



Did U Know?

European teams have reached the final of every FIFA World Cup except in 1930 and 1950.



Rohit Sharma

(Deccan Chargers batsman)
"It is a great honour to be named the Under-23 Success of the League. I've been pleased with my form in South Africa, it has been a fantastic competition and I have really enjoyed it." After being named the best under-23 player of the second Indian Premier League.



STAR Cricket

England v West Indies
Third ODI
Live from 3:45pm
ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

Javed, Rubel slam hatricks

SPORTS REPORTER

Javed and Rubel slammed hatricks in the final round of the Citycell National School Football Championship that was played in inclement weather at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Narayanganj Laxminarayan Cotton Mills School rode on Javed's treble to crush Netrakona Dutta High School by 9-0 goals in the opening match.

Loknath and Alamgir struck twice while Mohammad Russell and Anik Barman added one goal each.

In the second match, Rubel scored a hatrick as Gobindaganj Bahumukhi High School of Gaibandha came from one goal down to beat Gov. Nasirabad High School of Chittagong 3-1.

Aminur converted a penalty to put Nasirabad ahead.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid formally inaugurated the final round meet as chief guest.

Zia, Niaz start with wins

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Masters Ziaur Rahman and Niaz Murshed won their respective first round matches in the second Subic Open International chess tournament at Subic Freeport, Olongapo City, Philippines yesterday.

Zia beat Jia Hoaxiang of China and Niaz beat Lkhamsuren Uuganbayar of Mongolia.

A total of 74 players including 17 Grand Masters and 14 International Masters from several countries are participating in the event.

Ajmal in the clear, eyes T20 title

AFP, Karachi

Pakistani off-spinner Saeed Ajmal said Monday his focus would be his team's bid for victory in next month's World Twenty20 after he was cleared of a suspect bowling action.

The International Cricket Council's Australian biomechanic expert on Sunday

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

Tigers in high spirits

Play NZ in practice game today

SPORTS REPORTER



The Tigers play their first practice match against New Zealand at the Wormsley Cricket Ground today.

Bangladesh was the first team among the top ten to reach England to start their preparation for the ICC World Twenty20 which will kick off from June 5 with hosts England taking on Netherlands at Lord's.

Jamie Siddons' charges have been out of international cricket for last four months but has got five practice matches in England to get accustomed with the condition before the tournament proper.

After the first game the Tigers travel to neighboring Kent to play the second additional practice game against Netherlands while their third match is scheduled for May 29 against Scotland.

After showing no side effects or jet-lag from the long flight from Dhaka both the captain and his deputy will play the first game and the rest of the team will be decided in the afternoon's team meeting, according to TigerCricket.com.

With the captain and vice captain joining the rest of the group after nearly two months the spirit in the Tigers camp has gone up a notch. Mohammad Ashraful and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza flew into England last night and after a decent nap headed for training in the morning.

Both stars looked fresh and ready as the

Bangladesh team had an extended centre wicket training session of nearly four hours at the Ashton Rowant Cricket Club ground, a five-minute drive down the road from the team hotel and through the lush valleys and sunflower fields of a typical English village. This was probably not as picturesque as the breathtaking sceneries that soothe the eyes at the Wormsley Cricket Ground but the wicket and the outfield were perfect for preparation.

At the start of the day the sky had cloud cover but slowly the sun came out and the intent shown by Mashrafe and Ashraful came as a welcome sign after their separation with the national team due to IPL commitments. Practice focused on creating certain match situations and the bowlers and batsmen were challenged to execute certain plans.

"Twenty20 is very positive cricket and you have to take initiatives with a positive mind frame. Although we did not play many matches still for me and Ash (Ashraful) the time at the IPL allowed us to study the game more and hopefully we have learned a few things that we can share with the coaching staff and the other players," Mortaza told the BCB's official website.

Bangladesh's official practice games are against Australia on June 1 and Sri Lanka a day later at Nottingham.

