



WORTHY VICTORS: Jubilant Bangladesh U-19 cricketers party over the champions' trophy after beating Sri Lanka in the tri-nation cricket tournament final at BKSP on Tuesday. PHOTO: STAR

Div I cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhanmondi Club registered an exciting one-wicket victory over Bangladesh Boys in the First Division Cricket League at City Club ground yesterday.

Mostafa scored highest 62 and Joy added 42 runs as Dhanmondi raced to 214-9 in 49.5 overs in reply to Boys' 213-9 in 50 overs.

At the Dhaka University ground, Partex Sporting Club (122-4) outplayed Dhaka Wanderers (121-10) by six wickets.

Gazi Tank defeated Eskaton Sabuj Sangha by five wickets at BKSP in the other match. Gazi scored 223 for 5 in reply to Eskaton's 219-8.

Shoaib for two bouncers per over in ODIs

REUTERS, Lahore

Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar, who decimated England with five wickets on Monday, has called on cricket's lawmakers to allow two bouncers in one over in one-day internationals.

"I think they should consider allowing two bouncers in one over because of all the restrictions being introduced these days in international cricket," he said after taking five for 54 to set up a Pakistani win in the second one-day.

"When you have various restrictions, like now they have fielding restrictions for 20 overs, it is only fair to allow two bouncers. Once one flies away you can't do it again (or) you end up getting a warning," he said.

Bowlers are allowed two bouncers in one over in Test cricket but only one in one-dayers by the International Cricket Council.

Shoaib also had praise for his captain Inzamam-ul-Haq with whom his working relationship remained cold until recently.

"I think the consistency that has come into our performances is also due to the way Inzamam has developed into a very good captain," he said.

"He has helped keep the team together. He is very calm and composed and is good at encouraging the players and getting their best performances out of them. After the first match loss he lifted the team really well," said Shoaib, who also took 17 wickets in the 2-0 Test series win over England.

Sakib alone suffices

Bangladesh clinch U-19 title beating Lanka

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Sakib Al Hasan struck a swashbuckling hundred as Bangladesh clinched the under-19 tri-nation trophy in style with an emphatic six-wicket victory over Sri Lanka at BKSP yesterday.

The Magura lad, tipped by many as a star in the making, turned the final into a one-man show with a dazzling all-round performance.

The 16-year-old took three wickets for 39 runs to restrict the islanders to modest 217 on a perfect batting track and then smashed exactly 100 coming at number three as Bangladesh raced to victory 218-4 with more than three overs to spare.

The title-triumph completed a fantastic run of the young Tigers since the Afro-Asia cup in India last month as they won nine matches against the defeat at the hands of their yesterday's vanquished in the last league match on Sunday.

The southpaw with his Tuesday's three wickets pushed his tournament tally to ten. But he was more impressive with bat scoring highest 280 including two big half centuries to run away with both the man-of-the-match and the man-of-the-tournament trophies.

"I've learnt that many including Wisden Asia dubbed me as a future star. It is nice but I am not excited about my future. My target is to establish myself as a good top order batsman and play an important role for my country in the Youth World Cup in Sri Lanka next year," said excited Sakib after the match.

Shakib, as elegant as any other left-handed batsman, struck ten boundaries including some superb back-footed drives in flawless 86-ball essay. He was the third Bangladeshi to have scored century in the competition after another exciting left-hander Tamim Iqbal (112) and Raqibul Hasan (121).

He was eventually caught at

short cover off spinner Karunaratne with Bangladesh only four runs away from the target.

Tamim and Raqibul gave the home team a solid start producing 51 runs before the former was completed outfoxed a Weerasinghe off-spinner that spun viciously. Tamim entertained the small crowds with six boundaries in his 46-ball 38 while Raqibul added 36 off 79 balls.

Earlier, Sri Lanka captain Angelo Mathews hit 65 but it was not enough for the visitors to put up a fighting total.

The only disappointment in the match for the home side was sloppy fielding.

But chief selector Faruque Ahmed, who along with Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore watched the final, wanted to focus on the brighter side of the youth team.

"If you ask me what strike me most I must say it was their self-believe. I never saw them in negative frame of mind. This is not a joke that they have defeated five top-class teams in recent times. We are optimistic they will produce something special in the Under-19 World Cup in February," said the former national captain.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 2



Bangladesh all-rounder Sakib Al Hasan plays a straight-drive during his match-winning century against Sri Lanka in the final of the tri-nation under-19 cricket tournament at the BKSP on Tuesday. PHOTO: STAR

BCB boss' surprise

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Ali Asghar surprised everybody when he appeared at the BKSP in Savar at the closing stage of the under-19 tri-nation final between the hosts and Sri Lanka.

The BCB boss, who holds the dubious record of ducking a board-sponsored programme at the eleventh hour, also made a surprise announcement during an unscheduled bout with the reporters after the final.

