

Star SPORT

DHAKA THURSDAY AUGUST 2, 2012, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

FA charges Ferdinand

Manchester United's Rio Ferdinand has been charged by the Football Association in relation to comments made on Twitter in the wake of the recent John Terry racism trial.

Following the trial, in which Chelsea and England defender Terry was acquitted of racially abusing Ferdinand's younger brother Anton, Rio responded to a Tweet that described Chelsea defender and defence witness Ashley Cole as a "choc-ice". The term is commonly understood to mean "black on the outside, white on the inside".

"The FA has today charged Manchester United's Rio Ferdinand with improper conduct in relation to comments posted on



Maria enchants

QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM from London

The dazzling streak of blonde hair, the piercing scream with every shot of the ball and the full house on Centre Court -- Maria Sharapova certainly makes her presence felt.

The Russian tennis player is a true superstar and you get that feeling almost as soon as she steps onto the centre court at Wimbledon during her second round match against Laura Robson of Great Britain at the Olympics on Tuesday.

The crowd here loves Sharapova. The crowds everywhere do. She is a big draw, as much for her ability as for her looks. Sharapova's arrival on court is greeted with applause -- loud cheers ring out from every corner of Centre Court. In a period of hush, wolf-whistles ring out, followed by titters of laughter.

"The crowds [here] are different," said Sharapova later. "They are more wilder," she said with a grin. "There are a lot more flags as well."

Most of those on Tuesday were British ones as Sharapova was turning out against the great British hope in the women's draw, Laura Robson.

The support was primarily for her opponent and chorus cheers of "Laura, Laura" rang out frequently. Outside people sported Britain flags as they chewed on Yorkshire hogs and strawberries and creams. There was a crying baby too, a strictly forbidden transgression during actual Wimbledon games.

"I could hear a few people shouting my name in Russian, but obviously less since I was playing Robson," said Sharapova.



In the mixed zones later, Sharapova was the only athlete who did not speak to the press. She flashed a winning smile and walked past. The journalists were informed that there would be a press conference -- in 40 minutes. Novak Djokovic and Andy Murray had spoken immediately after their matches. This would be a departure from tradition. No one really complained though.

At the press conference Sharapova was on time, and girlishly charming. She was full of praise for Robson, who gave her a good run for her money.

"You certainly see the little improvements she's made. I'm sure she has a bright future ahead of her."

Sharapova speaks with a marked American accent, a product of moving at an early age to Florida to take part in the Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy, which churned out players like Andre Agassi and Monica Seles.

You can also tell that she is just 25; she often uses choice colloquialisms.

"I am like, wow! This is different," she said while explaining how the Olympics in Wimbledon feel different from the actual

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Starry-eyed Shagor set for swim

SPORTS REPORTER from London

Bangladeshi swimmer Mahfizur Rahman Shagor will be participating in the Men's 50 metres freestyle event in swimming today. Mahfizur will take part in the fourth heat of the morning, which gets underway at 10 am London time.

Shagor's personal best time of 24.82 is the poorest among the eight competitors in his heat group and he will be lucky to finish anything other than last.

The swimmer was under no illusions though and admitted that the transition from swimming in Bangladesh to doing so in London had been extremely difficult.

"The water here is very cold and I have great difficulty adjusting to it," admitted Shagor. The weather in London has not helped the swimmer's preparations either.

"The first day when we came to the Village, it was so windy. I immediately caught a cold and have had to train through it," he said.

Shagor was having better luck in the Village though and had already met a number of legendary athletes.



Australia's Rachel Bugg and Loudy Wiggins compete in the women's synchronised 10m platform diving final at the Aquatics Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Shakib's SLPL in doubt

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan may not be allowed to play in the Sri Lankan Premier League Twenty20 tournament (SLPL) due to a knee injury.

Shakib was among five Bangladeshi cricketers who were selected by Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) to feature in the Twenty20 tournament scheduled to be held from August 10 to 31.

It was learnt that during yesterday's meeting of the cricket operations committee most of the members expressed negative opinions about Shakib's participation in the Sri Lankan competition as they believe it may aggravate the injury.

When asked about the matter, BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus said: "We recommended giving the green signal for the selected players but yes, we have reservations about Shakib's participation. What we learnt is that he has some problem with his knee and in that case we can't take any risk with our best player when we have the T20 World Cup and home series against West Indies in September and November. The board will take the final decision after talking with

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U-19s start with loss

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19s suffered a 31-run defeat to their West Indies counterparts in their first unofficial practice match at Brisbane in Australia yesterday.

Opener Liton Kumar Das played a patient knock of 63 off 104 balls that saw two fours and a six, after which number six batsman Al-Amin took charge during his 24-ball 44 that contained three fours and as many sixes. Their effort was however not enough to overtake the West Indies Under-19s' total of 249-7.

Bangladesh were ultimately bundled out for 218 runs in 48.1 overs. Asif Ahmed (35) and Mosaddek Hossain Saikat (31) were the other notable scorers.

Kyle Mayers claimed three wickets for 49 runs.

Earlier, West Indies opener Kraigg Brathwaite might have missed a hundred by just one run but his innings and the 84-run opening partnership with Sunil Ambris guided West Indies Under-19s to a fighting total.

