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21 DAYS TO GO

SOUTH AFRICA 2010
FIFA WORLD CUP



Ivory Coast footballers warm-up prior to a practice session at Montreux in Switzerland with the Alps in the background yesterday. The Ivorians are training for the FIFA World Cup to be held in South Africa over June 11-July 11. A high-profile casualty is inevitable in Group G with Brazil, Portugal and Ivory Coast fighting for two places while North Korea concentrate on damage limitation.

PHOTO: AFP

Tigers close to another defeat

SPORTS REPORTER

The Tigers were on the brink of another defeat as they continued to bat poorly against the England Lions on the second day of their four-day game at the County Ground in Derby yesterday.

Batting on a 74-run deficit, Bangladesh started their second innings and were reduced to 61 for 5 when the report was last filed.

Jahurul Islam was batting on 19 and Mahmudullah Riyad was not out on 8.

Tamim Iqbal (19) made a flying start by hitting two boundaries and one six but right-arm pacer Steven Kirby stopped him early, having him caught by wicketkeeper Steven Davies. Tamim's departure opened the floodgate as the wickets fell like ninepins.

Imrul Kayes (5), Junaed Siddiqui (0), Mohammad Ashraful (1) and captain Mushfiqur Rahim (4) were dismissed cheaply to create a chance for the home team to win the game quickly.

Bangladesh also lost the second three-day game by five wickets against Essex.

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Germans rust Clockwork Orange

Brazil lost the World Cup almost as soon as they regained it. The Jules Rimet trophy, theirs to keep after winning it for the third time, was stolen and never seen again. Their 1970 team melted away too. Zagallo put together a far more physical side, in the belief that the old skills wouldn't survive against European athleticism.

No one seemed to epitomise this more than the hosts and favourites, who'd won the 1972 European Championship with some masterly all-round football. Three of the team finished 1-2-3 in the European footballer-of-the-year poll and there were world-class players in every department: Maier in goal, Vogts and the new discovery Breitner at full back, the incomparable Beckenbauer, now the world's first great attacking sweeper, the imperious blond Netzer in midfield; Mueller ever more unstoppable up front.

But if 1970 was a Brazilian carnival, 1974 belonged to the Dutch who painted the tournament orange with their revolutionary "total football," thrilling millions of spectators and television viewers watching the first ever live coverage of the competition.

Holland dominated the first of their groups comfortably enough. In the second group phase, however, they were inspirational, destroying Argentina, easily beating Brazil and imperiously strutting off East Germany.

West Germany, on the other hand, were making much heavier weather of things, losing their "needle" match against East Germany in the first group phase by a goal to nil before shading the second group phase with a narrow victory over Poland.

Holland had made many friends in two weeks after destroying the greatest teams in the world with inspired, breathtaking football and their meeting with the hosts, Germany, in the final was eagerly awaited.

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Now resigns Titoo?

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Although it was not confirmed either by the man himself or the authority, it seems that Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has been hit by another resignation as it was learnt that Aziz Al Kaiser Titoo had resigned as the chairman of the marketing and commercial committee.

Highly placed sources in the board said that Titoo, who clearly expressed his desire to quit while talking to The Daily Star last month, submitted his resignation letter to BCB president AHM Mustafa Kamal after last Friday's board meeting.

BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus is now accompanying the national team in England as the head of delegation and could not be contacted for his version while acting CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury was not aware of what has happened and the BCB president was not ready to say anything when contacted over telephone yesterday evening.

"As the BCB president, I'm not the right person to say anything about it. You must come through the proper channel [media committee] if you want to know about it. It's not my duty to provide information to the media," said the BCB boss when asked about the resignation.

The latest one which follows the resignations of Shakil Kasem as the head of National Cricket Academy's management committee and Rabeed

Imam as the media manager clearly indicates that it is hard for a professional or someone who believes in professionalism to work properly with the way the board is running now.

Despite several attempts Titoo could not be reached over telephone last night but it was learnt that the BCB director had been disturbed with recent activities of the board where professionalism seemed to be vanishing from all activities.

The sources also said that Titoo, also a successful businessman, took this decision mainly because of fighting between him and senior vice-president Mahbulul Anam over the activities of marketing and commercial issues.

One source also informed that another very influential director even insulted him in a board meeting when he had advocated for a professional set-up in the commercial committee.

There was every reason for Titoo to be frustrated as the BCB is yet to appoint a permanent CEO, a post which has been vacant for almost three years now and few months back two professionals employed in the marketing committee have resigned, only to fuel the notion that professionals are not feeling comfortable to work in a place once regarded as very lucrative for them.

Titoo last month also put the board in a spot of bother by saying that he was not fully informed about the National Cricket League's sponsorship deal between the board and ATN Records although he held the responsibility to look after this matter.

Maradona runs over cameraman

THE GUARDIAN

The Argentina coach Diego Maradona insulted an injured cameraman after accidentally running over his leg ahead of an announcement of the Albiceleste World Cup squad.

Driving to yesterday's news conference in Buenos Aires, the 1986 World Cup winner was surrounded by journalists. One was hit and he fell to the ground.

According to a witness, Maradona's car rolled over the lower part of the cameraman's leg. "What an a**hole you are," Maradona shouted from the car. "How can you put your leg there where it can get run over, man?" Paramedics attended to the cameraman, who was taken away for further treatment.

The 49-year-old coach then delivered the names of the 23-man squad for the World Cup to the media. Maradona's World Cup preparation was disrupted in March when he needed minor facial surgery after being bitten by his dog.

CLUB CUP HOCKEY Farce final up for discussion

SPORTS REPORTER

The league committee of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation has forwarded the issue of the farcical Club Cup Hockey final to its governing body meeting to work out a solution.

The governing body meeting is scheduled to be held on May 25.

On 16 April, Mohammedan were leading 4-2 against Usha Kriya Chakra in the Club Cup final. However, the final ended 15 minutes before regulation time due to poor light and Mohammedan were declared champions.

The game got underway some 80 minutes later than schedule time, centering around

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Diego names squad

AFP, Buenos Aires



Argentina coach Diego Maradona named his 23-man World Cup squad on Wednesday, dropping seven players from the provisional list named last week.

Colón defender Ariel Garce, 30, keeps his place despite having won just one cap for the national team in this month's 4-0 World Cup warm-up win over Haiti.

The seven men cut from the provisional squad are Newcastle defender Fabricio Coloccini, Newell's Old Boys defender Juan Manuel Insaurralde, Jose Sosa of Estudiantes, Olympiakos midfielder Jesus Datolo, Napoli forward Ezequiel Lavezzi, Lanus' Sebastian Blanco and Juan Mercier of Argentinos Juniors.

Two-time champions Argentina were drawn alongside Nigeria, Euro 2004 champions Greece and 2002 semi-finalists South Korea in Group B and begin their campaign against the African side on June 12.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Sergio Romero (AZ Alkmaar/NED), Mariano Andujar (Catania/ITA), Diego Pozo (Colón)
Defenders: Nicolas Otamendi (Velez Sarsfield), Martin Demichelis (Bayern Munich/GER), Walter Samuel (Inter Milan/ITA), Gabriel Heinze (Marseille/FRA), Nicolas Burdisso (AS Roma/ITA), Clemente Rodriguez (Estudiantes), Ariel Garce (Colón)
Midfielders: Jonas Gutierrez (Newcastle/ENG), Maximiliano Rodriguez (Liverpool/ENG), Javier Mascherano (Liverpool/ENG), Juan Sebastian Veron (Estudiantes), Angel Di Maria (Benfica/POR), Javier Pastore (Palermo/ITA), Mario Bolatti (Fiorentina/ITA)
Forwards: Lionel Messi (Barcelona/ESP), Gonzalo Higuain (Real Madrid/ESP), Martin Palermo (Boca Juniors), Sergio Aguero (Atletico Madrid/ESP), Diego Milito (Inter Milan/ITA), Carlos Tevez (Manchester City/ENG)

FIFA World Cup 1974
Copa Mundial de la FIFA 1974
Coupe du Monde de la FIFA 1974

Abahani shift focus

SPORTS REPORTER

Shrugging off the disappointment of not qualifying for the AFC President's Cup finals, unconquered Abahani return to the domestic competition today when the leaders take on Sheikh Russel Kriya Chakra in the crucial match of the Bangladesh League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Two-time champions Abahani, who were eliminated from the AFC President's Cup Qualifiers on goal difference, need only four points from the three remaining matches to clinch a hattrick of professional league titles. The Sky Blues are leading the table with 61 points from 21 matches, a three-point cushion over arch-rivals Mohammedan Sporting Club, who played a match more than Abahani.

But before the match against Sheikh Russel, who are in third position, a place they can't change even if they win their two remaining

matches, Abahani's main concern is injuries their players sustained during the four-day AFC President's Cup Qualifiers.

Defender Mohammad Sujon was ruled out of today's match while another defender Rajani Kanta Barman is recovering from the injury and is expected to play the crucial match.

