

Platini predicts repeat final

UEFA president Michel Platini on Monday predicted that the finale of Euro 2012 will be a re-run of the last European championship showdown four years ago between Spain and Germany.

Asked for his predictions of which teams would make it to Kiev on July 1, Platini told reporters simply: "Spain, Germany."

Spain won the last encounter 1-0 in Vienna through a Fernando Torres goal and Germany are out for revenge this time round - and for their 2010 World Cup semi-final



England's star striker Wayne Rooney (R) celebrates with his teammate John Terry after scoring the match-winner against co-hosts Ukraine during their Euro 2012 Group D match at the Donbass Arena in Donetsk last night.

PHOTO: AFP

England, France in last eight

AFP, Donetsk

Wayne Rooney on Tuesday marked his come-back from suspension with a goal as England beat Ukraine 1-0 to win Group D and France ended their six-year wait for a knock-out spot despite losing 2-0 to Sweden.

The Manchester United player, ineligible for England's first two Euro 2012 matches after a red card picked up in the qualifiers, had the easiest of headers at the back post after goalkeeper Andrei Pyatov spilled a Steven Gerrard cross.

Rooney's goal in the 48th minute in Donetsk, Ukraine, had been the highlight of a lacklustre match which England only needed to draw to qualify.

But it livened up when Marko Devic forced a save from Joe Hart in the 62nd minute that was cleared off the line by John Terry. Television replays suggested the ball had crossed for a goal but Hungarian referee Viktor Kassai waved play on.

Football's world governing body FIFA is currently trialling two prototypes of goal-line technology after a number of high-profile incidents when goals have been disallowed.

The president of European football's govern-

ing body UEFA, Michel Platini, said this week that having five officials, as in the current tournament, would prevent such an issue - but Tuesday's incident appeared to undermine that theory.

France needed just a draw against already-eliminated Sweden in Donetsk to advance from the group stages of a major competition for the first time since 2006 and exorcise the ghosts of a disastrous 2010 World Cup, when players went on strike.

But Sweden were in no mood to help Les Bleus, as they sought to salvage some pride after a 2-0 defeat to Ukraine and 3-2 loss to England.

Swedish striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic opened the

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Tigers lessen the blow

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh trod an expected path when they lost to South Africa by 39 runs in the Twenty20 triangular series at the Harare Sports Club yesterday. But a handful of the batsmen made sure the afternoon wasn't wasted by staring at defeat.

Facing inevitable defeat after Hashim Amla helped his side and himself to 209-3 in 20 overs, the Tigers lessened the margin of defeat by reaching Twenty20 modesty with the bat, ending up on 170-8.

While the ten-plus run-rate reflected the bowlers' nightmare, skipper Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmudullah Riyad and Mohammad Ashraful batted like they meant business.

The 23-year-old skipper remained unbeaten on exactly fifty runs, smashing five boundaries and a flat-bat six over mid-wicket during his 32-ball knock. He shared a 61-run fifth wicket stand with deputy Riyad, who made 34 off 23 balls with the help of two boundaries and two sixes. The pair took the score past the 100-mark in the 14th over bowled by Albie Morkel, which generated 17 runs (Riyad hammering a six over mid-wicket and a boundary), the most productive of the Bangladesh innings.

Ashraful too batted freely with a striking shot or two; they often prop up in his short performances, this one ending for 33 runs off 31 balls with the help of four boundaries.

The later part of the afternoon's cricket belonged to the Bangladesh captain who took full toll of a dropped chance at square-leg by the hapless Wayne Parnell, the left-arm speedster who conceded a whopping 61 from four overs.

But the day belonged to Mushfiqur's opposite number, who smote three sixes and nine boundaries in his 53-ball 88; two of those maximums were beautifully timed by one of the leading batsmen in world cricket.

Amla didn't go after the bowling when the innings started, which was Richard Levi's prerogative. The meaty

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NATIONAL SHOOTING Sabrina, Shahadat win gold

SPORTS REPORTER

Shahadat Ahmed and Sabrina Sultana clinched gold in the 50m Rifles 3 position and 25m Standard Pistol respectively in the IFIC Bank 26th National Shooting Championship at the National Shooting Complex in Gulshan yesterday.

Shahadat of Bangladesh Army Shooting Club scored 538 out of 600 to put his teammate Nadimul Islam (516) to retain the crown of the 25m standard pistol gold.

Ripon Kumar of Dhaka Rifles Club won the bronze medal with a score of 508.

"It is always pleasing to win gold medal," said Shahadat on his immediate reaction.

The 31-year old from Natore, whose pet event is the 10m Air Pistol, chose the 25m standard pistol event last year after coming back to the country following four years of service at an overseas UN Mission and immediately won gold with only two-and-a-half months of practice. However, this time he had one year's practice before coming into the championship.

"I had scored 560 in practice but there was no reflection in the main competition.

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Mohammedan striker Mohammad Rony (C) shapes up to shoot during their Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League match against Rahmatganj MFS at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Rahmatganj relegated

SPORTS REPORTER

Rahmatganj Muslim Friends Society have been relegated from top flight football after 10 years when the Old Dhaka Outfit suffered a 3-0 defeat at the hands of Mohammedan SC in the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Rahmatganj MFS, who were last season guilty of playing a 'compromised match' with holders Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and subsequently handed monetary punishment, are at the bottom of the 11-team points table with nine points from 18 matches and on a streak of 11 straight defeats. They still have two matches in hand but it is not sufficient to overtake 10th-placed Arambagh KS who have 16 points from 18 matches.

The Old Dhaka Outfit, who were also alleged to have played a fixed match with Brothers Union in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League, entered the professional football league from its inception in 2007 after emerging champions in the Senior Division Football League, which they were forced to play after being relegated from the Premier Division Football League in the 2002-2003 season.

The latest relegation was their fourth such demotion, having been demoted to the

Senior Division from the Premier Division twice since the Premier Division League was introduced in 1993.

Rahmatganj had entered the top flight of the First Division Football League in 1968 and have never been relegated from the then First Division League, according to club officials.

"Luck did not favour us this season though we played well in the league," said Rahmatganj manager Hafez Haji Harun after the game.

Before being terminated with four matches left in the season, Rahmatganj coach Mahmudul Hasan Liton had often alleged that he could not get all players together to practise and could not arrive at a solution despite informing the club officials. Harun however ruled out Liton's claim saying that everything was in the right place and that the coach could handle things properly.

"We will now try to bring our club back to the Bangladesh Premier League after playing the second-tier league (Bangladesh Championship League)," said Harun.

On the other hand Mohammedan, with seven victories in 18 matches, climbed to fourth position from fifth with 28 points from 18 matches. Nigerian striker Nduka Uwa helped the Black and Whites post an easy win with a brace in the second half after Mohammad Rony put Mohammedan ahead in the third minute.

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SLOW OVER-RATE Misbah can't play 1st Test

CRICINFO, Colombo

Pakistan cricket captain Misbahul Haq has been suspended by the International Cricket Council from the first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle because his team was found guilty of a "serious over-rate offence" during the fifth ODI in Colombo on Monday.

Pakistan were found to be three overs short of their target even after time allowances were taken into consideration. Following the defeat that cost them the series 3-1, Misbah pleaded guilty to the charge laid by the umpires and the penalties were accepted without the need for a formal hearing.

"As this was Pakistan's first serious over-rate offence in the past 12 months, Chris Broad of the Elite Panel of ICC Match Referees handed Misbah two suspension points while each of his

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