

Star SPORT

DHAKA THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 7, 2006, E-MAIL: sports@thelystar.net

NCL prizes handed over

SPORTS REPORTER

The prize distribution ceremony of the Ispahani Mirzapore Tea Seventh National Cricket League took place at a local hotel yesterday.

Long-serving national wicket-keeper Khaled Mashud highlighted the lively programme most as he lifted both four-day and one-day trophies as Rajshahi skipper.

Rajshahi had double delights in the seventh version of the country's lone first-class competition which concluded last March with Chittagong finishing runners-up in the longer-version and Dhaka as one-day runners-up.

The programme, held more than five months after the tournament's conclusion, was graced by host of players including national caps, coach Dav Whatmore, selectors and organisers.

The players discarded from the national team dominated the ceremony as Ehsanul Haque received the man of the series trophy as the highest run getter in the first-class competition (955).

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OLYMPIC FOOTBALL Bangladesh drawn against Hong Kong

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will play Hong Kong in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games football pre-qualifiers in February 2007.

The preliminary round draw for the 20 teams was held yesterday at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur.

Bangladesh will travel to Hong Kong to play the first leg match on February 7 before hosting the second leg a week later.

The ten winners will join the top 14 seeded teams for the second round for which the draw will be held on September 16 in Singapore. China have automatic qualification to the tournament as hosts. Iraq, South Korea, Japan, Bahrain, Iran, Oman, Kuwait, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Malaysia, North Korea, Syria and Qatar play directly in the second round.

The preliminary round pairings: Myanmar v India, Jordan v Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan v Thailand, Vietnam v Afghanistan, Uzbekistan v Tajikistan, Singapore v Pakistan, Hong Kong v Bangladesh, Yemen v Palestine, Indonesia v Maldives, Australia v Chinese Taipei.



Did U Know?

The most French Open women's singles titles (seven) won by an individual is Chris Evert (USA) in 1974, 1975, 1979, 1980, 1983, 1985, and 1986.

What to WATCH

TEN Sports

US Open
Day 11
Live at 9:00 pm



Ronaldinho

(Brazilian star footballer)

"A professional footballer has to 'kill a lion' every day to prove themselves worthy of being kept in the team. I am here to do my best for Brazil and show I want to be in the national team for as long as possible."



Bangladesh wicketkeeper batsman Khaled Mashud (R) receives the National League trophy from State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman (2nd-L) during a prize awarding ceremony at a local hotel yesterday. Mashud led Rajshahi to win both the first-class and one-day versions of the Ispahani Mirzapore National Cricket League for the season 2005-06.

BFF not to pay full salary to Cruciani

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) executive committee members unanimously decided not to pay Argentine coach Diego Cruciani his full salary for the last month at job.

Cruciani, who joined as national team coach last year, left Dhaka in the early hours of Tuesday after a 13-month stint. The BFF had cut US dollars 3,000 from his salary to pay the fine imposed on the Argentine by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) for assaulting an Indian referee in December 2005 during an Asian Cup pre-qualifying match against Pakistan in Dhaka.

"Everybody had complaints against the coach and decided that Cruciani rather than the federation should pay his fine. The manager's report after the 10th South Asian Games also suggested he was not committed to the job and almost attacked the match officials after the first two games in Colombo. So we have decided to reject his appeal for paying him the salary in full. We will pay the 3,000 dollars to the AFC soon," told BFF general secretary Anwarul Hoque Helal after yesterday's executive committee meeting at the BFF Bhaban.

The BFF also gave a guideline to the league committee for smooth launching of the first ever Professional Football League.

The committee, after discussion with the clubs within this week, will announce a fresh transfer date for the Pro League, scheduled to kick off in November.

"We have given a concrete guideline to the league committee so that they can launch the league on November 7," Helal informed.

"The National Sports Council (NSC) will prepare the ground at the Bangabandhu National Stadium for football by September 23 although the athletics track would not be completed. As the clubs have disagreed to go for the transfer without assurance from the NSC, the committee will get a written statement about the handover time of the ground before sitting with them.

"There is a possibility that the league would start in mid November but we have told them to launch the league on November 7 at any cost."

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Bangladesh crash out of AFC U-17 soccer

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh crashed out of the AFC Under-17 Football Championship when they went 7-0 down to Syria at the Bishan Stadium in Singapore yesterday.