The right-handed Brathwaite, who made his Test debut against Pakistan in May

MEDALLIST

COUNTRY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE
China	15	8	4
USA	10	8	8
France	5	3	4
S Korea	5	2	3
N Korea	4	0	1
Germany	3	7	2
Italy	3	4	2
Kazakhstan	3	0	0
Russia	2	3	5
Great Britain	2	2	4
Ukraine	2	0	3
South Africa	2	0	0
Japan	1	4	9
Australia	1	4	2
Romania	1	3	2
Brazil	1	1	1
Hungary	1	1	1
Netherlands	1	1	1
Georgia	1	0	0

(The medal list was updated at 10:00pm Bangladesh time)

Djoker in full flow

SPORTS REPORTER from London



Novak Djokovic's eyes go wide. He raises his hands upwards, his eyebrows raised. "What, you guys are leaving already?" he says to the room full of journalists that were heading to the door.

For a second, everyone is quiet -- the journalists unsure of what to do, and the Serbian savouring the moment. Then everyone burst out in laughter as Djokovic points the way to the door. "None of you speak Serbian then?" he says, a parting shot to the English journalists who left at the end of the English questions segment.

With Djokovic you realise quickly that all that you have read about him is

true. Not for nothing is he nicknamed the "Djoker." The Serbian might look steely and play divinely, but he mixes up his talent with wit, charm and a healthy dose of cheek. With Djokovic, it is hard to get bored, even if it is in a half-full press conference after a second-round match of the Olympics at Wimbledon.

Djokovic has just decimated the American Andy Roddick. There really is

no other word for the 6-2, 6-1 thrashing that the Serbian doled out to the thrice-losing finalist at Wimbledon on Tuesday. Djokovic's win took all of 54 minutes. He barely broke a sweat. "It was the perfect match," admitted the Serbian.

But was it because Roddick was so bad or because he was so good?

"You have to ask him that," says Djokovic with a poker face. There are titters again. You feel that with Djokovic, there often is.

"I am committed to enjoying the whole Wimbledon experience," says Djokovic. "A big part of the Olympics for me is meeting all the other athletes."

Djokovic admitted he was the one doing the chasing on a number of occasions.

"I am going to repeat what many have already said; I really want to meet

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BPL TAX ISSUE

Shihab Trading's accounts frozen

STAR REPORT

In a bid to realise the overdue taxes, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday asked banks to block all the accounts of Shihab Trading, which had the ticket-selling rights of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20 cricket tournament.

However, the decision was taken only to realise the taxes from the organisation, which had bought the ticket-selling and distribution rights for Tk 45 crore.

The money-spinning BPL took place in Dhaka and Chittagong in February this year and the first edition created huge enthusiasm among sports lovers in the country and the meet saw full houses, except for a few games, throughout.

The NBR has also asked the Game On Sports Management (GOSM), which had earlier bought the rights of the BPL for six years at a price of 44.33 million dollars, to submit documents proving by next week that it too deposited taxes on prize money for champions and runners-up teams by deducting taxes at sources.

"As per rules, Shihab Trading should pay 5 per cent of ticket selling earnings as tax which it did not do," said Kanon

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The fast life of Oscar Pistorius

QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM from London



Oscar Pistorius has no legs; yet he is an Olympic sprinter. He should be an angry young man, instead he possesses a lovely sense of humour. He should wear a frown, but a bright smile lights up his face whenever he answers a question; even difficult ones. In a competition where game changers are lauded, Pistorius should be celebrated above all else. Yet human nature dictates that we speculate, question and put under a microscope anyone who is different. In life, like in school, the easiest way to live is to fit in.

Pistorius certainly does. Looking at his lean frame dressed in tracks and a jacket, it would be impossible to state that this is a man who has no legs below his knees. Pistorius himself states that he never felt different. Even though he is. Pistorius was born



without a fibula in either of his legs and his parents yielded to doctors' recommendations that his lower legs should be amputated. When he was 11 months old they were cut off just below the

knee. At 13 months he was fitted with prostheses. At 17 months, he was walking. Now he is among the top-ranked 400-meter runners in the world.

"My mother never allowed it

[to feel different]. She always said -- your brother puts shoes on in the morning and you put on your legs. And that is the last I will hear of it," recalled a smiling Pistorius yesterday. "I never really felt

different. I was always playing with my brother and sister and my family was always crazy about sports. I wasn't academic at all; sports was always my thing."

Indeed it was, and Pistorius only got into athletics after a fledgling interest in rugby was arrested by a horrible knee injury in 2003. But he has also actively pursued wrestling, water polo, rugby and motocross. "I have stopped going on the motorbikes too much. They are too risky," says Pistorius cheekily. He was referring to an accident on his bike a few years ago when he clipped a fence and turned around to see one of his prosthetic legs swinging from a section of barbed wire.

In fact, accidents seem to be part and parcel of the Pistorius story. A boating one in 2008 was particularly galling. His face and body hit the steering wheel, and he broke two ribs, his jaw and an eye socket. Doctors had to sew 172 stitches in his face.

Those excesses hint at the simmering rage behind his cool exterior. It is perhaps this that drives Pistorius. The South African, it seems, is blessed with an unenviable temperament; a fierce, even frenzied need to take on the world at maximum speed and with minimum caution. He has the heart of an athlete.

Which is why it makes sense that Pistorius is the first man to achieve the unthinkable feat of running in the Olympic Games without lower limbs.

Pistorius is scheduled to run in the 4x400 metre relay for South Africa in these Games. Usain Bolt, the world-record holder in both the 100 and 200 metres does the same for Jamaica. There is the real possibility that Bolt and Pistorius could square off against one another in the finals of that event. For many it may provide the marquee moment of London 2012 - Usain Bolt against the Blade Runner.

Pistorius laughs at his