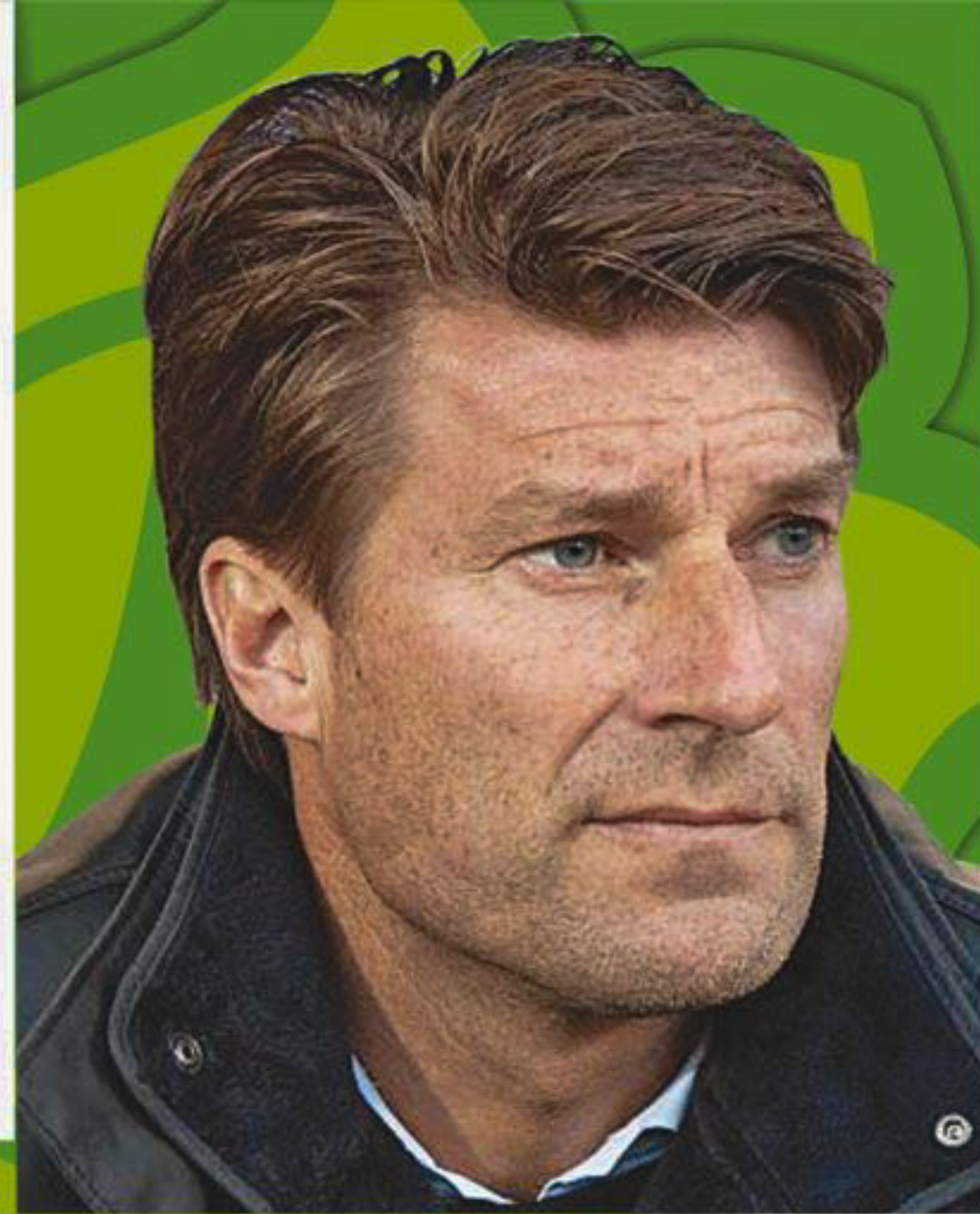


Swansea hire Danish legend

Denmark legend Michael Laudrup was on Friday named as Swansea's new manager, the Premier League club announced. The 48-year-old former Barcelona and Real Madrid midfielder replaces Brendan Rodgers, who left the club to take over at Liverpool at the start of the month. A club statement confirmed: "Swansea City are pleased to confirm the appointment of Michael Laudrup as the club's new manager. "Contracts were completed at noon today on a two-year deal." Laudrup won five Spanish league titles in the early 1990s, four of them with



Mohammedan striker Augustin Chizoba holds off a Feni defender during their Bangladesh Premier League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

MSC breeze past Feni

SPORTS REPORTER



Mohammedan lifted themselves to fifth position in the Grameenphone Bangladesh League points table with a convincing 3-1 win over Soccer Club, Feni at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The win took the Black and Whites to 25 points from 17 matches and ahead of Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club on goal difference, while confining the visitors to the threat of relegation. The Feni club, who defeated Mohammedan 2-1 in their first meeting, are in tenth position with 16 points.

The first half was a cagey affair as neither side managed to penetrate the other's backline but for one instance late in the half when Mohammedan's Nigerian forward Chigozie produced a brilliant fingertip save from Feni goalkeeper Piaruzzaman Piru to go into the breather 0-0.

The second half was a completely different affair as both sides came out of their shells, with Mohammedan making more inroads than their Feni counterparts.

The Black and Whites deservedly took the lead in the fourth minute of the second half when midfielder Habibur Rahman Sohag floated in a delectable freekick from five yards out of the penalty box that missed the outstretched hands of Piru to find the back of the net.

The second goal came two minutes later when veteran defender Rajani Kanta Barman came out with a touch of brilliance. Augustine Chizoba's initial shot was fisted away by Piru, the rebound was headed by Chizoba to the path of Rajani who swerved the ball with his left foot as he lost control, the

SEE PAGE 17 COL 5

Tigers lose both practice T20s



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh lost both their practice Twenty20s to a Zimbabwe Select XI yesterday at the Country Club ground in Harare. It wasn't the most pleasant way to begin another tour of the African nation though the unofficial standing of the tour means that it will be part of the Tigers' learning curve in the format.

After a middle-order collapse in the first game, the visitors made 126-7 which was chased down by the Africans in 19.3 overs. After the three-wicket loss in the first game, Bangladesh found the second snatched away by Hamilton Masakadza's 58-ball century. The visitors, making 156-7 in 20 overs chasing 176 to win, lost by 19 runs as they head into the tri-nation Twenty20 competition which begins tomorrow.

The Tigers had lost the tour opening three-day at the same venue last year too, but the team management led by new coach Richard Pybus would take heart from Abul Hasan's work with the new ball and also Jahurul Islam's enforcing role.

FIRST GAME

Choosing to bat first, Bangladesh made a fine start through openers Tamim Iqbal and Mohammad Ashraful, who has been recalled into the national setup after a six-month hiatus, moving to 50 runs in 6.1 overs. But the left-hander fell for 29 off 30 balls, to end a 64-run stand.

When Ashraful fell for 32 to make it 71 for two, a big score was still in the offing but the Tigers suffered a sudden collapse in the face of leg-spinner Graeme Cremer and part-timer Malcolm Waller. Losing Nasir Hossain (5), skipper Mushfiqur Rahim (3), another comeback man Junaed Siddiqui (12), newcomer Ziaur Rahman (0) and Abdur Razzak (2), the Tigers were reduced to 91 for seven in the 16th over.

Mahmudullah Riyad, the vice-captain, and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza added 35 for the eighth wicket in the last four overs to add a bit of meat to the 20-over total.

Cremer took 4-14 from four overs while Waller finished with three for 14. The hosts started their chase poorly, losing openers Vusi Sibanda (14) and Hamilton Masakadza (12) by the end of

the Powerplay before Riyad removed Ervine (caught & bowled for six) and skipper Brendan Taylor (nine) to reduce the Zimbabwe Select XI to 56 for five in the eleventh over. Regis Chakabva was snared by Elias Sunny, but the following partnership, 58 runs for the seventh wicket between Elton Chigumbura and Cremer, was enough for the hosts to win the first game of the tour.

Hasan, Sunny and Riyad took two wickets each.

SECOND GAME

Masakadza began like he did in the first game, depending on boundaries, but this time he continued the battering as he moved to 50 off 35 balls with four boundaries and two sixes. Sibanda played a supporter's role, stroking 26 off 20 balls before Ziaur Rahman ran him out. But the other opener continued in his merry way, scoring the next 50 off just 23 balls hammering six fours and five sixes in all.

Nazmul Hossain took two expensive wickets from his four overs while Hasan and Abdur Razzak picked up one each.

The chase began on a poor note, losing the top three -- Anamul Haque,

SEE PAGE 17 COL 7

France storm ahead



FRANCE 2: 0 UKRAINE  
MENEZ 53, CABAYE 56



REUTERS, Donetsk

Sparkling attacking football and goals from Jeremy Menez and Yohan Cabaye earned France a 2-0 win over Ukraine in their Euro 2012 Group D match on Friday after the game was halted for 55 minutes due to a thunderstorm.

Dutch referee Bjorn Kuipers took the players off the field in the fifth minute after thunder, lightning and torrential rain descended on the stadium and it was almost an hour before play resumed, with the surface having dried out remarkably quickly.

The win takes France to four points, one ahead of the co-hosts who failed to find the form that brought a 2-1 win over Sweden. England, who drew 1-1 with France in their opener, have one point ahead of their game with the Swedes later on Friday.

Despite the weather disruption, the match at the Donbass Arena started at a high-tempo as both teams attacked from the outset, with Ukraine urged on by a raucous, albeit drenched, home crowd.

