DIV I CRICKET Six in the running

SPORTS REPORTER

Kalabagan KC's loss to Eskaton SS by four wickets in the First Division League at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium has opened up the claim to the top of the table as six teams are levelled up on equal terms.

Indira Road, Khelaghar, Eskaton, Baridhara Dazzlers, Jatrabari and Kalabagan are positioned evenly in the race to the top.

In other matches of the league, Bangladesh Boys beat Baridhara by 77 runs at the Dhaka University Ground, Jatrabari beat Azad SC by nine runs at BKSP and Indira Road won by 16 runs against Khelaghar at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Ijaz pleads innocence

AFP, Lahore

Former Pakistan batsman Ijaz Ahmed said he was innocent Friday and vowed to defend himself in court after his arrest for allegedly giving false cheques to a client.

Ijaz was due to appear in court in Pakistan's eastern city of Lahore on Friday but was taken to hospital after his health deteriorated.

"I have not done anything wrong," Ijaz told AFP. "The police have mistreated me and I am in hospital after an attack of asthma. I will defend myself in the court once my condition gets stable."

The 40-year-old coaches students on fielding at the National Cricket Academy run by the Pakistan Cricket Board in Lahore and also has a private business.

"I vomited blood and experienced difficulty in breathing, so doctors put me on artificial respiratory system for sometime. It has been very frustrating because I have not done anything wrong."

money and instead they made a false case against me," he added.

A Lahore police official said Ijaz was arrested on Thursday.

"This is a land scam case under which Ijaz was on bail. His bail expired on Thursday and we arrested him on charges of giving false cheques to a business party," senior police official Rana Abdul Jabbar said.

Cheques worth 10.05 million rupees (125,000 dollars) were involved, the police official said.

Ijaz played 60 Tests and 250 one day Internationals for Pakistan between 1987 and 2001, and was a member of Pakistan's World Cup-winning team in 1992.

He stressed he had never been involved in any crime and said he had been cleared of any wrongdoing in a matchfixing inquiry from 1998-2000.

The judicial inquiry saw his brother-in-law Salim Malik, a former Pakistan captain, banned for life.

Super Cup

FROM PAGE 17

Aminul palmed away a Sujan header during a corner in the 76th minute while Emmanuelle once again salvaged the side with a goalline save three minutes later, heading out the ball after Abul nodded Ibrahim's centre from close. Mohammedan, desperate

to hang on to the slim lead, took off both their strikers and fielded defenders Kamal and Saikat but the experience of Rajani and Hassan Al Mamun in addition to Emmanuelle's inspired defending eventually won the game for Mohammedan.

Yellow cards: Robin, Arman, Maruf (Mohammedan) and Ibrahim, Waly (Abahani)

TEAMS

MOHAMMEDAN: Aminul, Rajani, Emmanuelle, Hassan Al Mamun, Nasir, Godwin, Sharif (Kamal, 71st), Arman, Hazem, Robin (Maruf, 64th) | captain Arman Aziz. and Bukola (Saikat, 88th).

ABAHANI: Biplab, Nazrul (Tipu, 67th), Sujan, Samad, Siraji, Zahed, Emeka, Mamun, Waly, Ibrahim and Emily (Abul, 34th).

Referee: Faghani Alireza (Iran)