"Playmaker Pranotosh Kumar has a 50-50 chance in today's match", said Abahani coach Amalesh Sen.

Amalesh, however, was confident to win the match against Sheikh Russel as they have shifted their focus to the league instead of dwelling on the disappointment of their AFC President's Cup failure.

For the record, Sheikh Russel have never beaten Abahani in the professional league though the new powerhouse once held their mighty opponents in their first meeting in the inaugural Bangladesh League. Since then they went down in all four matches they played Abahani.

BOA order members for audit reports

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) has pushed its members hard to submit the audit reports of the different sub-committees, formed during the South Asian Games in Bangladesh earlier this year, immediately after the National Sports Council (NSC) sought a quick submission of the Games' expenditure audit.

The instruction was given at the BOA executive committee yesterday, but there was no instruction of a submission date.

The 11th SA Games ended on February 9 and the BOA are yet to submit the audit report

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PHOTO: INTERNET

England Lions' Steven Davies tucks the ball towards fine leg on way to making 80 from 87 balls on the second day of the four-day match against Bangladesh at Derby yesterday.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

The Chittagong leg of the 4th Electra Divisional Karate Championship will begin at the MA Aziz Stadium Gymnasium from today.

Eighty men and 75 women are taking part in the competition from all parts of Chittagong Division.

Previously, Dhaka district became champions of the Dhaka leg of the meet.

DIVIBASKETBALL

Gregs Club posted an 85-50 win over Wraiths Club in the Premier Bank First Division Basketball League at the Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday.

Shetu top-scored with 27 points while Mizan netted 16 points.

In the day's other matches, Eagles Club beat Gregarious Club by a massive 121-73 margin and The Shawns Club earned a 38-24 win over Old DOHS in a low-scoring affair.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL FROM TODAY

For the first time, an inter-college football tournament called the Clear Men Confidence Cup will take place in two venues from today.

The regional rounds will begin in Rangpur and Khulna while the regional champions will take part in the second round of competition in Dhaka from June 3.

Forty-four teams from seven divisional headquarters will take part in the meet including 16 colleges from Dhaka, eight from Chittagong and four each from Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet, Barisal and Rangpur.

The final, to be telecast live on ATN Bangla, will take place on June 5.

BATTLE OF THE GIANTS

Hridoy struck twice to power North South University (Brazil) to a 3-1 win over East West University (Argentina) in Nescafe's Battle of the Giants at the Gulshan Youth Club ground yesterday.

terday.

Monayem scored the other goal for North South University.

In the other match of the day, American International University Bangladesh (Argentina) defeated East West University (Brazil) by a solitary goal, scored by Nazmul.

The tournament, participated by eight universities with two teams -- Brazil and Argentina -- from each, will conclude on May 26.

SCHOOL KABADDI

Bir Muktiyoddha Hafizur Rahman Oli High School crushed Civil Aviation High School 63-15 in one of five matches of the Standard Chartered School Kabaddi competition at the Kabaddi Stadium yesterday.

The winners won with four lonas under their belt.

Khilgaon Government High School beat Karatitola CMS Memorial High School 87-57, JB Memorial Academy defeated Bir Shrestha Nur Mohammad Rifles School & College 61-54 and Khilgaon Model School & College won against Foyez Ur Rahman Ideal School by a margin of 55-48 points.

The day's first match however was awarded to Agargaon High School after their opponents Armanitola High School failed to turn up for the game.

WOMEN'S SWIMMING

The two-day training programme for women's swimming judges began at the Dhanmondi Women's Complex yesterday.

Bangladesh Women's Sports Association general secretary Mahfuza Akhtar inaugurated the seminar.

A total of 21 trainees from Chandpur, Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Rajbari, Kushtia, Jessore, Chuadanga, Natore, Rajshahi, Barguna and Nilphamari are taking part in the programme.

WI A storm to huge win

SPORTS REPORTER

Sohrawordi Shuvo delayed the inevitable with an enterprising 64 but it was never enough to stop West Indies A run away with a 114-run victory in the first unofficial Test at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The proceedings on the fourth and final day would have been even shorter had it not been for the left-handed all-rounder's unbeaten 64 that took Bangladesh A to 315 all out in their second innings.

Shuvo went hammer and tongs when all was lost, his side on 254 for nine after Lionel Baker removed tail-enders Nazmul Hossain and Syed Rasel early in the piece. The Rajshahi lad laid into the visitors with nine boundaries and two sixes, scoring 64 off 61 balls. He dominated a 61-run last wicket partnership with

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DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh League
Abahani v Sheikh Russel
Time: 4:00pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium