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SOUTH AFRICA 2010
FIFA WORLD CUP

Mandela to grace World Cup

INTERNET, undated

South Africa's ruling party says Nelson Mandela will attend the opening and closing matches of the World Cup. African National Congress spokesman Jackson Mthembu said Thursday that Mandela's office said he will attend both events. A spokesman at Mandela's foundation would not confirm the report, saying the foundation does not disclose Mandela's schedule ahead of time for security reasons.

The 91-year-old former president retired from public life in 2004. But he made a surprise appearance last year at a rally before the national election.

Mandela has strong links to sports in South Africa after he famously appeared at the 1995 rugby World Cup final wearing the green and gold jersey of the Springboks, the country's national rugby team.

Shuktara relegated

SPORTS REPORTER

Newcomers Shuktara Jubo Sangsad of Narayanganj were relegated from the Citycell Bangladesh League after playing out a 1-1 draw against visitors Chittagong Mohammedan in their last match at the Narayanganj Stadium yesterday.

Shuktara had a miserable run in their first-ever appearance in the professional football league as they managed only four victories, eight draws and lost 12 matches in 24 outings to finish ahead of fellow demotees Beanibazar SC with 17 points from 23 matches, who, however, have a match in hand against Muktiyoddha Sangsad on Saturday.

After the barren first-half, Amadi Moses put Shuktara ahead in the 74th minute only to have the lead cancelled out by Lamin Soumah one minute from time to deprive the newcomers from their fifth victory.

Chittagong Mohammedan with 26 points from 24

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THE ROONSTER NEEDS HIS SLEEP: England superstar Wayne Rooney carries a pillow as he boards a South Africa-bound plane at Heathrow Airport on Wednesday. Rumour has it that Rooney likes to sleep on the floor of airplanes because he likes hearing a buzz in the background.

PHOTO: AFP

Jamie eyes win, to change team

Old Trafford Test from today

Cricket

AFP, Manchester

Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons revealed Thursday he was set to change his bowling attack as the Tigers looked to level their Test series with England here at Old Trafford.

Siddons said paceman Shafiqul Islam, left out of the series opening eight-wicket loss at Lord's, would definitely start and that left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak was likely to come in as well.

That would suggest seamers Robiul Islam, who made his debut at Lord's, and Rubel Hossain, who also struggled in the first Test, were set to be dropped for what will be the second and final match of the series, starting here on Friday.

The Old Trafford pitch has a reputation for taking turn and Siddons told reporters here on Thursday: "Shafiqul Islam will come in for one of our fast bowlers, we haven't really worked out which one and I'll have a look at the wicket and see whether it's worthwhile playing another spinner."

Only Shahadat Hossain, with five first innings wickets, distinguished himself amongst the quicks, and Siddons added: "Our bowling was horrendous. We lost the game on the first day and,

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England land in South Africa

AFP, Johannesburg

England arrived in South Africa Thursday morning hoping a favourable first-round draw can be the catalyst for a serious World Cup challenge.

Cool, clear conditions greeted some of the most watched performers in the global televised football arena when they landed at Johannesburg international airport with manager Fabio Capello.

"I hope the World Cup will be a big success for South Africa and also for my team. Thank you. It is good to be here," the Italian told reporters on the airport tarmac.

Live broadcasts of virtually all English Premiership matches mean the stars of Chelsea, Manchester United, Arsenal and Liverpool are more recognisable to many South Africans than domestic equivalents.

A recent survey here revealed England would be the second most popular team after Brazil among local supporters should the national side fail to go all the way in the June 11-July 11 tournament.

Tight security surrounded the grey-suited England stars as they followed Australia, Brazil, Argentina, Denmark, United States, North Korea and Nigeria in reaching the first African country to host the World Cup.

Once immigration formalities had been completed at a temporary arrival facility, England headed by luxury coach for

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The return of Ronaldo

In a tournament characterised by an overwhelming capacity to surprise, with virtually every underdog having their day, it seemed somehow inappropriate that the final of the 2002 World Cup was contested by two teams who between them had graced 12 of the competition's 16 finals.

