Fine start by Rifles

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Rifles made a flying start in the final round of the Exim Bank 19th National Men's Handball competition when they beat Bogra 41-6 in the opening match at the outer stadium handball ground yesterday.

The winners led the firsthalf 25-4. In the other matches, Chittagong defeated Faridpur 28-17 and Kushtia thrashed Bogra 39-7.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Hasan Mahmud inaugurated the meet as chief guest.

Heritage win T20 opener

SPORTS REPORTER

Heritage Cricketers crushed EEE Chargers in the opening match of the Igloo Summer Twenty20 Cricket Challenge at the Dhanmondi Club ground in the city yesterday.

Batting first, Heritage made 179 for 6 from their 20 overs and went on to bowl out the Chargers for only 107 runs.

Pappu made 57 off 43 balls while Tomal blasted an 18-ball 43. Later, Faisal picked up four wickets for Heritage.

Rousing return for Chargers

IANS, Hyderabad

Deccan Chargers, the winners of the second edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) in South Africa, arrived here on Wednesday night to a rousing welcome from fans.

The fans were, however, disappointed a bit as only three players - Tirumalsetti Suman, Harmeet Singh and Shoaib Ahmed - arrived at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport.

The crowd was hoping to catch a glimpse of captain Adam Gilchrist, Andrew Symonds, Herschelle Gibbs, R.P. Singh and Rohit Sharma, who played key roles in the team's victory.

Holding the IPL trophy and the winner's cheque, the three players came out of the airport building amid utter chaos.

The team management said the foreign players went back to their respective countries while R.P. Singh, Rohit Sharma and others headed for Mumbai to join the Indian team for next month's Twenty20WorldCup.

Talking to reporters at the airport, Suman said the team played good cricket. "The final was amazing. It was a close match and we enjoyed a lot," said the Hyderabadi batsman.

"We had not set any target. We were taking it game by game," said Ahmed, another local player. He said playing under Gilchrist and with the likes of Symonds and Gibbs had helped them a lot in improving their skills.

The three members of the victorious team stood on a special vehicle with the trophy as they reached a hotel.

Champs League FROM PAGE 17

India, New Zealand, South

Africa and the West Indies, finishes on October 23. The inaugural edition was set for last year but it was cancelled following the terror attacks in Mumbai.

The 2009 edition will feature 12 teams instead of eight and the venues will be decided next month.

Ashraful

FROM PAGE 17 for two in the second over when he flicked straight to the fielder at mid-wicket off paceman Ruud Nijman. then Leftarm spinner Pieter Seeler removed Zunaed Siddique (17) and Shakib Al Hasan (4) in the eighth over.

There were three changes in the Bangladesh side from Tuesday's first warm-up against New Zealand. Rokibul Hasan comes in for Mohammad Mithun, fast bowler Rubel Hossain replaces Syed Rasel while Nayeem Islam, who is nursing a sore shoulder, makes way for Shamsur Rahman. Netherlands have left out their IPL star Dirk Nannes who has

According to the BCB website, there is a slight cloud cover in Kent's home ground. A good number of expatriate Bangladeshis also made their to watch the game.

BRIEFSCORES BANGLADESH: 206-6 in 20 overs (Ashraful 69, Mahmud Ullah 54, Roqibul 27 not out, Mushfique 24, Junaed 17, Shakib 4, Tamim 2)



PHOTO: BANGLARCHOKH.COM Dancers from Manikganj put on a show ahead of the opening of the Exim Bank 19th National Men's Handball Tournament at the Paltan Maidan yesterday.

Less pressure on us' Best pace

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Kumar Sangakkara said his team would make a "very strong impact" on the World Twenty20 with less pressure on it to perform in this format. The tournament, which begins next week in England, marks Sangakkara's maiden tour as captain since taking over from Mahela Jayawardene, and the team's return to cricket following the Lahore attack in March.

"I don't think there is as much pressure on us in the T20 format as an international side as when we play Test cricket and one-day cricket. It is still a format that we are exploring but I think with the side we have, we have a great opportunity to make a very strong impact," Sangakkara said before his team's departure for London on Thursday.

Group C, which Sangakkara described as the group of death but also pointed to the opportunities it presented. "You've got to win at least one game. But at the end of the day you have to beat the best sides in the world to qualify in a tournament. We've just got to take our chances," he said.

Africa in 2007, Sri Lanka came through unbeaten in their group and qualified for the Super Eight before being eliminated.

Sangakkara said he believed the side had the right balance for the tournament and was confident his sometimes inconsistent batting line-up would play its part in their success. "I am definitely confident of the batting we have. You take [Tillakaratne] Dilshan, Sanath Group C.

top earner

Cricket

a survey has found.

Test cricket captain Ricky

Ponting remains Australia's

most marketable sports star but

teammate Andrew Symonds

has lost his lustre with sponsors,

Ponting, who is preparing to

lead the Australian team in

defence of the Ashes in England

over the coming months, has

held his place at the top for the

third consecutive year of the

list ahead of recently-retired

Olympic swimming champion

Grant Hackett and semi-retired

But while Ponting is in

favour, the controversial

Symonds is on the nose with the

marketeers and has tumbled to

36th in the survey after reaching

a high of 10th position in last

The Aussie skipper tops the

Sweeney Sports Report.

cricketer Adam Gilchrist.

year's report.

AFP, Sydney

Ricky stays as

[Jayasuriya], Mahela [Jayawardene], [Jehan] Mubarak, Chamara [Silva] and myself - we've got great batting talent to represent the country in a World Cup.

"A hundred and twenty balls is a long time. Even though Twenty20 cricket seems short it is not really that short when you are batting. If you plan your innings right and hopefully execute it on that day any score over 150 would be a very competitive one. "Sri Lanka's bowling line-up, he said, was one of the best in the tournament.

"There is [Nuwan] Kulasekera, who is no. 1 in the world, Murali, Ajantha [Mendis], Thilan Thushara and Lasith Malinga who has come back so strongly. It's a great mix but at the end of the day it doesn't matter what you have, you've got to walk the walk basically to really get on the field and perform well," he said.

Sri Lanka have included Angelo Mathews and Farveez Maharoof in the squad, and Sangakkara feels one of them could fill the Sri Lanka are with Australia and West Indies in vacant allrounder spot. "Angelo is a batting allrounder and Maharoof, a bowling allrounder. One of them has got the ability to put their hands up and become that allrounder that all sides are looking for and one we haven't had for a long time."

Indika de Saram comes into the side after a In the inaugural World Twenty20 in South long time on the back of some very good domestic performances and Sangakkara described Isuru Udana as an exciting prospect with his change-up. "He was the best performing bowler in the domestic tournament from what I have seen , he said

Sri Lanka begin their campaign on June 8 against Australia at Trent Bridge and take on West Indies two days later at the same venue in

attack'

CRICINFO, undated

Sachin Tendulkar has said he is confident about India defending its World Twenty20 title and expects the pace attack to come good in English conditions. "It is on par with the best," he told Daily News and Analysis. "Zaheer [Khan], Ishant [Sharma] and RP Singh form a lethal combination, particularly in English conditions. Our seam attack has a lot of variety and would come handy in such conditions. On our day, we can demolish any batting side."

Tendulkar, who will not take part in the World Twenty20, had stressed the need for the Indian players to get adequate rest ahead of the competition after an intense IPL. He had singled out India's opening combination, Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir, which had struggled in the IPL, to fight fatigue in the lead-up to the tournament in England.

Bangladesh A

FROM PAGE 17 tourists chasing the leather. The right-hander smashed eight fours and four sixes in his blazing innings.

But it was Imran, the righthander from Mymensingh and returning to a national setup after eleven long years, who set the scene for a big score with a patient knock that came off 163 balls. He struck fourteen boundaries and a six. He added 46 with Nafis (30) for the second wicket before adding 62 with Hannan Sarkar (39).

But with ten runs to reach a hundred, Imran edged one to wicketkeeper Rohit Motwani off Samad Fallah in the 57th over.

Samad was the only Maharashtra bowler to make an impact. The medium-pacer took five for 101 runs from his 24 overs. Kiran Adhav had two wickets including the dangerous Dollar while Aditya Dole had one.

BRIEF SCORES

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BANGLADESH A: First innings 336-9 in 89.5 overs (Kayes 4, Nafis 30, Imran 90, Hannan 39, Rajin 1, Mehrab 81, Sahagir 2, Dollar 79, Sajid 0, Enamul 6 not out; Samad 5-101, Aditya 1-68, Kiran 2-73)

Henry's sweet memories

AFP, Rome



Henry said his side's 2-0 Champions League final triumph over Manchester United will stay long in the CHAMPIONS memory, while beaten giveyourbest. goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar was at a loss to explain why his side failed to

reproduce their top form. Goals either side of half-time in the final at Rome's Olympic Stadium from Barcelona's Samuel Eto'o and Argentina star Lionel Messi gave the Spaniards their third European Cup

Victory ensured Barcelona became the first team to win the Spanish treble of La Liga, the King's Cup and the Champions League.

Henry was in the Arsenal side which lost to Barcelona at Paris's Stade de France in 2006 and said the taste of Champions League victory was all the sweeter.

"This victory will remain engraved in my memory," said the 31-year-old.

"I had already known this kind of emotion when we won the Premier League title with Arsenal.

"It is something special to win the treble, it is ing as "shoddy". a part of history."

Henry, who had double cause for celebra- when we had the ball. tion as it was his daughter's birthday, shrugged off a knee injury to play in Wednesday's final didn't go so well for us and everything they tried and said he left it until the eve of the game to seem to come off."

decide whether he would play.

"For my part, I did not think I would be able Barcelona striker Thierry to play, but on Tuesday evening I started to understand that it was going to be good," said the Frenchman.

"You just have to grit your teeth and get on with it, but as always with Barca, you always

"There is always a clear plan of attack, whoever the opponent."

United's dreams of becoming the first team to defend the Champions League title were left in tatters as Barcelona out-played the English Premier League champions.

Manchester were just a shadow of the side who beat Chelsea in Moscow 12 months ago and van der Sar - their hero last year in the penalty shootout win over Chelsea - was at a loss to understand why.

United stars like Wayne Rooney, Ryan Giggs and Cristiano Ronaldo conceded defeat to Barcelona with little resistance and once Eto'o scored the first goal after ten minutes Manchester lost their composure.

"They got off to a good start and after the first goal it just all seemed to go wrong for us." said the 38-year-old goalkeeper whose coach Sir Alex Ferguson described his side's defend-

"We seemed to be under pressure, even

"It was just one of those nights when things

Arrests mar celebrations

AFP, Barcelona



more than 100 arrests celebrations after the Champions League final

degenerated into riots early Thursday, with dozens needing hospital treatment. Around 100,000 people

spilled onto the streets of the Catalan capital in the aftermath of Barcelona's 2-0 victory over Manchester United in Rome. But while a carnival atmo-

sphere initially prevailed, the mood turned ugly after midnight when youths began clashing with police around one of the city's main thoroughfares, Las Ramblas. Youths hurled bottles as

metal barricades keeping a mob back from shops, prompting a surge by batonwielding riot officers, who fired into the air. Terrified passers-by caught

they tried to storm through

up in the violence had to cower behind walls as the clashes intensified. In a statement, police said

they had arrested 119 people for public order offences in the city and a total of 134 in the wider Catalan region. A total of 153 people were also injured, said the state-

