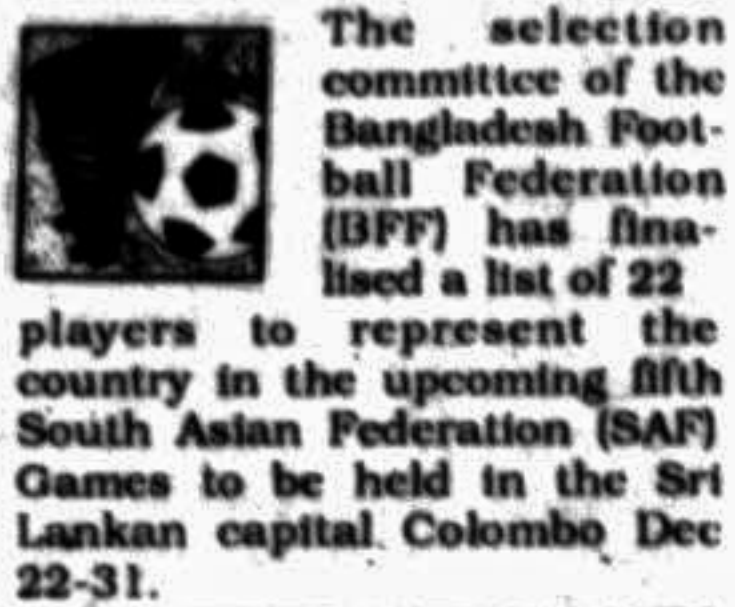


BFF announces SAF squad

Sports Reporter



KAISER HAMID

The selection committee of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has finalised a list of 22 players to represent the country in the upcoming fifth South Asian Federation (SAF) Games to be held in the Sri Lankan capital, Colombo Dec 22-31.

General Secretary of the BFF Harunur Rashid disclosed the names of the players at a press briefing yesterday evening at the BFF conference room which was also attended by Joint Secretary Sirajul Islam Bachehu, manager of the SAF soccer squad M. Nurun Nabi Chowdhury and other federation officials.

The name of the country's

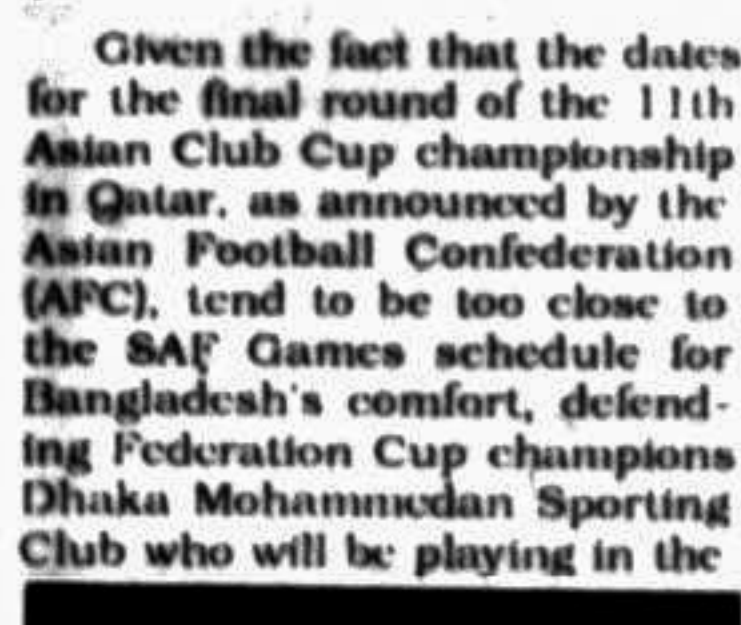
highest paid footballer, Abdul Momen Munna, the star stopper back of reigning NBL Senior Division league champions Abahani Krira Chakra, is conspicuous by its absence.

According to the BFF officials, the two-million-taka man reportedly ruled himself ineligible by injuring himself in the course of a trial match held yesterday between the 29 players who have been undergoing intensive training at their camp at the Bangladesh Krira Shiksha Protisthan's (BKSP) Savar premises since the 14th of this month.

