

'SMARTBATS' TO DEBUT IN CHAMPIONS TROPHY

The International Cricket Council (ICC) and Intel teamed up last year promising innovation and the first glimpse of their unity will be on display in the upcoming Champions Trophy, where certain players will be equipped with 'smartbats'. The bats will have electronic chips, which weigh less than 25 grams, embedded on their handles and will give coaches, broadcasters and fans immediate data on every shot they play. They will measure bat speed, the speed of the bat at impact with the ball, the angle of the back-lift, the angle of the bat on impact and the angle of that bat on follow-through. The ICC and Intel are also working on a drone to help with pitch reports which will give information about the density of the grass, the health of the grass and the topography of the pitch. It will also analyse and generate graphics about whether the pitch is likely to offer spin, seam or uneven bounce. Englishmen Ben Stokes, Alex Hales and Jason Roy and India's Rohit Sharma, Ajinkya Rahane and Ravichandran Ashwin are some of the players who will be using the bats.

—STAR SPORT DESK



Abahani, Mohun Bagan playing for pride

SPORTS REPORTER

Having already been eliminated from the qualifying race for the final stages of the AFC Cup, Abahani and Mohun Bagan will look forward to restoring some pride when the cross-border rivals face off in the sixth and final match of Group E at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today. The match will get underway at 7:45pm. Maziya S&RC of Maldives, with 12 points, and JSW Bengaluru FC of India, with nine points, are fighting to grab the lone spot from the group turning the match in Dhaka into a dead rubber. Mohun Bagan, who last came to Bangladesh in 2005 to play against Muktioddha Sangsad in the now-defunct Asian Club Cup championship, are apparently seeking some solace by winning their last match of the season after going trophyless, having finished

second in both the I-League and the Federation Cup. Likewise Abahani, are giving as much importance to this match as their opponents even though they are scheduled to play the semifinals of the Federation Cup two days later. "From the perspective of the competition, neither side have anything to win from this game as neither team can qualify for the next round," said Mohun Bagan coach Sanjay Sen at a pre-match conference yesterday. "However, both clubs have a rich heritage in their respective countries and when there is nothing to get [from the tournament], the motivation comes from the desire to uphold the club and country's image. We must respect Abahani. We will try to play our own style and try to win the match," outlined Sen before ensuring that spectators would enjoy the fixture as he feels it is their duty to entertain them. Like Mohun Bagan, Abahani, who suffered a 3-1 defeat to the same opposition in their away match, want to end

their AFC Cup campaign on a high. "We have come to the end of the competition and tomorrow's game is a big one against Indian giants Mohun Bagan, but we are conscious that we are representing Bangladesh football and we will try to win the last game," said Abahani coach Drago Mamic. The charges of Mamic are in good shape having played three matches in the Federation Cup even though they suffered a 0-2 loss to Maziya S&RC in their last AFC Cup fixture. "We want to give a special gift to our friends and not finish the campaign with a loss. I think the boys are also thinking the same way and we have a chance to win it," said Mamic. However, the Croatian may rest his best player – winger Rubel Mia – in a bid to not risk an injury for the rest of the season. However, he will be able to apply the services of three foreign players – Emeka Darlington, Jonathan David and Samad Yussif against Mohun Bagan's two foreign recruits – Katsumi Yusa and Darryl Alexander Duffy.



Coaches and captains of Abahani and Mohun Bagan exchange pleasantries at the Bangladesh Football Federation House yesterday ahead of today's AFC Cup fixture.

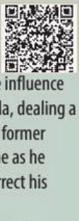
PHOTO: STAR

QUICK SINGLES

The following are a few samples of stories that did not make the print edition. However, if they pique your interest, you can always read them online on The Daily Star website by simply scanning the QR codes listed below:

Tiger Woods sorry after arrest, says alcohol not involved

Golf superstar Tiger Woods was charged with driving under the influence by police in Florida, dealing a fresh blow to the former world number one as he struggles to resurrect his career.



Buffon knocking on Ballon d'Or door

As Juventus look to end a 21-year wait for the Champions League title, there are those who believe goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon can end a 54-year wait and be officially crowned the top shot-stopper in Europe.



Barcelona name Valverde as coach

Barcelona name former Athletic Bilbao coach Ernesto Valverde as the successor to Luis Enrique and he will take charge of the La Liga runners-up on a two-year contract with the option of a third.



Spalletti leaves Roma despite record points haul

AS Roma coach Luciano Spalletti parts company with the club despite leading them to second place in Serie A this season with a club-record points haul.



Brazil great Roberto Carlos eyes Aus

Brazilian football legend Roberto Carlos is keen to coach Australian side South Melbourne, who are pushing to join an expanded domestic A-League.



