

Nine fined for dissent

SPORTS REPORTER

Nine Rajshahi players were fined for stopping play for nine minutes during their crucial National League tie against Dhaka at the Fatullah Stadium yesterday.

Among the nine, discarded national wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud and former all-rounder Mushfiquur Rahman were fined Tk 5,000 each for breaching the Discipline on the field 21-b and c clause.

Early on the third day, tail-ender Mahbub Alam was adjudged run out by the umpires after the stumps were broken by silly mid-off Shamsur Rahman as Mahbub ventured out of his crease while shadowing a shot that he had just misused to short leg Sharifullah's body.

Shamsur was seen juggling with the ball after the ball ricocheted off Sharif. According to sources, batsman Mahbub thought that the ball was dead by the time he was shadowing the flick shot which he mis-cued.

Captain Mashud, Shumon Shaha, Mohammad Shahjada, Arif Hossain, Shafaq Al Jabir, Farhad Hossain and Junaed Imrose all came out on the ropes to tell the batsmen not to come out of the pitch. These players protested the decision along with the batsmen at the crease Mahbub and Mushfiquur Rahman.

Match referee Hemayet Ahmed Siddiqui slapped a total of Tk 27,000 fine on the nine Rajshahi players with Shumon, Shahjada, Arif, Shafaq, Farhad and Junaed each being fined Tk 2,000 each.

Foysal seeks help

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Mir Foysal Ali Dollar, a fast bowler taking part in the Grameenphone Pacer Hunt, is fighting for his life after his kidney failed during the talent hunt programme.

On February 27, the crowd who flocked at the Dinajpur Cricket Ground had their eyes on Dollar. But the son of Mir Mohammad Ali hailing from Paharpur, was suffering from kidney related problems and had to be rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Doctors informed that both his kidneys have already been damaged and advised to send him to India urgently for better treatment. But it will cost at least Tk ten lakhs, an amount that will be tough to arrange for his poor parents.

In this circumstance, Dollar's parents and Dinajpur Sports Association as well as other sports organizations urged the affluent people of the country to save the life of their only son.

While this correspondent was talking with Dollar over cell phone, he expressed determination that sports loving people will stretch their helping hand for him.

For concerned people, his address: Mir Moktar Ali Islami Bank A/C. 8340 Dinajpur Branch Dinajpur.

Totti explains

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grown Romanista, Totti looked at the difference between his time in the crowd and the current violence problem.

"In my day, we went into the Curva to support Roma as a team and we were all united in that intent. Now unfortunately the political aspect has invaded the fanbase, as some are right-wing and some left. Misunderstandings occur and attitudes that are ugly to see, both for us players and the children who should feel welcome in the stadium."

Veron in Argentina

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Argentine public when he was blamed for the team's first-round elimination at the 2002 World Cup in South Korea and Japan.

He returned home in the middle of last year to play for Estudiantes de La Plata and inspired the team as they won the Apertura championship.

MU to take on

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The match also marks 50 years of the Red Devils' involvement in European competitions.

The final teamsheets will be announced in Brussels on March 12, the day before the match, at a press conference with European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, new UEFA president Michel Platini and Manchester United legend Bobby Charlton.

All proceeds from the evening match, on Tuesday March 13, will go to charity, with the tickets available from the Manchester United website.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Advisor to caretaker government Geete-ara Safiya Chowdhury (C), additional general manager of Grameenphone Ghalib Ahmed Ansari (2nd from L) and media manager of Grameenphone Moeen Tariq inaugurate the Grameenphone Junior Fed Cup Asia/Ocenia Zone tournament at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Sabuj Vidyapith snuck a one-wicket victory over Adarsha Vidyapith in the Standard Chartered Young Tigers National School Cricket tournament at the Uttara Friends Club ground yesterday.

Shahadat's five-wicket haul could not give Adarsha the win as their 203-run target was topped in the first ball of the 33rd over by Sabuj Vidyapith. Didar top-scored with 50 for the winners.

In other matches, Manarat trounced BIT by 107 runs, Rahmatullah Model beat Khilgaon Government by six wickets while Rajabari beat Faridabad by four wickets.

GAIBANDHA SCHOOL CRICKET

Chandipur High School defeated Islamia High School by seven wickets at the Gaibandha Stadium yesterday.

Islamia only scored 91 as they were bowled out in 23 overs. Chandipur reached the target in 16.2 overs.

JFA CUP

Dhaka and BKSP were drawn in Group A while Khulna and Chittagong were pencilled in Group

B for the final round of the JFA under-15 football tournament at the Army Stadium in Dhaka from March 5.

Dhaka take on Natore while BKSP will play Chuadanga in the opening day matches.

