

Musician Lee!

His cricket career hampered by injuries, dashing Australian pacer Brett Lee is working on his future as a musician and India would be the first stop for his rockstar ambitions. Lee, who retired from Test cricket due to a string of injury breakdowns, will be in India later this month to perform with his new band called 'White Shoe Theory' with his friend Mick Vawdon. They have been booked for eight shows in India so far, the 'Sydney Morning Herald' reported.



HERO RETURNS HOME: Country's golfing pride Siddiquir Rahman is all smiles on his arrival at the Shahjalal International Airport yesterday. Siddiquir became the first Bangladeshi to have won a major professional Asian tournament when he lifted the Brunei Open on August 1.

Glorious Siddiquir returns

Golf
SPORTS REPORTER

It is a common scenario among the busy people at the Hazrat Shah Jalal International Airport to take a peek at the arrival of country's cricketers and footballers following their achievements on foreign soil, but they probably had no time to watch a smiling sporting hero sporting a black t-shirt, grey trouser and a sponsored cap.

The lack of interest among general people at the airport on Siddiquir Rahman's return was perhaps evidence that golf is still a very unpopular sport in the country. But that hardly diffused the sentiments of Siddiquir who was raucously greeted by the golf federation, sponsors, his family members, amateur golfers, employees of the Kurmitola golf club and a large contingent of media at the airport yesterday.

The 26-year old golfer, who became the first Bangladeshi to win on the Asian tour defeating South African Jbe Kruger in a nerve-wracking play-off at the Brunei Open on August 1, was given a warm reception. The reception was accorded jointly by Bangladesh Golf Federation, Kurmitola Golf Club and sponsors Grameenphone where Siddiquir's father Afzal Hossain, mother Firoza Begum, and younger brothers Rafiqul Islam and Shafiqul Islam were also present.

"If we consider the performance of the country's golfers

in the last five years, golf must be the number one game in our country and I believe that golf has a bright future," said Siddiquir, who has qualified for the European Tour for next two years with victory at Brunei Open.

"Nothing is possible without support, something that I got from the federation and my sponsors which is why I have been able to scale this height. I am really grateful to all those who inspired me. I feel proud for my parents," said Siddiquir, who turned professional in 2007 and has

now won a cup in the professional circuit within one and a half years.

Siddiquir now dreams of winning bigger tournaments under the European Tour within next two years to qualify for the US PGA Tour. The golfer will take part in a tournament in Switzerland later this month and then go to Japan to play in another tournament.

"I did not think that I would win the Brunei Open, but I gave my full effort. After finishing behind the leader on

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Man United give Chelsea the blues

Football
REUTERS, London

Manchester United dominated a stuttering Chelsea to score a deserved 3-1 victory over last season's Premier League and FA Cup Double winners in an entertaining Community Shield match at Wembley on Sunday.

Goals from Antonio Valencia after 41 minutes and Javier Hernandez's first for his new club after 76 gave United control in the third curtain-raiser between the two clubs in the last four seasons. Dimitar Berbatov, on as a late sub, lobbed in United's third in stoppage time.

Salomon Kalou had pulled one back for Chelsea six minutes from time when Edwin van der Sar could only parry a shot from Daniel Sturridge during a late rally by the champions who have now lost five straight pre-season games.

Valencia struck first after a brilliant move saw Paul Scholes find Wayne Rooney with a raking pass. Rooney crossed superbly for Valencia to strike. Valencia then turned provider for Hernandez to score, with the ball going in off his face.

Barca bow to promoters

AFP, Beijing

Spanish champions Barcelona on Sunday finished their pre-season Asia tour with a 3-0 win over Beijing Guoan, Argentine superstar Lionel Messi given a rousing reception during his first-half cameo.

Tens of thousands of fans turned out for the friendly at the Bird's Nest, played on the opening ceremony of the 2008 Olympics -- most of them hoping for a moment of brilliance from Barca's prize forward.

Messi, who led Argentina to Olympic gold in Beijing, did not score, but he had several opportunities including one that hit the post. The crowd roared every time he touched the ball.

Messi's appearance in South Korea had been in doubt, as coach Pep Guardiola said Messi was not match-fit.

But the club made a quick about-face after a meeting with furious promoters, saying he had made "good progress" in training and was ready after all.

Barca however were forced to pay a 200,000-euro (265,000-dollar) penalty as Messi only played 15 minutes in Seoul -- less than the time stipulated in the contract, the club said.

They paid a further 100,000 euros because of the absence of midfielder Xavi, a member of the Spanish World Cup squad.

Super Cup in December

Bangladesh League to follow

Football
SPORTS REPORTER

The domestic football season will start with holding of the Federation Cup from October 7 to October 31. The season opener will feature teams from Bangladesh League and First Division League along with the services teams.

The one crore taka Super Cup will be held from December 1 to 15 comprising of all twelve teams of the Bangladesh League.

In case the Super Cup cannot be held at its regular venue -- the Bangabandhu National Stadium -- due to renovation work ahead of the ICC Cricket World Cup, it will be shifted to the Birshreshtha Sepoy Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.

The Super Cup will be followed by the Bangladesh League, starting on

December 20 which will run up to May 2011.

These decisions among others were taken at a Bangladesh League committee meeting held at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) Bhaban yesterday with its chairman and federation's senior vice-president Abdus Salam Mursheedy in the chair. Later Mursheedy briefed reporters and informed of other decisions taken.

Twelve teams will be participating in the upcoming Bangladesh League. Two teams will be relegated and their places will be taken up by promotees next year when the second tier league starts in September 2011. Ultimately from 2001, there will be two tiers, each consisting 10 teams and the bottom two from Tier One will be relegated to Tier Two while the top two finishers from the second will be promoted.

The transfers market for the upcoming season will be held between September 1 and September 20 for the

local players while it will remain open till October 15 for the foreign players.

Each team will be able to register five players, maximum four of them upfield players and one goalkeeper. And each team will be able to field all the five in any single game. There will be compulsory fitness test for all the foreign players.

Transfers will be held in electronic transfer matching system. A two-day training session will be conducted for the players in this regard on September 1 and 2.

Each team of the Bangladesh League will be provided with a coordinator for better coordination within the club and with the BFF from next season.

Apart from these there were couple of development programmes taken by the BFF which includes setting up international standard football grounds in all the divisional cities.

League committee members Anwarul Haq Helal and Harun-ur-Rashid and BFF general secretary Al Musabbir Sadi were present at the press briefing.

Pak tails holds up Eng

Cricket
AFP, Birmingham

Test debutant Zulqarnain Haider and Mohammad Aamer frustrated England's bid to go 2-0 up in their four-match series against Pakistan with a defiant stand here on Saturday.

Pakistan were 150 for six at tea on the third day of the second Test at Edgbaston, needing a further 29 runs to avoid an innings defeat.

Zulqarnain, who might have been out for a 'king pair' was 36 not out, having batted for over two hours and faced 112 balls.

Teenage quick Aamer, demonstrating defensive application and mental resolve worthy of an old-fashioned top-order batsman, was 14 not out off 103 balls.

The 18-year-old, who should have been run out on one and was dropped on nine, had so far helped wicketkeeper Zulqarnain add 49 for the seventh wicket.

Pakistan were 94 for five in their second innings at lunch.

Umar Amin was 12 not out and Zulqarnain one not out. Off-spinner Graeme Swann, who'd taken three wickets before lunch, added a fourth when Amin was stumped by wicketkeeper Matt Prior to leave Pakistan 101 for six.

Swann bowled 67 balls without conceding a run and at tea had figures of four wickets for 23 runs in 24 overs but a seventh wicket continued to prove elusive for England.

Fast bowler Stuart Broad thought he had Zulqarnain, on 18, caught behind but umpire Marais Erasmus disagreed. England referred the South

African's verdict but the 'hotspot' technology being used as part of the Decision Review System (DRS) agreed with the umpire.

However, the 'Snicko' device -- not being used under DRS

this series as it takes too long to produce a verdict -- eventually suggested Zulqarnain may have got a thin edge.

Broad should have dismissed Aamer when the 18-year-old was yards out of his

ground. But his throw to the bowler's end was way over Swann's head.

Broad was also involved in a petulant incident when he hit Zulqarnain, on 22, with a

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England off-spinner Graeme Swann (R) celebrates with teammates after bowling Pakistan's Umar Akmal on the third day of the second Test at Edgbaston in Birmingham yesterday.



Barcelona's Argentine forward Lionel Messi (R) outfoxes Yang Hao of Beijing during a friendly match at the Bird's Nest Olympic Stadium in Beijing yesterday. An unfit Messi played the game for only 15 minutes.

SPORTS POLL
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Gul to play no more part

Cricket
AFP, Birmingham

Pakistan seamer Umar Gul was ruled out of the remainder of the ongoing second Test against England on Saturday with a torn hamstring, team manager Yawar Saeed said.

First-change Gul sustained the injury while running in to bowl on the second day at Edgbaston and the 26-year-old then went for a scan at a nearby hospital.

Despite his absence, Pakistan bowled England out for 251 with off-spinner Saeed Ajmal taking career-best figures of five for 82 in an innings where six catches were dropped.

At stumps, Pakistan were 19 for one in their second innings, needing a further 160 runs to avoid an innings defeat that would leave them 2-0 down in this four-Test series.

Pakistan captain Salman Butt, speaking to reporters after the close, was unsure about the extent of Gul's injury that left them with just three frontline bowlers in this match.

"I haven't spoken to the doctor as yet. All that I know is that it is a hamstring problem.

"He (Gul) wasn't available today and we still got seven or eight wickets. More than a bowler, if we start holding the chances

Butt hurries back home

PTI, Lahore

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Ijaz Butt returned home on Sunday from England amid speculation of his sacking and cut short a media interaction at the airport after being asked some tough questions.

A tired and angry-looking Butt came out of the airport terminal building to be greeted by a group of journalists and the interaction was not very cordial.

"You people think you know everything about cricket and selection, why do you keep on asking me these stupid questions?" said Butt.

The PCB Chairman reached home amid growing rumors that he has been told to step down from his position by next month by the chief patron of the board President Asif Zardari to pave the way for the government to appoint an ad-hoc committee for running cricket in the country.

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