

BFF to name nat'l captain today

SPORTS REPORTER

The newly elected executive committee of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) named a five-member committee to select the national captain for the Kyrgyzstan tour.

The committee including vice-president Manzoor Hossain Malu and members Sheikh Mohammed Aslam, Hasanuzzaman Babloo, Khorshed Babul and Satyajit Das Rup were given the duty to talk with coach Abu Yusuf and the senior players at BKSP today and name the captain for the AFC Challenge Cup qualifiers.

Bangladesh will leave tomorrow for Bishkek, where they play Afghanistan, Laos and hosts Kyrgyzstan for a place in the final round to be held in India this June.

Recent past captain Hassan Al Mamun and goalkeeper Aminul Haq, who was sidelined for over a year due to injury just after getting the armband, are in contention to lead the side.

The members of the BFF, meanwhile, also decided to give individual financial help to ailing former footballer Ching Hlang Chowdhury Mari.



Kazi Salahuddin (sitting) occupies the Bangladesh Football Federation hot seat as outgoing president SA Sultan (2nd from L) and members of the newly elected committee applaud during a ceremony at the BFF Bhawan yesterday.

Salahuddin takes office

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

One team, one leader: The newly elected executive committee of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) started its operation with this motto.

As soon as outgoing president SA Sultan handed over the baton to new chief Kazi Salahuddin yesterday, football in the country entered a new era: the era of democracy.

"It is a unique process. I am proud to be a part of this. Never in the history, a BFF president could be present to hand over charge to his successor but the fact that I am doing this proves that we have had a free and fair election," said Sultan at the BFF Bhawan in his farewell speech.

"I was also elected, or I should say we can claim we had been elected, as the process was not entirely democratic. Here, worthy people have been elected by a process that is unprecedented."

"Usually, football associations elections are held in rather privacy but the enthusiasm from general people we saw on election day has

really stirred me up. The extraordinary scenario with spontaneous presence of fans throughout the day proves football has not lost its popularity. Now it's the new executive committee's turn to use this in the proper way.

"Forget past but learn from our mistakes and perform for the love and respect you have received from different quarters. Prove your worth as football chiefs of the country and you have four years' time to do that," Sultan conveyed his message to the new body.

"Salahuddin is an ornament in our football and I want that football goes only forward in his able hands."

Salahuddin was optimistic as ever in his brief speech.

"I agree that dwelling in the past will take us nowhere. Our goal is to take the game to the right place and we, the 21 committee members, are all excited. Its one game and one committee working for one purpose: to develop football," said Salahuddin.

The 54-year-old legendary footballer added that they were not a bit relaxed.

"We are going to work together forgetting our different stands

before the election. Time is not a factor for the members who will work to produce fund. We are not Europe, we are not Brazil but Bangladeshis love football. We will take it to the ground from the table," promised Salahuddin.

There were a volley of questions about future plans but the new president said the committee would take a weeks' time to come out with concrete plans.

"We have to go through some documents first, then we will prepare a plan. And remember, this committee will be accountable to the media, which has brought us together. We want to stand united."

When asked how Salahuddin, a businessman, planned to give time to his new office, he said that he would be available whenever he is needed at the federation.

"We are decision makers. We will divide our jobs among 21 persons and the executives will implement the plans."

Salahuddin added that too much expectation of this committee is not like a burden to him. "Its rather an extra challenge for me and my committee."

Senior vice-president Abdus

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Did U Know?

The first mechanical chess clock was invented by Thomas Wilson in 1883. Prior to that, Sandglasses were used.



Sepp Blatter

(FIFA president)

"The football you see in Spain you don't see anywhere else. It is a football country and for this reason I would like them to organise another World Cup."



What to Watch

SET Max

Indian Premier League

Rajasthan Royals v Kolkata Knight Riders

Live from 3:30pm

Deccan Chargers v Kings XI Punjab

Live from 7:30pm

TEN Sports

UEFA Cup Semifinals

Zenit v Bayern Munich

Live from 10:25pm

Florentina v Rangers

Live from 12:40am (Friday)

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Jagannath Hall became champions and Zahurul Haq Hall finished runners-up in the Dhaka University inter-hall swimming competition yesterday.

Nazrul Islam of Zahurul Haq Hall jointly clinched the individual event with Abdul Halim, a student of Sir AF Rahman Hall at the Dhaka University swimming pool.

In the women's team event, Bangladesh-Kuwait Moitri Hall became champions and Shamsunnahar Hall finished runners-up.

More than hundred swimmers took part in 23 events.

DIV II CRICKET

UNB adds: Udayachal Club registered a five-wicket win over Chandpur Cricket Academy in the Second Division Cricket League at the City Club ground yesterday.

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Women face tough task

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's cricket team will face a daunting task when they launch their campaign in the Women's Asia Cup against defending champions India at the Welagedera Stadium tomorrow.

Hosts Sri Lanka will take on Pakistan, the other participating teams in the fourth version of the competition, in the other opening day's match at the Dambulla International Cricket Stadium.