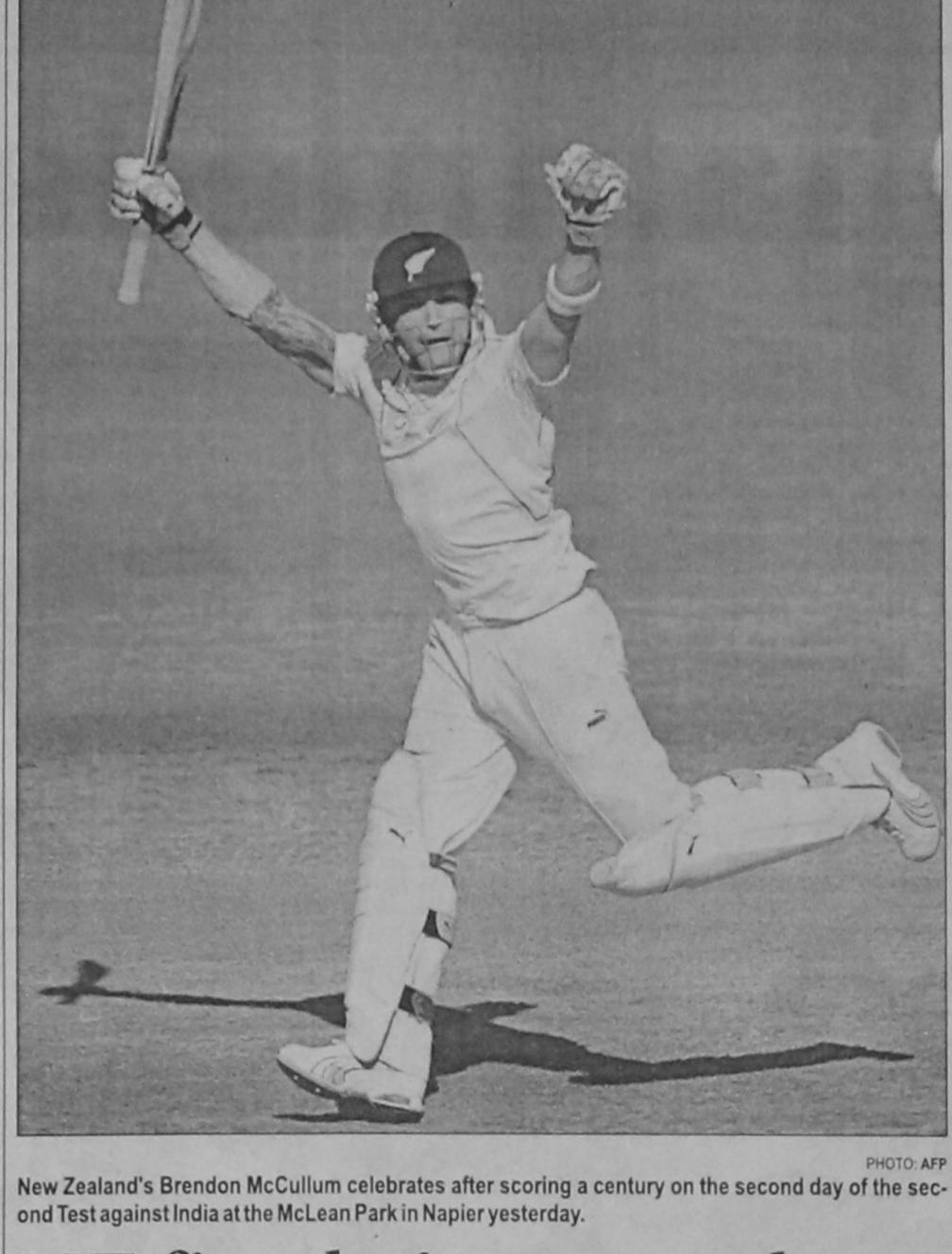


Leicester City went through an entire

FA Cup tie with Northampton Town in

1997 without committing a single foul.

Leicester won 4-0.



Nightwatchman Sharma

off the mark, to resume on the

Scoreboard at close on the

second day of the second Test

between New Zealand and

India at McLean Park in

NEW ZEALAND: First innings

McCullum c Tendulkar b Sharma 115

Patel c Sharma b Harbhajan 1

Total: (For 9 wkts decl in 154.4 overs) 619

Fall of wickets: 1-21, 2-22, 3-

23, 4-294, 5-415, 6-477, 7-605,

12

Gambhir cVettori b Patel

Total: (For 3 wickets in 23 overs)

Harbhajan, Zaheer, Munaf.

Brothers

FROM PAGE 17

penalty box.

To bat: Laxman, Yuvraj, Karthik,

Fall of wickets: 1-48, 2-73, 3

Sehwag c McCullum b Vettori

M

6 129

5 95

3 128

7 120

0 59

73

R W

Extras: (b-7, lb-8, nb-7)

Did not bat: Chris Martin.

Guptill c Sehwag b Zaheer

McIntosh c Karthik b Sharma

Taylor c Yuvraj b Harbhajan

SCOREBOARD

Napier on Friday:

How b Zaheer

Ryder b Zaheer

Franklin run out

Vettori b Sharma

O'Brien not out

8-618, 9-619.

Harbhajan41.4

Dravid not out

INDIA: First innings

SharmalbwVettori

Tendulkar not out

Extras: (lb-7, nb-1)

Bowler

Zaheer

Sharma

Sehwag

Yuvraj

Patel

(overnight 351 for 4)

NZ firmly in control

FROM PAGE 17

"I was just going ball by ball," he said after the longest innings of his career.