The Tigers, who has been pitted in Group A, will play their first group match against India on June 6 and second match against Ireland on June 8 at Trent Bridge.



PHOTO: TIGERCRIKET.COM

Bangladesh all-rounder Masrafe Bin Mortaza steaming in during centre wicket practice at the Ashton Rowant Cricket Club yesterday.

BFF won't comment on cricket's U-turn

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has decided not to get involved in a tug-of-war with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) for possession of the Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS).

It seems that the BCB's desire to arrange a few matches of the 2011 World Cup at the BNS besides the opening ceremony brought back the old battle between the country's two sports bodies, but BFF was not ready to fall into any trap.

"No comments" was the response of BFF president Kazi Salahuddin when asked to comment on the BCB's sudden aspiration of holding WC matches at the country's premier venue.

It was learnt that the football's governing body believed that the chapter was closed after Ahad Ali Sarkar, the state minister for youth and

sports, had repeatedly ensured that only the opening ceremony would take place at this venue.

Recently, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Sports has also recommended for only the opening ceremony to be held at the BNS after discussion with the high-ups of the two federations.

But like many the BCB announcement came as a surprise to the football fraternity though nobody was ready to make comments as the cricket's governing body had earlier announced that they chose Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur and Fatullah Cricket Stadium as their main venues for the event. They also announced that one stadium in Chittagong and another in Khulna would be readied as alternative.

Many considered it a healthy move from the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



PHOTO: AFP

AC Milan and Italian legend Paolo Maldini acknowledges the home support at the end of his final home Serie A match against Roma at the San Siro on Sunday. Maldini, a one-club man, played for Milan for 24 years and is instantly recognized worldwide as one of Italy's finest defenders.

Maldini bids San Siro bye

AFP, Rome



Paolo Maldini's final match in front of the San Siro crowd ended in disappointment as AS Roma stunned AC Milan 3-2 on Sunday.

Maldini was making his last appearance in the red and black Milan shirt in front of his home fans but Francesco Totti's late free-kick pooped the party for the 40-year-old veteran, who made his debut for the club in 1985 as a 16-year-old.

And despite Massimo Ambrosini's brace in the final quarter of an hour, Roma snatched a vital three points that secured them a place in next season's Europa League.

The result didn't do anything, though, to stop Milan's fans paying homage to a player who has graced the San Siro pitch for 24 years.

No-one left the building as Maldini performed a lap of honour to rousing applause, although a small minority spoiled the atmosphere by chanting slogans against Maldini.

Even so, coach Carlo Ancelotti, who may too leave Milan at the end of the season, said it did nothing to detract from the generally generous reception the club captain received.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

3rd one-day rained out

SPORTS REPORTER

The third and final one-day match between Bangladesh A and Maharashtra Cricket Association (MCA) was abandoned in Khulna due to inclement weather.

The teams shared the three-match one-day series honours as it finished in a 1-1 draw after the visitors bounced back in the second match.

They will now travel to Bogra to play the first four-day of the two-match series which will start from May 28 at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium.

The second four-day match will take place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur from June 3.

The selectors made one change in the Bangladesh A team day after they announced the squad as pacer Mahbubul Alam suffered a back injury during practice yesterday and will be replaced by Ziaur Rahman.

Club Cup football

SPORTS REPORTER

The draw was the order on Monday in the Bashundhara Champions Club Cup Football as half of the matches ended in stalemates at different venues across the country.

Gopalganj Nijora Ekadash played a 1-1 draw with Madaripur Sabujbagh KC at the Gopalganj Stadium, the match between Feni Soccer Club and Noakhali Purbani Tarun Sangha ended in goalless draw at the Feni Bhasha Shaheed Salam Stadium, Lalmonirhat Agnishikha Sangsad shared points with Naogaon Probaho Sangsad in a 1-1 draw at the Rangpur Stadium, Jessore Shaheed Muktijoddha Moeen Smriti Sangsad played to a 2-2

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8

Sharapova battles thru'

AFP, Paris

Maria Sharapova made a winning return to Grand Slam tennis when she came from behind to beat Belarus's Anastasiya Yakimova 3-6, 6-1, 6-2 in the first round of the French Open here on Monday.

The Russian former world number one, who underwent surgery on her right shoulder last August and only returned to singles action in Warsaw last week, was contesting her first Grand Slam match since a second-round defeat to countrywoman Alla Kudryavtseva at last year's Wimbledon.

Sharapova, a three-time Grand Slam winner, made a shaky start, double-faulting at break point in her first service game and then conceding another break after rallying to lead 3-2.

A Gilchrist glory

AFP, Johannesburg



triumph will make this a truly special achievement.

During an international career that spanned almost 12 years the Australian wicketkeeper-batsman won three World Cups, three Ashes series and set many more records as an integral cog of the all-conquering Australian Test machine.

When he retired from international duty early last year he was widely heralded as the greatest wicketkeeper-batsman of all time, having revolutionised the role with explosive batting and exemplary glove work.

More than 12 months on, Gilchrist has

In the context of his overall career an Indian Premier League (IPL) title may not be the pinnacle, but Adam Gilchrist's contribution to Deccan Chargers' 2009

reminded the world of his incredible talent, and added another string to his bow by exhibiting remarkable leadership qualities in turning the Chargers from chumps to champs.

Deccan finished bottom of the IPL table in 2008 after a miserable campaign in which they won just two of 14 matches, and little more was expected of them in the competition's second edition.

"We certainly felt at the start of the tournament that we were coming in as one of the least favoured teams," Gilchrist admitted after the Chargers beat Bangalore in the final Sunday.

"I really encouraged our team to try to play everything down and fly under the radar if you like, because we were happy with that, without having any expectations on us."

Indian fans will remember Gilchrist leading Australia to their first Test series win on Indian soil in 35 years as stand-in skipper for the injured Ricky Ponting back in 2004.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

Nadal, Safina sail

AFP, Paris



court humiliation.

Top seed and world number one Nadal, sporting a bright pink shirt, saw off plucky Brazilian qualifier Marcos Daniel 7-5, 6-4, 6-3 to take his Roland Garros career record to 29 wins in 29 matches.

He will now face either Igor Kunitsyn or Teimuraz Gabashvili, both Russians, for a place in the last 32.

World number two Federer, the runner-up to Nadal in the last three finals, faces Spain's Alberto Martin later on Monday with the Swiss beginning his 11th attempt to win an elusive French Open title and complete a career Grand Slam.

Women's world number one Safina handed

Rafael Nadal, bidding for an historic fifth successive French Open title, swept into the second round on Monday while women's top seed Dinaara Safina engineered a brutal centre

out a 6-0, 6-0 mauling to Anne Keothavong as the Russian's howitzer hitting ruthlessly exposed the Briton's glaring weaknesses.

Safina, the 2008 runner-up and bidding to win a maiden Grand Slam title, will face compatriot Vitalia Diatchenko, a qualifier, for a place in the last 32.

Keothavong, the world number 48, had come into the tournament buoyed by her performance in Warsaw last week where she became the first British woman in 26 years to make the semi-finals of a WTA claycourt event.

But her sun-blessed Roland Garros debut turned into a nightmare as Safina showed no mercy, racing to victory in just over an hour on the back of three breaks of serve in each set.

The 25-year-old Keothavong had the minor satisfaction of saving four match points before the world number one secured victory with another pinpoint, down-the-line forehand.

It was one of 16 winners for Safina compared to just two for the hapless Briton.

"I'm not going to go away and slit my wrists," said Keothavong.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4



PHOTO: AFP

Lucie Safarova of Czech Republic plays backhand against Sabine Lisicki (not in picture) of Germany in the French Open first round match at Roland Garros in Paris yesterday.