

Nat'l booters' first practice match today

SPORTS REPORTER

Shahidur Rahman Shantoo's boys will play their first practice match against Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today as part of the preparations for the next month's Bangabandhu SAFF Championship. The match will kick off at 5pm.

There are two more practice matches scheduled for the national team players as they will take on a BFF XI on November 24 at BKSP and Korean club Ulsan Hyundai on November 26 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

A 20-member final squad is expected to be announced after the last practice match.

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has given 31 players to Shantoo for the camp after they fired Brazilian coach Edson Silva Dido, who had a 23-member team.

The regional football extravaganza is scheduled for December 4-13 at the

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Did U Know?

Italian referee Marcello Donadini was taken to hospital in 1973 after being bitten in the back by a player who didn't agree with a decision.



Greg Chappell

(Former Australia captain)
"If you want people to come, then obviously you have to fit into their lives, not hope that they will fit into the life of cricket."

While stressing on the need for Test cricket to adapt to the changing times.



TEN Sports & SuperSport3

South Africa v England

Second ODI

Live from 3:00pm

ESPN

English Premier League

Bolton v Blackburn

Live from 8:30pm

STAR Sports

English Premier League

Stoke City v Portsmouth

Live from 11:00pm

SuperSport7

English Premier League

Tottenham v Wigan

Live from 10:00pm

SuperSport2

Primera Liga

Malaga v Zaragoza

Live from 1:00am (Monday)

Osasuna v Valencia

Live from 3:00am (Monday)



Premier Div Cricket League

Abahani v Biman

Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium

Surjo Torun v Mohammedan

Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium



PHOTO: AFP

DO YOU NEED A CAPTION FOR THIS? Irish journalist Geraldine Comiskey, who works for the Sunday World Irish newspaper, poses next to a poster of French football star Thierry Henry outside FC Barcelona's Joan Gamper Sports Center on Friday.

Bittersweet finale awaits Henry

AFP, Paris



As a rising star his budding skills helped France along the route to World Cup glory 11 years ago.

But assuming Thierry Henry makes the France squad for what would be his fourth and last World Cup finals in South Africa next summer the attention will likely focus on his moment of sporting infamy in the playoff win over Ireland rather than his enormous talent.

Henry is caught in the eye of the storm after his handball gave William Gallas the chance to score the goal which took the 1998 champions through, leaving the Irish distraught and the former Arsenal striker sheepish as he admitted his misdeed.

"Of course the fairest solution would be to replay the game but it is not in my control," the Barcelona striker said.

"Naturally I feel embarrassed at the way that we won and feel extremely sorry for the Irish who definitely deserve to be in South Africa."

"The ball bounced and it hit my hand," said Henry, though he insisted that "I am not a cheat."

The circumstances, while not as blatant as Diego Maradona's slam dunk past England keeper Peter Shilton in the 1986 finals, may now sadly prove the abiding memory of a player who has worn French blue for 12 years, won the Champions League with Barca and lit up the English Premiership with Arsenal.

Henry was a precocious talent at Monaco, where he won the French league and broke into the French World Cup squad at age 20. Juventus

swiftly came calling but the man from Les Ulis in the southern Parisian suburbs saw his career run into a cul-de-sac in Turin.

After half a season a man named Arsene Wenger came calling, prescribing a remedy of a move to Arsenal and a switch of role to centre forward.

In eight years with the Gunners Henry became one of the European game's top attractions, winning a clutch of domestic honours including two Premiership titles.

Barcelona were long smitten, though Henry continually professed his enduring love for the red half of north London.

But after the Catalan club had spiked the Gunners in the 2006 Champions League final the Frenchman decided that at 29, it was finally time for a new challenge.

And despite losing an element of his searing pace owing to a succession of niggling injuries he landed a La Liga winners medal in his first season before finally adding the main omission in his collection - a Champions League winners medal.

That Barca's vanquished rivals were Manchester United only made the win sweeter.

With the national side Henry, despite his fitness foibles across the qualifying campaign, has been a stabilising element in the camp and is, with 51 goals in 117 games, his country's all-time leading scorer.

But now his reputation has been tarnished, even if Wenger came to his defence on Friday.

"Football and sport are full of heroes who have cheated 10 times more than Thierry," Wenger said.

