

U-15s lift title in SL

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-15 cricket team won the triangular tournament title with a massive 109-run victory over hosts Sri Lanka Under-15s in the final at the Premadasa Cricket Stadium in Colombo yesterday.

It was also a sweet revenge for the visitors after their two-wicket defeat in their group league match of the meet which also involves Malaysia.

Majumdar hit 79 and Ali 51 as Bangladesh scored 237 in 42 overs before being all out. The match was fixed 46-overs-a-side due to early morning rain.

In reply, Sri Lanka were bundled out for 128 in 38 overs.

Captain Humayun Kabir caused the home side collapse picking up four wickets.

AFC CUP

Brothers go to Turkmenistan today

SPORTS REPORTER

Brothers Union Club leaves Dhaka this morning to play their AFC Cup away match against Turkmenistan Nisa in Ashgabat, the capital of the central Asian country.

The Gopibagh outfit, who clinched the Federation Cup trophy last week to also confirm their participation in the tournament next year, held the Turkmenistan club 1-1 at home in March.

The Premier League champions have so far secured one point from two matches while Nisa have also one point. Al Nejme of Lebanon are leading the Group C table with nine points.

"We have no chance to move into the second round but it will be a good news for our football if we can beat them at their home," said Brothers Union manager Amer Khan yesterday.

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Did U Know?

The very first Wimbledon Championship was in 1877 when it was watched by some 200 spectators. In 1999 it was broadcast



Arjuna Ranatunga

(Former Sri Lanka cricket captain)

"He is too good a player to be axed. He is a very positive captain. I feel that he is one of India's best captains I have played against."

While supporting Sourav Ganguly to be retained as India captain until the next World Cup in 2007.



TEN Sports

West Indies vs South Africa

Second ODI

Live at 8:00 pm

ESPN

Primera Liga

Real Madrid vs Racing Santander

Repeat at 4:00 pm

English Premier Football League

Arsenal vs Liverpool

Live at 9:00 pm

STAR Sports

Football Extra

Live at 9:00 am

Brazilian Football

Corinthians vs Sao Paulo



EYE FOR A TIE: Wife of Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar knots his husband's tie as their son looks on at the Zia International Airport before the Bangladesh cricket team's departure for England on Friday night.

PHOTO: STAR

INDEPENDENCE DAY SOCCER

Arambagh in last four at MSC's cost

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,

Rajshahi

Arambagh Kriha Sangha rubbed salt into the wounds of Mohammedan Sporting Club as they beat the popular giants 3-1 to move into the semifinals of the Independence Day football tournament at the Rajshahi Stadium yesterday.

Majibur Rahman Ritu struck twice and Ridhon added the other in the second-half as Arambagh came from a goal down in the first-half to eliminate their Dhaka neighbours. It was Mohammedan's third defeat in row after their humiliating 5-1 thrashing at the hands of Abahani and a 1-0 semifinal loss against Muktioddha in the Federation Cup.

Arambagh will take on Premier League runners-up Sheikh Russel in the first semifinal tomorrow while another Dhaka giants Muktioddha will meet today's winners of the Abahani-Farashganj match in the second semifinal.

In front of a strong 15,000 crowd, striker Monju gave the Black and Whites a sixth minute lead, heading home a Faisal corner.

Striker Ritu levelled in the 55th

minute as his right-footed shot on a Dominic pass bamboozled Mohammedan custodian Biplob. Then his young striking partner Ridhon took the team ahead in the 65th minute.

With one minute left, Ritu fired in a left-footer to seal the margin and later he was adjudged man-of-the-match.

Ramzan Ali of Arambagh KS received marching orders one minute before the final whistle.

Captain and ace striker Alfaz Ahmed spoiled some good chances for Mohammedan and in the 76th minute his right-footed shot hit the left bar.

Red card: Ramjan (Arambagh).

Yellow card: Asad (Mohamedan), Dulal (Arambagh).

TEAMS

ARAMBAGH: Shakil, Dulal, Ramjan, Akram, Dulal Saha, Murad (Rintu), Juku, Imrul (captain), Dominic (Russel), Ridon (Morshead) and Ritu.