"I just went out and stuck to my gameplan and it's worked "These clients owe me | for me and I came off with a double. I can't ask for anything more at this stage of my career."

In an innings of milestones Ryder was the star, reaching his maiden double century in his eighth Test by pulling Zaheer Khan to the boundary for four to move to 201.

However, Ryder's celebrations were short-lived as an uncharacteristic slash at the next delivery chopped the ball back on to the stumps.

Ryder, who scored his maiden Test century in the first Test last week, produced stand came to an end when he only the 15th double ton in

New Zealand Test history. In an innings that was a portrait of patience, he faced 328 deliveries, hit 24 fours and a six, and seldom put a foot

But after a heroic innings, he threw his bat away in disgust on leaving the field.

going so far and working so hard to get to where I did, and just to get out like that really angered me.

He and Taylor came together with New Zealand on the ropes and put on 241 -- a record New Zealand fourth wicket stand against any country, and a record for any New Zealand partnership against India -before Taylor went for 151.

Ryder then shared in a 121run partnership with James Franklin for the fifth wicket and added 62 runs with McCullum for the sixth.

New Zealand resumed the second day at 351-4 and added 64 runs before Franklin was

"It's an amazing experi-

ence for everybody to play

football in front of such a big

crowd. It's nice to see the fans

who have come to the ground.

Now we hope the game will

regularly roll into the ground

and the crowd will make it

habit to watch the football,"

said an excited Mohammedan

effort which enabled us to lift

the trophy as well as the big

cheque. We started this sea-

son's campaign brilliantly by

winning the Federation Cup

"I think it's all about a team

FROM PAGE 17

packed stadium.

run out for 52 when he was before he hit a gentle catch to slow to respond to Ryder's call Vettori off Patel. for a quick single.

McCullum appeared to went lbw to Vettori without shed a tear as he reached his scoring, leaving Rahul Dravid third Test century -- and first on 21 and Tendulkar, yet to get against a major playing nation -- after he cut Virender Sehwag third day. through backward point for four in the final over before tea.

"No disrespect to Bangladesh and Zimbabwe (his previous centuries), to get one against a top quality side like India means a lot, so that was probably the reason for the emotion.

After the tea break, Vettori lasted two overs, time enough to race from 43 to 55, before he was bowled by Ishant Sharma.

Two overs later, McCullum's belted Sharma to Sachin Tendulkar at deep point.

In contrast to Ryder's measured approach, McCullum's 115 came from 140 balls and included 13 fours.

In the over following McCullum's dismissal, Vettori called his side in when Harbhajan Singh had Jeetan "I was just so disappointed Patel caught for one.

On a wicket that proved unresponsive for the quick bowlers, Sharma finished with three for 95 and Khan three for 129.

However, Vettori's decision to mix spin and pace with the new ball paid handsome dividends in the 23 overs India faced before stumps, with the New Zealand captain taking two for 16 off five overs. Sehwag blasted 34 off 25

balls, including five boundaries and a six, before he was caught behind by McCullum offVettori. Gautam Gambhir, who

survived a close run-out call on 11, moved through to 16

Beginning of a dream

Victoria win dead rubber SPORTS REPORTER

Victoria won the last relegation phase match of the Premier Cricket League against Young Pegasus by seven wickets at the Sher-e-Mirpuryesterday.

The match will have no consequences apart from making a difference to the points table as Young Pegasus and City Club had already confirmed their spots in next season's First Division Cricket League.

Pegasus won the toss and opted to bat first on a placid batsmen friendly track and piled up a sizeable 256 losing all their wickets in 49.5 overs. Opener Jupiter Ghosh top scored with 61 and Iftekhar Nayeem contributed 52 to take the total past 250. Victoria's all rounder Arafat Salahuddin picked up three wickets albeit went a little expensive with 44 runs in 6.5 overs.

Opener Arman Hossain gave Victoria a flying start scoring 104 runs from 111 balls and fine 45 from Shakil Haider sealed the match for their team in the 48th over.

BRIEFSCORE

YOUNG PEGASUS: 256 all out in 49.5 overs (Jupiter Ghosh 61, Iftekhar Nayeem 52, extras 13; Rabiul Robi 2-39, Arafat Salahuddin 3-44)

VICTORIA: 260-3 in 47.2 overs (Arman Hossain 104, Shakil Haider 45, extras 13; Mamun Hossain 1-34).