"In my eyes, those who buy referees, who take drugs, they are the real cheats. Thierry

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Sangakkara rues missed chances

Cricket

INTERNET, undated

Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara rued a lost opportunity early in the first test after India escaped with a draw on a flat pitch on Friday.

Sri Lanka, aiming to win their first test on Indian soil after 27 years of trying, had the home team struggling in the first innings before they recovered to 426 all out.

"We had our best chance when we had them 32 for four but we gave it away after lunch (on the opening day)," Sangakkara told reporters. "There was not much for the bowlers on the last two days."

"If you were a batsman you would like it. I don't think anyone expected this wicket to be this flat," he said after India finished the fifth and final day on 412 for four in their second innings, 78 runs ahead.

More than 1,500 runs, including a world-

record sixth wicket stand of 351 between Sri Lanka pair Mahela (275) and Prasanna Jayawardene (154 not out) and seven centuries, were scored in the match and only 21 wickets fell.

Last year South Africa won a test in under three days on a seaming track at the same ground.

India skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni said the pitch was of little help to the bowlers especially the spinners.

"The wicket was quite flat but I wouldn't say it was the flattest I have seen," said Dhoni.

"I think it was on the slow side so it wasn't much help to the spinners. For the fast bowlers also the wicket got slower and slower."

Dhoni said India did not panic despite being 334 runs behind on first innings.

"We knew if we didn't give early wickets to the Sri Lankan bowlers it would be very difficult for them to get 10 wickets and that's what happened," he said.

The second match in the three-test series is in Kanpur starting on Tuesday.

Is time running out?

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Amidst high hopes the current office bearers at the country's most affluent sports body, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), took charge a year back following a free and fair election. The presence of tried and tested organisers made many believe that this time things would be put in the right place to achieve the much-talked about professionalism. It was also expected that cricket would take a few steps forward in the country. Many also believed that the people in charge would make certain of democratic practice in all activities on way to ensuring a good 'team-work' to help achieve the biggest challenge - hosting the 2011 World Cup as one of the co-hosts.

Bangladesh's existence as a sporting nation will certainly reach a new high when the opening ceremony of cricket's premier show - the 2011 World Cup - will take place at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on February 17.

To savour that august occasion and hosting another eight games to be played at Dhaka and Chittagong, the board, which has never undertaken a massive task like this before, first and foremost need a dedicated set of professionals under a committed leadership.

But bitter it may sound the reality at the moment is that non-professionals are calling all the shots starting from occupying vital positions to becoming custodians of a mind-boggling amount of money to be spent for infrastructural development and preparation for the showpiece event.

The appointment of a CEO can wait for

no certain terms. We have our own styled glorified chief operation officer who will smile when asked to be smile. Do we dare for a ruthless professional like Zimbabwean Mackey Dudhia, who changed the face of the board during his two-year stay in turbulent times?

Sorry, one year activities has hardly reflected anything positive for which we can enthuse on the bright side, rather evidence is plenty about the decline in professionalism.

There are only a few people who are actually dictating all the affairs.

"Sometimes a meeting was called and we just attended this meeting. That's all. Actually everything is now depending on few members wishes," said a disgruntled board director preferring anonymity.

It seems that with the cricket's biggest extravaganza knocking on the door, some people are desperate to control everything with the political influences, which have divided the board in many groups and thus stagnated their activities.

Many argued the selection of convenor for the local organising committee (LOC) of the 2011 World Cup, suggesting that it should have been given to someone who had the experience of organising the event of this magnitude.

It also surprised many when a Bangladesh Biman official was appointed as event director.

Of late in the domestic front a questionable sports organiser has been made member secretary of the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) in place of a more credible candidate. Cynics say that his appointment in the sensitive post was done to ensure a chain of command of a politically blessed big shot.

The appointment of AHM Mustafa

Kamal as BCB president two months ago offered fresh hope when he promised to appoint a highly efficient individual as CEO.

He did get a shortlist of aspiring candidates for the demanding post but it remained in cold storage like the HR policy, which has been approved five months back but is still not practice as many employees are yet not sure what is their job description.

It was learnt that some influential members are not interested in spending money for the professionals: a back dated thinking in these days. Many however believe that there is another reason for this certain quarter not to be interested with CEO appointment as they are afraid of losing ground.

With the board president apparently not proactive like his other predecessors who had dedicated almost full time for the betterment of the game, internal dispute which is now the worst-kept secret, apparently slowed down all development activities.

Many are already worried with the way the World Cup preparations are progressing as it was nearly eight months back the board high-ups said that they were lagging behind in preparation and till today there is no visible progress in this regard.

Rather the tendering process has been delayed by fifteen days although the government has already approved Tk 252 crore for preparing the venues. It was learnt that a certain group tried to influence the tendering process but ultimately their efforts went in vain. But time is running out fast for Bangladesh to prepare the selected venues before the October next year deadline.

SA-ENG 2ND ODI TODAY

Kallis blow for hosts

CRICINFO, undated

Jacques Kallis has been ruled out of the one-day series against England with a fractured rib and is also doubtful for the opening Test at Centurion Park on December 16.

It is thought Kallis suffered the injury during last month's Champions League in India but the seriousness of the problem was only revealed in recent days when he underwent a scan after the pain hadn't disappeared.

"He just wasn't getting better from that injury," Mickey Arthur, the South Africa coach, said. "We had him re-scanned this morning and found there is a fracture in the cartilage of the rib -- which clearly affects his performances for the next four weeks."

His absence will be a significant blow to South Africa and means they will need to adjust the balance of their side to cover for the loss of a batsman and a bowler.

Kallis was set to partner Graeme Smith at the top of the order in a reshaped batting line-up, but now there will have to be another rethink. Hashim Amla is the likely replacement as opener, but the selectors may be tempted to call up Loots Bosman after his exceptional performances during the Twenty20 series including a 45-ball 94 in the second match at Centurion Park.

The opening game of the series at the Wanderers was abandoned without a ball bowled on Friday but the forecast is better for Sunday's meeting at Centurion.

Dilshan breaks his nose

CRICINFO, undated

Sri Lanka's opening batsman Tillakaratne Dilshan has fractured his nose after colliding with one of his teammates while playing football following the first Test against India in Ahmedabad on Friday. Brendon Kuruppu, Sri Lanka's team manager, confirmed the news upon arrival in Kanpur, the venue for the second Test starting Tuesday. Dilshan had to be rushed to hospital where an X-ray revealed the damage.

However, Dilshan may yet be available for the second Test. "The injury was put right by the surgeon before we left for Kanpur and Dilshan is out of danger," Kuruppu said. "He is not in any kind of great discomfort. He will resume practice with the rest of the team tomorrow (Sunday)."

This is Dilshan's second injury on this tour. Prior to the first Test, he sprained his ankle during practice, but recovered in time to score a century.

Khelaghar win at last

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Khelaghar Samaj Kalyan Samity got their first points of the Premier Division Cricket league in their eighth round match against Partex at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. Khelaghar barely had to break a sweat as they chased down a meagre total of 98 losing only two wickets taking little more than 22 overs. Niaz Morshed scored 41 while Aslam Ali remained not out on 48 to guide Khelaghar to their first win of the season. However, the match's fate was determined earlier when Partex got bowled out for 98 despite a half-century from their opener Gazi Salaudhin. Khelaghar spinner Bishwanath Halder did most of the damage with the ball as he took four wickets for nine runs in 9.1 overs.

Over at Fatullah, BKSP got a five-wicket victory over Old DOHS in a dramatic encounter. Batting first, Old DOHS looked on for a big total as they passed the hundred mark without losing a wicket in 26 overs. But a splendid spell from Asif Ahmed (4-25) crippled DOHS innings and they lost all their wickets for the last 53 runs skittling out for 158. BKSP comfortably ran down the target in 39.2 overs losing five wickets, thanks to two 49-run knocks, one from opener Soumya Sarker and the other from middle-order batsman Tanvir Ahmed who remained unbeaten.

Victoria got the better off Cricket Coaching School (CCS) by 30 runs at the BKSP-2 ground. Batting first, Victoria posted 191 on the board losing seven wickets in their allotted fifty overs. Arsalan Mir scored 46 runs while Arafat Salaudhin stayed not out on 49 to set up a challenging total. Salaudhin then shone with the ball as he took three

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