"I think your first question will be when the board meeting will take place. Let me assure you that the next board meeting will be held in the first week of January," said Asghar after being faced with a volley of questions over some burning issues that he has not addressed yet.

Asghar had earlier promised to hold an emergency meeting in the second week of this month after the resignation of his joint-secretary Reazuddin Al Mamun following allegations that the board president had struck a secret deal with Malaysia-based Aston Moore over future sponsorship and TV rights.

"I hope you will get your every question answered after the board meeting. I have already instructed my general secretary (Mahbubul Anam) to solve certain outstanding issues like forming the remaining standing committees," said Asghar.

He also admitted things were not going in the right direction after the August election that saw the board suffer financial loss both domestically and internationally. The Premier League started without sponsor on Monday.

The BCB boss also expressed his disappointment at the postponement of the Asia Cup.

"We were supposed to earn at least two million dollars from the meet. I will talk to the new Indian board president (Sharad Pawar) within a week and raise the matter along with the issue of our long-pending tour of India," he added.

"I think your first question will be when the board meeting will take place. Let me assure you that the next board meeting will be held in the first week of January," said Asghar after being faced with a volley of questions over some burning issues that he has not addressed yet.

Asghar had earlier promised to hold an emergency meeting in the second week of this month after the resignation of his joint-secretary Reazuddin Al Mamun following allegations that the board president had struck a secret deal with Malaysia-based Aston Moore over future sponsorship and TV rights.

"I hope you will get your every question answered after the board meeting. I have already instructed my general secretary (Mahbubul Anam) to solve certain outstanding issues like forming the remaining standing committees," said Asghar.

He also admitted things were not going in the right direction after the August election that saw the board suffer financial loss both domestically and internationally. The Premier League started without sponsor on Monday.

The BCB boss also expressed his disappointment at the postponement of the Asia Cup.

"We were supposed to earn at least two million dollars from the meet. I will talk to the new Indian board president (Sharad Pawar) within a week and raise the matter along with the issue of our long-pending tour of India," he added.

Now Pietersen blow for Eng

AFP, Lahore

England suffered a setback ahead of the third one-day international against Pakistan when their hard hitting middle-order batsman Kevin Pietersen was ruled out Tuesday because of rib cage injury.

"Pietersen is returning home on Tuesday evening due to a rib cage problem and would miss the remaining three one-day internationals against Pakistan," England media manager James Evory told AFP.

Pietersen, who starred in England's Ashes win over Australia in September this year, played a brisk knock of 56 in England's 42-run win in the first of five one-day internationals in Lahore on Saturday.

Pakistan levelled the series with a comfortable seven-wicket win in the second match, also played in Lahore on Monday.

The remaining three matches are scheduled for Karachi (Thursday) and the last two at Rawalpindi on Saturday and Monday.

England is without their regular captain Michael Vaughan who was ruled out of the one-day series after he was advised to have surgery on his injured right knee.

They also missed left-arm spinner Ashley Giles in the one-day series who suffered a recurrence of a hip injury which forced him to return home before the third Test against Pakistan.

Clash of contrasting styles

Bangladesh v Pakistan: Second Semifinal

AL MUSABBIR SADI from Karachi

SAFF CHAMPIONSHIP PAKISTAN 2005

When defending champions Bangladesh meet hosts Pakistan in the second semifinal of the Fourth SAFF Championship here today, it would be a battle of Latin American football versus the English-style long-ball game.

Under the able guidance of Argentine coach Diego Cruciani, Team Bangladesh have been playing attractive and intelligent brand of football, building attacks with neat short-passes whenever they get possession and surprise the opponents down the middle or flanks.

And even their second-choice side held mighty India to a draw in their last group match a couple of days ago to prove that Bangladesh have definitely improved under Cruciani merely in two months.

The confidence and authority they have showed in the three matches so far, controlling proceedings as well as upsetting opposition's plans, Cruciani's charges have already earned the respect of their opponents.

In addition, consistency of the forwards and their clinical finishes have raised their hopes of retaining the title. However, things would not be as easy as it had been against Bhutan, Nepal or India in the group stage.

Backed by the home crowd, the physically superior Pakistanis would be ready to unsettle Bangladesh's style in the battle for a place in the December 17 final.

"It's the knockout stage and tomorrow's game would be very tough. I don't expect good football because both teams would be

fighting," said Cruciani yesterday.

"Pakistan are very strong but we need to create space and move the ball as we have been doing so far. It would be better for us."

"I don't want the opposition to take advantage from long balls and headers. So, I told my boys not to give Pakistan freekicks near our area. It is very important," he said while highlighting Pakistan's strong-point.

A good match-reader, the 41-year-old also pointed out that the

grass and attack from the wings. This would be our hard point.

