

Joey Barton could face an English FA probe after the Newcastle midfielder was caught on camera punching Morten Gamst Pedersen during his side's 2-1 defeat against Blackburn at St James' Park. Barton collided with Pedersen in an off the ball incident in the second half on Wednesday and then knocked the Norway international to the turf with a punch to the ribs. Referee Mike Jones didn't see the incident so Barton escaped punishment, but the FA may well investigate and could hand the midfielder a retrospective suspension.



SPORT

DHAKA FRIDAY NOVEMBER 12, 2010, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net



Countdown botched up

SPORTS REPORTER



The few thousand fans that turned up at midnight on Wednesday at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban to mark the 100-day countdown for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2011 was evidence of the increased enthusiasm amongst the public about hosting an event of such magnitude.

But the passion of the locals threatened to fall flat, as there were a number of red flags that were raised about the management of the small but ultimately crucial event. The careless organising raised questions about the competence of the authorities concerned and many were apprehensive that a bigger test might expose even greater weaknesses come February 17 when Bangladesh stages the opening ceremony of the 10th World Cup.

The biggest question on Wednesday night was with the countdown clock itself. It malfunctioned on a number of occasions and did not display the timing clearly. This put off a number of the watching fans and although the fireworks were ultimately released on time, the event registered unpleasantly among the locals.

Also worrying was the lack of seating arrangements for dignitaries and special invitees.

Ex-national captain Habibul Bashar was spotted standing behind the seating area with the journalists while numerous friends and family of influential people occupied the few available seats. The lack of proper coordination with the seating also upset a number of current national players who attended at the event.

There were also concerns raised about the security, which has emerged as a

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GETTING OFF ON THE WRONG FOOT! (Clockwise, from top L) Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (shaking hands with Sourav Ganguly) should have been sensible about his clothes while the too-much-of-presence by Dewan Shafiqul Arefin (R) on the stage was no less eye-pleasing either. The dais to hold the countdown clock at the SAARC Fountain on the Sonargaon Hotel roundabout shows the Cricket World Cup will end on March 2 and not on April 2. The clock that started the official countdown at the South Plaza of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban Wednesday night, was out of order the morning next. And this very digital clock gave wrong digits even during the function itself.

PHOTOS: STAR

Zimbabwe arrive on Nov 26

SPORTS REPORTER

Zimbabwe will arrive in Dhaka on November 26 to play a five-match one-day series against the Tigers.

They play the first three one-dayers at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur with the third game being the only day-night affair of the series.

The fourth and fifth one-dayers, on December 10 and 12, will take place at the Jahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong.

FIXTURE

Dec 1: First ODI at Mirpur
Dec 3: Second ODI at Mirpur
Dec 6: Third ODI (D/N) at Mirpur
Dec 10: Fourth ODI at Chittagong
Dec 12: Fifth ODI at Chittagong

Nobin fires Daily Star to final

SPORTS REPORTER

A swashbuckling all-round performance from Nazmul Alam Nobin steered The Daily Star to the final of the DRU-Pepsi Media Cup cricket tournament with a convincing three-wicket win over defending champions Channel i at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The Daily Star will play the final today against Daily Destiny, who thrashed Daily

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10 yrs in Test cricket to be celebrated

SPORTS REPORTER

To mark the occasion of Bangladesh's ten years in Test cricket, a programme will be held at the Dhanmondi Road 4 Ground today.

All former national cricketers have been requested to join the party at 7pm wearing national blazer.

Bangladesh played their inaugural Test match against India at the Bangabandhu National Stadium from November 10, 2000.

Booters' Asian Games over

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh's hopes of playing in the second round of the Asian Games football event ended in a misery when the U-23 side suffered their third consecutive defeat in a 4-1 loss to Hong Kong in their Group E final match at the Haudu Stadium in Guangzhou yesterday.

With two wins and one draw, Hong Kong moved into the 16-team second round for the first time in 52 years though they finished behind group champions United Arab Emirates, both having seven points each, who thrashed former champions Uzbekistan 3-0 in the day's other match. Uzbekistan finished third having three points from as many matches while Bangladesh returned empty handed having conceded 10 goals in three matches.

After suffering identical 3-0 defeats against Uzbekistan and UAE, Bangladesh were dreaming of upsetting Hong Kong to restore some pride. But that dream was far from reality as Bangladesh went down in the very second minute with Au Yeung Yin Chung putting Hong Kong ahead availing the defence laps.

Bangladesh, who did not score in previous two games, brought some excitement back in the game after 24 minutes when star striker Enamul Haq levelled the margin. The Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club striker did not make mistake to drive home when a clearance off a Mamunul Islam freekick came his

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ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP HISTORY

Some big names bowed out of the international limelight after this World Cup. Dennis Amiss, Alan Knott, Tony Greig and John Snow left the scene to make their way to play in the World Series in Australia. Great West Indian player Rohan Kanhai also bade farewell. On the other hand, three all-time greats were taking their early steps in international cricket: Imran Khan and Javed Miandad of Pakistan, and New Zealand's finest cricketer, Richard Hadlee.

Glen Turner of New Zealand was the highest runscore of the World Cup, piling on 333 runs in four matches, 171 of them coming in one innings against East Africa. He scored another unbeaten hundred against India. In total there were six hundreds in the tournament, the others scored by Dennis Amiss and Keith Fletcher of England, Alan Turner of Australia and Clive Lloyd of West Indies.

Perhaps the innings of the tournament, for its importance to the outcome of the tournament and daring strokeplay, belonged to Clive Lloyd. The bespectacled giant of the West Indian team smote 102 off only 85 deliveries against Australia in the finals, propelling his team to a mammoth 291 for 8. He came in at a dodgy 50 for 3, and left 149 runs later, having scored 102 of those runs and striking twelve

fours and two sixes in the process.

Although he played in only two matches, Australian swing bowler Gary Gilmour came away with the highest wickets in the tournament. Gilmour was included in the side for the semi-final against England, the only team other than West Indies to have progressed to the knockout stage undefeated, and duly dispatched them for 93 with bowling figures of 6 for 14. In the final against the mighty West Indians, Gilmour repeated his heroics in taking 5 for 48, but ended on the losing side with the West Indians showing more fight than the English.

Bernard Julien of the West Indies was second behind Gilmour in the wickets column, and bagged two four-wicket hauls.

Although Viv Richards displayed precious little of his monumental talent with the bat, his dynamism in the field went a long way in deciding the final in West Indies' favour. Richards, a brilliant outfielder, had a hand in three of the five runouts in Australia's innings.

The wicketkeepers of the two finalists, both stalwarts, led the table for dismissals in the tournament. Rod Marsh of Australia was the leader with 10 dismissals (9 catches, 1 stumping) and Deryck Murray trailed one behind with 9 catches.

Odd man Arafat leads Barisal

Cricket

MOHAMMAD ISAM

Arafat Salahuddin was slightly amused to be the focus of attention on the eve of Barisal's crucial match against Dhaka today. The defending NCL (National Cricket League) one-day champions, although clear at the top with 10 points, still need a win to confirm a place in the final.

The two-point advantage over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Khulna came through five wins from seven games but Barisal's rationale to play the last game of the second phase with a must-win attitude is their poor net run-rate (-0.02).

"We have to win tomorrow [Friday]. We are ahead in points but our net run-rate is lower than two other teams," said Arafat after returning from a practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, the venue of the Dhaka-Barisal tie.

The all-rounder, though, should be given a lot of credit for the sterling performance of a perennially under-performing division. Out of his six innings, Arafat has been undefeated on three occasions scoring 176 runs at an average of 58.66 with a strike-rate of 79.63. He bats at number seven mostly (once at four) and in the first phase game against Rajshahi, won Barisal the game with a last-ball four.

In the earlier game against Dhaka, Arafat was poised to do the same while in the last game against Khulna on Wednesday, he

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The Tide of aspiration

QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM, back from China



Exactly a month after Chinese president Hu Jintao handed the Asian Games torch to the first of over two thousand bearers at the stunning Temple of Heaven in Beijing, the Asiad cauldron will finally be lit at the opening ceremony in the southeastern industrial city of Guangzhou on the banks of the Pearl River later today.

The lighting of the torch will signal the start of the second largest sporting event in the world after the Olympics and authorities and fans in China will have more than a little smile on their lips at having hosted both events within just two years of each other.

But for the small town of Zhongshang and seven friends of Vatti, their more interesting line of work lies in the torches that they have produced for various sporting events across the world.

Already Vatti are a household name in torch making. They have produced



'The Tide' (2nd from L), the torch for the 16th Asian Games is on display at the offices of the Vatti company in Zhongshang recently. Also in display is the torch for the Beijing Olympics of 2008 (C).

PHOTO: AL-HAADI ABU BAKAR

\$100,000. Eighteen years on, they are China's number one kitchen appliance supplier with a core staff of more than 1600 and up to 2500 stores across the mainland.

But for Huang Qijun, president of Vatti, their more interesting line of work lies in the torches that they have produced for various sporting events across the world.

Already Vatti are a household name in torch making. They have produced

torches for the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008, the East Asian Games in Hong Kong in 2009, the first-ever Asian Youth Olympic Games in Singapore this year, as well as all of the last three editions of the Chinese National Games.

"I have developed an affection for the torch business since 2001 when we supplied the torches for the 9th National Games in Guangzhou," he said. "Torch making has become a shining name card of Vatti."

And using their extensive experience in producing torches the company has made improvements to its design for the Guangzhou torches.

"The torch is named 'The Tide'. The chances of it getting extinguished during the relay are virtually zero and it is more environmentally friendly than any torch made before," said Huang Qijun.

But manufacturing is only a part of the package. The company also provides technical assistance for the torch relay and even trains staff in the best ways to carry the torch.

The Tide is 78 centimetres in length and is proverbially as 'light as a feather' weighing in at a mere 98 grams. The design is tall, straight and dynamic. The upper part of the first torch is adorned with delicately carved ivory in the shape of swirling water, symbolising the inclusive spirit of the local Lingnan culture. The second mimics rising, flowing flames, while the distinctive reddish colour of the handle reflects the bombax cotton flower, the emblem of Guangzhou, embodying the power and passion of life.

But even as the Guangzhou torch enters its last lap, Vatti is already looking ahead having bid for the right to make torches for the 2012 Olympics in London.

But even that is not the centrepiece of Huang's pride. That honour is reserved

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Asiad opens today

AFP, Guangzhou



Thousands of athletes began settling in for the Asian Games Thursday, but for one man it has been a nightmare start after a humbling apology to China for calling fans "a bunch of dogs".

The Olympic Council of Asia officially confirmed the 16th Asiad as the biggest ever with 9,704 athletes and nearly 5,000 team officials in the booming southern Chinese city.

Among them are dozens of Olympic and world champions with Chinese superstars Liu Xiang (110m hurdles) and Lin Dan (badminton) and Japanese swimmer Kosuke Kitajima among the biggest names.

With athletes from 45 countries and regions competing for 476 gold medals, tensions are starting to build ahead of the opening ceremony on Friday and the official start of competition Saturday, when 28 titles will be decided.

"In all Games, Asian Games or other multi-sport events, always before the opening ceremony things get tense, excited, worried," said Olympic Council of Asia director general Husain Al-Musallam.

"But after that we will see smooth sailing for all participants." In a change to standard procedure, the opening ceremony will be held on an island in the Pearl River rather than a stadium.

Organisers are promising the largest lighting show ever seen at a major sports event, based around a theme prominently featuring the local Lingnan culture.

Film starlet Zhang Ziyi and world-renowned pianist Lang Lang will perform together in a highlight, while athletes will arrive by a convoy of pleasure boats.

China has poured billions of dollars into infrastructure projects ahead of the Games, including a new railway station, a gleaming trade centre, subway lines, housing projects, highways and bridges.

But many of the 30 million migrant workers in the city are

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