

DC Gold Cup

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Gaibandha

Gaibandha Pourshava defeated Dinajpur Jela Dal by 2-0 to clinch the DC Gold Cup, held at the Gaibandha Stadium on Friday.

Pradip and Nigerian recruit Idi each scored a goal to hand the crucial victory to the host team.

Pradip was also declared man-of-the-final.

Hafizur Bhuiyan, Rajshahi Division Commissioner was present as chief guest during the prize giving ceremony.

Austria bans vuvuzelas

AFP, Vienna

The Austrian professional football league on Thursday imposed a stadium ban on the long plastic trumpet, the vuvuzela, which made such a noisy impression in last month's Confederations Cup in South Africa.

But the league said the vuvuzelas were being banned not for the deafening and tuneless din they produce but because they might be used as missiles.

"Vuvuzelas can be used as projectiles. Furthermore, they can incite aggressive behaviour amongst other fans," Austrian league spokesman Christian Kirchers said.

Newly-promoted Wiener Neustadt had been counting on handing out 150 vuvuzelas to fans to make some noise during the league's seasonal kick-off at home on Friday against Austria Carinthia.

The trumpets caused consternation among some in South Africa for the Confederations Cup, with several non-African players and coaches calling for their ban.

But the president of world football's governing body FIFA, Sepp Blatter, has given them his blessing, blasting the detractors by telling them Africa is about dance and music and that moaning about the instrument bordered on discrimination.

WICB blames

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been resolved they exercised the option not to attend," the WICB statement read.

According to the association, a letter was subsequently sent to the president of the WICB to the effect. WIPA acknowledged receipt of a letter from the WICB and a notice of dispute which it would respond to, denying any such assertion of strike action or breaches of the MoU and the CBA, and said it would proceed to respond as mandated under the CBA.

The latest move in the ongoing player contracts crisis comes on the heels of WIPA's tongue-in-cheek 'apology' on Tuesday, listing the debacles of the WICB administration and management over the last few years and also slamming the board for not honouring previously-arbitrated agreements between the two entities. On Wednesday, WIPA wrote to the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), seeking their intervention on the contractual impasse.

Beximco

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edge Citycell 3-2 in a thriller to join them in the final.

And the pharmaceutical firm saved the best for last, turning in a stunning display of attacking football to bring home the trophy and hand a lesson to Union Capital.

Defending champions Brac Bank failed to make the grade but did not go home empty handed. Billed to go far for their sterling show, an unfortunate loss in the group phase saw them having to contend for the Plate Championship.

They duly obliged and like any banker came back with high returns courtesy a nail-biting 3-2 win over IIDFC. On way to the final they edged out Banglalink in a thriller and also saw off IDLC.

Prince of Ascent Group and Abdul Hannan of IIDFC jointly shared the "Golden Boot" scoring a mind-boggling 19 goals each.

Union Capital captain Nipul Barua won the title of the Most Valuable Player. Flora Telecom won the award for the Most Sporting Team and Bangla Trac Communications went home with the Fair Play award.

PHOTO: AFP
World number one Swiss Roger Federer poses behind a plaque bearing his name at the Basel Hall of Fame after an unveiling ceremony on Thursday.

Bolt wants to shine

Athletics

AFP, Paris

Usain Bolt will use his outing at the fourth meeting of the Golden League series to fine-tune preparations for an assault on next month's World Athletics Championships.

The Jamaican took the Beijing Olympics by storm, setting world records en route to victory in the 100 and 200m, as well as being part of his country's gold medal-winning 4x100m relay team.

But he was beaten into silver in the 200m in the 2007 world championships in Osaka by triple world champion Tyson Gay of the United States, who will not be competing at the Stade de France.

Bolt will be keen to set down a marker after some storming performances by Gay, whose Olympic adventure was disastrous after a comeback from injury.

But Gay has set the two leading times of the season over 100m, notably a 9.77sec into a headwind in Rome, the fourth fastest time ever run over the blue riband event.