The four teams will play two series of round robin matches at the two venues and the top two sides in the league standings will qualify for the final on May 11 in Kurunegala.

When Sri Lanka are looking forward to stop India's domination and Pakistan were preparing for tough challenge, the Bangladesh

women cricketers will try to impress everybody in their first appearance.

Bangladesh team captain Salma Khatun also said while talking with the local reporters that they will need to perform brilliantly to make an impact in the tournament.

Bangladesh women's team warmed up well at home by winning all four games against Hong Kong in March.

"We are hoping to give our team at this age group (a chance) to play, learn and gather knowledge through experience," said Salma.

India is favourites as they won all four previous titles.

The inaugural Women's Asia Cup was played in Sri Lanka in April 2004 with only two teams -- Sri Lanka and India -- taking part while the next episode was held in Karachi in December 2005 and January 2006. The third was held in Jaipur in December 2006.

SQUAD

Sathira Zakir Jessy, Shukhtara, Ayesha Akhter, Salma Khatun, Irin Sultana, Chamilly Khatun, Rumana Akhter, Panna Ghosh, Shamima Akhter Pinky, Jahana Alam, Lily Rani, Tithi Rani, Papiya Haque Babu, Mina Khatun.

ITINERARY

May 2: Sri Lanka vs. Pakistan (Dambulla)

India vs. Bangladesh (Welagedera)

May 3: Sri Lanka vs. India (Dambulla)

Pakistan vs. Bangladesh (Welagedera)

May 5: Sri Lanka vs. Bangladesh (Dambulla)

India vs. Pakistan (Welagedera)

May 6: Sri Lanka vs. Pakistan (Welagedera)

India vs. Bangladesh (Dambulla)

May 8: Sri Lanka vs. India (Welagedera)

Pakistan vs. Bangladesh (Dambulla)

May 9: Sri Lanka vs. Bangladesh (Welagedera)

India vs. Pakistan (Dambulla)

May 11: Final (Welagedera)

Under-15s reach semis

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-15 team reached into the semifinal of the Clico International Under-15 Cricket Championship with a five-wicket victory over Ireland at the National Cricket Centre in Couva on Tuesday.

Iktedar Nazeeq Ahmed, younger brother of national opener Shahriar Nafees, led from the front with figures of five for 18 as Ireland were bundled out for 140 runs after batting first.

In reply, Bangladesh Under-15 reached 142-5 in 31.5 overs with Didar Hossain making 61. Rakin Ahmed chipped in with an unbeaten 48 runs.

Bangladesh Under-15 take on Pakistan Under-15 in the semifinal today.

Usha win, Mariners held

SPORTS REPORTER

Usha Krira Chakra got off to a flying start in the Green Delta Premier Hockey League yesterday when the defending joint-champions brushed aside Bangladesh Sporting Club (BSC) 7-1 at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

Midfielder Zahidul Islam Rajan and striker Maksud Alam Habul each scored brace while Tariq Aziz, Rahul Kanti Roy and Imran Ahmed added one goal apiece for the winners, who led 5-0 at the break.

Abdur Rahman Sajib reduced the arrears for promotees Bangladesh Sporting.

Last year's runners-up Mariners Youngs Club drew goalless with Sadharan Bima in the day's second match.



Bangladesh cricketers Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (C), Shahadat Hossain and Rokibul Hasan (L) enjoy their time in the gym at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Outcome satisfies How

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

No play was possible on the final day of New Zealand's three-day warm-up against Kent at Canterbury, after heavy overnight rain had left the outfield saturated. Further drizzle in the morning was all that was needed for the umpires to abandon the fixture at 12.45pm, 15 minutes before lunch.

The situation left Jamie How, New Zealand's stand-in captain, frustrated but not unduly concerned about his team's brief opportunity for middle practice. How himself found some useful form with an unbeaten 53 in the 38.2 overs available on the second day, but with two four-day fixtures

to come against Essex and England Lions, New Zealand have ample opportunity to prepare ahead of the first Test at Lord's on May 15.

"We expected a bit of rain so that's why the schedule is pretty jam-packed," said How. "We've got plenty of time left and we did get a little bit of a workout. It would have been nice to get a few more wickets, but we got something out of this match, and you can only do what you can do."

How was named as New Zealand's leader in the absence of Daniel Vettori because he was one of the few non-IPL players who could be guaranteed a place in the Test side, following his impressive efforts in last month's series. He made 92 at Hamilton, an innings that set up a famous New Zealand victory, and he was looking good

again in this match as he notched his first half-century of the tour.

"I'm pretty happy with where I'm at," he said. "I didn't get that much chance out in the middle, but we've been working hard indoors. We've had a nice start here and at Arundel, and we'll be upping the ante a little against Essex, and building up to the first Test nicely."

How, however, doesn't know whether he will still be captain come the Essex fixture, which gets underway on Friday. The IPL players are starting to drift into the country, with Vettori due to arrive at 6am on Thursday morning. "I'm just taking things day by day," said How. "My efforts and concentration have been on these last couple of games. It's been a great honour and very enjoyable, apart from the

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Mumbai's first win



CRICINFO, undated

Inspired by Sanath Jayasuriya's 3 for 14, the best figures of the tournament, the Mumbai Indians put their off-field troubles aside and pulled off their first win. On a slow Eden Gardens pitch, though not the minefield of the previous game, Mumbai had a nifty start and were 25 for 3 before Dwayne Bravo and Robin Uthappa put on a century stand to see them home.

After Kolkata Knight Riders chose to bat, Mumbai's stand-in captain Shaun Pollock stunned the huge crowd, removing local hero

Sourav Ganguly and the dangerous Brendon McCullum in the first over. Ganguly chased at a wide delivery and only managed a thick edge that was smartly held by Jayasuriya at wide slip. McCullum was trapped lbw for 1 two balls later, leaving Kolkata at 6 for 2.

The early momentum was provided by Twenty20 debutant Debabrata Das. Pollock was hit over midwicket for a big six and three leg-side fours followed in the next couple of overs. Das favoured the cut and got his innings going with two of them off Ashish Nehra in the second over, but another one off Dwayne Bravo flew straight to Robin Uthappa at point.

Bravo kept it just short of a length and outside off, giving away only four runs in two overs. Ponting and David Hussey consolidated for

a couple of overs with singles and the odd boundary. Ponting was unable to get his timing right or middle the ball, and Hussey tried to up the tempo slamming Pollock for two fours.

Jayasuriya, tossing it up instead of firing it in as he usually does, broke the partnership by luring Hussey into swiping one to mid-on in the 11th over for 17. His next over, a maiden, saw two wickets fall as well. A run-out put Ponting out of his misery and two balls later Mohammad Hafeez nicked one to the wicketkeeper Pinal Shah as Kolkata slid to 77 for 6.

Laxmi Ratan Shukla, who revived Kolkata batting with a quick 42 against the Chennai Super Kings, was called on to rescue his team yet again. He smashed two

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MU set all-English final

Scholes scorcher sinks Barca

AFP, Manchester



Paul Scholes has scored dozens of crucial goals for Manchester United over the years but none of them has been quite as precious as the sublime strike that sent Sir Alex Ferguson's squad into the Champions League final.

Scholes, along with Roy Keane, famously missed United's triumph over Bayern Munich in the 1999 final through suspension and Ferguson admitted he was delighted to see one of his most loyal servants claim the opportunity to make up for lost time with a stunning long-range strike in Tuesday night's 1-0 win over Barcelona at Old Trafford.

"It is great for Paul to be in the final," Ferguson said after watching the midfielder unleash a 14th-minute shot that ensured an all-English final in Moscow next month.

"He is one of the great players, he came through the ranks at the club and I am so pleased for him."

"It was a fantastic goal. You can't expect him to score 15 or 20 goals a season for you now like he did when he was younger."

"But when he gets one like that it makes up for the ones he can't score because of his age. It was a marvellous moment for him."

Scholes deserved to savour the moment, as did the rest of a United side who made light of the absence of Nemanja Vidic and Wayne Rooney with a mature display which made Barcelona pay a high price for their failure to turn long periods of domination in terms of territory and possession into clear chances.

"We had to dig deep at the end because they put us under pressure," said Rio Ferdinand, who was outstanding in United's back four.

"It was our discipline and a moment of quality from a fantastic player that got us through. We don't care who we play in the final. Whoever comes we will be ready."

Ferguson added: "We needed a fantastic performance and we got one. We kept our concentration at the back, protected the space really well and our play up front was really good. We could have scored three or four goals."

United started nervously but scored what proved to be the decisive goal inside the opening quarter of an hour, Scholes latching on to a loose ball and unleashing an unstoppable drive from the best part of 30 yards.

Ferguson's men also had to endure some intense late pressure but they conceded little in the way of clear-cut chances, while both Park Ji-Sung and Nani came within inches of adding to the Scholes's strike.

"If you are 1-0 down you have got to give it a go and they did that," Ferguson said before acknowledging: "It was a bit of a hang-on job at the end but they did not create many chances which is down to our defenders."

Barcelona boss Frank Rijkaard, who insisted he would not quit in the wake of the defeat, could not resist a dig about what he sees as a lack of adventure among the English clubs currently dominating the tournament.

But Ferguson declined to rise to the bait. "We are there in the final and that is an important thing in this year (the 50th anniversary of the Munich air disaster)."

"It does not matter who we play, we deserve to be there. Our form throughout the tournament has been fantastic, we have shown good discipline and been tactically very good."

Ferguson is also counting on the feelgood factor generated by Tuesday night's performance spilling over on to the domestic

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Manchester United midfielder Paul Scholes is ecstatic after scoring the all-important goal against Barcelona during their Champions League semifinal second leg at Old Trafford on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP