to avoid at the 1974 finals.

Communist East Germany secured a politically charged 1-0 victory over West Germany in the first phase, but both had already qualified for the next round.

The humiliating defeat had a profound effect on the West German team, prompting captain Franz Beckenbauer to hold a crisis meeting with his players.

It worked, as West Germany went on to win the tournament, overcoming the "total football" of Johann Cruyff's Dutch side to beat them 2-1 in the final.

Beckenbauer is an obvious common link between the two tournaments. The man who also went on to win the World Cup with Germany as coach in 1990 has been an outspoken head of the 2006 organising committee.

"Bringing back the tournament was probably my greatest moment," Beckenbauer said. "To bring the World Cup to your country and to organise it is a chance you only get once in your lifetime."

"We want to show the rest of the world that the 2006 World Cup is in a different country to 1974 when

West Germany were hosts."

Germany will become only the fourth nation to host the World Cup finals twice when they organise this summer's finals, following in the footsteps of Mexico (1970, 1986), France (1938, 1998) and Italy (1934, 1990).

It is not only the political backdrop that differs greatly between the two tournaments.

In 1974 there were just 16 teams competing for football's ultimate prize compared to the 32 nations vying for the trophy this summer.

The tournament format has also changed dramatically with the 1974 finals consisting of two group phases in which the top team from each of the final groups met in the final.

That system was scrapped for the 1986 World Cup in Mexico and, in 2006, the 32 nations are divided into eight groups of four. The top two teams will advance into the last 16 stage.

There are also noticeable variations in the qualified nations at the 1974 finals from those in 2006.

Football giants England, France and Spain, all present at this summer's finals, were absent from the finals in West Germany.

However, Australia qualified for both the 1974 and 2006 finals -- the only World Cups they have

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Gatlin sets new WR

Athletics

AFP, Doha

Justin Gatlin insisted that breaking the 100 metres world record would not change him at all and that the impact of doing so had yet to really hit him.

The 24-year-old American joined

an elite group of athletes who have held the world, Olympic and world record after he ran a blistering 9.76 seconds here on Friday breaking Jamaica's Asafa Powell's old mark of 9.77sec.

However Gatlin, who in 2001 tested positive for amphetamines and was hit with a two-year ban, reduced to one year after he appealed on the grounds he

required treatment for attention deficit disorder, said he would not let the record go to his head and wanted instead to focus on lowering it even further.

"I don't know how much it's (life) going to change," said Gatlin, who also won the 200m world crown last year.

"I'm just trying to stay focused on what I've got to do. I'm trying to go faster than that. I'm trying to go 9.74 or 9.73."

Amazingly Gatlin, who is coached by Trevor Graham, the former handler of Marion Jones and the disgraced Tim Montgomery, said that the race had not been one of his better ones.

"The race really wasn't one of my best races that I can put down in my book, but if I can stay focused and not get the big head obviously, and not be content with what I just ran, then I can go out there and do it again."

However while everyone around him was showering him with plaudits Gatlin admitted it was taking time to sink in.

"It hasn't hit me yet," said the always unassuming Gatlin, who has come a long way from the time as a hyperactive child he used to dress as Batman and jump up and down on his parents' bed.

"I think everyone saw a good competitor from Justin Gatlin in 2004 and 2005," said Gatlin, who admitted that after breaking the record he wanted to jump into the stands and hug all the spectators.

"I think I'm more aggressive this year in going after the world record. It actually came quicker than I thought it was going to come and that's what I'm working on now."

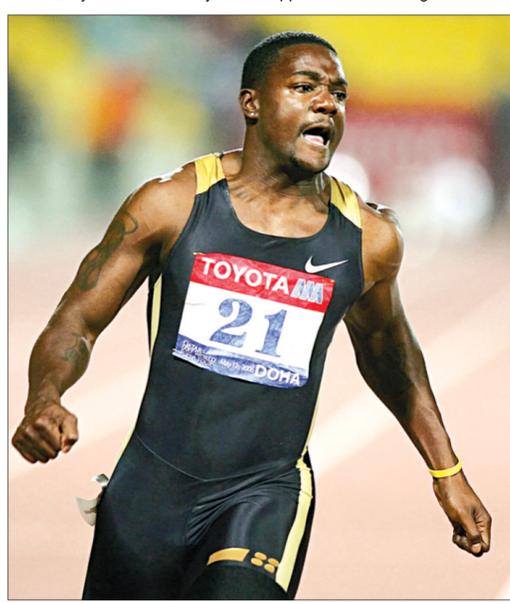


PHOTO: AFP

American sprinter Justin Gatlin crosses the finish line setting a new 100m world record at the Qatar Super Grand Prix with a time of 9.76 seconds in Doha. The Olympic champion broke Asafa Powell's previous mark of 9.77 seconds.

Lankans follow on

Cricket

AFP, London

Upul Tharanga and Kumar Sangakkara restored some pride for Sri Lanka as they defied the England attack on the third day of the first Test at Lord's here Saturday.

Sri Lanka, following-on, were 93 for one in their second innings at tea - still 266 runs behind England's imposing first innings 551 for six declared.

But having looked set for another collapse when reduced to 10 for one, an unbroken stand of 83 between the two Sri Lankan left-handers prevented further embarrassment.

Earlier Yorkshire fast bowler Matthew Hoggard took his 200th Test wicket as Sri Lanka were bowled out for 192 - 160 runs shy of the follow-on target of 352 - shortly before lunch.

Hoggard, who finished with first innings figures of four for 27, soon struck again as he revelled in the overcast conditions.

The 29-year-old, known for his ability to swing the ball into left-handers, brought one back to Jehan Mubarak and the batsman,

late on a drive, was bowled off an inside edge for six to leave Sri Lanka 10 for one.

At least Mubarak, one of four Lankan batsmen who made nought in the first innings, had avoided a pair.

But Tharanga and the experienced Sangakkara steadied the ship, both men playing attractively through the offside.

Flintoff brought on medium-pace Paul Collingwood, England's fifth seamer, while left-arm spinner Monty Panesar, who would have given the batsmen something else to think about, languished in the outfield.

Panesar, after more than 102 overs of England right-arm pace bowling in the match, came on just before tea and started with a maiden.

Sri Lanka started Saturday in the dire position of 91 for six and only stands of 44 and 61, for the seventh and ninth wickets respectively, took them to three figures.

Mahela Jayawardene, Sri Lanka's captain and the last of their top-order batsmen, was 40 not out.

England fast bowler Sajid Mahmood, a Lancashire teammate of Flintoffs, had enjoyed a debut spell to remember on Friday of three wickets for no runs in nine

balls.

But the 24-year-old cousin of British boxer Amir Khan was denied a further victim and had to settle for innings figures of 13-2-50-3.

No Sri Lankan had made a fifty in the preceding fixture, a 10-wicket defeat against England A.

However, Jayawardene's seventh boundary, a cut off Mahmood, took him to the landmark in 102-balls.

Farveez Maharoof, six not out overnight, supported his skipper well in a handy seventh-wicket stand before he was caught and bowled by Hoggard for 22, after trying to turn the ball legside.

Hoggard was the tenth England bowler to take 200 Test wickets.

And eight balls later Jayawardene's defiant knock ended when he was caught behind off a rising Flintoff delivery for 61, Sri Lanka 131 for eight.

Chaminda Vaas (31), dropped twice and Nuwan Kulasekara (29) each hit four boundaries before both men fell to slip catches off Hoggard and all-rounder Flintoff respectively.

England's total, their highest score against Sri Lanka, was built around hundreds from Kevin

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1