

AFC CHALLENGE CUP Bangladesh to bid for qualifiers

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will bid to become hosts of the qualifying rounds of the next AFC Challenge Cup, said Bangladesh Football Federation president Kazi Salahuddin yesterday.

"I have already told AFC vice-president Manilal Fernando about our wish to host the qualifying rounds," the BFF chief informed The Daily Star.

"I have a meeting with AFC president Mohammad Bin Hammam on February 1 and I will also place this to him," he added.

Bangladesh hosted the inaugural edition -- the entire tournament of 16 teams -- in Dhaka and Chittagong in 2006 but the AFC introduced qualifiers for the second edition last year with the 8-team finals being held in India.

The finals of the next edition of the competition for the

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Abahani striker Zahid Hasan Emily takes flight after completing his hat-trick against Khulna Abahani during their Citycell B. League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Emily on fire

SPORTS REPORTER



Zahid Hasan Emily fired four goals in Abahani's biggest win of the season as the league leaders brushed aside Khulna Abahani 6-0 in the Citycell B. League yesterday.

Nigerian midfielder Emeka Christian was also in form, adding a brace for the defending champions who moved to 29 points after 13 rounds with their ninth victory that helped them keep looking down on the title rivals.

Emily and Emeka also moved to the top of the scoring list with ten goals apiece.

Bottom-table Khulna Abahani, who had shocked their more illustrious namesakes 2-1 in the inaugural B. League last season, showed none of that zeal and lost their 12th successive match to continue struggle to avoid relegation.

It was a one-way traffic at the Bangabandhu National Stadium and Amalash Sen's men warmed the winter evening for a handful of crowds with numerous raids.

The form of Ghanaian playmaker Awudu Ibrahim, who is expected to leave Abahani camp for personal reasons next week, proved that his absence could be a big trouble for the Sky Blues with the big matches coming.

He sparked most of the attacks and before Emily's opening goal in the 12th minute, Emeka hurried a shot wide before Emily was

denied by the reflex of Khulna goalkeeper Nahid from point-blank range.

However, Emeka set the first goal when his through ball sliced the rival defence for Emily to go round the keeper and tap home.

There was no respite for the visitors but Nahid's legwork kept efforts by Abul and Emeka at bay while Emily drove over the bar before getting his second in the 31st minute.

Ibrahim picked up Mamun with a crossfield pass from their own area and the young Abahani midfielder, who dashed down the left, squared the ball to an unmarked Emily to find the target effortlessly.

Emily should have had his treble four minutes later but volleyed onto the crossbar after Emeka mishit his shot on a low cross by overlapping rightback Siraj.

The competition's fourth hat-trick came in the 37th minute. This time, Ibrahim's pass from the middle bisected two rival defenders and Emily shrugged off the last man to place the ball past Nahid, who got a foot to the ball but failed to stop it from looping into the net.

Emily, who joined Sheikh Russel's Alfaz, Arambagh's Kenyan forward Nicodemus and Mohammedan's Nigerian striker Bukola in this season's hat-trick-club, became the first player to score four goals in the ongoing league when he toe-poked a low cross by Ibrahim into the net from two yards before the second half was 50 seconds old.

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Ashraful, Mushfiqur handed fines

SPORTS REPORTER

Tigers captain Mohammad Ashraful and wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim have both been fined for excessive appealing during the third day's play of the second and final Test against Sri Lanka.

Ashraful has been fined 15 per cent of his match fees while Mushfiqur was docked 50 per cent of his remunerations.

According to an ICC media release, the pair were handed the punishment by match referee Jeff Crowe following hearings which were held in Chittagong on Tuesday after the match. The on field umpires Steve Bucknor and Nigel Llong, third umpire Nadir Shah and fourth umpire Anisur Rahman laid the charges.

Ashraful was found to have breached Level 1.5 of the ICC code of conduct that relates to "excessive appealing" while Mushfiqur was found guilty of a charge under Level 2.5 that deals with "charging or advancing towards the umpire in an aggressive manner when appealing".

The incident happened in the Sri Lanka second innings when an appeal off Mehrab Hossain's bowling was turned down.

During the second Test, the match referee also spoke to Bangladesh openers Tamim Iqbal and Imrul Kayes following similar conduct.

The players charged, as well as Bangladesh manager Shafiqul Haque, coach Jamie Siddons and the four umpires attended the hearing.

NSC receives Hammam's gift

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh National Sports Council (NSC) yesterday received 3,000 footballs as gift from Asian Football Confederation (AFC) president Mohammad Bin Hammam.

AFC vice-president Manilal Fernando handed over the footballs to NSC chairman and Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed at his new office at the NSC Tower.

It was also the first day at office for the NSC officials and staff, who moved from the old building to the adjacent Tower.

The NSC chief had asked Hammam during one of his visits for the footballs, which actually arrived in Dhaka about two months earlier.

"We will send the footballs to schools in rural areas. We will identify where football is being played regularly and those villages will get the priority," General Moeen told reporters.

"It's a new year and there would be new planning for sports. It's time we go ahead," he added.

In reply to a question, Moeen said that they have taken all preparations for SA Games, training and hope that foreign

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Riyad, Enamul recalled Rubel new face for Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER

Mahmudullah Riyad finally got a recall while prodigious fast bowler Rubel Hossain became the only newcomer in the Bangladesh side when the national selectors settled on the one-day side for the tri-nation tournament and the series against Zimbabwe.

Seamer Nazmul Hossain remained in the one-day setup while Enamul Haque made a comeback to the limited-overs side having played

his last match exactly three years ago. All-rounder Nayeem Islam made the side after recovering from a finger injury.

The national selectors axed batsmen Imrul Kayes, Rajin Saleh and pacemen Shahadat

Riyad has done the most. Having been set aside after the New Zealand one-day series at home, the right-hander went back to domestic cricket and became the second highest run-getter (710 runs) but more noticeably he slammed four centuries, two of which were match-winning ones.

Chief selector Rafiqul Alam confirmed that it was Riyad's batting form that forced the change and it was left-hander Kayes who suffered.

"Riyad has been rewarded for his batting form. Unfortunately Imrul Kayes had to give way, as he has not managed to deliver despite getting opportunities. He will remain in frame though as he is someone we think will perform in the future," said Rafiq.

Riyad will be among four all-rounders in the squad along with the man in form Shakib Al Hasan, Mehrab Hossain and Nayeem Islam.

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RUBEL HOSSAIN

Hossain and Sajidul Islam who were all part of the squad that featured in the just concluded Test series against Sri Lanka. Among those who returned,

SQUAD

Tamim Iqbal, Zunaed Siddiqui, Mohammad Ashraful (captain), Rokibul Hasan, Shakib Al Hasan, Mehrab Hossain, Nayeem Islam, Mahmudullah Riyad, Mushfiqur Rahim (wicketkeeper), Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Mahubul Alam, Nazmul Hossain, Rubel Hossain, Enamul Haque.

Visitors in full control

Cricket

STAFF REPORTER, Bogra

Zimbabwe need only two wickets to win the practice match after GP-BCB National Cricket Academy succumbed to the guiles of Raymond Price on the second day at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday.

The visitors made up for their poor showing in the first innings by scoring 273 in 65.2 overs in their second innings. Given a target of 304 runs to win, the Academy side were in a precarious 107 for eight in 41 overs.

The GP-BCB captain had no excuses and laid the blame on the batsmen. "Our batting has been pretty bad. We have failed to carry out responsibilities," said Nayeem after the end of day's play.

Left-arm spinner Price took four wickets for just 21 runs as the local side lost six wickets for just 22 runs in the final session of the day. He broke the 67-run third wicket stand between Kamrul Islam and captain Nayeem Islam when Hamilton Masakadza took the catch to get rid of Kamrul for 31 off 73 balls. Nayeem was next to go, out for 36 and it was 94 for three.

