

Column One

SPORTS TALK



Saurav Ganguly
(India cricket captain)
"As a captain one has to set examples."

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1	Who is the number one women tennis player at the moment?	Hingis	Pierce	Williams
2	Who won the European Champions' League?	United	Real Madrid	Lazio
3	Who won the UEFA Cup?	Valencia	Galatasaray	Florentina
4	Who lifted national schools cricket title?	St Joseph	McSingh Zila	Og Khastagar
5	Who is the coach of Bangladesh football team?	Harrison	Van Gaal	Shakir

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U-16 booters held by Pakistan

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh football team suffered a severe blow in their hunt for promotion to the next round of the Asian Youth (U-16) Football Championship when they were held to a 2-2 draw by Pakistan in their second Group 4 match at Jamshedpur, India yesterday.

According to a faxed message, Bangladesh forfeited the lead twice after Sohel and Maud scored in each half.

The outcome now left Bangladesh with a tough task of defeating the hosts in their last match tomorrow for a place in the next round. India with victories against Sri Lanka (3-1) and Pakistan (6-0) topped the four-team meet with full six points.

Bangladesh, who won against Sri Lanka by a lone goal in the previous match, have four points from two games. Only the top finisher from the group will qualify for the final round.

AMs vote for Bangladesh

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh's bid for the elusive Test status got an official momentum yesterday when the Associate Members of the ICC (International Cricket Council) gave thumbs-up to the aspirants in their meeting in London.

Like the last year when Bangladesh applied for Test status all the non-Test playing nations threw their support behind the ICC trophy champions and put forward a unanimous resolution to the Executive Board yesterday. Syed Ashraf

Huq, the general secretary of BCB (Bangladesh Cricket Board), represented the country at the meeting. To become the tenth Test-playing country, Bangladesh needs at least seven out of nine votes from the Full Members and an undivided approval from the Associate Members.

The game's governing body would give its final verdict on upgrading of Bangladesh's status during the last day of its weeklong annual meeting on July 26 at Lord's. That all-important meeting will be attended by all the Full and Associate

members.

Talking to the BSS from London over phone BCB president Saber Hossain Chowdhury revealed, the Associate Members also elected Jimmy Rayani of Kenya, Rees Evershot of Holland and Tinku Inran of Malaysia as the three associate directors in the Executive Board of

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Mohammedan Sporting Club's general secretary Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan addressing a press conference organised in connection with the team's upcoming tour of England at the club premises yesterday. Also seen are (L-R) Zakir Hossain, chairman of the Bangladesh Football Association in London, Peter Waith, head of Public Administrative Division of sponsors Canary Wharf Limited, UK and Tanvir Haider, additional joint secretary of Mohammedan Sporting Club.

—Star photo

MSC going to Britain

Sports Reporter

Mohammedan Sporting Club is going set foot on English soil with a duel mission to introduce Bangladeshi football to mainstream Europe and to entertain its expatriate community.

The journey of the traditional force in the domestic arena to England in the first week of August, will offer an opportunity to get a feel of modern football as well as forge closer ties with the strong Bangladeshi community in London.

Although the national team will also travel to Britain to play a couple of exhibition matches with India at Leicester ahead of the Mohammedan tour, the latter's visit is aimed at purely promoting the Bangladeshi game.

All the black and white matches will be played at East London, considered by many as the heartland of a strong Bangladeshi community.

"There is a serious lack of Asian representation in British football," observed Peter.

On the other hand the national team will be involved at Elbert Street, the home of Premier League side Leicester City.

The nine-day goodwill trip of Mohammedan, which will commence on August 8, will be a joint venture of Bangladesh Football Association (BFA) of London and Canary Wharf Limited, a leading property developer in Europe.

We are making a serious effort to take the Asian community to the heart of British football.

Mohammedan is a familiar name there. So, the trip will give a big boost to young Bangladeshi living in the UK, said Peter Waith, who heads Canary's public administration department, at a press briefing held at the club's Motijheel premises yesterday.

The middle-aged Briton added that this tour would be the first of many in the years to come.

"We will provide the air fare, accommodation and food for a 22-member Mohammedan team," said Zakir.

Launched in 1996, the BAF has about 48 affiliated clubs and 26 teams are playing in the football league.