"Zesh (Rahman) is not a good ball-player. I don't see any particular player who could be dangerous, it's rather the whole team. But tomorrow, I think we will play against the Pakistan team and the supporters and hope we don't have to play against the referee. It would be a close match and we would be attacking and have to be careful when their two fast players come on the counter."

The memory of conceding five yellow cards in the second group match would be haunting the players and team management against the home team but everyone believes that Cruciani, a master strategist, would be able to cope with that.

Cruciani, who will field the team that started in the first two games, said after yesterday's training session that he would not give Emily a start despite scoring 'two beautiful goals' in the tournament.

"He is a very good player and I think he is not a promise any more. He is a reality. But he has to wait for more exposure."

Pakistan's Bahraini coach Salman Ahmed Sharida predicted that it would be 'anybody's game' at this stage.

SEE PAGE 13 COL 5



Bangladesh captain Arif Khan Joy talks to the press in Karachi on Tuesday. PHOTO: STAR

Pakistani defenders are strong in the air but not good at ground.

"So we should keep the ball on the

HEAD-TO-HEAD			
DATE	SCORELINE	EVENT	VENUE
2.5.1985	Bang 2: Pak 1	Quaid-e-Azam Trophy	Peshawar
21.12.1985	Bang 2: Pak 1	SAF Games	Dhaka
25.11.1987	Bang 0: Pak 1	SAF Games	Kolkata
26.10.1989	Bang 0: Pak 1	SAF Games Final	Islamabad
24.12.1991	Bang 0: Pak 1	SAF Games	Colombo
25.3.1995	Bang 0: Pak 1	SAARC Gold Cup	Colombo
24.4.1999	Bang 4: Pak 0	SAFF Championship	Goa

V-Day the inspiration

SPORTS REPORTER from Karachi

SAFF CHAMPIONSHIP PAKISTAN 2005

With the Victory Day only a couple days away, the Bangladesh footballers would take inspiration from the memory of the great Liberation War before taking on Pakistan in the semifinals of the Fourth SAFF Championship here today.

"We have the motivation. The coach wanted to take some technical advantage by dropping nine regular players against India and I feel that the result of that game is satisfactory. We will use that advantage in the semifinal," said Bangladesh captain Arif Khan Joy yesterday.

"In the last SAFF tournament, we wanted India in the final but had to face them in the semis. This time around, the same thing is happening although we did not think we would be playing the hosts in the semis," the midfielder said.

"The idea of playing Pakistan on their home ground in the month of victory has inspired the team members. We feel like giving some extra efforts due to this. We are really inspired to give our best tomorrow because the Liberation War in 1971 is pride for us and shame for them. We want to use this spirit to go into the final. People at home are wait-

ing anxiously. They know we are playing Pakistan and they will watch the game on TV. We are going through a crisis back home and if we lose now, they won't forgive us."

Joy thinks the expectation would not be a pressure. "We are always expected to win trophies at this level and the team is well prepared for winning."

"Pakistan are a tough side under a foreign coach. They have trained long and would want to utilise home conditions. But as a team we are stronger than them. We have also been playing good football. I think we are the more spirited side."

The skipper also warned his boys against complacency of over-confidence. "We have a lot of matured footballers with big match temperament. They can understand what a knockout game is like. Still we will have a players' meeting tomorrow after breakfast where the coach would not be allowed. We will decide about our roles and duties."

"Pakistan are speedy and can last full 90 minutes. They are more physical than us but we have better players in each position. The most important thing is that we have more match winners. Our strikers are consistent and in addition to that, we have players like Alfaz, Arman and Matir Munna. Any one can strike in the nick of time."

"Also, we have a striker like Emily among the reserves and he

has proved that he can score from any position. The way he played against India, he has proved that he is a class act and knocking at the doors to be a regular in the team. He worked hard and got the equaliser for us. I praise his nerves. Scoring over the goalkeepers' heads under pressure is not an easy task."

"I felt that India were trying to avoid Maldives in the semis. They used a full strength team but not only they failed to beat us but also had a player sent off. We really damaged their spirit by making a great comeback."

Pakistan will miss their top striker Imran Hossain through suspension but Joy thinks whatever the opposition attack is, centre-backs Rajani and Sujun can handle them.

Commenting on Pakistan's Birmingham-born defender Zesh, who plays for English Premiership side Fulham, Joy said that he found nothing extra-ordinary in the defender. "He is good in air and sometimes joins attack during corners. We will have to be careful in those times."

What to WATCH

DD Sports
India vs Sri Lanka
Second Test, Day Five
Live at 10:00 am

ESPN
English Premier Football League
Everton vs West Ham
Live at 1:45 am (Thursday)

STAR Sports
English Premier Football League
Man United vs Wigan
Live at 1:45 am (Thursday)