

Bangabandhu Int'l Gold Cup next season

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin is eyeing a good combination of teams for the Bangabandhu International Gold Cup, which will take place in Bangladesh next season.

In an impromptu meeting with reporters at the BFF house Salahuddin informed that preliminary discussions regarding the tournament have been held with the other countries and the rest of the details will take place at the 59th FIFA Congress in Bahamas, early next month.

The top two clubs from Bangladesh along with six international club teams from Asia will compete in this 8-team meet likely to start later this year.

"I am very happy to announce that the Bangabandhu International Gold Cup will bring together two of the top clubs in our country along with six international clubs from Asia. I have had the first round of discussions with them and I will meet them in Bahamas next month for further discourse," said Salahuddin.

The man, who has been working relentlessly to host international clubs and teams to the country, is looking at the Middle East, South East Asia and India to send their clubs for this contest.

"I am looking at the Middle East and at the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) for clubs to participate in this tournament. And, I

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Did U Know?

Bryan Robson was the longest-serving (1982-1994) captain in Manchester United's history.



What to WATCH

- BTV**
BCB XI v MCA
Third Twenty20 Match
Live from 9:30am
- SET Max**
Indian Premier League
Bangalore Royal Challengers v
Delhi Daredevils
Live from 8:30pm
- ESPN**
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm



TALK TURKEY



Xavi
(Barcelona playmaker)
"This is my fourth league title and it is the one I have enjoyed most."
After winning the Spanish championship on Saturday.



BCB XI v MCA
Third Twenty20 Match
Time: 9:30am
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Mirpur



PHOTO: AFP

England bowler Tim Bresnan (second from R) celebrates with teammates after dismissing Fidel Edwards, the final wicket of West Indies on the fifth day of the second Test in Chester-le-Street yesterday.

Anderson abases WI England clinch series 2-0

Cricket

AFP, Chester-le-Street

James Anderson took nine wickets in a Test for only the second time in his career as England crushed the West Indies by an innings and 83 runs to win the second Test at the Riverside here on Monday.

Victory, in their last Test before the start of July's Ashes campaign, meant England took the two-match series 2-0 after a thumping 10-wicket win at Lord's and saw them regain the Wisden Trophy they'd lost in the Caribbean this year.

The West Indies, following on, were bowled out for 176 in their second innings, having made 310 first time around after England had piled up 569 for six declared in a match where the whole of Friday's second day was washed out.

"We came back to England after the West Indies tour keen to make amends for what went on over there," England captain Andrew Strauss

told Sky Sports. "We knew the conditions would help us a little more over here, but we played well and it bodes pretty well," he said after his side had won this series inside eight days' playing time.

"You have to savour your Test match victories and we are delighted but we realise we have further to go as a side."

Anderson added: "I'm delighted with how it's going. It swung around today luckily and I'm glad we could finish them off quite quickly."

West Indies captain Chris Gayle, whose side now face England in a three-match one-day series starting at Headingley on Thursday, said: "We are very disappointed with the way it worked out in difficult conditions for us but I guess it's a great way to start the summer for England."

"We found the conditions very tough but we also played poor cricket so we can't have any excuses."

West Indies were 167 for eight at lunch on having lost five wickets in the day's first session

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Rain ruins BCB XI's chance

SPORTS REPORTER

Heavy rain robbed BCB XI of a possible victory over Maharashtra Cricket Association as the second T20 match was called off on completion of the first innings at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Playing under the banner BCB XI, the England-bound T20 team won the first game by 63 runs on Sunday and play the third and last match against the same opponents today at the same venue before their departure for London on May 23.

Riding on spinner Nayeem Islam's impressive spell of 3-1-5-4, the BCB XI shot the visitors out for 83 runs in 15 overs before rain played spoilsport.

Captain Harshad Khadiwale and Rohan Bhosale gave the tourists a good start as they added 62 runs in 8.1 overs but lost their way once Mahmudullah Riyad gave the breakthrough by removing Rohan for 16.

Harshad however showed his class in a 30-ball 39 that featured six boundaries.

It was however not possible to finish the match as the ground became waterlogged following heavy shower. The sun shone later on to allow the teams play an unofficial warm-up game where Shakib Al Hasan (49 off 20 balls), Tamim Iqbal (51 off 42 balls) and Shamsur Rahman (33 off 33 balls) batted well.

The local players made 167 for five and then restricted the visitors to 121-7.

JU-Biman tie today

SPORTS REPORTER

The final of the Public Universities and Services Cricket Tournament was called off due to rain at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The match between Bangladesh Biman and Jahangirnagar University will now be held today at the same venue.

And if the match is again washed out, the championship will then be decided by toss according to the tournament-by-laws.

National TT from June 6

SPORTS REPORTER

The 30th AB Bank National Table Tennis Championship will be held from June 6 to 13 at the National Sports Council (NSC) gymnasium.

The championships will include men's team, women's team, boys' team, men's singles, women's singles, boys' singles, men's doubles, women's doubles, boys' doubles and mixed doubles events.

Meanwhile the Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation (BTTF) has sent forms to different district sports associations, Ansar and VDP and Biman Bangladesh Airlines, Universities or other institutions that are interested to

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Mehrab to lead Bangladesh A

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced a 15-member Bangladesh A team for the three-match one-day series against Maharashtra Cricket Association.

Left-handed Mehrab Hossain will lead the team while all-rounder Sohrawordi Shuvo has been named his deputy.

The Rafiqul Alam-led selection panel included players like Nafis Iqbal and Hannan Sarker, who were out-of-favour for a long time, but ignored middle-order batsman Tushar Imran.

"We actually considered those players who were not selected for the national side but performed well in the domestic competitions as well as some promising players. Tushar missed most of the domestic matches due to injury," explained Rafiq.

"We did not have much options because a number of players are involved in the academy side. On the other hand there are some injuries and even Imrul Kayes and Nazmul Hossain are still not hundred per cent fit," he added.

The most interesting name on the list was off-spinning all-rounder Mohammad Sharifullah. "He is an average cricketer but performed well on the domestic circuit over the last two-three years. We need these type of players, especially when he is an off-spinner," the chief selector went on.

The one-day matches will be held on May 22, 23 and 25 at the Birshrestha Shahid Motiur Rahman Stadium in Khulna.

The second string Bangladesh side will also play two four-dayers against the visitors.

SQUAD

Mehrab Hossain (captain), Sohrawordi Shuvo (vice-captain), Imrul Kayes, Nafis Iqbal, Nazmus Sadat, Hannan Sarker, Faisal Hossain, Mohammad Sharifullah, Mahbulul Alam, Nazmul Hossain, Dollar Mahmud, Arafat Sunny, Tareq Aziz Khan, Sahagir Hossain (wicketkeeper) and Nazmul Hossain Milon.

Bashar's belated wisdom

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Former national skipper Habibul Bashar urged the new generation of cricketers to think twice before moving away from the mainstream.

"Over the last eight months I realised the pains of staying away from the mainstream," Bashar said explaining the reasons behind his decision to cut ties with the unapproved Indian Cricket League (ICL).

It was nice to see a cricketer like Bashar change his mind to come back in the mainstream as he is not only one of the best batsmen the country has ever produced but also a leader who has captained the national team to some remarkable international success.

But his return has raised numerous questions that

need to be answered and the 36-year old faced those hard questions while talking with the reporters at an official press briefing at a local hotel yesterday; a day after he submitted a letter to BCB president Lt Gen Sina Ibn Jamali mentioning that he wanted to avail the "amnesty."

There had been different opinions among the cricket lovers in the country with regards to decision of the rebel cricketers when they pointed out that it was not only money but also the behaviour of the cricket authority, which forced them to join the unauthorised Indian T20 competition.

So, the obvious question facing Bashar was whether the situation had changed dramatically or whether he was admitting to a mistake with his decision of taking up the 'amnesty'.

The experienced campaigner however came up with diplomatic answers to these questions.

"In your life you definitely make some mistakes and everything was not right from my side," was the answer of the smiling Bashar.

"No doubt money is a big issue for any professional but I



HABIBUL BASHAR

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Ansar and VDP h'ball champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Ansar and VDP team clinched the EXIM Bank 20th national women's handball title beating hosts Faridpur 23-14 in the final at the Faridpur Stadium yesterday.

This was the 14th national crown for them including 11 in a row out of the 20 national meets since its inception in 1983.

Rumi of Ansars was adjudged the player-of-the-meet and Tisha of Kusthia was named the promising player-of-the-tournament.

Stern warning for McCullum

AFP, Johannesburg

Kolkata Knight Riders skipper Brendon McCullum was severely reprimanded Sunday for showing dissent during an Indian Premier League debut by Deccan Chargers.

The 27-year-old New Zealand wicketkeeper-cum-batsman lost his temper in the final over of a thriller at the Wanderers Saturday as Deccan chased a 161-run target and the outburst led to a hearing here chaired by the match referee.

McCullum was furious when the first delivery of the over was declared a 'no ball' because bottom-of-the-table Kolkata did not have sufficient fielders in the circle.

The decision stood and Deccan snatched a six-wicket victory in one of the most exciting matches of the second IPL season when Rohit Sharma struck a six off the final ball.

McCullum, whose team have managed just one win and three points in 12 games at the Twenty20 extravaganza, later apologised for his reaction against the umpires.

"My reaction out there was purely emotional and I wish to apologise. It is not easy being in a team that has lost a lot of tight matches," he said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

Rach sees hope in disaster

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national hockey team coaching director Gerhard Peter Rach believes that there is a lot to look forward to and that his team is far from being done, even after a disastrous Asia Cup, which recently concluded in Kuantan, Malaysia.

The Bangladesh team, which left for the Asia Cup with the aspirations of beating the likes of Japan and Malaysia, lost all four games in the tournament while conceding 32 goals.

Rach however believes that there are some obvious deficiencies in the team and the lack of preparation and international match practice are responsible for the shambolic performance in the Asia Cup.

"Before leaving for Malaysia I said that some special preparation is needed if we want to touch Malaysia and Japan. We did not have enough time to prepare for the tournament at home and even there as we arrived just two days before the Cup

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Stars approve new roof

Tennis

AFP, London

Grand Slam golden couple Andre Agassi and Steffi Graf gave Wimbledon Centre Court's new retractable roof the superstar seal of approval on Sunday.

The roof will cheer players and fans across the globe who have long had to endure London's famously wet summers playing havoc with the tournament's scheduling.

On Sunday, right on cue, it rained. But under the new, translucent roof, 15,000 people couldn't care less as Agassi, Graf, Tim Henman and Kim Clijsters, who is fine-tuning her game ahead of a comeback, played a light-hearted exhibition to mark the occasion.

With the court covered,

rain delays will be a thing of the past when this year's Wimbledon starts on June 22.

The roof, which will allow natural light to continue to shine on the grass below and has also been fitted with floodlights, will take 10 minutes to close although there will be a further delay of 30 minutes for moisture levels to be given the all-clear.

"I don't think I've ever smiled so much on a tennis court," said Agassi who, won the first of his Grand Slam titles here in 1992.

"I was impressed with how solid it felt and the sound was magnificent. When you get two people out there who can really play then you'll get a titanic battle, the sort you've not seen yet."

Graf, whose last match on Centre Court was 10 years ago,

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Kolkata stop the rot

AFP, Centurion



Monday in an Indian Premier League thriller.

Skipper McCullum from New Zealand struck 81 runs and Australian Hodge an undefeated 71 as Kolkata scored a single off the last ball at Centurion Park and triumphed by seven wickets.

It was only the second win in 13 outings for the bottom team in the Twenty20 extravaganza while a Chennai side lacking injured star batsman Matthew Hayden suffered their fifth loss of the group phase which finishes Thursday.

Suresh Raina top scored for Chennai with 52 as they made 188-3 in 20 overs on a cold, late autumn evening at the Test venue halfway between Johannesburg and Pretoria.

McCullum was quickly into his stride as Kolkata chased a daunting total, reaching a half century

during the sixth over before being bowled by Shadab Jakati with his side on 124-2 after 13 overs.

But Hodge carried the fight to Chennai and after going into the final over needing six runs to win, it came down the final ball which wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha scrambled for a single to avoid a super-over climax.

"Winning was far more important than my contribution," said modest man of the match Hodge. "We have tried so hard in the IPL only to finish on the wrong side of results."

McCullum added: "I would not wish the last four weeks on my worst enemy, but the boys kept lifting themselves off the floor and tonight we got over the line. Now we must enjoy ourselves."

Chennai skipper MS Dhoni said: "We got a lot of runs only for our opponents to bat brilliantly. Now we face the same situation as last year of needing a win from our final match to clinch a semifinals place."

Kolkata face defending champions Rajasthan Royals and Chennai meet Kings XI Punjab Wednesday in a Durban double-header.



PHOTO: AFP

Tennis legends Andre Agassi (R) and Steffi Graf celebrate a point during their mixed doubles match on the Centre Court at The All England Lawn Tennis Club in London on Sunday.