

KABADDI WORLD CUP
Bangladesh
in last 8
SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh emerged group champions to set a quarterfinal clash against Nepal in the second World Cup Kabaddi India yesterday.

South Asian Games and Asian bronze medalists Bangladesh routed Thailand 55-25 and Afghanistan 71-36 on Wednesday and followed up the opening day's victories with a 69-28 defeat of Italy yesterday morning at the Karnala Sports Academy in Panvel near Mumbai.

All the quarterfinal clashes were due last night. In the other last eight games, hosts and defending champions India were facing Malaysia, Iran were pitted against Thailand while Sri Lanka were up against Japan.

The semifinals and the final will be held today.

Amateurish
Russel boss
SPORTS REPORTER

Even before start of the Professional Football League, Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra president's unprofessional remark came as sheer surprise.

Sheikh Russel boss Nurul Alam Chowdhury yesterday admitted yesterday that coaches of his club had to consult the club president before finalising the final line-up of the team ahead of a game.

It means the club will be reluctant to give the coach freedom in the coming B. League.

SEE PAGE 22 COL 1

What to
WATCH

ESPN
Australia v England
7th ODI, CB Series
Live at 09:13 am
Pakistan v South Africa
3rd Test, Day 1
Live at 2:30 pm
STAR Sports
Australian Open
Women's Doubles Final/Mixed
Doubles Semifinal
Live at 10:00 am
Tommy Haas v Fernando Gonzalez
Men's Singles Semifinal
Live at 2:30 pm

DAY'S
EVENT

Premier Division Cricket League
Mohammedan v Indira Road
Venue: BKSP
Victoria v Partex
Venue: Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium
Sonargaon v Young Pegasus
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium

Experience preferred

Tamim new face in Tigers' Zim tour

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

There might have been debate on whether wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud's injury made the selectors' job easier to prolong his absence from the national team but chief selector Faruque Ahmed categorically told that the team would miss his experience during the four-match one-day series against Zimbabwe next month.

Habibul Bashar's men will fly to Zimbabwe on January 31 to play the matches on February 4, 6, 9 and 10 as part of World Cup preparation.

Although the long-serving stumper missed the list due to a thumb injury, the selectors, however, looked to experience ahead of the coming World Cup when they announced the 15-member squad yesterday at a press conference at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

SQUAD

Habibul Bashar, Shahriar Nafees, Aftab Ahmed, Mohammad Rafique, Mashrafee bin Mortaza, Tushar Imran, Mohammad Ashraful, Sakib Al Hasan, Mehrab Hossain, Shahadat Hossain, Mushfiqur Rahim (wk), Mohammad Sharif, Tapash Baisya, Abdur Razzak and Tamim Iqbal.

SEE PAGE 22 COL 5

Past inspires Russel, Farashganj

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

While Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra hope to repeat the performance of their Premiership debut when the inaugural Professional Football League kicks off next month, Farashganj Sporting Club have faith they would able to show similar strength from last season.

Runners-up on their arrival in the big stage in 2003-04, Russel failed to live up to the billing in their second

season but they would be banking on their Moroccan connection to build up a strong side.

Five players from Morocco, start striker and 2003-04 season's top scorer Toufi Younes, defender Burdeep Mohammed, midfielders Saad Abdul Fettah and Egor Mohammed – all known faces – and fresh import Khobashi Mohammed are due to arrive in the city this morning to complete the squad.

"I have a better team than three years ago," commented coach Wajed Gazi, who returns from Brothers Union to be at the helm of

SEE PAGE 22 COL 2

a side that flourished under him in their first appearance.

Russel, yet to register any player, have secured contracts of 18 locals with winger Tanvir being the highest paid player, informed president Nurul Alam Chowdhury.

"We are giving Tanvir Tk 7.5 lakh. Our total budget is Tk 1.75-crore and we hope to make infrastructure developments this season if we get help from the authority," informed Nurul, who has already appealed to delay the start of the league by two weeks for preparation.

SEE PAGE 22 COL 6



PHOTO: STAR

Farashganj (L) and Sheikh Russel footballers display their new jerseys for the B. League during a presentation ceremony at the BFF Bhaban yesterday.

Abahani surge ahead

Nafees, Mehrab hit 132 each

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani extended their solo lead by four points as they dismantled Brothers Union by eight wickets in the sixth round match of the Kai-Altech Premier League at the Fatullah Stadium yesterday.

Paceman Talha Jubair made the mark on his first match for the Dharmundi side this season, picking up five wickets as Brothers Union were bowled out for only 168 runs in 47 overs. Abahani went past the total in 42.2 overs, losing only two wickets.

Brothers now languish at the bottom of the table having lost all six of their matches while Abahani reiterated their strong claim for the title with this clinical performance.

In the days other match, it was a welcome return amongst the runs for Shahriar Nafees as City Club rode on his sparkling 132 to post 275 but the defending champions had their own national opener to

SEE PAGE 22 COL 6

Gibbs ban upheld

AFP, Paris

South African Herschelle Gibbs will miss one Test match, one ODI and a Twenty20 international after the International Cricket Council (ICC) rejected his appeal Thursday against a ban imposed by ICC match referee Chris Broad.

It means Gibbs will not be eligible for his side's third Test against Pakistan starting in Cape Town on Friday and will also miss the first of the ODIs of the five-match series between the two sides that follows.

Gibbs was initially accused of "racially offensive" comments during the first Test against Pakistan.

On Thursday he was found guilty of a Level 3 offence under the ICC code of conduct which prohibits using "any language or gestures

SEE PAGE 22 COL 6



PHOTO: STAR

SMILES APLENTY: All-rounder Mohammad Sharif can't stop smiling at his club team Sonargaon's tent yesterday after being recalled to the national team for five years for the tour to Zimbabwe.

'Never say never'

Cricket

BISHWAJIT ROY

He was advised by well-wishers to try his luck abroad, definitely in other professions, during his painful nine-month lay-off from cricket.

But Mohammad Sharif also got support from many including the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to keep the hope in his heart to make an amazing comeback in the national team.

It was exactly five years back the

seamer all-rounder had played his last international game against Pakistan in Dhaka before being recalled for the coming Zimbabwe tour.

"It's impossible to express my emotion today because it was not at all easy for me to get back my place in the national team after five years. Many even advised me to go aboard and choose a different profession when there were doubts whether I would ever recover from multiple groin injuries," responded the young all-rounder in an instant reaction.

"But I never gave up the hope. I

must thank the board which sent me to India twice and to Australia for surgeries and then helped a lot in my rehabilitation," said Sharif, who also recalls Australian surgeon David Young for giving him the confidence about his return to international fold.

The five-feet six-inches tall all-rounder's rise was outstanding but suddenly the lights went out after playing eight Tests and as many one-dayers when it was detected that he needed surgery to recover from groin pain.

SEE PAGE 22 COL 2