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Krishnakati Sporting Club advanced to the final of the Jhalakati First Division Cricket League beating Taruli Ekota Club by 16 runs in a closely fought first semifinal.

Batting first after winning the toss, Krishnakati SC scored 203 runs losing all their wickets in 38.2 overs with Nayan contributing match highest 58 runs. In reply, Taruli Ekota Club

were all out for 187 in 28.3 overs with Russell scoring 53 runs. Nayan of the winning team and Russell of the losing side

were declared joint man of the match.

PABNA KABADDI The Magic Tooth powder Kabaddi Tournament will start

in Pabna today. 10 local teams will partici-

pate in the tournament held at the Pabna town hall premises. Secretary of Pabna district

sports association Abu Ishhaque Shamim, joint secretary Shahidul Haque Manik, and manger of Square Plant Md. Abdul Khaleque said that Kabaddi is part of our culture and heritage. But this typical sport is losing its presence from the country due to the lack of proper initiative and sponsorship.

Derbyshire release SA all-rounder

CRICINFO, undated

Derbyshire have "reluctantly" released Charl Langeveldt, their Kolpak fast bowler, for the IPL after the Kolkata Knight Riders signed him up. Langeveldt is playing out the second year of his two-year contract with the county and will head to South Africa for the Twenty20 tournament April 18 and May 24.

Derbyshire have three Championship games, eight Friends Provident Trophy matches and an MCC University match in that period. John Morris, Derbyshire's

head of cricket, it would be very difficult to stop a player from having the opportunity to play and earn the money available in the IPL. "Although we will undoubtedly miss a bowler of Charl's experience and ability for the early part of the season, I am pleased for him that he has the opportunity to play alongside the world's best in the IPL competition," Morris said. "The absence of Charl will mean that somebody else gets an opportunity to fill the gap left by one of our senior bowlers."

Skrtel gets Slovak vote

AFP, Bratislava

Martin Skrtel, Liverpool's young defender, was on Thursday declared Slovakia's best footballer in the annual competition jointly organised by the country's football federation, media reported Friday.

Napoli midfielder Marek Hamsik was runner-up while VfL Bochum's striker Stanislav

Brothers midfielder and the The 24-year-old Skrtel, who joined Liverpool from Russian champions Zenit St Petersburg fluffed two chances towards in January 2008, will play for Chittagong Mohammedan | Slovakia in a friendly match against England on Saturday at Wembley.

'Wild Child' tames India

Cricket

AFP, Napier

New Zealand's cricket "wild child" Jesse Ryder further enhanced his cult status with a magnifi-Bangla National Stadium in | cent double century in the second Test against Indiahere Friday.

His 201, nearly a third of New Zealand's first innings 619-9 declared, lifted his average to a phenomenal 64 from 14 innings in eight Tests.

The player who opens New Zealand's oneday batting because of his fiery, swashbuckling approach, showed again that at Test level he is equally comfortable playing a patient innings when the team needs it most.

But away from cricket, the 24-year-old is too often in the headlines for his well-documented battle with alcohol.

Initially it held back his cricket career but Ryder proved such a valuable talent that New Zealand Cricket has a programme in place to his problem." help him off the field.

part-time medium pacer, have never been in doubt. "Clearly we've had concerns over the years

with a number of issues off the field," then-New Zealand convenor of selectors and former fast bowling great Sir Richard Hadlee said when understands how serious this is." Ryder finally made the national side last year.

But the enfant terrible of New Zealand Ryder is not allowed to forget his troubles. cricket continued to have problems even when selected for New Zealand and was sidelined for seven months after injuring a hand when he favourite shot -- tequila.

broke a window in a bar.

When he was recalled for the New Zealand tour of Bangladesh last year he said he was delighted to be given another chance.

"It's been a long time coming. It was up to them (the selectors) to give me another chance and I'm just happy they did," he said then, adding the bar incident had changed his attitude "pretty much big time".

"I've got a good support network around me now and we go through one day at a time in getting it all sorted," he said.

But there was to be more trouble when the West Indies toured New Zealand earlier this year and he was dropped for the fourth one-day international after a drinking binge.

Again there was repentance, and again Ryder was reinstated.

"Jesse assures us it's a thing of the past and we have to move on with that in mind," said New Zealand coach Andy Moles.

"We've got a plan in place to help Jesse with

New Zealand Cricket Players' Association However his ability with the bat, and as a chief executive Heath Mills said his organisation was supporting Ryder, although it was ultimately the player's responsibility.

"People counsel him, programmes are put in place around him and for a time he apparently stopped drinking, but I'm not sure he fully

Even when he is batting at his sublime best,

In a one-day match against England last year, a sign at the ground read: Jesse Ryder's

Home beckons for KP

Cricket

AFP, London

Kevin Pietersen said Friday he cannot wait to get home after a "heck of a tough time" following his departure as England skipper, although he insisted there were no problems with this tour". his return to ranks.

In an interview with the time and I'm at the end of my Daily Mail, he said he still could not understand what can't wait to get home," happened in January, when he Pietersen said. quit after just three Tests in charge claiming he couldn't the third one-day international what I wanted but good luck to work with coach Peter Moores, who was sacked in the row.

why everything happened the born batsman told the news-

deal with and live with, and I problem," the former skipper have dealt with it and I'm said. living with it. I just want to bat and bat now."

for the sake of the England team saying: "It's been too close to and I know that the players have the bone in terms of what enjoyed this tour even though happened in January and that we haven't won games."

whole affair had "drained me talking about me throughout gets me.

He was speaking ahead of against West Indies at him because he's a top man. I

"I still don't understand five-match series is tied 1-1. "There haven't been any way it did so suddenly and so dramas here or any trouble the captaincy in the future, he quickly," the South Africa- with me going back to the was sceptical, and ranks like some people downplayed suggestions he seemed to think there would might take over for the "It's something I've got to be. I knew it wouldn't be a Twenty20World Cup.

wary of giving his successor Pietersen said.

He added: "I did what I did Andrew Strauss any advice, has made it difficult for me to The 28-year-old said the get involved in decisions."

He said: "I never had everymentally and I know people thing I wanted as England have been watching me and captain, that's the thing that

"My England captaincy "It's been a heck of a tough was not the England captaincy I wanted, that's what will live tether now. Really and truly I with me for a long time.... I wasn't allowed to do it in my way.

By contrast, "Straussy got Kensington Oval on Friday. The know he'll make the most of Asked if he would consider

"After the way I was let down I just don't think I want But he admitted he was to get involved in that again,"

French relying on Henry

AFP, Paris



France, marshalled by an inform Thierry Henry, put their World Cup qualifying lives on the line in back-to-back games against Lithuania over the next

five days. Coach Raymond Domenech is looking for a maximum harvest of points from Saturday's trip to Kaunus and Wednesday's return at the Stade de France.

And a quick look at Group Seven explains why, with the 1998 World Cup winners and 2006 finalists trailing co-leaders Serbia and Lithuania in third place and by five points although the French have a game in hand.

Henry is France's leading scorer and his buoyant form for Barcelona this season makes him the key man in attack in the absence of the injured Nicolas Anelka. The influential Chelsea forward was ruled

out of contention at the start of the week with a

toe injury, while another striker, Rennes novice

Jimmy Briand, is also a non-starter after picking up a knee injury in training on Wednesday. Henry aside, the relative inexperience of France's forwards is mirrored in defence with Willy Sagnol and Lilian Thuram retired and Eric

Abidal injured. Domenech, who must also contend with an injury concern surrounding novice Andre Pierre Gignac of Toulouse, is in no doubt over

the former Arsenal star's importance. "We can't say that we are at our best at the moment, except for 'Titi', who is sensational," said the coach who has been under attack since

France crashed out of Euro 2008. Domenech, asked about tactics for Saturday's qualifier, was his usual guarded safe. "I have lots of ideas, I have lots of options,"

be a system with one striker and three attacking

anywhere, except as a right wing, where even he doesn't feel comfortable. Despite the positive showing of number two keeper Hugo Lloris, Domenech did reveal that

who turns 24 on Saturday, Manchester United left-back Patrice Evra spelled out precisely what was at stake in the

Lithuania double header. "A good result from the two matches would be six points. I like to feel pressure to win, even if Lithuania are top of the group, but we respect

unthinkable of France not making it to South Africa next year. "We are not ready to think about that, but it is important not to allow teams to get too far

He said he wasn't about to contemplate the

two matches." Waiting for France in Kaunus is a Lithuania side set to feature Deividas Cesnauskis, the Hearts midfielder, and Tomas Danilevicius,

and is the only out and out striker in the squad. Stankevicius, the Sampdoria defender, is

injured and will miss both qualifiers. Evra meanwhile took a swipe at those French supporters who have taken to whistling

"It is really unbelievable. You get the impression that sometimes it would be better if we told the public to stay at home and not come and support the players," Evra said.

