



AT LONG LAST: Bangladesh striker Enamul Haque (R) is chased by his teammates after he has just scored the all-important goal against Cambodia during their opening AFC Challenge Cup Group-A qualifying match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. It was Bangladesh's first victory in three years.

Hosts ride on Enamul Bangladesh's first win in 3 years

SPORTS REPORTER



A late strike from Enamul Haque gave Bangladesh a much-needed winning start in the AFC Challenge Cup qualifiers at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

From the get go, Dido's boys started to terrorise the opponents territory but squandered chance after chance before Enamul broke the deadlock in the 72nd minute to electrify the sparse crowd in the big bowl under lights.

The Farshganj striker headed Bangladesh home from handshaking distance that came his way from a Mamun free kick to make sure that Bangladesh won their first international match after a three-year and 25-match hiatus.

They had their last victory against Guam (3-0) in April 2006 in the same competition in Dhaka.

Under the guidance of Brazilian coach Edson Silva Dido, the hosts not only served up an attacking brand of football against their South East Asian opponents but also showed rare signs of fitness all through the match under the scorching heat.

On their way to making the final round berth, there was no other choice than winning the first game in the Group A qualifiers and that was the reason the lean and slender Brazilian looked tense with anxiety at the tent while his charges failed to close out the match.

But at the end he was the happiest man although the score-line hardly showed about the dominance of his boys in the one-sided match.

"At first I congratulate Cambodia for putting

up a splendid fight that made us bounce to bring our best. I am happy with the way the boys played the match," said the excited Dido, who made a winning start as a Bangladesh coach.

"At the end of the day winning is everything. Missing chances is part of the game," he responded on his team's squandering too many chances.

Bangladesh could have taken the lead as early as the second minute if match hero Enamul's brilliant back volley didn't fly inches away from the cross piece and then Brothers Union winger Atiqur Rahman Mishu, who was tireless all through the match to produce some good chances for the strikers, Emon and few others tried from long-range to break the stalemate but Cambodian goalkeeper Samreth was brilliant under the bar.

In the first half, Cambodia failed to create a single chance rather Mamun was very close to put Bangladesh ahead but his header was saved by Tieng Tiny from goal line.

After the breather the home side got an early chance to draw blood in the match but Mamunul Islam frustrated the crowd as he executed a fragile shot one-to-one with the opponents goalkeeper.

Cambodia however looked much better in the second half and Sam El Nasa got a good chance to win the match against the tide but his right-footer inside the box flew away inches from the cross piece in open net.

But then again Bangladesh spoiled few good chances as Manik's shot was saved by the opponents goalie and defender Lay Raksmei rescued his side by making a goal line save of Mishu's header.

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Did U Know?

Aston Villa Football Club was formed in March, 1874, by members of the Villa Cross Wesleyan Chapel in Handsworth, an inner city area of Birmingham in the West Midlands.



Talk Turkey



Sachin Tendulkar
(Indian cricket icon)
"I feel like 16."
On his 36th birthday last Friday.



What to Watch

SET Max
Indian Premier League
Chennai Super Kings v Deccan Chargers
Live from 4:30pm
Kolkata Knight Riders v Mumbai Indians
Live from 8:45pm
TEN Sports
Pakistan v Australia
Third ODI, D/N
Live from 5:00pm
ESPN
Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm
English Premier League
Newcastle v Portsmouth
Live at 12:55am (Tuesday)

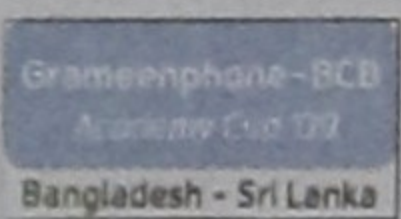
Ajmal reported for odd action

CRICINFO, undated
Saeed Ajmal, the Pakistan offspinner, has been reported for a suspect bowling action. Asad Rauf and Asoka de Silva, the umpires for the second ODI between Pakistan and Australia in Dubai on Friday, said they had concerns over Ajmal's action and hence requested the ICC to review his action.

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New look Academy

SPORTS REPORTER



A new look GP-BCB National Cricket Academy is all set to take on the visiting Sri Lanka Cricket Development Squad who arrive in the capital today on a three-week tour.