CHALLENGE CLUB CUP

Diganta Prohori Sangha beat Kazihat Sporting Club by 69 runs in the BCB Challenge Club Cup competition at the Rajshahi Stadium.

Batting first, Diganta scored 243-9 in 50 overs to which Kazihat only replied to 174 in 42.3 overs.

NATIONAL PAIRS BRIDGE

The national pairs bridge competition will begin at Imperial Hotel on March 2.

Interested pairs are requested to register their names along with Tk 400 for fees.

AMATUER GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

Chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam inaugurated the 22nd Cotton Group Bangladesh amateur golf championship yesterday.

Leading golfers from the South Asian region are taking part in the four-day long competition.

GM Niaz joins Rajib in table

SPORTS REPORTER

Enamul Hossain Rajib remained unbeaten in the Kolkata Open 07 Grandmaster Chess Tournament but the Bangladesh International Master dropped points in the fourth round on Wednesday.

Rajib drew with Indian IM Sriram Jha at the Gorky Sadan to extend his collection to three points.

Niaz Murshed, Bangladesh's first GM, returned to winning ways and also levelled with Rajib on three points after beating Murali Krishnan of India.

Six players were sharing the lead with 3.5 points each.

In other matches, GM Ziaur Rahman, IM Abdullah Al Rakib and FM Mehdi Hasan Parag all defeated their Indian opponents, Satyajit, RR Laxman and Debashish Dutta respectively.

Abu Sufian Shakil and Debaraj Chatterjee, the other players to cross the border for the tournament, lost their boards.

Boys sneak home

SPORTS REPORTER

Lower order batsmen Mohammad Sajib and Rezwanul Islam made sure Bangladesh Boys won by one wicket against Dhaka Mariners Youngs Club at BKSP yesterday.

Batting first, Mariners scored a competitive 224 in 50 overs. In reply, Bangladesh Boys reached the target in the last over of the innings with just a wicket in hand.

Earlier, Mofizul Islam struck 72 off 96 balls while Jalaluddin hit 47 as Mariners fought hard to score 224 before being bowled out due to a tight spell from Rafiqul Islam (4-29).

For Bangladesh Boys, almost everyone contributed but it was Shojib's unbeaten 20 when it mattered most which counted. Rezwan was not out on 4.

At the City Club ground, Rony Talukdar and Rumman Islam took three wickets each as Dhanmondi fought hard to win by four wickets against Azad Sporting Club.

Rokon loses his father

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammed Sohrabuddin, father of national cricketer and stylish batsman Al Shahriar Rokon, died of old age ailments yesterday. He was 75.

Rokon's local club Sonargaon Cricketers expressed deep sympathy towards the bereaved family and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

JR DAVIS CUP

Bangladesh stay alive

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh brightened their chances to move into the second round when they upset top seed Malaysia 2-1 in the Junior Davis Cup Asia/Oceania zone pre-qualifiers yesterday.

Local boy Omar Faruk Sunny won the first match comfortably, outplaying Amirul Amin 6-0, 6-1 but Mufazzal Hossain conceded his match against Marcus Chee 6-2, 7-6 at the Ramna Tennis Complex.

In the deciding doubles, the hosts snatched a 6-3, 7-6 victory to stay in contention.

Pakistan led the table with two out of two wins when they edged Jordan 2-1.

In the Junior Federation Cup pre-qualifiers, Bangladeshi girls crashed 3-0 to Sri Lanka while Singapore beat Pakistan by the same margin.

Earlier in the morning, Adviser to the Caretaker Government Geete-ara Safiya Chowdhury officially inaugurated the Junior Fed Cup.

Kanwaljit Singh, representative of the International Tennis Federation, Bangladesh tennis Federation president AMM Nasir Uddin and general secretary Sanaul Haque, sponsor Grameenphone's additional general manager Ghalib Ahmed Ansari and media manager Moeen Tariq were also present.

NATIONAL TT

Soma, Rumi lift doubles title

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Ansar maintained their impressive run in the Palolic 28th National Table Tennis Championships when they added the women's double title yesterday to previous success in the men's and women's team events.

In the boys' doubles, Javed and Rahat emerged as Group A champions while Shakil and Shahin won Group B to set a final clash.

The women's singles moved to the quarterfinals stage with Saleha, Soma, Rumi and Jayati of Ansars, Ratna and Seema of Jessore, Tumpa (Biman) and Snigdha (Narail) advancing to the last eight.

In mixed doubles, Hamlet and Tumpa moved to Group A semifinals alongside Anup-Ripa, Gautam-Ratna and Mostafa-Saleha pairs.

In Group B, Mahbub-Rumi, Rocky-Tinni, Munna-Soma and Ripon-Turbina duos made the semis.