Vieirinha strike saves Wolfsburg from the drop

Portuguese defender Vieirinha blasts in a 49th-minute winner as VfL Wolfsburg avoid relegation from the top tier of the Bundesliga with a 1-0 (2-0 aggregate) win over Eintracht Braunschweig.



Wenger to extend reign

AFP, London

Arsene Wenger has told Arsenal owner Stan Kroenke he will accept the Premier League club's offer of a new two-year contract, according to reports on Tuesday. Wenger met Gunners majority shareholder Kroenke and chief executive Ivan Gazidis on Monday to discuss his future before his contract expires next month. The 67-year-old has been heavily criticised this season, with Arsenal fans calling for his resignation after their team failed to qualify for the Champions League for the first time in 20 years. Suggestions that Arsenal may insist on hiring a director of football to work with Wenger had sparked claims the Frenchman was considering ending his 21-year reign. But after leading Arsenal to an impressive 2-1 FA Cup final victory over Premier League champions Chelsea with Kroenke watching from the stands on Saturday, Wenger had hinted he was willing to stay. And the Daily Mail and Daily Mirror reported Wenger has informed American tycoon Kroenke, who remains a firm supporter of his manager, that he wants to remain in charge of the north London club.

A formal announcement of Wenger's new contract is expected to come on Wednesday. Wenger, who has won three Premier League titles and a record seven FA Cups with the Gunners, will attend an Arsenal board meeting on Tuesday when the contract should be rubber-stamped. Wenger will outline his plans for close-season signings and while there may still be some tinkering with his backroom staff it will not be without his approval. Gazidis would still like to bring in a sporting director to coordinate issues ranging from scouting and medicine to youth development and analytics. But Wenger has been told he will retain control of the key areas of team selection and transfers. With his reign set to reach 23 years if he sees out the new deal, Wenger has a chance to salvage what was in danger of becoming a tarnished reputation. First on his to-do list will be making improved contract offers to Alexis Sanchez and Mesut Ozil. The unsettled Arsenal stars are holding out for weekly wages of around £300,000 (\$385,000) per week with their present deals due to expire at the end of next season.

Bale fit and raring to go

AFP, Madrid

Gareth Bale is "desperate" to return from injury in time for a Champions League final homecoming against Juventus in Cardiff on Saturday, his Real Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane said on Tuesday. Bale hasn't played since suffering the latest in a series of calf injuries that have plagued his time in Madrid, against Barcelona on April 23. But with the Welshman back in training the pressure is on Zidane to choose between Madrid's record signing or stick with Isco. The Spaniard has been in sensational form as Real won their last six games to beat Barca to the La Liga title last weekend. "Gareth doesn't need to tell me anything. He is ready, he is back with us and he is absolutely desperate to play," Zidane said on Tuesday.

No Norde for Dhaka crowd

SPORTS REPORTER



Spectators in Dhaka will once again be deprived of watching Sony Norde in action after the Haitian forward, who plays for Mohun Bagan, failed to obtain a Bangladesh visa for today's AFC Cup match against Abahani. Sony, arguably the best foreign player to play in Bangladesh's domestic football since the 1990s, enthralled local spectators with his scintillating skills. The 26-year-old footballer featured in two seasons, one where he played for Sheikh Russel KC and the other for Sheikh Jamal DC, helping both teams to clinch the league titles before joining cross-border outfit Mohun Bagan in the latter part of 2014. The fleet-footed Haitian playmaker scored a goal and assisted another during Mohun Bagan's 3-1 win over Abahani in their home match. It has been learnt that Sony was denied a visa because of a shortage of pages on his passport. However, Abahani coach Drago

Mamic feels Mohun Bagan still have enough quality players on their side. "I know Mohun Bagan. I watched them 10 or 12 times. They are a really strong team. They have a lot of good players," said the Croatian coach during the pre-match press conference yesterday. "Sometimes one good player may not play but the other players give their best. It is not only up to Sony Norde, there are more good players like Jeje [Lalpekhlu], Katsumi [Yusa], Balwant [Singh], [Darryl] Duffy. But I am not looking at the other team; I am looking at my team to play like we played against Bengaluru FC. Everything is possible in tomorrow's [Wednesday's] match," Mamic said. Mohun Bagan coach Sanjay Sen echoed Mamic's sentiments: "It is more important how we play tomorrow than what team we have brought with us. We did not play Sony, Duffy and Eudardo against Bengaluru FC in our previous match of the AFC Cup, but still we beat them 3-1. So it is not important how much strength we have. What is important is whether you can play well to win."

