

NATIONAL CRICKET LEAGUE 2007-08

Bowling Ctg's bane

SPORTS REPORTER

Chittagong took the lead in terms of individual performance in last season's National Cricket League but that didn't reflect on the team success at all.

Gazi Salahuddin was the top scorer in the four-day game with 791 runs in nine games while off-spinner Sabir Khan became top wicket-taker in the longer-version with 53 wickets.

Also, wicketkeeper batsman Dhiman Gosh scored 324 runs to secure the top batting spot in the shorter-version.

Although they lost only one match in the four-day competition they also just managed to muster a single victory in ten matches, meaning that they only finished third. Similarly they won only two one-day games out of five to secure the fifth position.

"Our individual performances hardly reflected the team's outcome. Actually we could not win enough matches to finish as per our expectation and the weak bowling attack was the main reason behind this result," said Chittagong skipper Ehsanul Haque.

The seasoned right-hander was

still concerned about whether his pace attack would be able to challenge for the championship in the ninth-edition of the league, which starts from October 19.

"We have a very strong batting line-up but our pace attack is not strong enough for winning longer-version matches. And one of our pace bowlers Palash (Wascorni Ahmed) is unlikely to play the tournament due to a suspect Aftab.

"National players had hardly got any chance to play the league properly in the last two seasons due to national commitment. I played only one four-day game last year. I am looking forward to playing in this competition," said Aftab.

"This is especially important for me because I am eagerly waiting to make something special to get back my place in the Test squad. But my main objective is to enjoy the competition as much as I can," he added.

The right-hander also said that he changed a lot in his batting as recently he has tried to carry the innings.

"What I learnt is that one batsman should be mentally good enough if he wants to cope with the different version of the game. It would be a challenge for me to occupy the crease as much as possible," he said.

Captain Ehsanul also believes that the gutsy batsman can bring something extra to their batting line-up in this season.



Members of the Tajikistan football team train at the BUET ground on Saturday.

PHOTO: STAR

Brothers, Indira relegated

Decision a first in local cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

In an exceptional move, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) decided to relegate Brothers Union and Indira Road from the Dhaka Premier Cricket League yesterday.

The two clubs will play cricket in the First Division, the second rung of competitive cricket in Dhaka this season.

The decision brought an end, for the time being, to the extensive dispute between the clubs and the cricket board.

The relegation play-off match between Brothers and Indira 'fell through' after both sides did not show up at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on October 4. As a result, the two remaining matches of the playoff

were called off as they have now become inconsequential. This meant that City Club, the other outfit involved in the playoff, escaped unharmed and would to play in the top division.

Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) took the matter to the BCB working committee last month after talks with the three clubs, City Club included, did not draw much conclusion. The clubs were hell-bent on staying in the Premier League citing several reasons, most of which were ready to be solved by the board. Player unavailability, financial constraints and many more were put forward but BCB gave them enough time and even offered financial help to run practice sessions.

"It is never a nice feeling for any official to sign papers that relegates clubs without any play possible, but we did what we had to do," said CCDM chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu.

"The board did everything that was possible on its behalf. We gave it enough time but it was getting out of hand," he added.

Shafiqur Rahman Munna, another board member, reiterated the fact that it was a decision that came from everyone in the board and CCDM.

"We had discussions with our president (Maj Gen. Sina Ibn Jamali) regarding this matter," said Munna.

He mentioned that the clubs wanted to meet the president but

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Tajikistan finally arrive

SPORTS REPORTER

The Tajikistan football team arrived in the capital yesterday morning to play the first-leg of their 2010 World Cup pre-qualifier against Bangladesh.

The match will take place at the Bangabandhu National Stadium tomorrow at 3pm with ATN Bangla beaming live coverage.

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has named defender Hasan Al Mamun as captain and striker Saifur Rahman Moni as his deputy for the match, a day after they announced the 20-member squad.

The visitors practiced at the BUET ground in the afternoon while the local booters are undergoing a residential camp under the supervision of Indian coach Syed Naseemuddin at the BKSP in Savar.

The return-leg will be played on October 28 in Tajik capital Dushanbe.

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DFA okayed or not?

 Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Former national footballer Badal Roy on Saturday demanded that the recent claim by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president SA Sultan about getting 'green signal' from FIFA regarding the endorsement of District Football Association (DFA) constitution belies the truth.

He also presented a letter from FIFA's legal division sent on September 26 to the acting general secretary of the BFF Manzoor Hossain Malu in support of his claim.

The letter clearly stated that the DFA draft constitution needed a lot of 'changing' since it did not explicitly mention the independence of the Divisional Football Association of the National Sports Council as well as from every other governmental influences.

Interestingly, BFF president SA Sultan on October 1 said that the FIFA has endorsed the DFA constitution 'with minor observations' paving the way for elections in line with the prescription of the game's ruling body.

"We have sent the draft constitution to the NSC and if it is endorsed, we will take three days to approve the amendments. If the government cooperates it would take less than a month to hold DFA elections," Sultan told The Daily Star Sport on Monday.

It may be mentioned here that the BFF gave the present BFF, whose tenure has expired in April this year, a year to amend its constitution in line with the FIFA statute before holding a fresh election by May next year.

The launching of DFA is the first step for the BFF to find councillors from divisions and districts who would eventually vote the new executive committee. And it looked like everything went according to plan when the BFF general secretary Malu with a broad smile on his face said: "We have received the green signal from the NSC to take the next step towards an election after getting approval on the DFA constitution."

He was also quoted the following day on his president's remark that the executive committee would sit on Friday to announce a date for an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) where the DFA

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'Team talk worked'

Third Sri Lanka-England ODI today

 Cricket

CRICKINFO, undated

England's impressive 65-run victory in the second one-day international against Sri Lanka came on the back of an honest team meeting which laid down where each player could improve.

The squad sat down after their 119-run drubbing in the opening game and openly discussed how they could set about hauling themselves back into the series.

They turned words into deeds on the field at Dambulla as they skittled Sri Lanka for 169 on Thursday after Owais Shah's 82

had given them 234 to defend. The fast bowlers led the way, with Ryan Sidebottom and Stuart Broad taking vital early wickets, and they were backed-up by Graeme Swann who continued his eye-catching return to England colours.

"It was all about jogging the memory," said Sidebottom. "As a team in general, nobody likes criticism but we all talk to each other about how we can improve and maybe the batsmen will pitch in with what they can see. We don't handle criticism very well but as a team you've got to do that and I think we've done that sitting down for 10 minutes.

"It's not about having a go at players, it's just reinforcing what

we could have done better and what we should have done that we didn't do -- it's not criticism, it's helping each other out to improve."

Sidebottom, who missed the series against India last month with a side strain, removed Upul Tharanga in his first over and followed up with the vital scalp of Kumar Sangakkara to put Sri Lanka onto the back foot. Despite a slow pitch he registered 89mph, the quickest bowling of the match ahead of Lasith Malinga and James Anderson.

"I wasn't aware of being the fastest bowler until I came off the pitch, but I suppose I built up a bit

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With the pending deadline hanging above them to appoint national team coach by October the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) contacted with West Indies opener Gordon Greenidge.

"I just asked him to send necessary papers and let us know about his requirements. It's nothing big, we just contacted with him," said Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu, chairman of the BCB's cricket operations committee, yesterday.

Meanwhile, BCB has recently set a deadline to make sure a permanent national coach is appointed before the upcoming tour to New Zealand in December-January.

"We will also talk with John Dyson (former Sri Lankan coach) once he return from his holiday from Canada," he added.

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Academy down Rajshahi

SPORTS REPORTER

National Cricket League (NCL) sides' poor showing in the warm-up games continued as GP-BCB National Cricket Academy handed a four-wicket defeat to star-studded Rajshahi at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday.

Left-handed opener Zunaed Siddique hasn't got Twenty20 cricket out of his mind as he smashed a 40-ball 42 with the help of seven boundaries. But his knock at the top of the order was not good enough as the northern division was bowled out for 121 in 32.1 overs after being sent in to bat.

All-rounder Forhad Reza similarly went for a leather-hunt but was dismissed after scoring 23.

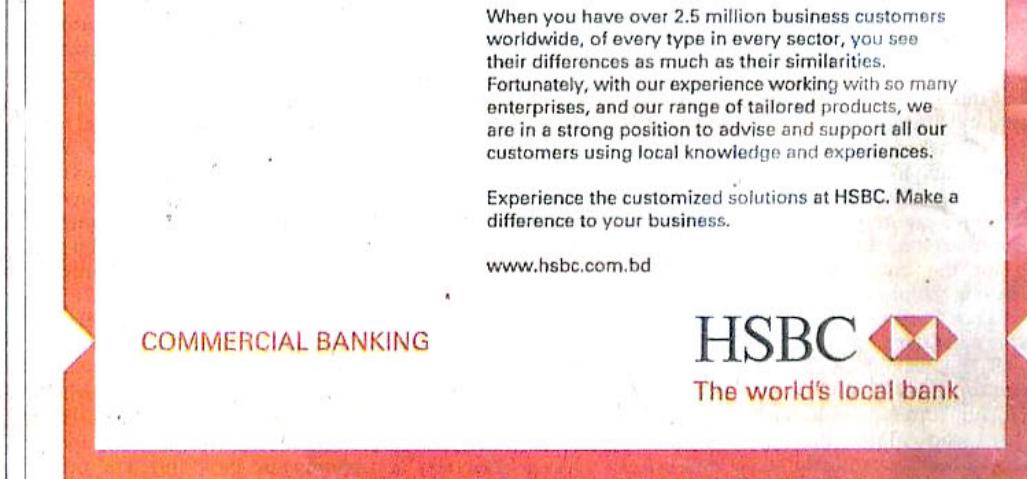
Paceman Dollar Mahmud (3-33) and left-arm spinner Mosharrif Rubel (3-16) made merry while lanky paceman Talha Jubair, who is in the Barisal side for this season, took two for 35 runs.

Academy side achieved the target in 36 overs losing six wickets with Dollar making a match-winning unbeaten 27 that contained three fours and a six. Nasiruddin Faruque added 25 off 70 balls.

Forhad claimed three wickets and seamer Mohammad Shahjada captured two for 27.



Ex-national footballer Badal Roy talks in an impromptu session with the press at the National Sports Council yesterday.



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PHOTO: AFP

England wicketkeeper Phil Mustard plays a sweep shot during a training session at the Rangiri International Cricket Stadium in Dambulla on Saturday.