The briefing was also attended by the general secretary of Mohammedan Sporting Club Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan and publicity secretary Fazlur Rahman Babul, who is credited for putting the tour together.

QUARTERFINAL PREVIEW

France v Spain: Who will uncork the champagne?

France's winner as they beat Spain 1-0 in a friendly.

Now the two countries' paths cross yet again, with a place in the semi-finals at stake and Roger Lemerre's side widely expected to finish on top.

Spain's two-goal rally in injury-time to beat Yugoslavia 4-3 and reach the last eight was the stuff of footballing legend. But there will be no such deliverance against France if Spain's rickety defence fail to cope with the sheer speed and firepower of Thierry Henry and Nicolas Anelka.

Reacting to the statement

made by the former Indian skipper Mohammad Azharuddin who had alleged persecution because he belonged to the minority community, Hussain said, "When he became the captain of the Indian side, he was termed as the wonder boy of the country. His religion was not taken into consideration. So when he made that comment on 'minority' I talked to him.

"He admitted his mistake and apologised to me. He also stated that he would not repeat the mistake again. So, as far as I am concerned the matter is closed. I would not like to make any comment on it."

Mahmud, Enamul miss pay-roll?

Sports Reporter

National all-rounder Khaled Mahmud and veteran left-arm spinner Enamul Hoque are almost destined to miss out from the elite list of fourteen cricketers, who are coming under the pay-roll of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) from August 1.

According to a reliable source injured national opener Mehrab Hossain, who is now in India for treatment on his bad right knee, will not be included in the first of its kind contract since he needed at least a few months to recover.

Although the BCB president Saber Hossain Chowdhury opted for taking a maximum 14 players for a one-year contract, the selection committee headed by Tanvir Haider is reported to have selected 15 players in order to strike a balance.

Mahmud had a miserable last match for the national team against Pakistan in the seventh Asian Cup. The right-arm seamer was smashed for 80 runs in 10 overs, apparently considered past his prime to have a place in an otherwise youthful selection. Enamul whose days as a specialist taker may be over too.

It was gathered that the selectors have picked stroke-maker Al-Shahriar, Kalabagan young middle-order batsman Rajin Saleh, gangling off-spinner Sabbir Ahmed and young left-arm seamer Bikash Ranjan Das.

The final decision however will be made during the next board meeting.

Hockey final today

Sports Reporter

History will be in the making when Bangladesh will line up against favourites India in the final of the Asian (under-16) Federation Cup Hockey final in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur today.

Having never won an international tournament at any level, Bangladesh will hope for a reversal of fortune in their repeat clash. India defeated Bangladesh by a lone goal in a group league match.

Bangladesh advanced to the final defeating hosts Malaysia 4-1 in the second semifinal on Friday.

BKSP rule the pool

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Krira Shikha Protisthan (BKSP) established their supremacy in the Keaya 19th age-group swimming championship, winning highest 36 gold medals in the three-day meet that concluded at the Baniyan BN Swimming Complex yesterday.

Bangladesh Ansar with 31 gold finished runners-up while Kushtia bagged 21 to secure the third place.

Although Pabna claimed a lone gold, the natants from the northern district were voted the best disciplined team.

The President of Bangladesh Swimming Federation and Chief of the Naval Staff Rear Admiral MA Taher witnessed the final day's proceedings and distributed prizes.

Azhar's minority issue closed

From Our Correspondent

CALCUTTA, June 24: India's State Minister for Sports Shaikh Shahnawaz Hussain today made it very clear that if any cricketer was found involved in betting he would not be allowed to get away scot-free.

The minister, who is here to hold meeting with the coaches of the Sports Authority of India, said, "The government will go forward with the aim of finding out the real truth behind the allegations."

Reacting to the statement made by the former Indian skipper Mohammad Azharuddin who had alleged persecution because he belonged to the minority community, Hussain said, "When he became the captain of the Indian side, he was termed as the wonder boy of the country. His religion was not taken into consideration. So when he made that comment on 'minority' I talked to him.

"He admitted his mistake and apologised to me. He also stated that he would not repeat the mistake again. So, as far as I am concerned the matter is closed. I would not like to make any comment on it."

Re-reading the toss, Titas bat-

ted first and made 130 runs losing all wickets. Khokan was the top-scorer with 45 runs.

In reply, Ekota collected 110 runs for seven wickets in the stipulated 25 overs.

Partisan Viewpoint (Depending on which side you are on)

by Nizamuddin Ahmed

Tryst with tomorrow

Cricket Conference, named International Cricket Conference in 1965.

Contrary to mistaken belief, one of Bangladesh's greatest sporting achievement is not being handed on a silver platter.

The road to Test status was not strewn with rose petals. In fact, some thorns remain in the form of a section of the press in England and India, who have recently mounted a hate campaign on the Net to woo eight of the nine Test nations who have already made public their unequivocal support for Bangladesh.

Let this be an opportune occasion to remind the befuddled scribes in those two countries that England have won only about 33% of their Test matches in a pedestrian drudgery that stretches about a century; and India's success-rate is less than 20% in a mediocre grind that is seventy years old.

Come tomorrow the learned section of the press by the historic Thames and the holy Ganges shall be proven wrong. Also to be proven horribly off beam will be Bangladesh's former bamboozled cricket coach West Indian celebrity Gordon Greenidge, who said in 1998-99 that Bangladesh should not get the Test status before another ten years.

Some home-grown analysts

have of late aired on television that ICC should wait another two years before granting Bangladesh the coveted right to play Test matches. How unfortunate!

If it is Bangladesh's playing standard the section of the English and Indian press, Gordon Greenidge and this Bangladeshi 'pundit' is worried about, let them recall the standard of any of the other six at the time they became full members of ICC.

As far as cricket's infrastructure, popularity, government patronisation, club support, scope and future is concerned, few even among the nine can presently compare with Bangladesh.

Come tomorrow cricket fans in Bangladesh shall express their gratitude to the BCB president Saber Hossain Chowdhury and its general secretary Syed Ashraf Hossain, as well as the state minister for sports Obaidul Quader, a trio which worked in perfect tandem to elevate a nation to its long-felt aspiration.

Come tomorrow the Test status may not be enough to appease this nation's hunger for the game. Bangladesh shall always want a 'little' more. In this regard, this scribe wants to be on record that Bangladesh shall not have to wait GG's ten years before winning its first Test.

pitch that saw them crumble to a crushing defeat.

Only Marvan Atapattu, who scored 59 in 249 minutes with nine fours, and former captain Arjuna Ranatunga, who slammed a quick 65 off 80 balls with 13 fours, held up the Pakistan advance.

Sri Lanka resumed at 45 for one and moved promisingly until lunch before things started to fall apart for them. The hosts had gone to lunch at 123 for two after Waqar Younis had claimed the only wicket to fall in the morning, that of Russell Arnold lbw for 26.

Off-spinner Arshad Khan snapped up the wickets of Atapattu and Aravinda de Silva (11) within 13 balls in the afternoon session as Sri Lanka slid to 189 for 6 at tea.

Atapattu gave Pakistan captain and wicketkeeper Moin Khan a simple catch and De Silva was caught at forward short leg by Mohammad Wasim.

Ranatunga, with the support of Chaminda Vaas (20), put together a stand of 43 for the seventh wicket before Wasim Akram broke through by having the former captain leg before wicket with a swinging yorker.

Azhar Mahmood then accounted for Vaas and Rangana Herath in one over to speed up the victory.

Muttiah Muralitharan hit out boldly for 22 of 10 balls which included five fours before Waqar ended the innings and the match by shattering his stumps.

Waqar finished with figures of four for 40 and a match bag of seven wickets, but Akram who scored 100 and took three wickets was picked the man-of-the-match.

Pakistan won the first Test by five wickets on 17 June.

The third and final Test commences at Kandy on Wednesday.

SCOREBOARD

Final scorecard of the second cricket Test between Pakistan and Sri Lanka on the fourth day at the Galle International Stadium on Saturday:

SRI LANKA: First innings

600 for 8 declared (Saeed Anwar 123, Inzamam Haq 112, Younis Khan 116, Wasim Akram 100; Muttiah Muralitharan 4/138)

SRI LANKA: Second innings (overnight 45 for one)

Atapattu c Moin b Arshad 59

Jayasuriya c Inzamam b Waqar 21

Arnold lbw b Waqar 26

De Silva c M. Wasim b Arshad 11

Jayawardene lbw b Akram 65

Ranatunga