Ali Daei promises win

AFP, Tehran



Iran coach coach Ali Daei has vowed his team will defeat Saudi Arabia for a much needed win in a key Asia Zone 2010 World Cup qualifier here the two sides, held in Riyadh, ended in a 1-1 on Saturday

Cup finals, are languishing in third place in Group B with six points from four games, two behind South Korea and one behind North Korea. Only the top two teams automatically qual-

ify for next summer's World Cup finals in South Africa. "If we play the way we played against on the offensive," Nekounam told the Mehr

Tehran," Daei told the ISNA news agency. "Our players are highly motivated and they know how crucial the win is, for us to make it to the World Cup,"

to a penalty kick five minutes from time by Maziar Zare. In another friendly match on March 15 Iran beat Kenya 1-0 in Tehran again by a penaltykick after 55 minutes by Hossein Kazemi.

Peseiro) although I used to know their technique when they were coached by Nasser al-Johar, but in any case, regardless of who is coaching them, they will leave Tehran empty handed," Daei said. The previous match in the group between

Javad Nekounam, who plays in the midfield for Spanish first division side Osasuna and who

against the Saudis, warned that the visitors could be dangerous on the break. "They will be very dangerous on the counter attack and we should be very careful, since due to their standing in the Group, they will not be

Saudi Arabia are struggling with just four points from four games with the United Arab Emirates bottom of the group with one point.

The third-place teams in the two final Asian Iran beat Kuwait 1-0 away on Monday thanks qualifiers will play each other for the right to take on Oceania zone victors New Zealand for a place in the finals.

Iran appeared in the World Cup finals in 1978, 1998 and 2006 but their only win to date was over the United States in France in 1998.

failed to keep up our standards but finally we performed our best today," he said about his team's success against their bitter rivals. for us to play a game in such an electric atmosphere in front of a full-house crowd. But we have to continue it and it's now a big

Abahani captain Nazrul Islam. Nazrul also rued his team's missed opportunities and said

that the luck didn't favour them. "In this kind of big match one can't win if they even miss one tournament but now the one good chance but unfortunately we missed a number of sure chances. On the other game continues to produce hand Mohammedan got one quality.

challenge for everybody," said

and capitalized on it to be successful," he said express-

ing his disappointment. He also complained about the absence of their three key players---Joy, Pranatosh and Emily. "We felt their absence," he said. Mohammedan custodian

Aminul Haque, the best goalkeeper in the tournament, also expressed his excitement with the turn out. "It's great we won the final but I am also excited with the turnout which is something new for us," said the country's numberone goalkeeper. The pain was unbearable

for new sensation Emily, the best player in the tournament who displayed his great ability to score when his side trailed, as the Abahani striker failed to "It's a fantastic experience play the entire match, substituted in the 34th minute due to a hamstring injury. "It's really painful. The

> story might have been different had I played the entire match because we played better football and created a number of opportunities, said the young striker. The dream came true with

question is about sustainability and it can only be ensured if the money.

26 Martin Franklin Vettori O'Brien

had felled Tapu inside the The visitors wasted a great chance to regain lead in the 57th minute when Raphael drove a spotkick against the base of Brothers' right post after Arup's foul on Jitu in the

Four minutes later, brothers were awarded their second penalty when Khan Sharif brought down Shakil Ahmed inside the area. Substitute midfielder Liton scored in his first attempt but referee Azad Rahman ordered a rekick and Liton was successful again to put the Oranges ahead. Wasim Igbal's side sealed

the victory and the Tk sevenlakh prize money ten minutes form time when Tapu broke down the right, turned on a defender and fired a low leftfooter into Mamun Khan's near post. Matiur Munna failed to widen the margin when the

national captain headed wide

from close while Raphael

received Tk six lakh as prize

Sestak placed third.

drawlast September. Iran's Team Melli, seeking a fourth appearance in the World scored Iran's equaliser in the away game

Kuwait, undoubtedly the Saudis will lose in news agency.

"I do not know their new coach (Jose

he said. "If there are no more problems, it will midfielders behind, or two strikers. But with 'Titi' (Henry), we can use him

for stability and continuity's sake he planned to stick with his top stopper Steve Mandanda,

ahead of us which would then make it difficult. For us to be comfortable, we need to win these

who plays his club football in Italy with Livorno But fellow Serie A player Marius

their national side.