Brazil, with four titles to their name going into the tournament, prevailed against a decidedly average German side, with three previous wins, by two goals to nil in a match that ended in a fashion the neutrals wanted and the tournament needed.

Ronaldo got both goals -- his seventh and eighth of the tournament -- and earned the striker the competition's Golden Boot at the same time as slaying the ghosts of France 98. There was, at least, one anomaly saved for the competition's denouement -- player-of-the-tournament Oliver Kahn was culpable for Brazil's first, fumbling a speculative shot from Rivaldo to the feet of his gleeful strike partner. This after the indomitable German had conceded just one goal in his country's six previous matches.

Brazil's return to all-conquering form, welcome though their easy-on-the-eye brand of football always is, was largely overshadowed by the achievements of the hosts, both on the field of play and in the slick organisation and good spirit garnered off it. For the first time in World Cup history, the finals went to Asia and, also a first, to not one but two countries. Korea and Japan set aside historical differences to jointly host one of the most successful tournaments ever, even if the standard of football on offer, at times, was not quite up to scratch,

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Dunga plays down pressure

AFP, Johannesburg

Brazil coach Dunga said on Thursday that the pressure on perennial favourites Brazil to deliver a sixth World Cup was normal - but unfair.

Addressing reporters at a news conference at team headquarters in Randburg, north of Johannesburg, Dunga said that "the pressure is normal. We have to play to win - this is the Brazilian mentality. All that has gone before is to be left in the past," said Dunga.

Since taking over the job in 2006 he has won the 2007 Copa America and the 2009 Confederations Cup as well as guided the auriverde to top spot in the qualifiers for South Africa.

Dunga, a winner as a player in 1994, noted

that Brazil always have to deliver given their history and warned he was well aware that the press knives were always on the point of being sharpened in readiness for a slip up.

"Here we will have 300 journalists from Brazil who are hoping we don't win the next event so they can say they were right all along - that he (the coach) got lucky in the Copa America and the Confederations Cup.

"But in reality it's not just with me that this happens but they demand every coach wins."

Dunga said that 108 goals scored under his tutelage and generally miserly defending "shows that there is a balance in the Brazilian team."

Brazil will compete in Group G alongside North Korea, Ivory Coast and Portugal.

After beating Zimbabwe 3-0 in a friendly in Harare on Wednesday Dunga's men will take on Tanzania on Monday in their final tune-up.

Aussies look to Samantha after slaying Serena

AFP, Paris

Samantha Stosur is out to end a 30-year-long drought for Australian women in Grand Slam tennis following her wins over Justine Henin and Serena Williams.

The 26-year-old Gold Coast resident reached the semifinals of the French Open for the second straight year on Wednesday with a thrilling 6-2, 6-7 (2/7), 8-6 win over the top-seeded American.

Next up is Serbian fourth seed Jelena Jankovic, whom she beat in straight sets the last time they played, with the winner of the tie between Elena Dementieva and Francesco Schiavone in prospect for Saturday's final.

A win then would make Stosur the first Australian woman to win a Grand Slam title since Evonne Goolagong won Wimbledon as a mother

in 1980. Stosur knows that she has as good a chance as anyone and taking into account her back-to-back wins over Henin and Williams, she will be the favourite in some books.

"I think I've got as good a chance as anyone," she said. "I'm in the semis now; I played two great matches. Hopefully they're both gonna help me for tomorrow's match."

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World No 1 Serena Williams is inconsolable after losing her quarterfinal against Australia's Samantha Stosur in the French Open at the Roland Garros on Wednesday. The seventh seeded Stosur won the game 6-2, 6-7, 8-6.