Zverev, Konta crash out

AFP, Paris

Alexander Zverev, the man seen as a potential French Open champion, crashed out in the first round Tuesday while Johanna Konta became the second top 10 women's player to exit. Zverev, just 20 and fresh from his sensational Rome Masters demolition of Novak Djokovic, slumped to a 6-4, 3-6, 6-4, 6-2 defeat to Spain's Fernando Verdasco, 13 years his senior. "I played absolute shit, that's why I lost," said Zverev. "But life goes on, it's not a tragedy. In Rome I played fantastic, I won the tournament. Here I played bad, I lost first round. That's the way it goes." In a match controversially suspended on Monday at one set each, Zverev was defeated in a fog of mistakes and despondency. The beanpole German committed 50 unforced errors and drew jeers from the Philippe Chatrier court crowd when he took out his frustration by hammering his racquet into the clay. Left-handed Verdasco, playing his 14th Roland Garros and 56th consecutive major, had lost to Zverev in the first round on clay in Madrid earlier this year. But he is an experienced Grand Slam competitor, making the last 16 in Paris on four occasions. "I practised really hard before this match against a great player like Alexander and I am super happy to be here on this court," said Verdasco who next plays France's Pierre-Hugues Herbert. "Maybe it was my experience. You have to be ready emotionally and physically because it can be a long match." Third seed and 2015 champion Stan Wawrinka was an easy winner, defeat-



Stanislas Wawrinka of Switzerland celebrates his victory against Slovakia's Jozef Kovalik during their French Open first round match at the Roland Garros in Paris yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

ing Slovakian qualifier Jozef Kovalik 6-2, 7-6 (8/6), 6-3. Wawrinka saved two set points in the second set tiebreaker before going on to down the 152nd-ranked qualifier. Juan Martin del Potro marked his return to the French Open after an absence of five years by defeating Argentine compatriot Guido Pella 6-2, 6-1, 6-4. "I love to be playing this tournament again after five years," said 2009 US Open champion Del Potro, who reached the quarter-finals in his last appearance in Paris before blowing a two-set lead against Roger Federer. Taiwan's Hsieh Su-Wei, the world number 109, stunned seventh seed Konta 1-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-4. Konta is the second top 10 woman to lose in the first three days after world number one Angelique Kerber was also dumped out in the first round. "I tried very hard and gave myself a big chance. Every time I tried to run as

fast as I can and get the ball back," said Hsieh, who won for the just the second time in seven trips to Roland Garros. Konta has yet to win one match in the main draw in three attempts. There were no such problems for fifth-seeded Rome champion Elina Svitolina as the 2015 quarter-finalist defeated Yaroslava Shvedova of Kazakhstan 6-4, 6-3. Andy Murray targets a French Open tonic later Tuesday as the 2016 runner-up seeks to get his season back on track. World number one Murray, who was the first British man to reach the Paris final since 1937 when he lost to Novak Djokovic 12 months ago, faces Andrej Kuznetsov. The 30-year-old has endured a trying 2017 with bouts of illness as well as an elbow injury conspiring against him and his form. He suffered a shock fourth round defeat to Mischa Zverev at the Australian Open.

Zia takes solo lead in India

SPORTS REPORTER

Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman took the solo lead at the end of the sixth round of the 10th KIIT International Chess Festival in Bhubaneswar, India yesterday. Zia beat IM Sayantan Das in the sixth round to secure 5.5 points. GM Reefat Bin Sattar slipped to second position with five points after drawing against Sidhant Mohapatra. FM Mohammad Fahad Rahman earned four points after playing out a draw against IM Raghunandan Kaumandur Srihari while GM Niaz Mursheed and FM Syed Mahfuzur Rahman Emon have 3.5 points each.

Tuchel leaves Dortmund

AFP, Berlin

Borussia Dortmund's head coach Thomas Tuchel has left the club, the Bundesliga side confirmed Tuesday, denying that the departure was sparked by a public spat with the club's chief executive. "We thank Thomas Tuchel and his training staff for their successful work at BVB," said the club, adding that the "cause of the separation is by no means a disagreement between two people". Relations between Tuchel and chief executive Hans-Joachim Watzke have become publicly strained since a bomb attack on the Dortmund team bus on April 11.

Allegri stays optimistic

AFP, Turin



Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri has labelled 11-time winners Real Madrid favourites for the Champions League final, but said the "optimistic" Italians intend on bringing the trophy home from Cardiff on Saturday. Fresh from securing a record third consecutive league and Cup double, Juventus are looking to complete a treble this season when they face Real in the Welsh capital. The June 3 final comes two years after a 3-1 defeat to Barcelona in Berlin in Allegri's opening season at the club -- that was Juve's sixth defeat in the final of the competition, a record. Real, meanwhile, won the trophy in 2014 and again last season, beating city rivals Atletico in the final on each occasion. "We're optimistic, but it doesn't seem right to me that Juventus have been branded favourites because Real have won two Champions League titles in the past years," Allegri said Monday. "They're used to playing the final, as we are. We have to accept that they are the favourites."