"Everything is possible," said Bolt, who on July 7 recorded the fourth fastest time in history in the 200m of 19.59sec. "If it's fine weather, I can manage a quick time. I never run just for laughs."

"I'm maybe at about 85 percent," he told L'Equipe newspaper. "I won't be at 100 percent before Berlin. I've still got some work to do on the 200 and 100m."

"I've been working on my starts. In training it's going well but when it comes to competition time, I try to anticipate the orders too much."

There might not be a showdown with Gay or

Jamaican compatriot Asafa Powell on Friday, but a strong field includes Churandy Martina of the Dutch Antilles, Trinidadian duo Richard Thompson and Marc Burns, and veteran St Kitts and Nevis sprinter Kim Collins. Bolt, however, is not in the running for the one-million-dollar Golden League jackpot for the athlete who wins all six races in their discipline throughout the season.

Of the five men's events (100m, 400m, 3000m/5000m, 110m Hurdles, Javelin Throw) and the five women's (100m, 400m, 100m Hurdles, High Jump, Pole Vault), there are just four jackpot contenders.

Kenenisa Bekele of Ethiopia has notched up three wins over the 5,000m, while Jamaican Kerron Stewart remains unbeaten in the women's 100m.

American Sanya Richards looks comfortable in the women's 400m while Yelena Isinbayeva is so dominant in the pole vault that it will take a serious upset or injury to derail the Russian, who shared the 2007 jackpot with Richards.

In the men's pole vault, local hopes will rest with rising star Renaud Lavillenie, who has set a season's best of 6.01 metres, considerably more than the field he'll be up against.

Three high-profile late withdrawals have, however, taken the shine off some events.

Ariane Friedrich has pulled out of the women's high jump in which she would have resumed her rivalry with Croatian Blanka Vlasic, the German having come out on top in their first head-to-head outdoors in Berlin.

Richards will miss competition from nemesis Christine Ohuruogu of Britain, who produced an amazing finish to snatch Olympic gold in Beijing from the American.

And Olympic champion Dayron Robles will miss the men's 110m hurdles as he struggles with a nasty bout of flu.

FINA allows swimsuit

Swimming

AFP, Manchester

Australia's head swimming coach Alan Thompson believes the upcoming world championships have been blown wide open by the dominance of the new generation of swimsuits and warns the issue could badly damage the sport.

Thompson's team began their final preparations for the worlds on Friday with a training camp in Manchester, where they will also be based before the London Olympics, before leaving for Rome on Wednesday.

The late decision by world governing body FINA to allow polyurethane suits has caused a scramble among the Australian team, who are sponsored by Speedo but have a clause in their contracts to allow the use of other suits. However many swimmers have only had access to them since arriving in Europe this month.

"Glossing over it and I think it has been a distraction," Thompson said.

"Myself and my coaches have tried to take control over these things so the swimmers don't have to worry about it so they can focus on the job they have and the process they have put in place to be successful. There is a calmness about the suits with our team."

Still because of the swimsuits, Thompson believes there could be a few surprises in Rome, with athletes from countries without a strong swimming background creating the headlines.

"Medals and placings have become more and more widely spread over the last few years

anyway, but certainly it creates a situation where it's very difficult to predict who the favourites are," Thompson said.

"Not always the best athletes win the races at the moment and that's what we want to get back to. (A situation) where it's the best prepared athletes, the most talented athletes who have the best coaching, winning the events."

"It's the responsibility of FINA now to take some kind of control in the future and let's bring it back to just talking about the pure athletic performance of our athletes."

Thompson says FINA needs to show better leadership to stop the swimsuit issue alienating fans.

"I think the credibility of the sport is at risk now and if FINA don't move decisively and strongly and show strong leadership in this area, then there's a real possibility (of alienating fans)," Thompson said.

