

Real test of selection

Cricket

BISHWAJIT ROY

The national selectors are in a tight spot with the selection of the Bangladesh A and Academy teams as both sides have international commitments at the same time.

South Africa A and Academy team are expected to arrive in Dhaka on April 20. The second-string South Africa side will play two four-dayers against Bangladesh A while South Africa Academy team will play two four-dayers, three one-day matches and two T20s against GP-BCB National Cricket Academy (NCA).

West Indies A team will also arrive in the first week of May to play a tri-nation one-day tournament, involving the hosts and South Africa A and after that they will play two four-dayers against their Bangladeshi counterparts.

But also during this duration, the national team will be on duty in the West Indies and England to play the Twenty20 World Championships and Test matches respectively.

As all three teams have their schedule tangled, the selection policy will be virtually exposed because there has not been the existence of the A team and Academy team in a true sense.

Actually a very limited number of players are always picked to make the teams; few of whom are left out of the national team and some same old 'new prospects'.

"We are working on the teams but in reality it's a very difficult job this time as we have to prepare at least six teams," admitted chief selector Rafiqul Alam.

This time there was no alternative for the selectors other than to widen their area of selections. And to do that they have to focus on the domestic circuits but the question has been raised about how serious the selectors were with the domestic competitions.

Without any question, the selectors must watch as many domestic games as possible but the fact was that the selectors watched only a few matches in this year's National Cricket League.

So the cold scorecard will be the only reliable source for the Rafiqul Alam-led selection panel when they go for some new faces in these back-up teams.

"It was not possible to watch the maximum number of National League matches as at that time there were international games at home," defended Rafiqul.

Was there any point to send all the selectors to one international match then?

"Actually there were some close contests and that's why we all saw those international matches," he replied.

Rafiqul however was not too worried with the shortage of the cricketers to make the two different teams.

"Right now the Academy has been running with twenty-two players but for making the team we have to adopt some new players. We

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Bayern Munich striker Ivica Olic (L) is ecstatic after scoring the winning goal against Manchester United during their Champions League quarterfinal at the Allianz Arena on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

PORT CITY CRICKET LEAGUE Bengal Tigers on course

SPORTS REPORTER

Bengal Tigers of India took a big step towards qualifying for the semifinals by beating Dhaka Sports by 43 runs in their Port City Cricket League (PCL) clash at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

A rollicking 49-run knock from Jayachandra and 33 from Devendra set up a target of 166 runs for Dhaka Sports, but the reply ended on 122 runs giving the Kolkata club their second win in two matches.

Both teams had earlier registered easy victories in their first matches and were looking to extend that winning streak. After winning the toss, Bengal Tigers opted to bat first but found themselves in some trouble losing two batsmen very early. Former India wicketkeeper Deep Das Gupta was one of them as he became a victim of Syed Rasel after scoring just one run.

But they soon picked up the scoring rate with some good contribution in the middle-order reaching fifty in five overs and 84 in 10 without any further damage. Jayachandra was the main run-getter with 49 from 31 balls while Devendra scored a quickfire 33 and Rashmi Ranjan Parida got 24 to give Bengal Tigers a

decent enough score.

A few wickets in a cluster late in the innings thwarted the scoring a bit, but they still managed to put up a big enough score of 165 runs on the board losing nine wickets in the process.

Chasing the target, Dhaka Sports got hiccups in their first two overs. First it was Uttam Sarker who fell trying to pull one from Ranadeb Bose. The next over, Imran Farhat was run out after a chaotic mix-up with his partner. Two wickets in first two overs made their work much harder and Dhaka never recovered from those early jolts. Off-spinner Rajesh Sharma then came in to the act and chipped in with wickets at regular intervals. Despite some big hitting from previous match's hero Faisal Iqbal (41), Mehrab Hossain (17) and Shubhogoto Hom (15) the Dhaka Sports innings folded for 122 in 19.3 overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BENGAL TIGERS: 165 for 9 in 20 overs (Jayachandra 49, Devendra 33, Parida 24)

DHAKA SPORTS: 122 all out in 19.3 overs (Faisal 41, Mehrab 17, Shubhogoto 15; Rajesh 4 wickets)

Result: Bengal Tigers won by 43 runs. Man-of-the-match: Rajesh Sharma.



Abahani captain Asaduzzaman Chandan (2nd from R), along with teammates, rushes towards the umpire to 'protest' a decision during their Dhaka Bank Club Cup hockey tournament against Mariner Youngs Club at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

CLUB CUP HOCKEY Seniors reign in battle of BKSPs

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Abahani posted a second successive win in the Dhaka Bank Club Cup Hockey tournament after they beat Mariner Youngs Club 5-2 at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The second triumph in as many matches no doubt took the Dhanmondi-based outfit close to the semifinal berth but it was not one-way traffic as they saw in their 7-1 win against Bangladesh Police in the tournament opener.

Though it was a clash between Abahani and Mariner, actually it was a battle between the senior and the junior students of Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP) because both outfits have clogged their respective squads with the BKSP boys, at present the premium pipeline for providing players to mainstream hockey, even in the national team.

Obviously the Abahani squad is comprised of senior students, of whom seven are sitting for the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations today and the Mariner squad have

mostly juniors, the ones who gave the SSC exams two month ago.

The margin might have given the impression that Abahani easily won the game but the fact was that they had to toil hard to beat their juniors, who looked determined to pull off an upset though they failed because of the lack of experience.

Despite having gone one goal down in the third minute, Mariner put up a fast-paced game to give their seniors a nervous time throughout the game. But in the end they could not cash in on their movements as most of them have been playing at the top-level for the first time.

Abahani, however, never appeared to lose touch with the game as their striking duo Jamil Bin Talib and Hasan Jubair Niloy were excellent with their stick work in the destination and they together scored four out of the five field goals that Abahani struck.

Jamil put the Sky Blues ahead in the third minute before Niloy doubled the margin in the

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Abahani rope in Gilberto

SPORTS REPORTER

In a bid to bring cohesion in the midfield to achieve a hat-trick of league titles, defending champions Abahani have signed up Nigerian attacking midfielder Gilberto Felix Ben on the concluding day of the mid-term players' registration of the ongoing professional league yesterday.

Abahani lead the 13-team point table with 37 from 13 matches followed by their perennial foes Mohammedan (33 from 13 outings), who, however, have kept their hopes on Nigerian duo Alamu Bukola Olalekan and Emeke Christian and released their Nigerian goalkeeper James Paul, the hero of their Federation Cup triumph.

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INTER-DIST CRICKET Maruf, Faiaz drive Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER

Maruf's 74 and Faiaz's 71 helped Dhaka to a 40-run victory over Jamalpur in their clash of the 30th inter-district cricket championship at the Jamalpur Stadium yesterday.

Riding on the duo's batting, Dhaka amassed 261 for the loss of 6 wickets in 50 overs. And despite a 48-run knock from Sanwar, Jamalpur fell short of the target by 40 runs as they were skittled out for 221 in 49.4 overs.

In a close encounter at the Faridpur Stadium, the hosts beat Rajbari by 2 wickets. Faridpur chased down Rajbari's total of 142 runs in 38.1 overs losing eight wickets in the process.

In the day's other matches, Comilla (87-4) cantered against Feni (86-10) by six wickets,

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Delhi thump Rajasthan

SPORTS REPORTER

Delhi Daredevils outclassed Rajasthan Royals by inflicting a 67 run defeat in their IPL match at the Feroz Shah Kotla in Delhi yesterday.

Batting first, Delhi Daredevils put up 188 for the loss of 6 wickets in their 20 overs, thanks to a sterling effort from Denesh Karthik who scored a whirlwind 38 ball 69.

A top class all-round bowling performance led by Amit Mishra then restricted Rajasthan to just 121. Mishra took 3 for 25 from his 4 overs.

The defeat ended Rajasthan's four match winning streak and saw Delhi take second place in the points table, behind Mumbai Indians.

Delhi were 67 for four at one stage and looked in trouble but Karthik in partnership with Gambhir led the resistance which saw them post a defendable total on the board. Gambhir chipped in with a composed 43.

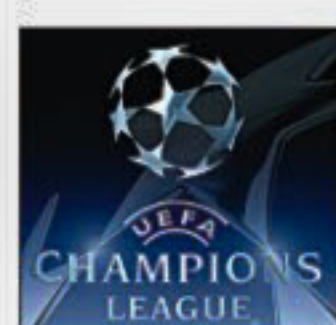
For Rajasthan, Sumit Narwal took three for 36.