The tourists will play the first of two four-day matches at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium over May 4-7 after they play a two-day practice match against the same team from Thursday.

Chief selector Rafiqul Alam said that the changes had to be brought about because thirteen players had to be replaced -- six of them in the national team, five in the second-string side while two (Mahbubul Karim and Dhiman Ghosh) have been banned.

"They are all seasoned players with good experience having played the entire season," said chief selector Rafiq during a press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

"They should improve their batting, bowling and fielding in these matches and that would do great for the team itself," said the former national player who was accompanied by Academy operations manager Khaled Mahmud during the press meet.

The team, led by classy batsman Marshall Ayub, will have new faces like Imtiaz Hossain, Arman Hossain and Suvagata Hom. Right-handed opener Imtiaz and left-hander Nasiruddin Faruque were called up on the back of impressive showings in the National Cricket League (NCL) while Arman and Suvagata were the revelations of the Premier League.

"This is our best possible side. We have some young players like Suvagata and Arman and if they perform well, no doubt the senior players will also do well. The Sri Lankan side is also strong but I'm confident about my boys," said Mahmud, the former national captain.

Among the other newcomers in the Academy squad, bowlers Saqlain Sajib and Shafiqul Islam have had a brilliant season throughout while Mukhtar Ali and Rabiul Islam were effective with the new ball.

"There are many changes because most have got promoted [to the national or A team] while some like Nasir [Hossain] and Nadif [Chowdhury] are sick while Delwar [Hossain] is still not cleared as fit. Mukhtar [Ali] and [Rabiul Islam] Shiplu are proven players who have performed well," said Mahmud.

Left-arm paceman Shafaq Al Jabir took 13 wickets from seven NCL one-dayers and another 16 in the Premier League where he

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Dilshan smacks B'lore

AFP, Port Elizabeth



Tillakaratne Dilshan smashed a quickfire half-century to power Delhi Daredevils to a six-wicket win over Bangalore Royal Challengers in the Indian Premier League here on Sunday.

The Sri Lankan cracked two sixes and five fours in his 47-ball 67 not out as Delhi achieved a 150-run target with four balls to spare for their third win in as many matches.

Kevin Pietersen-led Bangalore have so far posted just one victory in five matches.

Dilshan steadied the innings after the early dismissals of openers Virender Sehwag (seven) and Gautam Gambhir (16). He put on 44 for the unfinished fifth wicket off just 22 balls with Mithun Manhas (23 not out).

The Sri Lankan reached his second half-century of the tournament in style, hoisting South African Jacques Kallis for a six.

AB de Villiers was the other notable contributor for Delhi with 21.

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Clash over cricket hurts 12!

UNB, Laxmipur

At least twelve people were injured in a clash between supporters of two clubs over a cricket match at Bara Ballavpur here on Friday.

Quoting local people police said there was a schedule to hold a match of Super TV Cup tournament between East Hajirpara Shatadal Jubo Club and Yusufpur Tin Raster Mor Club at the local primary school ground in the afternoon.

The trouble began when Tin Raster Mor captain Sabuj got involved in an altercation with the tournament organiser, as his players did not take part in the match.

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England batsman Kevin Pietersen of the Bangalore Royal Challengers plays and completely misses a switch-hit and is clean bowled during his side's IPL Twenty20 match against Delhi Daredevils at St George's Park in Port Elizabeth yesterday.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

A four-wicket haul from Chameley Khatun helped Ansar & VDP to a 17-run win over Mohammedan Sporting Club in the first-ever Women's Club Cup match at the City Club ground yesterday.

Batting first, Ansar made 159-9 in 35 overs and then restricted the popular Black and White giants for just 142-8.

Panna top-scored for the forces with 39 off 45 balls with five boundaries while Shahnaz Akhtar added a patient 26. For Mohammedan, Salma Khatun picked up four wickets for 17 runs.

When their turn came to bat, the Mohammedans were lacklustre with only Shukhtara Rahman scoring 27 off 58 balls.

DIVII CRICKET

Al-Rashid Cricket Club's Talha blasted ten sixes and as many boundaries in a fantastic display to help his side to a six-wicket win over Wari Club at the Dhaka University Ground in the Second Division yesterday.

The right-hander struck 127 off only 111 balls as his side took just 38.1 overs to score 203 runs. Earlier, Wari got to 202 from 48.2 overs with runs from Ashiq (49*) and Zakir (29).

In another match, Nobin Sangha (252-9) beat North Bengal Cricket Academy (210-7) by 42 runs at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium. Sagar slammed 82 and Ariful made 76 as the Mohammadpur club made it to the Super League with four wins out of five games.

At the Jagannath Hall Ground, Dhanmondi Pragati Sangha (237 all out) beat Kakrail Boys (200 all out) 4-0.

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OCA chief due tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

President of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) Sheikh Ahmed Al Fahad Al Sabah arrives in the capital on Wednesday on a brief unofficial visit.

During his stay in Dhaka, the OCA president will pay a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

He will call on Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) president and Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed to present him the OCA "Award of Merit", BOA officials said here Sunday. The award will be given to Gen Moeen for his valuable contribution in development of sports in Bangladesh.

The army chief will be the second Bangladeshi to get the prestigious OCA after late sports organiser Zafar Imam.

Myanmar maul Macau

SPORTS REPORTER



Macau 4-0 in the opening game of the AFC Challenge Cup Group-A qualifiers at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

After a drab opening ceremony in the sweltering heat, Myanmar took little time to demonstrate that they are the better side with defender Khin Maung Lwin opening the floodgates in the very third minute. He curled in a 25-yarder that an out of position Macau goalkeeper Leong Chon Kit could only see over his shoulder as the ball curled into the net.

In the 15th minute Yaza Win Thein flashed a header past Leong to give his side a 2-0 lead in the first half.

Three minutes after resumption, Myanmar sealed the fate of the match when Pyaye Phyo drilled a low shot into the far corner of the post. Macau, who looked clueless in their efforts to stop a rampant Myanmar side, conceded a fourth goal in the 59th minute with Myanmar

captain Myo Min Tun fittingly ending a lop-sided affair. He ran fast to beat an off side trap and went past the onrushing Leong to nod the ball in an empty net.

After the fantastic opening victory Myanmar coach Tin Myint Aung expressed happiness over his team's performance. He said that his side did pretty well in the tough conditions with mercury rising to 39 degree Celsius.

However Tin was critical of Bangladesh Football Federation's (BFF's) for keeping them seated in the dressing room for one and half hours before the commencement of the match.

"We departed from the hotel at 12.45 pm for a 3.30pm start which I think is just way too early for any team. On top of that we sat in the dressing room for one and a half hours before the match started which really cooled us down and it was difficult to play a match after that," explained Tin.

Macau coach Leung Si Wing was disappointed over his team's performance but explained that his team was not full strength in this competition. He also had his version of BFF's shortcomings.

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Myanmar captain Myo Min Tun (L) is under pressure from a Macau defender as he takes a shy at the goal during their AFC Challenge Cup Group-A qualifying match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

'Great to be back'

AFP, Dubai

Exiled Andrew Symonds capped his international comeback with useful allround contributions in Australia's win in the second match against Pakistan on Friday, saying it gave him belief he can still excel.

The 33-year-old all-rounder, who was once told to seek counselling after a series of alcohol-related incidents, is on the comeback trail after being left out of the team for several months.

Symonds, whose last one-day match was against the West Indies in July 2008, made amends for his failure in the first match on Wednesday, taking two cheap wickets to dismiss Pakistan for a modest 207 and then hit a brilliant 58 to anchor Australia's six-wicket win.

The victory on Friday left the five-match series 1-1 with the remaining three matches in

Abu Dhabi on April 27, May 1 and 3. Pakistan won the first match by four wickets.

Symonds said he was pleased with his performance.

"It's great to be back," said Symonds after he was named man-of-the-match. "I really enjoyed the last two games, the first game was very disappointing to lose. That was a feeling I haven't had for a while so it's nice to bounce back."

Symonds, who was left out of the Australian team for the tour of India last year after he missed team practice and instead went fishing, said the performance lifted his confidence.

"I felt good and I sort of showed myself that I could still do it at this level. I have been away for quite a while and that was probably going through my head, whether I could fire the way when I played successfully," said Symonds.

Symonds said he did not bother about his critics and wanted to enjoy the game.

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