Thompson feels the world records generated in the new swimsuits have overshadowed the swimmers.

"When we were back in 2007 at the Melbourne World Championships, that was a fair competition I think and the decisions and the positions and the medals were given out based on the true performances of the athletes," he said.

"I think since that point in time, technology has assisted these performances and the new swimsuits have assisted these performances. We always talk about a level playing field for all but I don't think that's the case."

"The credibility of FINA has been severely dented there and needs to be sorted out in the very near future," Thompson said. "Hopefully we can put this period of time behind us like a bad dream and move forward."

Anderson leads Eng

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But here he played shots, five fours - all off struggling left-arm quick Mitchell Johnson.

Ben Hilfenhaus, who led the Australia attack with Test-best figures of four for 103, clean bowled Strauss second ball Friday for his overnight 161 as the left-handed opener shouldered arms.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at lunch on the second day of the second Ashes Test between England and Australia at Lord's in London on Friday.

ENGLAND: First innings

(overnight 364-6)
 Strauss b Hilfenhaus 161
 Cook lbw b Johnson 95
 Bopara lbw b Hilfenhaus 18
 Pietersen c Haddin b Siddle 32
 Collingwood c Siddle b Clarke 16
 Prior b Johnson 8
 Flintoff c Ponting b Hilfenhaus 4
 Broad b Hilfenhaus 16
 Swann c Ponting b Siddle 4
 Anderson c Hussey b Johnson 29
 Onions not out 17
 Extras: (b-15, lb-2, nb-8) 25
 Total: (All out in 101.4 overs) 425
 Fall of wickets: 1-196, 2-222, 3-267, 4-302, 5-317, 6-333, 7-364, 8-370, 9-378, 10-425.
 Bowler O M R W
 Hilfenhaus 31 12 103 4
 Johnson 21.4 2 132 3
 Siddle 20 1 76 2
 Hauritz 8.3 1 26 0
 North 16.3 2 59 0
 Clarke 4 1 12 1
 Hughes c Prior b Anderson 4
 Katich not out 8
 Ponting c Strauss b Anderson 2
 Hussey not out 4
 Extras: (lb-4) 4
 Total: (For 2 wickets in 12 overs) 22
 To bat: Clarke, North, Haddin, Johnson, Hauritz, Siddle, Hilfenhaus.
 Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-10.
 Bowler O M R W
 Anderson 6 2 12 2
 Flintoff 6 3 6 0

SL recall Vaas

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Sri Lanka Cricket, which announced the squad in a media release, did not say why Muralidaran was not picked.

The selectors retained the same 15 players who formed the squad for the first two Tests.

SQUAD

Kumar Sangakkara (captain), Mahela Jayawardene, Tharanga Paranavitana, Malinda Warnapura, Thilan Samaraweera, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Angelo Mathews, Rangana Herath, Nuwan Kulasekara, Thilan Thushara, Chaminda Vaas, Ajantha Mendis, Chamara Kapugedara, Kaushal Silva, Suranga Lakmal, Dhamika Prasad.

Lee targets third Test

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Australia were reduced to just two bowling options for much of Friday morning at Lord's, but reinforcements are on the way. Brett Lee, Australia's senior fast bowler with 310 Test wickets, has declared himself on track to play the third Test at Edgbaston, while Shane Watson has returned to bowling at full intensity and is available for selection as an allrounder after Lord's.

News of Lee and Watson's progress might not solve Ricky Ponting's problems in the short-term - Nathan Hauritz's dislocated finger and Peter Siddle's illness left him with just two frontline bowlers on the second morning of the match - but will certainly expand Australia's options for the last three Tests of the series. Lee completed a series of sprints under the supervision of team physiotherapist Alex Kountouris on Friday morning, while Andrew Hilditch observed Watson bowling from his full run-up in the Lord's nets.

Watson's recovery from a thigh strain is at a more advanced stage than Lee's recuperation from a rib injury, but both could figure in Australia's plans for the Edgbaston Test, beginning July 30.

"I'm very optimistic that I can get up for the [Edgbaston] Test, selection pending," Lee told Cricinfo after Friday's training session. "I'll be giving myself every opportunity. If I don't feel

like I'm ready to go I won't push it. We've obviously got a massive series here. You don't want to turn a three week injury into a six month thing if you tear it right through."

"I haven't had a bowl as yet. It's ticking off every box. You start off with a light walk, progress to some light jogging, then heavy jogging then sprints. There are a couple of little stages I have to get through first. I'll be doing a bit of medicine ball stuff before I can bowl. Provided I'm pain free the bowling will start. Whether that's in a day's time, two day's time or four day's time will be determined by how quickly I progress with things."

Lee struggled to watch Australia's bowlers on the receiving end from Andrew Strauss and Alastair Cook on Thursday morning, but drew encouragement from their late innings riposte. Mitchell Johnson, in particular, could find himself under pressure if Lee returns for Edgbaston, given the left-arm's erratic lines and profligate economy-rates thus far this series.

"It was difficult to watch, to say the least," Lee said. "I don't enjoy watching cricket, period. I think I'll enjoy it more when I'm finished. I just feel like I want to get out there and play. It's frustrating - if I'm on the sideline and injured, you just really want to try and get out there for your team. It was hard yesterday. I thought the guys early on, it wasn't our best start. However, the way the guys fought back, it showed a lot of character in our bowlers. To have them 1-200 and at stumps 6-360, with another wicket in our favour the day could have gone to us."

WIPA rejects WICB claims

Cricket

AFP, Kingstown

The West Indies Players' Association has rejected both the notion that protesting players have taken strike action and the West Indies Cricket Board's latest claims of players breaching their contractual obligations.

In a letter to the protesting players, the WICB gave them 10 days from Thursday to explain their protest action over the last two weeks which the regional governing body noted had breached the Code of Conduct for players and team officials.

The WICB has charged that the players making themselves unavailable for the first Test against Bangladesh, as well as their refusal to travel to St. Vincent for the match, and their skipping of the official launch for the 2010 Twenty20 World Cup on July 4 in St. Lucia as breaches of their obligations.

But WIPA has denied taking strike action, and insists that players were not under contract, so they could not have breached any agreements.

"These players were under no contract with the WICB that imposed any terms, conditions, and obligations with regard to the first Test

against Bangladesh and have taken no strike action within this context," said WIPA executive president Dinanath Ramnarine in a statement.

He added: "Although the players participated in the One-day Internationals against India, again there was no contract setting out what the terms, conditions, and obligations were with regard to this series, and it was their understanding that the Twenty20 World Cup launch was an optional event."

Under normal circumstances, the players may well have attended (the launch) in any event without a contract.

But after a three-hour meeting at which it came to their attention that a large number of long outstanding issues had still not been resolved, they exercised the option not to attend. A letter was subsequently sent to the president of the WICB.

In the meantime, the WICB has frozen the payments of players with retainer contracts who are part of protest action.

Media reports indicate that the majority of players the WICB have targeted are among a group of 29 who hold retainers that offer an annual fee of between 25-60,000 US dollars.

The WICB said that payments will be suspended until they indicate in writing their "resumption of obligations under the contract".

Plans for US-style IPL

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

There was a certain irony that on the day plans for a major Twenty20 tournament in the USA were announced back in the late 1980s as the host for the 1994 [football] World Cup, the world laughed and said 'what are they going to do with our game'. And yet we still hold the record for the most tickets sold at a football World Cup.

"Before the world laughs at the US taking on cricket, it's important to say we're going to do it best and with the world's experts and put together a programme that will be successful."

And he added that his plans were very much in tune with the ICC and would fit in with the existing international calendar. "We're going to make sure what we do has ICC backing. That's the promise we made when we did a presentation to the ICC in Dubai [in April].