

Football ready to help cricket!

SPORTS REPORTER

It seems the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) maybe willing to bail the Bangladesh Cricket Board out by allowing the BCB to stage a proposed tri-series at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

As part of its bid to raise Bangladesh's international ranking, the BCB is planning to host a three-nation one-day series involving Zimbabwe and Kenya at the country's premier venue sometime in November-January as their new home at Mirpur was yet to be completed.

When contacted BFF president SA Sultan tried to be understanding over the issue but did not rule out any possibility of cricket returning to the Big Bowl.

"It's too early to comment on the matter. We have some domestic commitments and we are also planning to host an international event at the venue. But we are not in a position to dismiss the national interest and we ready to open dialogue," said Sultan over telephone yesterday.

"We are very open-minded and there is no clash between football and cricket. But we need to consider how much national interest is involved with the tournament before taking any decision," he continued.

BCB president Ali Asghar, however, said that their first target was to finalise the triangular series and later they would deal with the venue.

"First we have to finalise the schedule. Yes, at the moment we have lack of venues to arrange the meet as Mirpur won't be ready in time. So, it will be nice if we could hold the meet at the BNS," he said.

Badda rout BRTC

SPORTS REPORTER

Badda Jagarani consolidated their position in the First Division Football League with a 5-0 thrashing of BRTC at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Moloy scored twice while Milon, Nasir and Sabur added one each as Badda, who recorded their seventh win in 11 outings, stayed second in the eight-team table with 23 points.

BRTC remained second from bottom with nine points also after 11 games.



Farashganj custodian Piru fails to stop Muktijoddha's opening goal by Jeremiah from a free-kick during their Premier Bank Premier Football League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Kottan charms Muktijoddha

SPORTS REPORTER



Inspired by the presence of Bangladesh's SAFF Football Championship coach George Kottan on the bench, Muktijoddha Sangsad blanked a stubborn Farashganj Sporting Club 2-0 in the Premier Football League yesterday.

Nigerian striking duo Jeremiah and Paul shared the second-half goals as Muktijoddha, playing for the first time in nine years without coach Shafiqul Islam Manik who was sensationally sacked on Tuesday, climbed to third place with their fifth win.

Both Muktijoddha and Farashganj started the eighth round match level on 13 points but the Reds overtook Abahani in the table, pushing their collection to 16.

Austrian coach Kottan, who has yet to take over from interim coach Atiqur Rahman, however, had his hand in the first eleven, playing Iqbal as libero behind Rajanai in the central defence.

Titu returned to his favourite right-back position as Muktijoddha started with a flat four-man backline but it was Farashganj, the surprise package of the ten-team competition, who drew early blood.

Nigerian midfielder Adafa tested Reds captain and goalkeeper from 25 yards but the scorching low drive that went inches wide of the upright.

Rajani, who looked set to shrug off his early season lethargy, then defended superbly by cutting a dangerous cross by Palash toward an unmarked Farashganj striker Felix.

There was no respite but Muktijoddha survived when Palash rattled the crossbar in the 21st minute after splitting the rival defence with a through from Nigerian Felix. Aminul made a spectacular save on the half hour when the full stretched keeper punched out a stunner by Kabir from 35 yards.

Muktijoddha came close twice from counter-attacks but Jeremiah and Paul's finish could not threaten Farashganj custodian Piru who was beaten at his near post six minutes

after the break by a curling Jeremiah freekick that came low past the wall.

A red storm rocked the Farashganj goal afterwards but Paul and substitute Pappu were denied by Piru from point-blank range before Paul finally sealed the victory in the 74th minute.

Arman sent Jeremiah racing down the left flank and he picked his fellow Nigerian forward Paul who received the ball inside six-yard box before placing home his first league goal. Paul is now sharing the top scorers' spot along with Brothers Union midfielder Liton.

Jeremiah spoiled two more chances while Farashganj, chasing shadows in the second half, were also let down as right full-back Khaled's powerful left-footer thundered the crossbar before Adafa forced a diving save by Aminul just before the final whistle.

Muktijoddha have one match left in the first-leg against Youngmen's Club Fakirpool while Farashganj play Abahani in their remaining match.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 4

Another blow for Reefat

SPORTS REPORTER

Reefat Bin Sattar suffered another blow in his campaign to fulfil the desired rating points to notch the Grand Master title when he drew in the University of Greenwich FIDE Rating Chess Tournament yesterday.

The International Master, who also drew on Thursday, shared his fourth round board with FIDE Master Abu Sufian Shakil at the National Sports Council (NSC) conference room.

The result pushed Reefat back to the second position as Grand Master Ziaur Rahman took solo lead with 3.5 points after winning his game against International Master Abdullah Al Rakib.

Reefat shared the second spot along with IM Enamul Hossain Rajib, FIDE Master Khondokar Aminul Islam, FIDE Master Shakil and FIDE Master Mehdi Hasan Parag securing three points.

SA to split NZ tour

CRICINFO, undated

The South African board has finally reached a settlement with New Zealand Cricket regarding their impending tour, beginning in October. According to Gerald Majola, the CEO of Cricket South Africa (CSA), the home series has been split into two visits, the first in October-November 2005, including five ODIs, and the second in April-May 2006, containing three Tests.

"This will allow us to field our best team, as well as to tour India [for five ODIs] in November at a critical time in our preparations to play Australia," said Majola during the release of the itinerary for the upcoming season on CSA's official website.

"The 2005-06 tour schedule is tough, but we believe it will provide excellent preparation for Australia in the short term, and the next World Cup in the West Indies in 2007 in the longer term."

South Africa, who are scheduled to play as many as five series in the forthcoming season, would solely rely on one-day cricket to get in shape ahead of their Australian tour in December. Before this series, South Africa will travel to India for a five-match one-day series beginning on November 14. Majola said that it had been decided to tour India in November because "We owe India five ODIs in terms of the ICC schedule. We had no option but to play these matches in November because of the ICC Super Series blocking other periods."

Majola said that the Super Series between Australia and a World XI in Australia in October had complicated South Africa's schedule, with six players -- Jacques Kallis, Mark Boucher, Herschelle Gibbs, Makhaya Ntini, Graeme Smith and Shaun Pollock -- included in the World XI squad.

"Again, there were clashes with the ICC Super Series matches when several of our top players will be on duty against Australia."

Kapali's mission England

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

There are as many ten players with Test experience in the 15-member Bangladesh A team which is due to tour England later this month but few will have as much at stake as Alok Kapali.

The highly rated yet estranged youngman has had an indifferent couple of years in international as well as domestic cricket and now finds himself out of the main team. Kapali knows that this England trip is a make or break opportunity for him with the Tiger's due to tour Sri Lanka in September.

Questions have been raised regarding the inclusion of so many main team players in the A side considering nine of them had only returned from England after a gruelling tour.

While selectors have argued that they are sending back those players to England with an eye to the future,

and while it could be beneficial to some extent for someone like Shahriar Nafees Ahmed, the teen-



ALOK KAPALI

aged captain of the A side who is yet to make his Test debut, for others like Aftab Ahmed, fatigue could set in.

But for Kapali, who is considered as one of the finest batsmen of his generation, it is a great opportunity

to get his place back.

"There are some players in the squad who have visited England before but it will be my first trip to that country and I am really excited for that. At the moment I am not thinking too much about the national team. Rather, my main goal is to find some form," said the 21-year old.

"I have watched Bangladesh's matches in England and Ashraf and Aftab have given me the belief that it is possible for strokeplayers like me to be successful there. They also told me that the conditions in English at the moment are far better than what the Bangladesh team experienced during their Test matches."

During a break in practice at the BKSP on Wednesday, Kapali said he was really heartened to hear that some senior Tigers members had missed him in the line-up in England.

"Everybody wants me to do well and they all wish me well and I am

SEE PAGE 13 COL 3

'It's wonderful to be back'

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

George Kottan told Muktijoddha Sangsad's high officials to sleep tight after their 2-0 win over Farashganj Sporting Club in yesterday's Premier Football League match.

Struggling in mid-table, local heavyweights Muktijoddha became the talk of the town when they ended the nine-year reign of Shafiqul Islam Manik on Tuesday and 24 hours later the Reds flew in 56-year-old Austrian coach Kottan from Berlin to take over.

The result was a relief for officials, whose big-budgeted side drew goalless with Sheikh Russel Krira

Chakra before crashing 3-1 to Brothers Union in the previous match.

However, Kottan, who led Bangladesh to the SAFF Football Championship in 2003, said he was satisfied picking up all three points but cautioned his players that much was needed to be done to improve their performance.

"Today, Atiq (interim coach) picked the team. He was the man in charge and I just assisted him," said Kottan who returned to his favourite ground -- the Bangabandhu National Stadium -- where the Bangladesh footballers held aloft the SAFF title.

The former national coach, however, admitted that switching defensive midfielder Iqbal to libero was his idea.

"We are missing key defenders through injury and suspension. So I

decided to give Iqbal the job because I have used him in a similar position in the past. It is an advantage to know the players.

"Rajani is the best fighter in my team. He was being wasted in that position. It was a mistake because he hardly gave 50 per cent.

"Most of the players here were in my national team three years ago but I had no idea about Paul and Jeremiah. But now I know them. So, before I take full charge from the next match, I'll have a clear idea about the team," Kottan said.

He also admitted that the boys made a nervous start.

"Because of the recent happenings, all eyes are on them. It is natural but they sustained the pressure

SEE PAGE 13 COL 7



PHOTO: STAR

Former national coach George Kottan briefing the Muktijoddha booters during the halftime break of their Premier League match against Farashganj yesterday.

NATWEST CHALLENGE

London matches on

Cricket

AFP, London

Two major cricket matches between England and Australia in London were set to be staged as planned despite the bomb attacks that rocked the British capital on Thursday.

The second and third matches of the NatWest Challenge one-day series between cricket's oldest rivals are scheduled to take place at Lord's, in north-west London, on Sunday and The Oval, in the south-east of the city, on Tuesday.

In a statement issued Friday, Lord's owners Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) said: "Following discussions involving the Metropolitan Police, Marylebone Cricket Club, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and Cricket Australia, MCC can confirm that The NatWest Challenge match between England and Australia will go ahead at Lord's, as scheduled, on Sunday.

"The usual major matchday security arrangements at Lord's -- which include bag and body searches -- will be further tightened.

Magesh India's 12th Grand Master

PTI, New Delhi

Panchanathan Magesh Chandran became India's 12th Grandmaster when he tied for first place in the 180,000 dollars 33rd World Open held at Philadelphia in the United States.

22-year-old Magesh lost to GM Kamil Milon of Poland in the title play-off after tying for the top spot and scored 7.5 points from the nine rounds in the 204-player event to obtain his third and final GM norm on Monday.

Magesh, a student in the University of Texas at Dallas, had got his first GM norm by winning the Asian Junior Championship at Sri Lanka in 2003 and completed his second norm at Bar in Serbia (formerly Yugoslavia) in March this year.

Magesh's main strength in the event was his consistency amidst a star-studded field. His points came from excellent performances against strong players like Jaan Ehivest of Estonia, Yuri Shulman of Israel and American Alexander Shabalov.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 4

Vaughan's reality-check

Cricket

AFP, Leeds

England captain Michael Vaughan did his best to keep his emotions in check after seeing his side here Thursday achieve their biggest wickets' win against Australia in a one-day international.

Victory by nine wickets at Vaughan's Headingley home ground saw England take a 1-0 lead in their best of three series with the world champions.

But Vaughan told reporters after Thursday's match: "It can't hinder your confidence when you win by nine wickets against a team like Australia but how much an effect the one-dayers have on the Ashes, who knows?"

"History suggests it won't have any. But as individuals there will only be two more knocks before the series starts so you have to make the most of every opportunity you get."

In Saturday's tied NatWest Series final against Australia at Lord's, England slumped to 33 for five but at Headingley they didn't lose a wicket until Strauss was out for 41 in the 25th over.

"We learnt a lot from Saturday's game, when you chase quite a smallish total it is important not to let them back into the game and at Lord's we let them back in too early," Vaughan said.

"Today we just wanted to give ourselves a platform if we needed to accelerate towards the last 10 or 15 overs as we had players down the order to do that."

Ponting said conditions were unlike anything he'd previously experienced.

"The wicket was very hard to bat on this morning and then of course the clouds went away when it was

England's turn to bat. That's the most challenging one-day wicket I have ever batted on."

Worryingly for Australia, experi-

enced fast bowler Jason Gillespie had another tough day on tour, his 10 wicketless overs costing 66 runs.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 7



PHOTO: AFP

Indian cricket coach Greg Chappell is pictured during a special yoga session for the Indian team in Bangalore on Friday. The second part of a conditioning camp is going on in preparation for a triangular one-day series involving West Indies and hosts Sri Lanka.



Did U Know?

During the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games, the procession of athletes is always led by the Greek team, followed by all the other teams in alphabetical order (in the language of the hosting country), except for the last team which is always the team of the hosting country.



Premier Football League
Arambagh vs Dhaka Wanderers (5:00 pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium



Kapil Dev

(Former India cricket captain)
"I have fond memories of Sachin. I have witnessed his evolution from a 16-year-old boy to undoubtedly the best batsman in modern times. I personally think that he has lot to offer to Indian cricket and wish him the very best."