Price then removed Marshall Ayub, Sajidul Islam and Nazmul Hossain as GP-BCB Academy were eight down. Mohammad Mithun remained unbeaten on five with tail-ender Rubel Hossain. Price apart, Tawanda Mupariwa picked up three wickets while Edward Rainsford took one wicket.

Mupariwa had opener Jahurul Islam caught at mid-off by Stuart Matsikenyeri for just one at the end of the third over, before fellow opener

Nasiruddin Faruque gave Tatenda Taibu a simple catch next ball off Rainsford.

Earlier, Masakadza added eleven runs to his overnight score of 55 but his innings ended when the impressive Nazmul Hossain had him caught behind in the 40th over. That ended a

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BCB Academy paceman Nazmul Hossain follows through on a delivery during his fiery four-wicket haul in their practice match against Zimbabwe at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday.

Rajshahi atop

SPORTS REPORTER



Rajshahi went on top of the National Cricket League one-day competition after their three-wicket win over Khulna at the Fatullah Stadium yesterday.

It was their fourth win in five matches, taking them to eight points. Barisal are in second spot now with six points along with Khulna, thanks to their win over Dhaka by four wickets at the BKSP ground.

In Dhanmondi, Chittagong scripted their second win, beating Sylhet by 27 runs in a shortened game of 30-overs-a-side. Left-arm paceman Kamrul Islam picked up brilliant figures of six for 47 from just 5.5 overs.

KHULNA-RAJSHAHI

Despite Murad Khan's four wickets, Khulna failed to defend a low total of only 161 runs.

Rajshahi stalwart Khaled Mashud made sure of the win with Shahzad Hossain in the 39th over after opener Hamidul Islam made a patient 47 off 77 balls with just three boundaries.

Earlier, left-arm spinner Sanjamul Islam took three for 15 from 8.3 overs to skittle out Khulna and pick up the man-of-the-match award. Only skipper Tuskar Imran made some runs, scoring 51 off 95 balls.

BARISAL-DHAKA

Abul Bashar's accurate spin got him five wickets and moreover stalled Dhaka's final push for a big score as they settled for 187 in 50 overs.

Shamsur Rahman made a slow 56 while Javed Omar, coming in late at six, scored 32.

In reply, Barisal fell in early trouble before Shahin Hossain and Nasir Hossain added 120 runs for the fourth wicket. Shahin made 65 off 113 balls while man-of-the-match Nasir remained not out on 73 with five boundaries and six.

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KP resigns, Moores too?

Cricket

AFP, London

Kevin Pietersen has resigned as England captain and Peter Moores has stepped down as team coach after their working relationship broke down, Sky News reported on Wednesday.

South African-born Pietersen had questioned Moores's ability as a top international coach in a dispute which became public.

Officials had been keen to have the dispute between the duo resolved before the England squad travelled to the Caribbean on January 21 for their four-Test tour of the West Indies.

Pietersen gave credence to longstanding rumours that his relationship with Moores was

in trouble by telling Sunday's News of the World newspaper: "This situation is not healthy, we have to make sure it is settled as soon as possible and certainly before we fly off to the West Indies."

Star batsman Pietersen apparently resigned by telephone from South Africa where he is on holiday.

The 28-year-old was not due to arrive back in England until Thursday.

It is understood the ECB board considered Tuesday a report by Hugh Morris, the managing director of England cricket, after the former Test batsman had spoken to both Pietersen and Moores, as well as others involved with the England team.

Shaun Udal, who has played alongside Pietersen for both Hampshire and England, told Sky News: "I am totally

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"Everybody has to have the same aims and pull in the same direction for the good of the England team."

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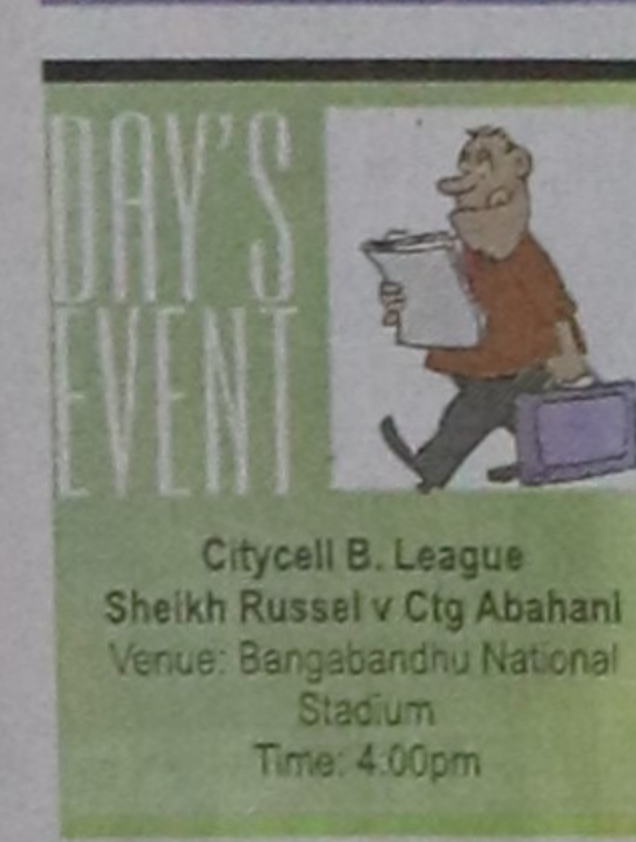
Tilekeraatne Dilshan became the fourth Sri Lankan player to score a century in each innings in the second Test against Bangladesh.



Ryan Giggs
 (Manchester United midfielder)
 "I will keep playing as long as I enjoy it, I am fit and the manager wants me. If one of those three things stops, I will consider retiring."



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BOA officials meet new sports minister

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) secretary general Kutubuddin Ahmed called on new sports minister Ahad Ali Sarker at his office yesterday.

The BOA secretary general also requested the State Minister for Youth And Sports to grace the Rajshahi-leg of BOA's regular programme Sports for All as chief guest.

BOA vice-president Mizanur Rahman Manu and other officials were also present.

AFC to help BFF achieve its goals

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) will continue its support to Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) for the development of the game in the country, promised AFC vice-president Manilal Fernando.

The Sri Lankan, who is also a FIFA development officer, was talking to reporters at the NSC Tower yesterday after handing over 3,000 footballs as gift of AFC president Mohammad Bin Hammam to National Sports Council (NSC) chairman and Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed.

Manilal, however, arrived in Dhaka on Tuesday night for a brief two-day visit along with Sri Lanka Football Federation's CEO Crysantha Perera to discuss about FIFA's second 'Goal project' in Bangladesh.

The FIFA is financing the BFF to build an artificial turf adjacent to the BFF Bhaban, which came as the first Goal project.

The cost of the project, meanwhile, has increased and Manilal said FIFA has given green signal to the BFF to get the additional fund from sponsors.

"The FIFA has agreed that the BFF will find the money to meet the increased cost and we will complete the work. We hope to start it in March and it would take three to four

months to complete it. Once we start, we are not going to stop halfway," he said.

"After this we are going to complete the Barisal training centre. Once that is over, we will talk about the next goal project."

A training centre in Barisal will be built under the tsunami fund and a tender will be floated in February. The 2.5-lakh dollars budget, however, is not enough for a complete academy.

"Yes, the Barisal Academy won't be full-fledged with this fund. However, we will start part one, which is better than having no part at all," replied Manilal to a question.

When asked, he said that the AFC was satisfied about

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AFC vice-president Manilal Fernando (L) hands over a football to NSC chairman General Moeen U Ahmed as BFF president Kazi Salahuddin looks on at the NSC Tower yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR