

BKSP join Rampur in 3rd div

SPORTS REPORTER
BKSP qualified for next season's Third Division Football League after a convincing 3-0 win in the Dhaka City Corporation Pioneer League semifinal against Tangle Football Club at the Bir Shreshtha Sepoy Mohammad Mostafa Stadium yesterday.

Women spikers camp ends

UNB, Dhaka
Bangladesh Volleyball Federation yesterday distributed certificates to sixteen women on completion of a three-week residential training at the Dhamrondi Women's Sports Complex.

Managing director of National Bank Abdur Rahman Sarker distributed the certificates among the participants as chief guest. Federation vice-presidents Morshed A Chowdhury, Mustafizur Rahman Mintu, Mostafa Kamal and general secretary Anisur Rahman were present on the occasion.

Farida Begum conducted the camp while Amit Kumar Krishna was her deputy. The players who received certificates are Aleya, Nazmun, Farhana, Nadia, Dipti, Nusrat, Farzana, Sushmita, Yasmin, Shahida, Marzia, Suchana, Sharmin, Bernali, Sonia and Nasrin.

Real turn down Robinho bid

AFP, Madrid
Real Madrid have turned down a bid for their Brazilian striker Robinho from English Premier League side Chelsea, the Spanish press reported on Saturday. The Spanish champions sent a fax to Chelsea telling them that the Brazilian international was "not for sale", according to sports dailies As and Marca.

Chelsea confirmed Thursday they had made an offer without giving details of the bid, reported to be just over 25 million euros (37.5 million dollars). But according to Marca, Real bosses consider the offer "too low, not to say ridiculous".

The Stamford Bridge club, who have already signed Jose Bosingwa and Deco, had made no secret of their desire to sign the 24-year-old, who joined Real Madrid from Santos in 2005, and has 50 caps for Brazil.

Liverpool edge Lazio

AFP, Liverpool
Liverpool, without injured captain Steven Gerrard, beat Lazio 1-0 at Anfield on Friday in a friendly warm-up for next week's Champions League match with Xabi Alonso in fine form. Liverpool travel to Belgium's Standard Liege for the first leg of the third qualifying round on Wednesday and thigh-strain victim Gerrard at this point looks unlikely to feature.

Amla shines

FROM PAGE 17
SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 194
ENGLAND: First innings 316
SOUTH AFRICA: Second innings (overnight 37-1)
Smith lbw b Anderson 0
McKenzie b Broad 29
Amla not out 71
Kallis not out 2
Extras: (b-6, nb-2) 8
Total: (For 2 wks in 26.5 overs) 110
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-82
Bowler O M R W
Anderson 8 2 31 1
Harmison 9 0 34 0
Flintoff 5 0 29 0
Panesar 1 1 0 0
Broad 3.5 2 10 1



American Mariel Zagunis (L) fights with compatriot Sada Jacobson during the women's individual sabre final of the 2008 Olympic Games at the Fencing Hall of National Convention Centre in Beijing yesterday.

Torres ready to end drought

AFP, Liverpool
Fernando Torres had only been a European champion for a matter of hours when the Liverpool star consigned Spain's triumph to the history books and turned his attention to Anfield's own trophy drought. Torres' typically clinical finish against Germany in Vienna sealed Spain's first international trophy for 44 years and capped a memorable season for the striker. His stunning debut campaign with Liverpool had provided the perfect response to critics who questioned his ability to prosper at the highest level, and now he was the golden boy of Spanish football as well.

watching arch rivals Manchester United move to within one title of Liverpool's record 18 English championships, the Anfield faithful are growing increasingly restless. Rafa Benitez has restored the club's reputation as serious contenders in Europe, but the tide has remained out of reach. There wasn't even the hint of a serious challenge last season and Torres, who signed for 21 million pounds from Atletico Madrid in 2007, knows bridging the gap to United and Chelsea must be their primary goal this year. Torres' form will be crucial to Liverpool's chances. From the moments he scored his first goal against Chelsea in August, Torres was a phenomenon. He eventually scored 33 goals in all competitions and laid waste to a host of records along the way. He was the first Liverpool player to score more than 20 league goals since Robbie Fowler in 1995-96; his 24 league goals broke Ruud van Nistelrooy's previous record for the highest scoring overseas player in a debut Premier League season, and he equalled Roger Hunt's club record of scoring in eight successive home games.

As if that wasn't enough to give sleepless nights to Premier League defenders across England, Robbie Keane, Torres' new Anfield strike partner, believes there is even more to come from the predatory finisher. Keane, a 20-million-pounds signing from Tottenham, will be expected to provide the ammunition for Torres to fire Liverpool's title bid and he can't wait to play alongside the Spaniard. "For me, Torres has just got to be about the best striker in the world at the moment," Keane said. "He will get better this season, which is great for Liverpool and has got to be a worry for the rest of the division. You saw how good he was at the European Championships, and I am sure scoring the winning goal in the final will have done his confidence the world of good. I am looking forward to playing alongside him, of course I am. Torres is the kind of striker that anyone would want to play alongside. He makes great runs, holds the ball up well to allow support to get around him, and when he gets the chance in front of goal he is deadly."

Hills made England's coach

BBC ONLINE, undated
England have appointed Australian Dene Hills as their new lead batting coach. The former Tasmanian left-hander will work under academy director David Parsons at the national performance centre in Loughborough. Hills, who also played for Scotland, previously worked as batting coach to Australia at the centre of excellence in Brisbane. The 37-year-old is set to take up his new position with the England and Wales Cricket Board in October. "We are very pleased to have secured someone of Dene's calibre to take on this new position and join the team of specialist coaches," said Parsons. "Dene will work closely with England assistant coach Andy Flower and be responsible for coaching players selected for the England Lions and England performance programme squads. He will also implement a development programme for our best young batsmen within age-group teams." England are also currently seeking a lead spin-bowling coach to complete their Loughborough-based set of specialists. Kevin Shine heads up the pace bowling programme, while Richard Halsall was appointed as fielding coach earlier this summer.

Fergie expects MU to fire

AFP, London
In the final moments before Sunday's Community Shield clash against Portsmouth, Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson will look into his players' eyes and feel reassured that the club's future is in good hands. Just 10 weeks after the curtain finally came down on a magnificent campaign that included Premier League and Champions League glory, United return to action in the Wembley friendly that marks the start of the English season. While United's ascent to the pinnacle of domestic and European football in May would be enough to satisfy the appetites of many, Ferguson is driven by a burning desire to establish his club alongside iconic teams like Real Madrid's 1950s vintage and the Ajax legends of the 1970s. He has no time for players who feel they have fulfilled their destiny and will stare deep into the eyes of each of his charges on Sunday to make sure they still have the same thirst for success as him. "Soon I will look into the eyes of my players to make sure they have retained the hunger they need to succeed," Ferguson said. "If success has gone to anyone's head and they show signs they are ready to rest on their laurels, they will soon be on their way."

With fierce competitors like Gary Neville, set to make his first start since March 2007, and Paul Scholes, Carlos Tevez and Nemanja Vidic in his line-up, the Scot expects to finish his assessment with an overwhelmingly positive verdict. "At this particular time, we are not in the best position fitness-wise but it doesn't concern me unduly," Ferguson said. "There is a great quality in the squad and a great enthusiasm. A lot of them are exhilarated by winning the European Cup." Ferguson will need every warrior he can find as he heads into the season without his two creative dynamos. Cristiano Ronaldo's return to United's training ground on Friday signalled the end of his attempt to engineer a move to Real, but the Portugal winger will be sidelined for several weeks after ankle surgery. Wayne Rooney contracted an illness on United's recent trip to Nigeria that will keep him out of action, while Owen Hargreaves, Louis Saha, Anderson and Nani are all ruled out. The absence of so many stars could allow Ferguson to hand debuts to Brazilian prodigies Rafael and Fabio Da Silva and Rodrigo Posedon. United have already beaten Portsmouth once this pre-season but John Utaka believes Sunday's encounter will be a far more high-tempo match than United's 2-1 win

in Nigeria. "It doesn't matter that Manchester United beat us in the last match, they are different games, they need different approaches," Nigerian midfielder Utaka said. "This will be nothing like that game. Things are different now and we have the chance to win. We've had good preparation for the pre-season and now we really want to win this first match at Wembley. Of course we will approach this game very differently to Nigeria. We have to be a lot more committed, we have to play and work hard and make sure we do our best. They are a very good side, but I believed we would win the FA Cup. If I didn't believe I would not play football, you cannot just give up." French midfielder Lassana Diarra is a doubt for Portsmouth and, with FA Cup final match-winner Nwankwo Kanu also set to miss out, Peter Crouch should partner fellow England international Jermain Defoe in attack. Crouch, an 11-million-pounds (21-million-dollars) signing from Liverpool last month, is determined to mark his first significant appearance for his new club with a repeat of his 2006 Community Shield winner against Chelsea. "I have great memories of that day, scoring the winner against Chelsea, I'm really looking forward to Sunday," Crouch said. "It's a fantastic occasion, like a cup final."

Brazil, Germany win

AFP, Beijing
Favourites Brazil and Germany got their Olympic women's football campaigns back on track with second round wins here Saturday while Norway ensured themselves a place in the quarterfinals. Hosts China were held to a 1-1 draw by Olympic newcomers Canada and they remain locked together at the top of Group E. Brazil and world champions Germany, who had fought out an uninspiring scoreless opening match in Group F, recorded their

first wins in their second pool matches but in contrasting fashion. With world player of the year Marta and her strike partner Cristiane in imposing form, Brazil produced an emphatic performance in beating North Korea 2-1 in Shenyang. Their fast-paced approach had North Korea scrambling to patch up holes in their defence and their two goals by Daniela and Marta came in the space of eight minutes, both following errors by under-pressure goalkeeper Jon Myong-Hui. The Koreans looked more determined and settled after the interval, as the South Americans appeared to ease off, and were

rewarded with a late goal by captain Ri Kum-suk. The result puts Brazil and Germany on four points in Group E with Brazil ahead on goals after the Germans beat Nigeria 1-0 thanks to a face-saving goal by Kirsten Stegemann. It was a crucial win for Germany, and should ensure they qualify for the knockout rounds, but it was a performance riddled with wayward passes and lack of cohesion. In Group G, being played in Qinhuaodao, Norway overcame stiff resistance to beat New Zealand 1-0 to have a firm grip on Group G and be the only team in the tournament with two wins from two matches. Defending Olympic champions the United States, who lost to Norway first up, recorded their win with a well-deserved 1-0 victory over Japan. China and Canada share the lead in Group E with their 1-1 outcome decided in a frantic burst just before halftime. Canadian captain Christine Sinclair scored first when Kara Lang chested the ball down and lobbed it into her path, leaving the Vancouver Whitecap star to slot it past keeper Zhang Yanru. Two minutes later Xu Yuan pulled China level, latching onto a through ball and rounding goalkeeper Erin McLeod. A lunging Rande Hermus hooked the ball off the line but it was adjudged to be a goal. Sweden are third in this group, a point behind China and Canada after beating Argentina 1-0 for their first win at the Games.



Natasha Kai (R) of the US scores the all-important goal against Japan during the Beijing Olympic Games women's first round match at the Qinhuaodao Olympic Stadium on Saturday.

One for the team

Cricket
CRICINFO, London
It bears repetition. Life will not always be this easy for Kevin Pietersen. But what a start the man is enjoying. His players have been released from their fears, he has yet to succumb to any of his own, and by the close of his second day in charge, a South African side that has run amok during the game-breaking moments of this series was being ushered ever closer to a gloss-removing defeat. "I wouldn't say it's an easy job, it can only get worse I suppose!" said Pietersen, after completing another incredible chapter in the tale of his accession and acceptance into the top job of English cricket. "I've been getting a few text messages asking: 'Who writes my scripts?' but I don't like to make mountains out of molehills. I just like to be as simple as I can, and I'm just playing the game that I love." Regardless of its magnificence, the most incredible aspect of Pietersen's first two days in charge has not been his century -- let's face it, it was as close to inevitable as a sporting feat can be. Rather, it is the extent to which his teammates have bought into the cult of KP. Those who doubted the appointment never questioned Pietersen's ability to score runs, they merely feared his inflated ego would squeeze all other incumbents out of the dressing-room. And yet, there was Steve

Harmison, grinning ear from ear as he compiled his highest Test score, and alongside him was James Anderson -- another player who had been prone to introspection in the former regime -- unfolding reverse-sweeps during a helter-skelter tail-end stand, before curling a peerless inswinger into the front pad of Graeme Smith, as he took the first over with the new ball at the close of a manic day. Those were not the performances of men who feel marginalised by their new lord and master. "I've been getting to know more about the players and how they operate, and that's come on in leaps and bounds in the three or four days I've been in charge," said Pietersen. "It's given me a really different perspective, and now when they are batting I really want them to do well for me and for the team. It's more of a holistic type of thing, which is great." It is too soon to pass judgment, but the feeling grows with every session. There's a spark about this set of players that was not visible even when England were turning their early-year fortunes around against New Zealand. Back then, everything relied on individual feats of brilliance -- in particular, game-changing five-fors for Anderson at Wellington and Trent Bridge, Ryan Sidebottom at Napier, and Monty Panesar at Old Trafford. Now, despite the assumptions that he'd prove to be a selfish leader, the collective is what really seems to matter to the new captain. "More than me getting a hundred, I

really wanted Steve to get a fifty today (Friday), and an even bigger score," said Pietersen. "He's deserved it. After being away from the game for six months, to see him back and smiling and laughing, the cynical little man that he is, it's great. It's lovely to see him back." Such gushing is the new leader's way, although it is noticeable that, on the subject of his own innings, Pietersen was diplomatically succinct. This wasn't destiny, he insisted, merely "another day of doing the simple things as best I can, and doing them right." He described a handful of loose strokes as "funky", but reiterated that, for the most part, he played straight, and in his areas. It was true as well, but you wouldn't normally expect such a modest self-appraisal of another remarkable performance. There is no "I" in team, as the old saying goes. Perhaps, henceforth, there will be no "I" in Pietersen either. Or at least, significantly fewer. But if the way in which he is talking about his performances has altered, there's no immediate danger of Pietersen carrying the burden of responsibility out into the middle with him. "You can't be a captain when you're batting," he said. "You just have to go and bat, and make sure you try and score as many as you can. All the nonsense that happened before the game, the scrutiny and the attention, you've got to get on with it, but I was so happy when I flipped the coin on Friday and knew the cricket was on the way."

Cunis no more

CRICINFO, undated
Former New Zealand medium-pace Bob Cunis has died aged 67 at his house in Northland. Cunis played 20 Tests between 1964 and 1972, taking 51 wickets at the average of 37, including one five-wicket haul, and was also a useful lower-order batsman. He went on to coach New Zealand between 1987 and 1990. One of the highlights of Cunis' international career was his battling 96-run association with Mark Burgess for the ninth wicket in the second innings against Pakistan in the third Test in Dhaka in 1969. The partnership helped New Zealand save the match and sealed their first series win on foreign soil.

Sachin, VVS

FROM PAGE 17
local hospital and Tendulkar has received treatment in the Indian dressing room. The details of the injuries will be disclosed at a later date. However, shortly after a member of India's dressing-room staff disclosed the status of the two's injuries, Ishant Sharma limped off the field. Ishant fell to the ground after sending down the third ball of his 16th over -- the 73rd in Sri Lanka's innings -- and was unable to continue bowling. Harbhajan Singh completed the over. Ishant's right thigh was the source of his discomfort, though it's not sure whether he pulled a muscle or was suffering from cramps.

Rain threatens

FROM PAGE 17
First, it may be played as scheduled either at the Gachibowli Stadium or Lal Bahadur Stadium here. The second option is to shift the venue to another city and play within a week. The last option is to postpone the game for a month or two. A decision will be taken by the Committee at 1600 hrs, he said. Playing in Hyderabad after a few days was not considered an option because of uncertainty that rain may stop in the next couple of days.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a Cryptoquip section at the bottom with a grid of letters and a key.

Kumar keeps SL afloat

FROM PAGE 17
the official to review the decision under a new experimental rule. Benson ruled the batsman not out after consulting TV umpire Billy Doctrove of the West Indies. Vaas was then dropped off Kumble by Tendulkar, who injured his elbow after losing balance. Jayawardene also asked for a review after he was given out leg-before by umpire Rudi Koertzen of South Africa while attempting to sweep Harbhajan, but the initial decision proved right after consultation with the TV official. The rule, on trial in the ongoing

series, allows a batsman or fielding captain to request a review of any decision by referring it to the third official monitoring television replays. SCOREBOARD Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the third and final Test between India and Sri Lanka at the P Sara Stadium in Colombo on Saturday: INDIA: First innings 249 (Gambhir 72; Mendis 5-56) SRI LANKA: First innings (overnight 14-1) Vandort lbw b Zaheer 14

Table with 5 columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Lists bowlers like Wamnapura b Sharma, Vaas c Sehwa b Harbhajan, Sangakkara not out, M Jayawardene lbw b Harbhajan, Samaraweera c Patel b Zaheer, Dilshan lbw b Kumble, P Jayawardene not out, Extras: (b-2, lb-9, nb-1, w-2) 14, Total: (For six wks in 92 overs) 251, Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-42, 3-137, 4-141, 5-201, 6-244.