PHOTO: AFP



INTER-COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Semifinal line-up drawn

SPORTS REPORTER

The semifinal line-up of the Inter-College Clear Confidence Cup football tournament was completed yesterday when RCCI College, Barisal Govt College, BAF Shahin College and Notre Dame College won their respective quarterfinals at the Army Stadium.

RCCI College and Barisal Govt. College recorded 1-0 wins over New Govt. Degree College and BL College respectively.

However, BAF Shahin College faced little challenge from the opponents as they handed an emphatic 4-1 defeat to Dhaka College in the day's third match while Notre Dame College posted a hard-fought 3-2 win against Madan Mohan College.

Liza's chance to become IM

SPORTS REPORTER

Six Seasons International Chess Tournament got underway yesterday at the National Sports Council tower with ten players from Russia, Mongolia, India and hosts Bangladesh taking part.

The event, sponsored by European Standard School, provides a unique chance for national women's champion WFM Shamima Akter Liza to obtain a women's International Master norm. She will require six points out

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India shocked again

Cricket

AFP, Harare

Zimbabwe pulled off a spectacular double against India in a tri-nations series match at Harare Sports Club here on Thursday, winning with three wickets and a huge 11.4 overs to spare.

India were held down to 194-9, having scored at below four runs per over.

Zimbabwe made 197-3 with ease in reply, due mainly to an opening partnership of 128 between Brendan Taylor and Hamilton Masakadza.

But Zimbabwe's veteran medium-pace

bowler Andy Blynnat also came up with a major contribution, taking just one wicket but giving away only 22 runs in his 10 overs.

Zimbabwe's performance in reaching the winning target in less than 40 overs secured a bonus point that will be crucial in their efforts to reach the final.

Taylor made 74 in his 100th ODI to add to his 81 against India in the opening clash of the series and Masakadza put together a solid 66, having scored 62 against Sri Lanka and 44 in the previous India match.

It was Taylor's 19th 50 in ODIs and Masakadza's 16th. Taylor was named man of the match, giving him a personal double after he picked up the same award for his 81 against

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Zimbabwe left-arm spinner Raymond Price (C) is pumped after removing Yusuf Pathan (not in picture) of India in their tri-nation encounter at the Harare Sports Club ground yesterday. The hosts defeated their much-vaunted opponents for the second game in a row, this time by 7 wickets.

PHOTO: AFP

Stosur-Schiavone finale

AFP, Paris

Samantha Stosur stormed into the French Open final on Thursday, beating Jelena Jankovic 6-1, 6-2, and she will become the first Australian woman in 30 years to capture a Grand Slam title if she wins again on Saturday.

Her opponent in that final will be Italy's Francesca Schiavone, who won a first set tie break 7-3 against Russian fifth seed Elena Dementieva, who then revealed she was suffering from a calf tear, quit in tears after 70 minutes on court.

The pair have played five times with Stosur winning the last four in straight sets.

The Australian's crushing one hour-long win over fourth seed Jankovic put her into her first Grand Slam title at the age of 26, almost four years younger than Evonne Cawley was when she won the last of her seven Grand Slam singles title at Wimbledon in 1980.

For former world number one Jankovic the loss is another heavy blow to her hopes of finally winning a Grand Slam title at what was her 27th attempt.

"I've been playing well and if I can keep this form going I think I have got a good shot," said Stosur, who defeated four times former winner Justine Henin and top seed Serena Williams in the two previous rounds.

Jankovic said she had been caught out by the

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WORLD CUP POLL STARTS TODAY

Who will you support in this year's football World Cup?

Visit the sports page of www.thedailystar.net to cast your vote

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www.twitter.com/dssport

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh League
Rahmatganj v Ctg Abahani
Time: 4:00pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium, Dhaka

What to WATCH

STAR Cricket & SuperSport2

England v Bangladesh
Second Test, Day One
Live from 4:00pm

STAR Sports & SuperSport1

French Open
Men's Singles SFs
Live from 5:00pm

SuperSport3

Friendly Internationals
France v China
Live at 9:30pm

ESPN

Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 11:00pm