Menez, brought into the France team for

Florent Malouda, had an effort ruled out for a clear offside and then the pacy winger brought a brilliant save from Andriy Pyatov with a close-range strike from a low Franck Ribery cross.

At the other end, Ukraine striker Andriy Shevchenko, who scored twice in their opening win in Kiev, brought Hugo Lloris into action when he raced on to a long ball and fired at the near post but the keeper got down well to save.

Pyatov made another brilliant save in the 39th minute to tip over a powerful header from Philippe Mexes, who met a Samir Nasri freekick.

It was a pulsating first half and the high tempo resumed after the break with Menez again testing Pyatov at his near post in the 49th minute while seconds later Shevchenko cut in from the left and fired just wide of the top corner.

Menez was a constant threat and it was no surprise when he put France ahead in the 53rd minute, finishing off a brilliant counter-attack. Ribery burst down the left and Karim

SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

Superb Siddikur surges

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman surged to the third spot with a scintillating 3-under-par (68) in the second round of the Queen's Cup in Bangkok, Thailand yesterday. The 27-year old golfer, who was in joint ninth position on one-under par after the first round, staged a superb comeback as he carded four birdies and just one bogey at the Santiburi Samui Country Club yesterday to take his aggregate score to four-under-par (138).

With his straight hitting game, Siddikur stayed in the hunt for a second Asian Tour victory two years after his first. "It was good. Less bogeys, which is why I'm so happy. One bogey and four birdies. Overall it was okay especially my putting was good. The winds were strong

SEE PAGE 17 COL 4

AFC U-22 QUALIFIERS  
Bangladesh take on Nepal today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are expected to face a stiff challenge when they open their AFC U-22 Championship Group D qualifying campaign with the game against hosts Nepal at the Dasharath Stadium, Kathmandu today. Bangladesh coach Syed Golam Jilani and skipper Shahedul Alam Shahed expressed confidence of putting a good show in the official press meet held at the Grand Hotel yesterday.

"All the players are fit and ready, they are focused to win the match with their best performance, all of

SEE PAGE 17 COL 4

Spain KO Ireland



SPAIN 4: 0 IRELAND  
TORRES 4, 70, SILVA 49, FABREGAS 83



AFP, Gdansk

Defending champions Spain are on course for the Euro 2012 quarterfinals after their 4-0 thrashing of Ireland on Thursday put them top of Group C with the Irish bowing out.

For all their endeavour in defence, Ireland struggled constantly to cope with the torrent of Spanish attacks as Chelsea's Fernando Torres proved he is back to his best with two clinically-taken goals.

Having decided the Euro 2008 final with the winning goal against Germany, Torres netted either side of Manchester City's David Silva second-half strike before his replacement Cesc Fabregas added the fourth seven minutes from time.

With 66 per cent ball possession, 26 shots on goal, 20 of which were on target, Ireland goalkeeper Shay Given had a busy night as Spain dominated while Ireland managed just six shots on goal in total.

The win puts Spain top of the group on goal difference and level on four points with second-placed Croatia, who Vicente del Bosque's world champions face here at Arena Gdansk again on Monday.

Having suffered their second defeat after losing 3-1 to Croatia on Sunday, Giovanni Trapattoni's Ireland will exit

after the group stages.

Italy, who drew 1-1 with Croatia earlier, have two points in third and can still progress if they beat Ireland in Poznan, Poland, the same day, but the Azzurri are reliant on either Spain or Croatia winning in Gdansk.

Spain had complained to UEFA about the dry condition of the Gdansk pitch during Sunday's 1-1 draw with Italy as Fabregas labelled it "a disaster", but heavy rain during Thursday's match made the issue null and void.

Having used a 4-3-3 formation against Italy without a recognised striker, Spain coach Vicente del Bosque elected to start Torres at the expense of Barcelona's Fabregas.

The Chelsea star rewarded the faith with the opening goal after just four minutes.

With Spain on the attack, Ireland defender Richard Dunne tackled Silva on the edge of the area, but Torres pounced on the loose ball and drilled his shot past Given from a tight angle.

Buoyed by the legions of green-clad fans, who clearly outnumbered the Spanish fans at Arena Gdansk and sang until the end, Ireland battled forward, but any rare first-half forages into the Spain half were quickly snuffed out.

A heavy tackle on Andres Iniesta earned

SEE PAGE 17 COL 2



Spain striker Fernando Torres celebrates one of his two goals against Republic of Ireland during their Euro 2012 Group C match at the Gdansk Arena on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

**EURO 2012**  
TODAY'S MATCHES

Wroclaw, Group A:  
Czech Republic v Poland  
(12:45am, June 17)

Warsaw, Group A:  
Greece v Russia  
(12:45am, June 17)