Munna, who had shown a rather indifferent form during the last Federation Cup tournament in October and had thereby contributed in no little measure to the failure of Abahani to reach the Cup final, is said to have been nursing an injury for quite some time now. It is reported that the handsome Abahani star, who made such a big name for himself during his stint with the Indian giants East Bengal earlier last summer, suffered the blow while playing in the Calcutta Super Division league.

There is also a big catch in the list of names announced.

According to reliable sources, although the BFF selectors have picked 22 players, it is believed that four key players will be dropped from the final list of 18 for the Games.



SHEIKH ASLAM

Given the fact that the dates for the final round of the 11th Asian Cup championship in Qatar, as announced by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), tend to be too close to the SAF Games schedule for Bangladesh's comfort, defending Federation Cup champions Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting Club who will be playing in the

The final 18-player list will be announced a few days prior to the actual departure of the team for Colombo.

Following is the 22 man list:

Manager-M. Nurun Nabi Chowdhury, Asstt. Manager-Fazlur Rahman (Habul), Coach-Shahiduddin Ahmad Selim and Asstt. Coach-Abdul Gaffar.

Footballers are: Goal keepers-Mohsin, Kanan and Poinir, Defenders-Kaiser, Jewel Rana, Ataur, Rehan, Pijush, Masud Rana, Alamgir and Pervaz.

Midfielders-Shabbir, Manik, Rupa, Titu, Roxy and Utam.

Forwards-Aslam, Rumi, Naqib, Ghaus, Mamun Joardar.

Those who were excluded from the 29 called to the selection camp are Moshit, Samrat and Rouf Babul.

Meanwhile, the team will play a series of preparatory matches against selections in Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna over the next couple of weeks.

Mahbubur Rahman Roxy and Saiful Bari Tito — will in all likelihood be dropped from the final SAF squad as a face-saving measure both for the federation itself and Mohammedan Sporting Club also.

The captain of the side is yet to be named.

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Action from yesterday's First Division chess league match between BTMC and Chalantika Krira Chakra at the National Sports Council chess room. BTMC and Chalantika split points 2-2 in the four-match encounter. —Star photo

Brisbane wicket may favour Indians

BRISBANE, Australia, Nov 27: Belaguered India have received a boost from an unexpected quarter in their preparations to tackle the formidable Australians in the Five-Test cricket series, reports AFP.

Kevin Mitchell, Curator of the Gabba wicket where the first Test begins Friday, has laid out a perfect batting strip instead of a green-top the

Indians expected.

Mitchell expects his first ever Test wicket to assist seam bowlers at the start, then settle down to aid strokeplay.

"I am looking for something with a bit of early life which will disappear as the game progresses," said Mitchell, son of the legendary Gabba groundsman of the same name.

That should be welcome news for the long line of talented, but inconsistent Indian batsmen who have struggled so

far on the tour.

After being bowled out for a paltry 64 by Western Australian in a one-day match and suffering a humiliating innings defeat to New South Wales in under three days last week, the tourists were of the dangers ahead.

The Indian brains trust expected a fast, bouncy track for the crucial first Test which would help the tried and trusted Australian pace Battery of Craig McDermott, Mery Hughes and Mike Whitney.

"I hope the wicket plays as well as it looks because we were not really expecting something like this," said team manager Abbas Ali Baig.

Baig was confident his batsmen would make good of the condition, but Australian bookmakers were not impressed.

Gold Coast bookmaker Lloyd Merchan gave India 10-1 odds to win the Test. Australia were quoted odds-on favourites at 4-1 with a draw at 5-2.

"If this Indian team can be thrashed by New South Wales, it doesn't seem to have any chance against the Australians," Mitchell was quoted as saying by the local Courier Mail newspaper.

But Allan Border, who will make a record 126th Test appearance here, has warned his team not to take the Indians lightly. Border's remarkable feat will be watched by the man whose record he breaks — India's former prolific batsman Sunil Gavaskar who has played 125 Tests.

Gavaskar, here to do television commentary, said Border

richly deserved the honour.

"Allan is a cricketer after my own heart because he is a fighter to the core and always gives his best," he said.

"It is nice to see someone whom I admire do it," Gavaskar added. "That's a very special occasion."

"The icing on the cake would, of course, be an Indian win so I have a lot to look forward to here," he said.

Biman defeats BKSP by 5 runs

Bangladesh Biman defeated BKSP by 5 runs in an exhibition cricket match at the BKSP playground in Savar near Dhaka yesterday.

Biman batted first and picked up a total of 171 runs losing 5 wickets in the stipulated 40 overs.

Selim Shahed with 65 contributed most towards Biman's victory. Other notable scorers were Zakaria 35, Munir 30.

Coming to the crease BKSP batsmen fought decisively but failed to score beyond 166 losing 10 wickets at the end of 39.3 overs.

Rokon played well and pulled up 60 by himself facing sharp-edged bowling by Biman bowlers.

Scores: Biman 171 for 5 in 40 overs. Selim Shahed 65, Zakaria 35, Munir 30; Salahuddin 1/35 and Rokon 1/30.

BKSP 166 for 10 in 39.3 overs: Rokon 62; Moni 2/20, Selim Shahed 2/25, Bacchoo 1/15 and Babu Jr 1/36.

Umpire: Alok Chakrabarty and Zakir.

National shooting begins in Pabna

PAIBNA, Nov 27: The 4th national clay pigeon shooting competition began at the local Mansurabad shooting ground today, reports UNB.

State Minister for Communication Fazlur Rahman Potal inaugurated the three-day competition organised by the National Shooting Federation.

Federation secretary Kazi Selim and DC Abu Solaiman Chowdhury also spoke on the occasion.

Eighty shooters from 40 clubs are participating in the competition.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas is expected to be present in the final on Friday and will give away the trophies.

Maj. Kamrul chef-de-mission for SAF Games squad

Major (Retd) Kamrul Islam, a parliament member from the Gulshan-Cantonment constituency of the capital, has been selected Chef-de-mission of the Bangladesh contingent for the 5th South Asian Federation (SAF) Games, reports UNB.

He will lead the proposed 192-member contingent in the SAF Games to be held December 22-31 in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo.

The contingent will comprise 160 athletes and 30 officials, including journalists and a doctor.

A baby elephant, the most beautiful and playful animal in Asia, was chosen as the mascot of the 5th SAF Games.

It is also learnt that the organising committee of the Games has invited State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadeque Hossain, National Sports Council (NSC) Chairman Major General Mahbubur Rahman and Additional Secretary in-charge of the Ministry of Youth and Sports MA Rouf as their guests.

Athletics from seven SAARC countries — Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives will participate in the ten disciplines of the Games.

The disciplines are: athletics, football, swimming, volleyball, basketball, shooting, weightlifting, boxing, tennis and table tennis.

Bangladesh will participate in all ten disciplines.

Meanwhile, the schedule of events for the 5th SAF Games has been finalised.

The opening and closing ceremonies will be held on December 22 and 31 respectively.

No competitions will be held on December 25 in view of Christmas. There will not be any event on December 30.

The football matches will be played from December 23 to 29 with a rest day on December 28 and the boxing bouts will commence on December 23 to 29 with a rest day on December 27.

Athletics, volleyball, swimming and shooting competitions will take place between December 23 to 28.