Bottom-table Bangladesh, who lost 2-0 to Vietnam in the opener, were trailing 5-0 at the break of their second game in Group D.

Darwish Midou slammed a hattrick for Syria while Mohamad Zaafar scored a double while Solaiman and Ziad Ajouz added one goal apiece.

Vietnam shared the lead with China in the group with four points each after the two drew 3-3 in the day's other match.

Bangladesh play their third and last group match against China tomorrow.

Nafis opens new innings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

National cricketer Nafis Iqbal began a new innings Tuesday night when he tied the knot with Taslima Makim Eva.

Opening batsman Nafis, nephew of former Bangladesh captain Akrab Khan, and Eva, teacher of an English medium school, have been engaged since February 3, 2005.

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, national coach Dav Whatmore, manager Shafiqul Haque Hira, chief selector Faruque Ahmed and hosts of fellow cricketers, sports organisers, journalists, friends and well-wishers joined the wedding ceremony at the Ladies Club in the port city to wish the new couple a happy conjugal life.

The couple, attired in gorgeous and lavish wedding dresses brought from abroad, also sought blessings from all to be able to go nicely through the new chapter.

Eldest son of late Mohammad Iqbal Khan, a former footballer and coach, and Nusrat Iqbal, a women's sports organiser in the city, the 20-year-old Nafis has so far played 11 Tests and 16 one-day internationals.

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Younis ton fashions win

Cricket

AFP, Southampton

the bat which was important.

"More than anything we showed a lot of fight in the whole game, and if we keep doing that we'll turn things around sooner rather than later."

"We put the ball in the right areas but were a bit unlucky in the middle. All credit to Pakistan, people keep getting hundreds and Younis Khan did that very well today (Tuesday)."

Broad gave Pakistan a scare by taking two wickets in two balls in the

47th over to get rid of Abdul Razzaq (16), caught and Kamran Akmal, held at point by Paul Collingwood before Navedul Hasan was bowled by seamer Jon Lewis for seven.

Earlier, paceman Naved took four wickets for 57 runs in England's 271 for nine.

Lewis, who had figures of two for 11 in Pakistan's seven-wicket win at Lord's on Saturday, struck with his sixth ball when Shoaib

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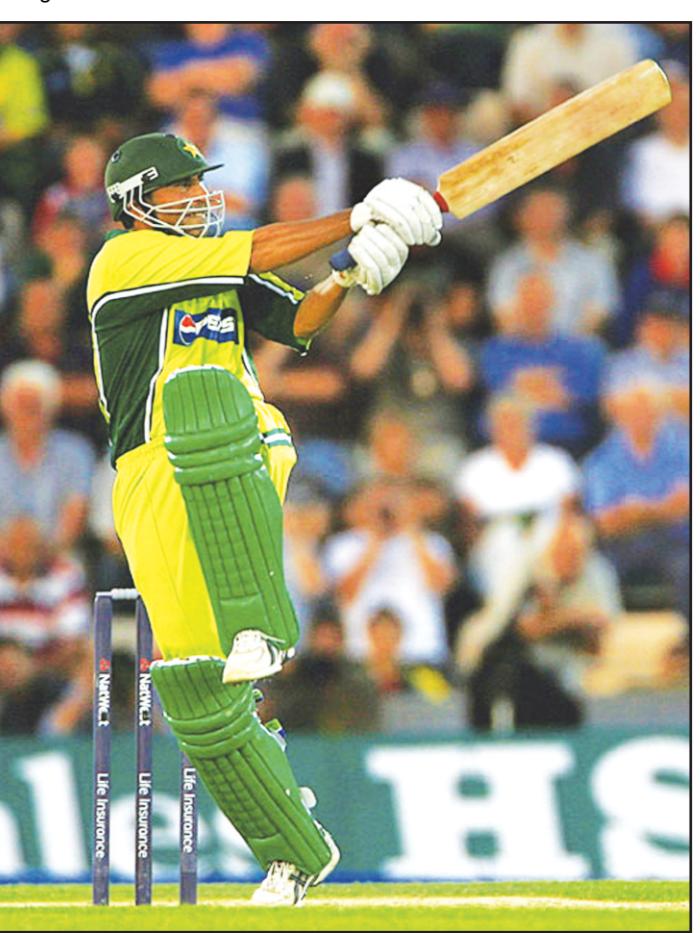


PHOTO: INTERNET

BRILLIANT: Pakistan vice-captain Younis Khan pulls one for four during his match-winning hundred in the third one-day against England at The Rose Bowl in Southampton on Tuesday.

A three-batsman race

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

The other selectors were Allan Donald of South Africa, Ian Healy of Australia, Arjuna Ranatunga of Sri Lanka and Waqar Younis of Pakistan.

The final selection will be voted by a 56-member ICC academy comprising the 10 Test captains, 18 members of the umpires and match referees panel and 28 legends of the game and members of the media.

Bangladesh opener and newly-appointed vice-captain Shahriar Nafes was nominated as one of the contenders for the Emerging Player of the Year award, on the back of his consistent run in Test and one-day cricket since making his debut on September 2005.

The Captain of the Year and Women's Cricketer of the Year awards have been introduced this year.

"Cricket is not just about runs, wickets and catches," said Speed. "It is also about tactics and the way a side conducts itself and the captain plays a pivotal role in those aspects of the game."

"The Captain of the Year Award is designed to recognize the leader's contribution to the game and to the spirit of cricket we all value so highly."

"The Award for Women's Cricketer of the Year is a welcome and very appropriate addition to this year's ceremony."

"It will serve to showcase the

very best women's cricketers, something that is vital as the ICC seeks to ensure the continued growth of the game at all levels."

NOMINATIONS CRICKETER OF THE YEAR

Ricky Ponting (Aus), Shane Warne (Aus), Muttiah Muralidaran (SL), Michael Hussey (Aus), Andrew Flintoff (Eng), Mohammed Yousuf (Pak), Rahul Dravid (Ind), Mahela Jayawardene (SL), Younis Khan (Pak), Monty Panesar (Eng), Brett Lee (Aus), Makhaya Ntini (SA), Adam Gilchrist (Aus).

TEST PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Michael Hussey (Aus), Ricky Ponting (Aus), Mohammed Yousuf (Pak), Andrew Flintoff (Eng), Shane Warne (Aus), Muttiah Muralidaran (SL), Kumar Sangakkara (SL), Rahul Dravid (Ind), Mahela Jayawardene (SL), Kevin Pietersen (Eng), Younis Khan (Pak), Makhaya Ntini (SA), Adam Gilchrist (Aus).

ONE-DAY PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Yuvraj Singh (Ind), Michael Hussey (Aus), Ricky Ponting (Aus), Shane Bond (NZ), Irfan Pathan (Ind), Andrew Flintoff (Eng), Mahela Jayawardene (SL), Kevin Pietersen (Eng), Younis Khan (Pak), Makhaya Ntini (SA).

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PHOTO: AFP

Belinda Bencic of Switzerland makes a forehand return against Elena Dementieva of Russia in the 2006 US Open at the Flushing Meadows in New York on Tuesday.

Rain ruins Day Nine

US OPEN US OPEN

AFP, New York

Rain washed out the ninth day of the US Open on Tuesday as one women's singles match was completed and two more main draw encounters started but were left in limbo.

Jelena Jankovic of Serbia defeated Russian fourth seed Elena Dementieva in straight sets to reach her first Grand Slam semi-final before the showers hit at 1:35pm (1735 GMT) forcing the others off the court and into the locker-rooms. Play was officially called off at 7:40pm local time.

Russian seventh seed Nikolay Davydenko was two sets to one up (6-1, 5-7, 6-3) against Britain's Andy Murray in a fourth round tie while another Russian, Marat Safin, was 2-1 up in the first set against Germany's Tommy Haas.

With weather forecasters calling for continued showers overnight the remainder of the day programme and the evening schedule featuring top seed Roger Federer was also postponed.

Federer was slated to play world number 79 Marc Gicquel of France on the main Arthur Ashe Stadium.

But the bad weather certainly didn't dampen the spirits of 19-year-old Jankovic who was bubbling with excitement after her stunning upset of 2004 finalist Elena Dementieva of Russia 6-2, 6-1.

The 19-year-old Jankovic finished her third-straight win over a top 10 player and was so busy celebrating she said couldn't even remember the final score.

"What was the score? I don't even know the total score," Jankovic said. "It's amazing. She beat me in Los Angeles. We played for 2 1/2 hours and it was a tough match. I was expecting to have a tough battle. I don't know what happened."

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National opener Nafis Iqbal (L) and his bride Eva pose for photograph during the couple's wedding ceremony at a local hotel in Chittagong on Tuesday.

PHOTO: STAR