Quakes shake West Indies

AFP, Kingston

Antigua and Trinidad, two countries that will host Cricket World Cup 2007 matches, were jolted on Tuesday by an early morning earthquake.

A quake with a magnitude of 5.1 on the open-ended Richter scale hit St. John's just prior to 06:00 local time (10:00 GMT) around the same time that Port-of-Spain was rattled by a quake with a magnitude of 4.3.

Disaster officials said there were no reports of injuries or damage.

Antigua is set to host Super Eight matches at the new Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, and Trinidad is the venue for four warm-up matches at the Frank Worrell Oval, as well as Group B matches involving India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Bermuda.

Indo-Bangla

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Bangladesh took 30 golds, 34 silvers and 18 bronzes.

Bangladesh's best performance came in shooting, in which Bangladesh bagged 11 golds, 7 silvers and 4 bronzes to dominate over the hosts as West Bengal shooters earned five golds, 9 silvers and 4 bronzes.

West Bengal put up better performances than Bangladesh in swimming and athletics.

They won 11 golds out of 16, while Bangladesh managed only five golds in athletics competitions held at Salt Stadium, the main venue of the meet.

Being subdued by the West Bengal athletes, Bangladesh can only cherish the success of Mohammad Shamsuddin, who annexed the fastest man's title in this games winning the 100-metre men's sprint in 10.8 seconds.

West Bengal swimmers accumulated 19 golds, 15 silvers and 21 bronzes, while Bangladesh claimed 12 golds, 15 silvers and nine bronzes. Swimming competitions were held at Subhas Sarobar swimming pool, near Salt Lake Stadium.

Bangladesh swimmers Kazi Monirul Islam and Doli Akhter became the fastest male and female swimmers of the competitions winning the men's and women's 50-metre freestyle competitions respectively.

Akbar Ali Mir earned the distinction of best male swimmer's title winning five golds and one bronze, while his compatriot Esha Chakraborty became the best female swimmer, bagging four golds and one bronze.

Shahjahan Ali Roni and Doli Akhter both won three golds each for Bangladesh.

Sangakkara's time

AFP, New Delhi



Whether behind the stumps or in front of them, it is just difficult to ignore Kumar Sangakkara whose value to the Sri Lankan team has been growing with each year.

His form will be important to his team's World Cup campaign because he is expected to maintain the tempo in the middle order after aggressive openers Sanath Jayasuriya and Upul Tharanga.

And Sangakkara has been doing this job commendably in recent years with his attacking approach which eases the pressure on his teammates in the shorter version of the game.

These are not the days of pure wicket-keepers, as Australian Adam Gilchrist and South African Mark Boucher have proved that a wicketkeeper-batsman always provides more options to the sides.

Sangakkara has also established himself in the same category as he is safe behind the stumps and a prolific run-getter in front of them, having already

scored more than 5,000 runs.

He had spent five years in international cricket when he leapfrogged many of his rivals to find a place in the Rest of the World side against world champions Australia for a three-match Super Series in 2005.

The selectors' faith was not misplaced as the Sri Lankan made two successive half-centuries when many of his illustrious teammates had been floundering against a strong attack.

Sangakkara may not be as big a star as off-spin wizard Muttiah Muralidaran or hard-hitting veteran Sanath Jayasuriya, but is second to none when it comes to delivering under pressure.

He was 22 when he replaced Romesh Kaluwitharana in 2000 and did not take long to reassure the selectors that they had found a batsman-wicketkeeper for the future.

Sangakkara is different from his predecessor in that he does not believe only in thumping the ball. Instead, he concentrates on building an innings with shrewd shot-selection.

His best came in 2006 when he cracked a career-best 287 in a world-record stand of 624 for the

third wicket with skipper Mahela Jayawardene against South Africa in the opening Test at Colombo.

He has adapted himself remarkably well to the rigours of one-day cricket, scoring a bucketful of runs without shedding his flair or flamboyance. His aggression has stood his team in good stead in recent years.

Sangakkara says the mental skill is the key to performing consistently at the highest level.

"There is a lot of emphasis on mental toughness, but there should also be emphasis on mental skills, on how you read and adapt to situations," he said.

"I am always thinking about what situation I am in now and what situations I am getting into. No matter whom I am playing, my approach is the same. I respect whoever is bowling to me."

Not only bowlers, but also batsmen cannot ignore Sangakkara, considered a shrewd sledger who is always aware of the fine boundary between "psychological aggression" and "obscenity".

Mahela can turn around

AFP, Colombo



Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene goes to the World Cup in the Caribbean hoping to erase bitter memories

of the previous tournament. The 2003 World Cup in South Africa ended in a nightmare for Jayawardene, who scored just 21 runs in nine matches. His form was so poor that he did not once reach double figures.

"That was a disappointing World Cup for me. Hopefully, I'll turn things around this time," Jayawardene said before his team's departure for the mega one-day event on Wednesday.

"I wanted to do well, but it just didn't happen. But if you see, we went on to reach the semifinals. The greatest thing about this team is that when someone is not in the best of form, the others put their hands up

for him."

The Sri Lankan captain is currently struggling to regain form. He is without a half-century in his past 17 one-day internationals.

"I know my personal contribution has not been that great during the last six months or so, but I am looking forward to get back among runs," said Jayawardene, who has scored 6,185 runs in 236 matches.

He said he was confident of a good show from his side as they had learnt to adapt themselves to different conditions.

"Adapting to the conditions has been high on our agenda during the last year or so and we've done well away from home," said Jayawardene, whose side won a one-day series in England last year and then shared a series in New Zealand.

"We want to continue in the same vein. The guys have been working really hard and I am very confident of our chances. If we are to win the Cup, we need to beat everybody and that means we (have) got to take every game seriously."

Last gasp preparation

FROM PAGE 17

Clubs who have appealed for foreign player registration through the Bangladesh Football Federation, can register the footballers but they will not be able to play until the ITCs are in hand.

Muktijoddha have decided to go into the inaugural Professional Football League with just two foreigners, their good old Charles Ghansah of Ghana and Moroccan attacking midfielder Brahim.

"We will register 23 players tomorrow including two foreigners, it has been decided," informed coach Abu Yusuf yesterday.

The Reds have retained their strength from last season as well as roping in more seasoned players from the national team.

Mohammedan, who have frustrated their huge fans by failing to build a strong team, will add six Nigerians to their moderate local collection in a bid to accept the challenge.

Black and whites coach Shafiqul Islam Manik, who has been training for long with five foreigners, said that last year's striker Emeka will be included in their 23-member squad. The other foreigners are goalkeeper Paul, defender Peter, midfielders Divine and Francis and strikers Paul Nwakuchu and Emeka.

The most successful team of the last two seasons, Brothers Union, are still struggling to pick their lot.

"We have six players with us but only one is proven. Moroccan Hicham Inani has played for us previously and we are certain

about him. We will pick two or three more but have yet to decided," said newlywed club manager Amer Khan.

Three Nigerians and one each from Uganda and Ghana are now training with the Oranges under guidance of Indian coach Syed Nayeemuddin.

SHAHEED SMRITI HOCKEY Army have the last laugh

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Army upset a star-studded strong SBSL side 3-1 yesterday to lift the Holybest Energy Bulb Shaheed Smriti Hockey Tournament title at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium.

It was a sweet revenge for Army, who lost the group match to SBSL. The soldiers went ahead with two-goal Mostafa Shahiduzzaman opening the scoring after nine minutes.

National defender Mamunur Rahman Chayan equalised for SBSL in the 21st minute from a penalty corner but Army regained lead three minutes through Sirajul before Mostafa sealed the victory with his second strike in the 43rd minute.

Holybest Energy Bulb managing director Syed Hasibul Gani witnessed the final as chief guest and distributed prizes.

How the BCB

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increments during the last year, which raised many eyebrows.

The above figures only show that there is hardly any policy in the board's appointment and salary structure.

"It is true that there is no policy about the appointment and salary structure. It is unthinkable the way the players and local coaches, most of them are former national players, are being paid in the structure. We should pay attention to this issue," said a top board official requesting anonymity.

"It is in many ways evident that an increment fully depends on one's personal liking or disliking which should not be a criteria in a professional house," he added.

However, a wind of change is blowing as it was learnt that the recruitment and evaluation committee headed by new board president is going to settle the issue soon.

Rafique senses

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morning earthquake.

A quake with a magnitude of 5.1 on the open-ended Richter scale hit St. John's just prior to 06:00 local time (10:00 GMT) around the same time that Port-of-Spain was rattled by a quake with a magnitude of 4.3.

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Sanath still up

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The Sri Lankan went on the rampage, smashing a 99-ball 152 with four sixes and 20 fours. And this was not the first time he had turned the match upside-down with breath-taking strokes.

India suffered from Jayasuriya's punishing blade when he cracked a career-best 189 in a tri-series final at Sharjah in 2000, his blitz eventually helping his side set a challenging target and win the match.

It was hardly surprising from a batsman who has the fastest half-century to his credit in one-day internationals -- off just 17 balls against Pakistan in a triangular series in Singapore in 1996.

Jayasuriya cannot be underestimated either as a left-arm spinner, having grabbed 284 wickets before the four-match series against India in February.

Sri Lanka will again rely on Jayasuriya's rich experience to make a strong statement in the World Cup.