

## AN UNBELIEVABLE APOLOGY

When kids are blasted by a football they begin to cry, but a Chilean child is over the moon that he got whacked by a football. Over the weekend, Neymar accidentally hurt a young boy as he was getting on Brazil's bus. Before stepping onto the bus, Neymar kicked a ball into the crowd, but he hit a small boy with his pass. The boy was subsequently given an amazing gift, as he was escorted onto the Brazil bus where he met the footballers before Neymar presented him with a signed football.

—INTERNET



The Tajikistan football team arrived in Dhaka yesterday to play their away match of the joint World Cup and Asian Cup Qualifier against hosts Bangladesh at the Bangabandhu National Stadium tomorrow.

PHOTO: BFF

## 'Tajikistan is better but we will fight'

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh captain Mamunul Islam believes Tajikistan is as good as Kyrgyzstan, Bangladesh's first opponents of the World Cup and Asian Cup Qualifiers, but also that Bangladesh will give their best against Tajikistan to swing the result in their favour.

Both Bangladesh and Tajikistan lost their first fixtures 1-3 against Kyrgyzstan and Jordan respectively and are looking to putting the nightmare behind them and bouncing back in the next match on Tuesday at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

"Tajikistan is a team like Kyrgyzstan. They play better football than Bangladesh. Tajikistan are ahead of us in all departments, but we want to display our best to bring the results in our favour," Mamunul told reporters, prior to yesterday's training session at the astro-turf adjacent to the Bangladesh Football Federation House.

The Sheikh Jamal DC midfielder also said that they didn't have not much information about Tajikistan, but they were analyzing the June 11 World Cup Qualifying match between Tajikistan and Jordan to learn about the Central Asian nation, who sit 27 places ahead of Bangladesh in FIFA Rankings.

Though Tajikistan are ahead of Bangladesh in terms of standards and previous records, Mamunul said that they would be fighting for points against all opponents of the World Cup and Asian Cup Qualifiers.

"If you look back to our last eight or nine matches, we played better football because we made the effort to do something. We never take to the field to hold the opponents, now we play for victory. Sometimes luck favours us, sometimes luck goes against us.

"We have tried to deliver enjoyable games from the start of the World Cup campaign. We will play for each point. We are going to play our second match day after tomorrow (Tuesday) and we will be trying to rectify the mistakes we made against Kyrgyzstan to win the game against Tajikistan," said Mamunul.

The lad from Chittagong wants to take inspiration from their 2-1 win over Tajikistan in the 2010 AFC Challenge Cup, but didn't want to dwell in the past as a lot has changed since, with Tajikistan boosting their squad by including foreign-based players.

Meanwhile, a 30-member Tajikistan squad arrived in the capital yesterday evening, just 46 hours before their match. The officials of Tajikistan refused to appear before media due to their tiredness following a 20-hour journey from Tajikistan to Bangladesh. The players are expected to have only one training session today afternoon.

## Rooney at the death Austria dent Russia's hopes

AFP, Ljubljana

Wayne Rooney moved to within one goal of England's all-time scoring record with an 86th-minute winner as his side edged Slovenia 3-2 in a topsy-turvy Euro 2016 qualifier on Sunday.

Milivoje Novakovic gave Slovenia the lead against the run of play in the 37th minute at the Stožice Stadium, before Jack Wilshere broke his international duck with a pair of brilliant second-half goals to put England ahead.

Slovenia substitute Nejc Pecnik appeared to have rescued a point with an 84th-minute equaliser, but moments later Rooney atoned for two glaring earlier misses by scoring his 48th England goal, taking him level with Gary Lineker and leaving him one goal behind Bobby Charlton.

Rooney's strike gave England a sixth win in six Group E games, sending them provisionally nine points clear at the summit, as they finished a season unbeaten for the first time in 24 years.

Away at Moscow, Russia's hopes of qualifying for Euro 2016 were dealt a blow as Fabio Capello's side slumped to a 1-0 defeat

at home to Austria.

Giant striker Marc Janko scored the only goal of the game for the Austrians with a spectacular overhead kick in the 33rd minute at Spartak Moscow's Otkrytie Arena as they extended their lead at the top of qualifying Group C.

After six games, unbeaten Austria are top with 16 points, seven points clear of Sweden before their match at home to Montenegro later on Sunday.

Russia, meanwhile, are third with eight points, three points better off than Montenegro and Liechtenstein.

With only the best third-placed side from the nine groups qualifying along with the top two sides from each section, and the rest going into play-offs, Russia's place at the expanded finals in France next year is far from secure.

### RESULTS

Ukraine 3 (Kravets 49, Garmash 57, Konopolyanka 87) Luxembourg 0  
Estonia 2 (Zenjov 35, 63) San Marino 0  
Slovenia 2 (Novakovic 37, Pecnik 84) England 3 (Wilshere 57, 73, Rooney 86)  
Liechtenstein 1 (Wieser 21) Moldova 1 (Boghiu 44)  
Russia 0 Austria 1 (Janko 33)

## Kiwis fly on twin tons

AFP, Southampton

Kane Williamson and Ross Taylor both scored hundreds in a record-breaking stand as New Zealand beat England by three wickets in the third one-day international at the Rose Bowl on Sunday to go 2-1 up in the five-match series.

New Zealand, chasing 303 for victory, were struggling at 36 for two.

But a stand of 206 between Williamson and Taylor, a New Zealand record for the third wicket in all ODI cricket surpassing Adam Parore and Ken Rutherford's 180 against India in 1994, turned the tide, although England dropped both batsmen with Taylor given several reprieves.

Williamson made 118 and Taylor 110 -- his second century in as many matches after his unbeaten 119 during New Zealand's 13-run win at The Oval on Friday levelled the series at 1-1.

The series continues at Trent Bridge on Wednesday.

## Argentina held by Paraguay

AFP, La Serena



Argentina's dreams of a first major title in 22 years were given a reality check on Saturday as Paraguay came from behind to snatch a last-gasp 2-2 draw in a Copa America classic.

English Premier league star Sergio Aguero and captain Lionel Messi looked to have put Argentina on the road to a routine victory in Group B after firing the tournament favourites into a 2-0 first-half lead.

But a long-range strike from Nelson Valdez hauled Paraguay back into the contest before Argentine-born forward Lucas Barrios grabbed a dramatic 90th-minute equaliser.

The stunning comeback left Argentina in shock and could complicate their route through the knockout rounds in Chile.

"It is a sin," to give away an equaliser in the final minute, Argentina coach Gerardo Martino said afterwards, lambasting his team's "neglect."

"We lost control and the other team had four or five chances to get a draw," Martino told a news conference.

"We had many chances to win," he

### RESULTS

Uruguay 1 (Rodriguez 52) Jamaica 0  
Argentina 2 (Aguero 29, Messi 36-pen) Paraguay 2 (Valdez 60, Barrios 90)

added, saying that the team in the second half were "totally different from the side that played in the first half."

"I do not think we need to change anything. What we have to look back at the two games we played in the 90 minutes today."

Paraguay goal hero Barrios was jubilant after his team's heroics.

"This group is so tough that getting a draw in the last minute against Argentina is like a victory," said Barrios, who plays for Montpellier in France.

Paraguay's other goalscorer, Valdez, paid tribute to the spirit shown by his team-mates.

"Individually we are less than Argentina, but as a team we are better than them," he said. "We needed a slap in the face at half-time."

Argentina now face a crucial second match on Tuesday against holders Uruguay, who struggled to impress in a lacklustre 1-0 win over Caribbean minnows Jamaica earlier Saturday.

## Baffled Bolt wins 200m

AFP, New York

Jamaican sprint king Usain Bolt has worked to do after clocking an unconvincing 20.29sec to win the 200m at the New York Diamond League meeting on Saturday.

Even with a headwind of 2.8 meters per second, Bolt said he was baffled by a performance that included "the worst curve ever in my entire career."

"Because I have been training so good, but then I come to competition and I am not executing right, that's all I am worried about," Bolt said.

"I was feeling good. Everything was going smooth when I ran yesterday, I was happy, my coach was happy -- just don't know what happened today."

"I've just got to go back to the drawing board and figure it out."

"It's just one of those days I guess," he concluded.

## Aus sweep series

AFP, Kingston

Australia demolished hapless West Indies on the fourth day of the second and final Test at Sabina Park on Sunday, routing the home side for 114 to win by 277 runs and take the series 2-0.

Off-spinner Nathan Lyon formalised the result with the wickets of Kemar Roach and Jerome Taylor off successive balls early in the afternoon session.

That was after Mitchell Johnson had ended the resistance of Denesh Ramdin, having the West Indies captain caught by his opposite number, Michael Clarke, at slip for a top score of 29.

It was Johnson's second wicket of the innings and lifted his career tally to 291, drawing him level with Craig McDermott, who is now Australia's bowling coach, as the joint-fifth most successful bowler in Test cricket for his country.

Before lunch, Josh Hazlewood lifted his match haul to seven wickets in removing Darren Bravo and Jermaine Blackwood.

Mitchell Starc, who started the rout by removing both openers in the first over of the innings late on the third day, got the ball rolling again for the tourists in the morning when he bowled Shane Dowrich off his pads after 19 minutes' play.

Despite struggling to find his rhythm throughout the match, Johnson joined the rampant wicket-takers when he breached the defence of Shai Hope for the sixth wicket of the innings.

Jason Holder, who took on the Australians with the bat and verbally during an entertaining first innings of 82 not out the day before, failed to have any impact the second time around.

Starting the morning at 16 for two, Bravo and Dowrich were kept under a virtual state of siege by the outstanding pace and perseverance of Starc and Hazlewood.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: First innings 399  
WEST INDIES: First innings 220 (Hope 26, Blackwood 51, Holder 82 not out; Hazlewood 5-38, Lyon 3-55)

AUSTRALIA: Second innings 212 for 2 decl (Marsh 69, Warner 62, Smith 54 not out, Clarke 14 not out; Roach 1-26)  
WEST INDIES: Second innings 114 all out in 42 overs (Ramdin 29, Permaul 23 not out; Starc 3-34, Hazlewood 2-18, Johnson 2-23, Lyon 2-12)  
Result: Australia won by 277 runs and clinch the series 2-0  
Player-of-the-match: Steven Smith

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