ment. And while most of the injuries were minor, 23 needed hospital treatment. RTVE public television said

one of its cameraman was among those injured. The statement said that police had issued "repeated

warnings" to the rioters. Lampposts, telephone

kiosks and bus stops were all badly damaged in the violence. The celebrations had started peacefully as thousands of joyous fans, many

draped in the dark red and

blue of their club, let off fireworks and honked horns. "Yes, yes, yes, the Cup is

here," shouted supporters. "I am so happy, we lifted the Spanish Cup. deserved this victory, we're going to stay out all night as

tain on the Ramblas, where night in their history," it said. fans traditionally celebrate. Real Madrid, who ended the now has "a legendary triple own fate for the past two sea-

us on," said one young fan,

Jordi, at the Canaletes foun-

sons until this term under new coach Pep Guardiola.

Gerona and Lleida. And in the Spanish capital, Catalans jumped into the fountain in the Plaza Cibeles, the traditional site for celebra-

tions by Real supporters. twice gorged on success in Carlos, told Spanish televirecent days after their team sion.

won the Spanish title and "Champions! (three

times)", headlined the Catalan long as the police don't move newspaper La Vanguardia. Barca and their supporters have experienced "the greatest

The nation's top-selling Many fans mocked rivals paper, El Pais, said Barcelona season trophyless -- Barca's crown" and is "at the top of the Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero-

Several other towns in the - a Barcelona supporter --Catalan region also cele- hailed it as the "dream team" brated, such as Tarragona, and predicted the country would now do the treble. "We've won the European Cup, today the Champions

League and now we will win the World Cup," a beaming Zapatero, who attended the Barca fans had already final in Rome with King Juan



Action from the Citycell School Football Championship match between Govindaganj Bohumukhi High School and Netrokona Dutta High School at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Big names survive

Wednesday, feasted on the meek resistance of Slovakia's Magdalena Rybarikova with an

easy 6-1, 6-2 win. Jankovic will next face Slovakian-born Jarmila Groth, who now plays for Australia.

who won the Marbella claycourt event in the run-up to Roland Garros, believes weight loss is helping to rejuvenate her game which took her to the world number one spot last year.

"I'm back to my normal weight. Maybe I had seven kilos more than I have now, which is a lot for me. When you put that kind of weight on it's tough to move around," she said.

Russian seventh seed Svetlana Kuznetsova, the 2006 runner-up, also eased through to the last 32 beating Galina Voskoboeva 6-0, 6-2, while Danish 10th seed Caroline Wozniacki breezed past American veteran Jill Craybas 6-1,6-4.

In the men's event, Argentine fifth seed Juan Martin Del Potro, Russian 10th seed Nikolay Davydenko, twice a semifinalist, and Spanish

16th seed Tommy Robredo all went through.

Symonds last week missed

The problems started when

selection for the Ashes tour

following his struggle to regain

form after a series of off-field

Symonds was axed from the

national team after his 'gone

fishing' episode in Darwin last

year, while he was also fined for

a well-publicised alcohol-

fuelled rantin a radio interview.

ues a consistent attitude among

Australians that sports stars

involved in controversial

highly marketable," Sweeney

Sports general manager Todd

Warne and tennis stars Jelena

Dokic and Mark Philippousis

have in the past suffered similar

from grace was Sonny Bill

Williams, who generated head-

lines last year following his

controversial departure from

Another sportsman to fall

Fellow cricketer Shane

"His fall from favour contin-

incidents.

Deacon said.

falls, Deacon said.

Later Thursday, fourth seeded Serbian Novak Djokovic was facing Ukrainian qualifier Sergiy Stakhovsky while sixth seed Andy Roddick of the United States was also The 24-year-old Jankovic, due on court to face Ivo Minar of the Czech Republic.

> Women's second seed Serena Williams, the 2002 champion was tackling Spain's 35year-old Virginia Ruano Pascual who won their only meeting 11 years ago at Wimbledon.