MOHAMMEDAN: Biplob, Nazrul, Biplob, Papel, Rony (Alfaz), Sentu, Asad, Faisal, Kaisar (Munnah), Zahid and Manju.

Referee: Azad Rahman.

BCCI panel talks coach issue today

Cricket

PTI, Kolkata

The process to find John Wright's successor formally begins on Sunday with the six-member committee, set up by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to select a new coach, holding its maiden session here.

The meeting would not only deliberate on the CVs received mainly from the Australians, but could also consider some other former players, both indigenous and foreign, for the top job to fill the vacancy caused by Wright's departure three weeks ago after a successful four and half year stint.

The presence of three eminent former national skippers Sunil Gavaskar, Ravi Shastri and Srinivas Venkatraghavan has made the panel rich in cricketing experience, and the board officials are also likely to sound out the seniors among the present crop of players informally before deciding the name of the new coach.

"There will be no official meeting with the present players, but their

views will be ascertained informally. We need to know their expectations from the new coach. After all, they are the ones who would be interacting closely with the coach," sources close to the BCCI said.

Chaired by BCCI president Ranbir Singh Mahendra, the committee also includes board secretary SK Nair and its former chief Jagmohan Dalmiya.

Meanwhile a report from New Delhi says, the BCCI on Friday denied media reports that an invitation has been extended to former Australian captain Allan Border to take over as coach of the national team.

"There is nothing like that. There is no truth in such reports," Mahendra told this news agency in the capital when asked to comment on media reports that the BCCI has sent a letter to Border offering the post of coach.

Mahendra pointed out that the committee had only been set up and the members were yet to meet and discuss the names.

Former Australian cricketers Dean Jones, Greg Chappell and Tom Moody are among those interested for the post.

Border's name, who stepped down as Australia's national selector, has cropped up only recently.

NATIONAL TT Biman blank Noakhali

SPORTS REPORTER

Holders Biman got off to a flying start in the men's event when the Meril 27th National Table Tennis Championships began at the Mirpur Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor Stadium yesterday.

The national flag carrier team defeated Noakhali 3-0 while runners-up Bangladesh Ansar beat Thakurgaon by same margin.

In the other men's team matches, Natore beat Nilphamari, Rangamati beat Meherpur, Dinaipur defeated Narayanganj, Habiganj beat Borguna, Rajshahi beat Naogaon, Jahangirnagar University beat Barisal, Munshiganj defeated Patuakhali, Magura beat Panchaghar, Rangpur beat Magura and Dhaka beat Kurigram, all by straight sets.

In the boys' team event, holders Ansar beat Thakurgaon, Naogaon

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Windies 86/3

STAR SPORT DESK

West Indies were 86 for 3 in 22.2 overs after winning the toss against South Africa in the first one-day international at Kingston in Jamaica on Saturday.

Captain Shivnarine Chanderpaul was batting on 15 and Ramnaresh Sarwan was on 17. Brian Lara departed after making only 8. Openers Chris Gayle and Wavell Hinds made 26 and 5 respectively.

For the tourists, Makhaya Ntini took 2 and Andre Nel grabbed the other.

Tigers touch down in England quietly

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh cricket team reached London yesterday to play their first full series against England.

But as expected, the Tigers passed through the Heathrow Airport unnoticed in the early hours after having nearly a ten-hour non-stop flight from Dhaka, where the mood was completely contrasting to say the least on Friday night.

Cameras were flashing endlessly and reporters desperately trying to collect a last minute information when Habibul Bashar's men were seen off at the Zia International Airport. And more surprisingly, the Bangladesh Cricket Board president Ali Asghar, who has a reputation of ducking such big occasions, was there to wish the Tigers well on their maiden full series in England.

But after a day, there was no news from England other than the conformation of their safe arrival and that too from a BCB official here in Dhaka.

It could not be known whether a reporter or a photographer was around at Heathrow as no international news service has wrote a word or displayed any picture. This treatment is not unlikely for a team like Bangladesh who are lying last

on the 10-team Test table.

The only solace for Bashar and company was that there were a couple of hundred Bangladeshi expatriates at the airport to greet them.

"I've not noticed a reporter or a photographer. But there were many Bangladeshi people at the airport to welcome us which was inspiring," said wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud while talking to The Daily Star Sport over phone.

"A few of them brought bouquets and some enthusiasts even chanted slogans," Mashud said while talking from their Marriott Hotel.

He also informed that it was a bright sunny day in London on Saturday and they were preparing to go to a ground nearby for stretching.

Bangladesh will play two Tests against Michael Vaughan's England, now second on the ICC rankings. After that the Tigers will feature in a triangular one-day tournament that also involves world champions Australia.

But before the series proper, Bangladesh will play three warm-up matches to get acclimatised with the English conditions. Their first three-day match is against British Universities at the Fenner's ground at Cambridge on May 10-12.

Essex batsman Mark Pettini will

lead the local side.

Bangladesh will play two more three-day warm-up matches, against Sussex over May 15-17 and Northamptonshire on May 20-22, before the first Test starts at Lord's on May 26.

Although it was all quiet on English front, Bangladesh captain Bashar, fresh after his side's historic home success against Zimbabwe in January, promised one or two surprises.

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed was also upbeat about something different from the young team despite the warning from coach Dav Whatmore, who said that the English challenge would be the second toughest task for him since his first assignment against Australia two years ago.

"Actually the series victory against Zimbabwe changed the whole scenario. I have never seen the players in such a free mood before the departure for an away series. Everybody was excited to play in England," said Faruque.

BANGLADESH: Habibul Bashar (captain), Javed Omar, Nafees Iqbal, Mohammad Ashraful, Rajin Saleh, Aftab Ahmed, Khaled Mashud, Shahriar Nafees, Mushfiqur Rahim.

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PHOTO: STAR

Cynthia of Narail in action against Ava of Gaibandha (not in picture) during the girls' singles (under-12 group) match of the Meril 27th National Table Tennis Championships at the Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor Stadium in Mirpur on Saturday.

Sharapova's dream shattered

Tennis

AFP, Berlin

Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova's dreams of becoming world number one were ended in devastating fashion by former top ranked player Justine Henin-Hardenne in the quarterfinals of the German Open on Friday.

The Belgian eased to a 6-2, 6-4 victory over the top-seeded 18-year-old Russian who would have ascended to the world top spot had she won the tournament here.

The victory was Henin-Hardenne's 15th in a row and she now faces Patty Schnyder from Switzerland in the semifinals.

Meanwhile, former world number one Amelie Mauresmo looks set for another rocky ride in Roland Garros after the defending champion fell in straight sets to Russian Nadia Petrova in the quarterfinals.

Mauresmo would like nothing better than to fulfill the desires of most of Paris by winning the clay court Grand Slam which starts in two weeks' time - but her 6-3, 6-2 loss to the world number 12 does not augur well.

The title-holder rarely seemed seriously in contention against the sixth-seeded Russian, who served more strongly, drove more consistently, and moved better from start to finish.

Mauresmo's serve rarely appeared to rise above second gear, giving the impression that she may still not have recovered from the abdominal muscle problem which has prevented her competing for more than a month.

Her only consolation was that she has been able to play three matches

here at a stage when she has been in need of on-court time, and appeared to get match practice without worsening the persistent injury.

"At the moment my expectations are pretty low," Mauresmo admitted.

"My view is that I really need to improve, and improve in all areas of the game. I must make sure that I play as many matches as I can and hit as many balls as I can and that's

the key. I wasn't able to do that in the last few weeks and it showed on court," added the Frenchwoman.

Petrova may also have been helped by the conditions, which were cold and slow, rain having delayed the start by an hour.

"The clay suited me because it

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PHOTO: AFP

Belgium's Justine Henin-Hardenne celebrates after beating Russia's Maria Sharapova at the German Open quarterfinal in Berlin on May 6.