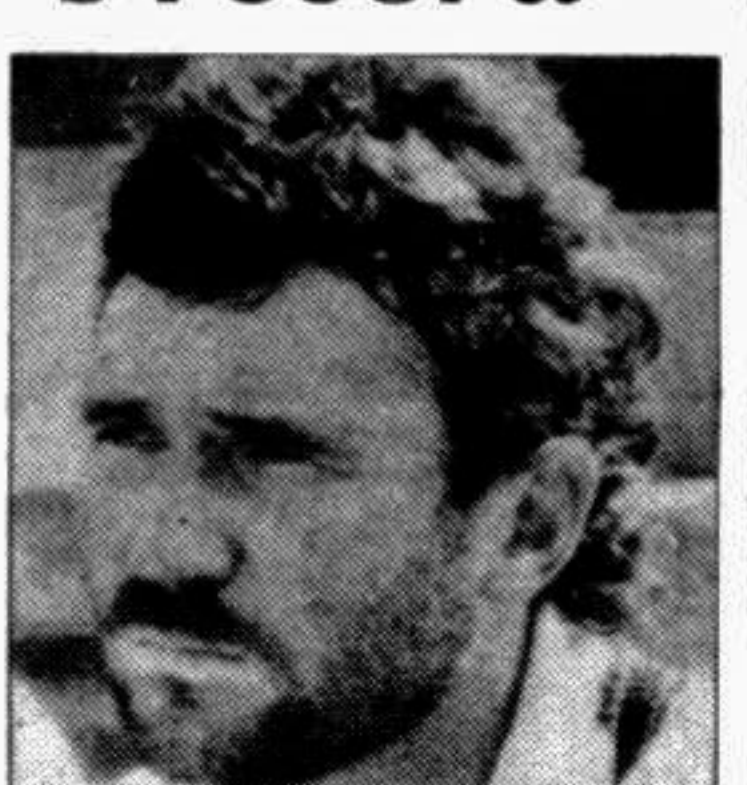
Tennis and table tennis matches will be held between December 23 to 27.

Basketball and weightlifting will be held between December 26 to 29.

Border poised to break Gavaskar's record



SUNIL GAVASKAR



ALLAN BORDER

BRISBANE, Australia, Nov 27: Australian cricket captain Allan Border will set a world record for test appearances when he leads Australia against India in the first Test, which starts Friday at the Brisbane Cricket Ground, reports AP.

Border will play his 126th test, eclipsing the record of 125 held by former Indian batsman Sunil Gavaskar. The match will be Border's 63rd as captain of Australia.

Gavaskar will be in the crowd to see his record broken.

Border, 36, has not missed a test for Australia since 1979 and has averaged 52.3 runs per innings, including 23 centuries and 52 half centuries.

Ironically, he has his test worst average 32.7 on the Brisbane ground, where he plays for Queensland state.

Border has not scored a century since the 1988 series against Pakistan when he hit a ton at Faisalabad, but has scored 18 half-centuries since then.

He is regarded as one of the best thinkers in cricket — and says that is one of the reasons for his longevity.

"I am always trying to analyse the way the game is going," he said. "I'm never totally satisfied with my own performance. I always come off the ground and pick it to pieces."

Eskaton Sabuj lift Div II cricket title

A brilliant all-round performance by Opi enabled Eskaton Sabuj Sangha to clinch the Rank Xerox Second Division cricket title when they scored an emphatic eight wickets victory over Ajax Sports Club yesterday at the Dhaka Stadium.

Ajax SC put into bat, were shot out for a paltry total of 122 runs in 38.1 overs.

Dodul with 35, Biplob with 24, Shawkat 13, Nipull and Mozammel with 10 were the Ajax batsmen to reach double figures.

Opi with two for 14, Zahid with two for 30, Aminul with one for 10 and Farooq with one for 18 were the successful Eskaton bowlers.

In reply, Eskaton Sabuj rattled their score to 124 for the loss of only two wickets in 30.1 overs.

Opi and Shaheed Shams led the charge with a superb 82 runs partnership for the first wicket.

Opi slammed a breezy 53 runs off 70 balls and knock was studded with five glorious boundaries. Shaheed Shams

Mercury's song for Barcelona Olympics opening

BARCELONA, Nov 27: Organisers of the opening ceremony for the 1992 Summer Olympics said Tuesday they still plan to project a video of British rock star Freddie Mercury singing the song he wrote for the event, reports AP.

Mercury, who died Sunday of AIDS, wrote "Barcelona" in 1987 and first performed it with Spanish opera soprano Montserrat Caballe at London's Covent Garden theatre.

The duo taped a performance of the song in the summer of the same year.

The independent agency Europa Press quoted Pepo Sol, spokesman for ceremony organizer Ovidio Bassat Sport, saying although they only recently learned Mercury was ill, the organizers never expected him to perform the song live.

"The song became a symbol at the beginning of preparations for the games," Sol said. "We always thought it should have a pleasant place in the ceremony."

Organizers expect 3.5 billion viewers worldwide to watch the July 25 opening ceremony on television.

BAF athletics

Three weeks remain before the SAF Games commence in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Like the legendary pink panther, the time has come for the Bangladesh Tennis Federation (BTF) to carry on the tradition of engaging in blunder and buffoonery on a monumental scale again.

The national team training co-ordinator Mr Sandru Salam is away somewhere in Southeast Asia with a group of juniors. The national No 1 Shovon Jamaly is reportedly still in the US doing what exactly, we don't know. The national No 2, Sardar Iftekhar has informed us that he is staying in shape in his personal capacity in the absence of any co-ordinated or meaningful training programme from the BTF. The national Nos 3 and 4, namely Mahtabur Rahman Maroof and Hiralal are also practically on their own with regard to training and preparation apart from being provided with balls by the BTF.

Talking to some of the players, this reporter could see that nobody had any idea of who is going to Colombo. A doubles team, always a critical factor in a team event, has also not been prepared. There is a strong rumour in the air that Faisal Rahman Riad, a former national 'also-ran' is being brought into the squad. Riad is currently supposed to be studying in the US and has not played the national championship.

While all this may yet be conjecture, it would certainly be a travesty of justice if this sequence of events were to come about.

While one is all for blooding newer, younger faces (although Riad is actually about 24 years,

Biman suffers setback

The reigning league champions Bangladesh Biman suffered a hitch when they suffered a shock defeat against Brothers Union in the eighth round of the First Division chess league yesterday at the National Sports Council chess room.

Despite the upset result, defending champions Biman were still leading the points table with 22 points.

Brothers Union defeated Biman by 2.5-1.5 points.

National runners-up Ziaul Kader Tuhi of Brothers Union dealt the first blow for his team when he beat Biman's Fide Master Ziaur Rahman at the board number two.

The other Brothers star players Shahinoor Hossain, Anisur Rahman and Sheikh

Anwar Hossain also performed their duty duly by splitting points against Biman's international Master Zillur Rahman Champak, national champions Rifat-bin-Sattar and Fide Master. Rezaul Haque respectively.

Last year's runners-up Bangladesh Ansars and Bangladesh Textiles Mills Corporation (BTMC) were jointly placed in the second spot with 22 points.

Ansars in their yesterday's outing defeated Mahakhali Pradip Sangha by 3.5 to 5 points, while BTMC were forced to share 2-2 points against Chalantika Krira Chakra.

In other yesterday encounters Pony Electronics beat Protibha Daba Gosthi by 3 to 1 points, Free Birds International won against

Anushlon Daba Krira Chakra by 2.5 to 1.5 points while Konika Sangskritik Sangha and Parijat Chess Club also recorded identical 2.5 to 1.5 wins over Farashganj Sporting Club and Gents Chess Club respectively.

Moulvibazar Soccer

MOULVIBAZAR, Nov 27: Moulvibazar pourashava team became champions in the Moulvibazar Zila Prashasak Gold Cup football tournament '91 eliminating sadar upazila by 5-4 goals in a tie-breaker at the local stadium Tuesday, reports UNB.

The normal match time ended in a goalless draw.

Finance Minister M Saffur Rahman witnessed the final match as chief guest and later distributed the trophies among the winners.

NZ may follow SA lead

WELLINGTON, Nov 27: Continuing urging of South Africa to integrate their cricket is prompting New Zealand cricket to do the same, New Zealand Cricket (NZC) chairman Peter McDermott said Tuesday, reports AFP.

"We acknowledge that there has been complacency and that it has been a White colonialised game in the past with the situation being stereotyped until recently," he said.

The current board has recognised that it has been ignored for a long time and wants to do something about it.

McDermott noted a lot New Zealanders of Indian and Pakistani origin played cricket here because they had virtually inherited it.

"What we want to do is bring in specialised cricket to those groups with non-traditional backgrounds in the game," he said.

Ethnic groups have the talent and potential to play cricket well, and given the need to make the game attractive to the people as a whole, we have to look at it.

With Pacific Islanders the NZC could have a problem as they have brought to New Zealand a much more colourful, lively version of cricket known by its Samoan name Kilkiti.

It involves both men and women with around 20 a side, rubber balls and a good deal of music, dancing and on-field fun that the sedate English game would frown upon.

For the last three years Kilkiti has been organised into a church-based national competition leading to an international tournament with teams from around the Pacific.

Even on the best of onedayers cricket seems a mite slow against the way Pacific Islanders have modified the game.

SAF boxing team announced

Bangladesh Amateur Boxing Federation has finalised its 14-member squad for the 5th South Asian Federation (SAF) Games beginning December 22 in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo, reports UNB.

The team consists of ten boxers and four officials.

Members of the team are: Manager-Latifur Rahman, Coaches Chey Yung Chuk (Korea), M A Mannan and Abdul Halim.

Boxers are — Mozammel Hoque (Fly Weight), M Rafiqul Islam (Feather Weight), Abdul Hakim (Light Weight), M Kapiluddin (Light Welter Weight), Kanchan Ali (Welter Weight), M Delwar Hossain (Light Middle Weight), M Ibrahim Mondal (Middle Weight), Hafizur Rahman (Light Heavy Weight), M Jamal Hossain (Heavy Weight) and Mir Haider Ali (Super Heavy Weight).

Bangladeshi boxers will participate in 10 out of 12 weight category competitions.

V Day cricket tournament

The Anirban Victory Day cricket tournament organised by Anirban Krira Sangskritik Sangha will be held on December 16 to celebrate the Victory Day at Manikdi, Cantonment.

The interested teams have been asked to submit their names by December 6

A mid-winter night's nightmare

by S. Islam

onship or any of the big local tournaments in the last two years, a key factor in the selection of a player in the national team. Riad's possible proposed inclusion seems to be based more on the strength of his connections, than his playing ability, which has been largely untested and unproven at the national level in recent times.

The BTF seems to be contemplating accommodating Riad at the expense of Iftekhar, the current No 2 a champion in his own right and the only Davis Cupper who has performed consistently in both the ties that Bangladesh has played this year. Against Bahrain in April it was Iftekhar who went in when the tie was deadlocked at 2-2 and won the deciding singles match against the Bahraini No 2, Shihab Shihab. It was Iftekhar again, who salvaged some pride in the 5-0 drubbing we received at the hands of Sri Lanka in June by being the only one to take a set off the in-form Sri Lankans. Needless to say, he performed creditably in the doubles event too (which is not surprising since he is the current No 1 in doubles and has been in that position for the last four years).

While all this may yet be conjecture, it would certainly be a travesty of justice if this sequence of events were to come about.

While one is all for blooding newer, younger faces (although Riad is actually about 24 years,

and can hardly be considered to be young) it would be a tragedy to leave out someone with Iftekhar's maturity and experience. His fighting spirit is also well-known to followers of the local scene.

The worst thing to emerge from this, messy handling of the whole affair is that it has pitched the players against each other. Rather than working on trying to perform as a team, the players, feeling insecure, are too concerned with worrying about who is going and who is not, to engage in any meaningful practice.

The last and the saddest joke in this mid-winter night's nightmare is that while the tournament in Sri Lanka will almost certainly be staged on slow clay, our boys are practising on fast cement. If ever there was a recipe for disaster, then this is it. If our team manages to avoid a clean whitewash, more knowledgeable heads than this humble reporter will be pleasantly surprised.

We admit that the BTF might be in the habit of flirting with madness and mayhem, catastrophic and chaos, backstabbing and blunders, but they would do well to remember that more is at stake here than mere personal prejudice or idiosyncrasy. Nobody has any right to toy with national honour and prestige, which honestly appear to be what BTF seems to be specialising in.