Argentine FROM PAGE 20

"Messi shone in an outstanding final during which Barcelona largely dominated Manchester with a beautiful passing game," it said.

Ole added that Messi's 70th minute header was his ninth goal in 12 Champions League matches this season, making him the top scorer. La Nacion featured a photo

of the 21-year-old Argentinian

hoisting the European trophy,

saying he had entered into the

"grand history of football".

Toulon in France. The Kiwi international, who left the Canterbury Bulldogs in the lurch, is listed at 78th in the

Australia's National Rugby

League to play rugby with

survey, a fall of 34 positions. Triple Beijing Olympic swimming gold medallist Stephanie Rice debuted in seventh place in the latest survey and is the highestranked sportswoman, ahead of former Olympic 400m champion runner Cathy Freeman, in

eighth. behaviour are not regarded as Fellow Olympic champion swimmers Leisel Jones and Libby Trickett climbed the list to 12th and 13th positions respectively, up from equal

20th position last year. Two-time grand slam tennis champion Lleyton Hewitt slumped to 32 in the survey after an injury-hit year.

The survey's findings are based on 1,000 interviews conducted with the public between October 2008 and March 2009.

Best season

recognise that they had a big chance with (Cristiano) Ronaldo's free-kick (on two minutes).

passed for Eto'o to score we tried to keep the ball more and bring it inside more. "Last year we saw that Leo (Messi) had difficulties with (United left-back Patrice) Evra

"But after (Andres) Iniesta

so we put him inside with Xavi and Iniesta and we had one more player in the middle. "We had chances and they did too but in the end we had control of the ball. For us it's a disaster if we don't have the ball so we have to have it and

keep it and move it well.

They tried to keep the ball with (Nemanja) Vidic, (Rio) Ferdinand and (Michael) Carrick, who's a very good player. They tried to keep it and

also tried to counter with

Ronaldo and (Wayne) Rooney

but we controlled the game

verywell. "We told our defence that it was important when we were attacking for them to pay close attention to Ronaldo and Rooney and (Carlos) Tevez and (Dimitar) Berbatov in the second half and they did this."

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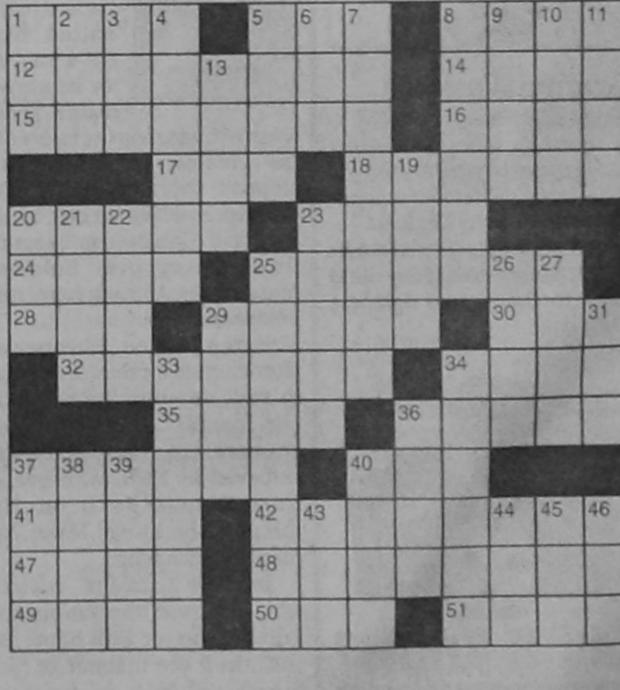
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CRYPTOQUIP

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Saturday's Cryptoquip: CLASSIC FILM DOCUMENTING A LARGE HURRICANE THAT HIT AN AFRICAN NATION: "GHANA WITH THE WIND."

ZLEPQY LEPQY?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: A equals T