

DC Gold Cup from Aug 23

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

The second DC Gold Cup football tournament, jointly organised by District Administration and District Sports Association (DSA) will begin on August 23 here at the Khagrachhari Stadium.

A total of eight upazilas -- defending champions Khagrachhari sadar, Panchhari, Dighinala, Matiranga, Ramghor, Manikchhari, Mohalchhari and Laxmichhari -- will compete in the tournament that targets to develop the game, footballers and build up relations among all footballers of the hill district.

The first DC Gold Cup was in July 2005.

Six eves asked to join camp

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday asked more players to join the ongoing women's football camp at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex.

The six players -- Shraboni, Hashi, Diana, Nishu, Reshma and Baby -- have been requested to report to coach Abu Yusuf tomorrow at 4 pm.

The Bangladesh women's team are now training for the exhibition match against visiting Orissa state team on August 20.

Huge win for nat'l hockey team

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh national hockey team crushed Bangladesh Air Force 7-0 in the first practice match of the preparatory tournament at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The tournament is organised by the Bangladesh Hockey Federation ahead of the Asian Cup to be held on September 1-9 in Chennai in India.

The final of the single-league basis tournament will be held on August 9, also at the same venue.

The 18-member Asian Cup final squad is expected to be announced on August 9 after the meet.

Eleven teams, split into two groups, will participate in the Asian Cup.

Bangladesh have been placed in a strong Group B along with hosts India, Korea, China, Thailand and Sri Lanka.

The other group comprises Pakistan, Japan, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore.

The youngsters

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the graduates from Manchester City's youth academy.

Micah Richards, 19, has already been capped by England; while Stephen Ireland, 20, and Michael Johnson, 19, have showed glimpses of the skill they will bring to midfield if allowed to blossom.

Two other young English players could take a great leap forward this season.

Aston Villa's lightning-quick winger Gabriel Agbonlahor, 20, should thrive under Martin O'Neill's astute coaching, while at Derby, Giles Barnes, a 19-year-old winger, has the chance to show why he is already been watched by the several leading clubs

Schalke delight

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opponents played a full part and means us work for everything."

Hamburg's Dutch international and captain Rafael van der Vaart grabbed his side's first goal against third-division Holstein Kiel in the Bundesliga team's 5-0 win.

Fellow Bundesliga side Eintracht Frankfurt had a comfortable 4-1 win over third-division side FC Union Berlin as 24-year-old midfielder Alexander Meier bagged a hat trick.

Newly promoted Duisburg had a 4-0 win over third-division Babelsberg while fellow Bundesliga new-boys Karlsruhe needed extra-time to see off fourth-division Neustrelitz.

Bundesliga sides VfL Bochum and VfL Wolfsburg are also in next Sunday's second round-draw after comfortable wins.

Bayern Munich play their first-round tie at third-division Wacker Burghausen on Monday.

Mourinho

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the sides in possession terms but we made the clearer chances and for that reason we deserved to win.

"They missed Drogha, there's no question about that. He is a very important player for them.

"But it doesn't matter if both sides had played their strongest team it wouldn't have given you any real information other than to say both will contest the Premier League title and possibly Liverpool and Arsenal will join in."

Ferguson was delighted to see Van der Sar emerge as the hero after a shaky end to last season.

"I think his experience came through there," he added. "He studied Lampard's penalty-taking and that experience has got the result for us today."



PHOTO: PID

NSC chairman and Chief of Army Staff Gen Moeen U Ahmed (R) hands over a check for flood victims to the Chief Advisor Fakhruddin Ahmed at the Chief Advisor's office yesterday.

McGrath boost for ICL



AFP, Sydney

Glenn McGrath says he wants to play in a breakaway Indian Twenty20 cricket league, even though confirmed high-profile signings are scarce.

Former West Indies captain Brian Lara is the only prominent contemporary player to confirm he has joined the Indian Cricket League, which is proposing to run a Twenty20 series in October in direct opposition to a one-day series between India and Australia.

McGrath and his former Test teammate Shane Warne, who both retired from Test and one-day cricket earlier this year, have been linked with the ICL, but negotiations

continue and so far neither of them has signed on.

"It's tempting," McGrath said Monday, two months after he bowed out of international cricket by taking a record 26 wickets at the World Cup.

McGrath, 37, said a short-term Twenty20 tournament would be ideal to give him his "fix" of cricket without taxing him.

"Obviously, you can make a little bit of money. Probably a month of cricket, get back, give me that fix of playing again -- it might be all I need."

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is determined to ensure the failure of the rebel ICL, which is bankrolled by the country's largest listed media house, Zee Telefilms.

The BCCI has not only refused to

let out stadia for the ICL's inaugural Twenty20 competition, but has also threatened to bar rebel players from representing India in official tournaments.

Despite a possible dabble with the ICL, McGrath said he was satisfied he had made the correct decision to quit top-level cricket.

"I think I played as long as I could mentally. Physically the body feels great, but the mental side of it is another thing," he said.

"Previously, watching other teams playing made me want to get out there. I couldn't wait for the season to start. Now I think I'm glad I'm not out there.

"For me it's been the right decision, and I've had time to get used to it. To finish on a high -- I couldn't have asked for much more than that."

Atapattu wants to quit

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's former captain Marvan Atapattu has asked to be released from his contract with the national team, cricket officials said Sunday.

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) chief executive officer Duleep Mendis said that Atapattu had sent a letter requesting to be discharged from the team.

Mendis said the SLC, the governing body of the sport here, would take a decision at its committee meeting Monday.

Atapattu's current contract with the SLC runs until March 2008 and he is one of the six players with 'A' graded contracts. He is also playing for the Lashing's World XI in England.

Atapattu was overlooked by the Sri Lankan selectors for the entirety of the World Cup in the West Indies and the subsequent tour to Abu Dhabi for the one-day series with Pakistan.

The former captain, who has scored more than 5,300 runs in 88 Tests with 16 hundreds and more than 8,500 runs in one-day internationals with 11 hundreds announced his unavailability for the home series against Bangladesh.

Atapattu's request, cricket sources say, has come at a time when his name has been linked with the lucrative breakaway multi-million-dollar Indian Cricket League.

Inter-ministerial

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The Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, the new home of Bangladesh cricket, has been proposed as the match and inaugural function venue, while Bangabandhu National Stadium and Fatullah Cricket Stadium or any other stadium located in the city, have been proposed as alternative and practice-match venues.

A permanent operational office would have to be set up minimum three years ahead of the kick-off, which will be played across the subcontinent in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

A full-fledged ICC office will be set up three weeks before the curtain is raised on the World Cup.

Media Cup football from Friday

SPORTS REPORTER

The Meril Media Cup football tournament organised by Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association (BSJA) will begin on Friday in Dhaka.

At least 24 teams are expected to take part in the seven-a-side tournament sponsored by Square Toiletries, organisers told at a press conference at the BSJA office yesterday.

Matches will be played at the Bangabandhu National Stadium and handball and kho kho grounds at the Outer Stadium.

Anjan Chowdhury Pintu, managing director of Square Group, said he was happy to be a part of the tournament for journalists again.

"I wish to continue sponsoring this event as long as BSJA organises it," he said.

BSJA president Manzurul Haque, general secretary Syed Mamun, tournament committee chairman Kamalul Rahman and secretary Raihan Al Mughni were also present.

Before the start of the press conference, a one-minute silence was observed to pay tribute to the dead flood victims.

Lyon off to flyer

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finished 17th last season, just one place above the relegation zone.

Toulouse levelled through midfielder Nicholas Dieuze, but Audel went on to complete his hat trick.

Meanwhile, Rennes lost 2-0 to Nancy.

Midfielder Marc-Antoine Fortune silenced the home supporters on the 36th minute with Youssouf Hadji doubling the scoreline just four minutes later.

Rennes, who finished fourth in the 2006-2007 season, will hope their performance levels pick up if they are to mount a serious challenge in the UEFA Cup this season.

Paul le Guen's Paris Saint Germain were dominated throughout their match with French Cup holders Sochaux in an uninspiring 0-0 draw at the Parc des Princes despite striker Pauleta, last season's leading goal scorer, hitting the post on three occasions.

However, it needed goalkeeper Mickael Landreau to put be in top form to keep the visitors at bay for a share of the points.

World cup winning defender Laurent Blanc made his managerial debut with Bordeaux and his side beat veteran coach Guy Roux's Lens 1-0.

Former Manchester United and Nice player David Bellion's 30th-minute goal went unanswered as Blanc's Bordeaux, who will compete in this season's UEFA Cup, got their campaign off to an ideal start.

Injury crisis at Chelsea

AFP, London



As Jose Mourinho surveys what's left of his injury-ravaged squad, he could be forgiven for fearing Chelsea's title challenge is in trouble before it has even started.

Losing to Manchester United in Sunday's Community Shield is the least of Mourinho's worries after John Terry, Didier Drogba and Claude Makelele joined an already lengthy injury list.

Michael Ballack and Wayne Bridge are carrying injuries from last term that will keep them out for several weeks, while Andriy Shevchenko, Arjen Robben, Salomon Kalou and Paulo Ferreira have missed chunks of the pre-season.

Drogba and Makelele are far from certain to be available for the Premiership opener against Birmingham on Sunday, while Terry could be out for up to a month after damaging knee ligaments in training on Saturday.

Even some of Mourinho's available players are far from fully fit. Frank Lampard has played through the pain barrier after breaking a toe, while Claudio Pizarro is struggling with a back injury.

It is a litany of bad luck that would have most managers reaching for a stiff drink. Surely it wouldn't get any worse? Yes, it could.

Chelsea were beaten by the champions at Wembley after Edwin van der Sar saved all three of the

London team's penalties in the shoot-out that followed a fiery 1-1 draw.

But Mourinho refuses to feel sorry for himself, insisting he has confidence in his few remaining healthy players.

"I'm not worried about it," he said. "When they are back they are back. I'm ready to go like I was today.

"I will go to the fight with these boys. I think only about these ones. I work with them, I play with them and I trust them, so no problem.

"It was not easy to prepare this game but what makes me happy was Manchester United were almost at maximum power and, if you look at Chelsea, we had more than 50 percent of the team being out, but we competed against them.

"They were not better than us and that gives us confidence for the start of the season."

Mourinho is pinning his hopes on having several of the walking wound back by the end of the international break, which comes after Chelsea's first three matches.

"We have two weeks to play and after that it stops for the national team week," he said. "I have to make decisions about the three matches we have to play against Birmingham, Reading and Liverpool.

"When you have so many out, I hope at least one or two can be back."

Ryan Giggs had given United the lead in the annual meeting between the champions and FA Cup winners, but Florent Malouda cancelled out that fine first half strike.

Then van der Sar stole the spotlight as he saved Pizarro, Lampard and Shaun Wright-Phillips's spot-kicks to hand United an early psychological advantage over their title rivals.

Sir Alex Ferguson insists United are far from the finished article as he waits to bed in his four close-season signings.

Only Nani was involved at Wembley, but Ferguson could have Owen Hargreaves and Carlos Tevez available for the Reading match on Sunday.

Tevez will officially complete his move from West Ham this week before playing in one of United's two friendlies against Glentoran or Dunfermline on Wednesday.

"We're nowhere near ready yet. The four new players have all got a bit of work to do, so it leaves us with the present squad from last season," Ferguson said. "Gary Neville, Louis Saha and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer are still to come back as well, so we are not as strong as we could be.

"Nani has had a couple of appearances in the Far East but he's still well short of 100 percent fitness. Anderson felt his hamstring was a bit tight on Friday night, so there is some work to be done there.

"Owen Hargreaves has only played his first game on Saturday. Tevez trained with us on Friday and Saturday but obviously he's got a bit of work to do."

Turmoil at McLaren

INTERNET, undated



Fernando Alonso has refused to speak to his McLaren

teammate Lewis Hamilton since Hungarian Grand Prix qualifying, following the pit-lane incident that landed both drivers and the team in hot water.

Alonso was docked five places on the grid from his pole position for impeding his teammates qualifying effort by holding him up in the pits and McLaren too were prevented from scoring constructors' points in the race as an extra punishment.

And British star Hamilton, 22, who admitted he did not let Alonso through when instructed earlier on during the session - probably causing the Spaniard's fury, said that no words have been exchanged by the pair, such is the ill-feeling.

"He doesn't seem to have been speaking to me since, so I don't

know if he has a problem," said Hamilton, who inherited pole position following Alonso's penalty and went on to win the race while his teammate was fourth.

"In terms of speaking to the team, I spoke to everyone, I have told everyone the situation, apologised if they feel I have done something against them but this is the way it is. It is higher than them if you know what I mean."

Team boss Ron Dennis has seen first-hand the way things have deteriorated since the North American double-header, after which Alonso admitted he was "not comfortable" with the balance within the team.

And he has now revealed that there is a distinct lack of trust between his pair, which was potentially the catalyst for the incidents in Hungary.

But he also insisted that it will not affect his determination to treat both drivers equally, despite it's affect on the Constructors' championship.

"There's a tremendous amount of tension in team and some mistrust too [between the drivers]," Dennis told ITV.

"It comes from having two drivers who are phenomenally competitive and who are heading the championship and looking for every advantage they can get in a system like ours that does not generate advantages.

"It's tough for us but we will not deviate away from equality. It's the foundation of the company.

Hamilton's victory was McLaren's sixth of the season and extended his championship lead over Alonso from two points to seven.

And with the nearest Ferrari rival, Kimi Raikkonen, now 20 points behind with only 60 still up for grabs, it seems that, barring a disaster in the next two races, the title will now be fought out between the pair.



PHOTO: STAR

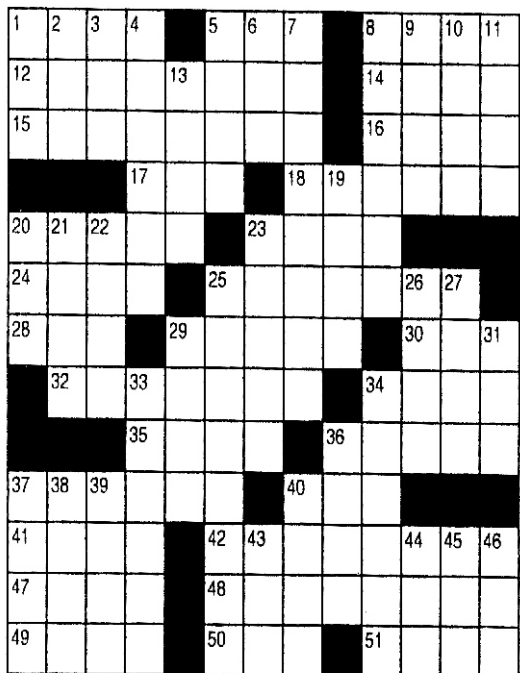
Anjan Chowdhury Pintu (C), managing director of Square Group, speaks at a press conference in connection with the Meril Media Cup football tournament at the BSJA office yesterday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Mediocre neighbor 5 Treasure seeker's aid 8 Singer Suzanne 12 Tubular pasta 14 "American —" 15 Grandly dramatic 16 "Arri-vederci" 17 Homer's interjection 18 Fine fish con-tainer? 20 Bonfire residue 23 Half (Pref.) 24 Rain in buckets 25 Best 28 Shade tree 29 Cove 30 Stolen 32 The great outdoors 34 Darling 35 N.Dak. neighbor 36 Horror-film villain 37 Past 40 Varnish ingredient 41 Laugh-a-minute 42 Phone-company employee 47 Desire 48 Break 49 Afternoon get-togethers 50 Dandy 51 Staircase component 19 Send forth 20 Gorilla

Solution time: 24 mins.

DOWN 1 Sis' relative 2 Pout 3 protruder 4 Not so easy 5 Butterfly look-alike 6 Black bird 7 A striking figure? 8 Prey 9 Tend 10 Hockey score 11 Soothing additive 13 New Mexico art colony 19 Send forth 20 Gorilla 21 Unaccompanied 22 Camel feature 23 Bowler's problem 25 Occasionally 26 Throat-clearing sound 27 Silty soil 29 Part of the loop 31 Attempt 33 Overacts 34 Old gold coins 36 Artist Chagall 37 Very dry, champagne 38 Green land 39 Spiritual discipline 40 Bound 43 Aye voter 44 Egyptian boy 45 Raw king 46 Agent, for short



CRYPTIQUIP

TH T DNYM NQ MUUAU NGASJ JKM YTQP AH GCAAP OADMGAPB KNO. T UMIYAQ TJ IASCP GM N JBRM-A JBRA. Saturday's Cryptiquip: IN A TELEMARTETING OFFICE, DO YOU SUPPOSE EMPLOYEES' CO-WORKERS ARE CONSIDERED CALL-LEAGUES? Today's Cryptiquip Clue: U equals R