Rajasthan never recovered from the first over loss of Michael Lumb and crumbled

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Olic strike sinks Man Utd

AFP, Munich



Bayern Munich stunned Manchester United 2-1 in their Champions League quarterfinal first leg Tuesday, with an injury-time goal by

Ivica Olic evoking memories of their famous clash in 1999.

The match was eagerly anticipated as a re-run of the famous thrilling Champions League final in 1999 when two dramatic goals right at the end of the game took the trophy to Old Trafford in a devastating blow to the Germans.

This time round, United struck right at the beginning of the match, with England striker Wayne Rooney latching on to a deflected free-kick and smashing home a close-range volley for his 34th goal of the season with only 66 seconds played.

Bayern were left to rue a golden opportunity half way through the first period as Olic somehow missed from about a yard out completely unmarked in front of goal.

Rooney missed a gilt-edged chance of his own in front of goal before the end of an open and entertaining first half which produced only one goal but could have seen a half-dozen as both teams concentrated on attacking football.

United manager Sir Alex Ferguson

called on his side to step up their effort in the second half but it was the home side who started the brighter with several shots on goal in the first few minutes of the second period.

And Bayern continued to dominate the second half, fully deserving their equaliser after when a long-range free-kick from the impressive French international Franck Ribery deflected off Rooney past a helpless van der Sar.

During a frantic last 10 minutes, United defender Nemanja Vidic clattered the bar and Gomez forced van der Sar into a last-ditch save during injury time.

But the van der Sar was helpless as Olic weaved his way through the United defence and slotted home in the second minute of injury time.

As a further blow to Ferguson and England, Rooney hobbled off the pitch at full time after a clash with Gomez.

Bayern coach Louis van Gaal was delighted with what he described as a "well-deserved win."

After a "shock" first goal, "we needed 10 minutes to recover and afterwards we were the best side."

"We have a good chance in Manchester because we can always score away from home," added the Dutchman.

The English side came into the clash in stunning form, having won their last seven games, including a 4-0 thumping of Italian giants AC Milan and a satisfying 2-1 defeat of fierce rivals Liverpool at home.

Coming in to the quarterfinal clash, the Reds were undefeated in their last 17 European encounters, a point made forcefully by coach Sir Alex Ferguson before the game.

In contrast, Bayern's recent form has been poor, with rare back-to-back league defeats knocking them off the top of the Bundesliga.

The four-time European champions have also been less than convincing in Europe, needing a hefty dose of luck to squeeze past Italian outfit Fiorentina.

MANCHESTER UNITED: Edwin van der Sar, Gary Neville, Patrice Evra, Rio Ferdinand, Nemanja Vidic, Ji-Sung Park (Dimitar Berbatov, 70), Michael Carrick (Luis Valencia, 70), Nani (Ryan Giggs, 82), Paul Scholes, Darren

SPORT DESK

announcements immediately sparked resentment in Sania's home city of Hyderabad where activists of a regional political party in Coimbatore held a protest against the much-specified marriage.

"Because we feel that the cricket player basically belongs to a country, which aids and abets terrorism against India. It is still to handover the Mumbai attack accused to India. Moreover, this is an insult to 100 crore Indian people and Muslims living in India," an activist of Hindu Makkal Katchi was

quoted by ANI. They also demanded Sania should be deported from India and the highest awards such as Padma Shri should be taken back from her.

However, Adil Mirza, father of Sania's ex-fiance Sohrab, on Tuesday wished good luck to the ace tennis player following her engagement to Shoaib.

"I spoke to Imran (Sania's father) and congratulated him. It is a happy thing. I wish them best of luck," Adil told reporters in Hyderabad.

Sania got engaged to Sohrab, her childhood friend, last year but it broke down due to incompatibility between the two.

But the latest developments have come as a shocker for Shoaib Malik's 'ex-wife' Ayesha Siddiqui.

Hyderabad girl Ayesha was holed up in her posh Banjara Hills home all day and was not available for comments. The family is said to be in a state of shock and disbelief over the reports of Shoaib-Sania wedding.

The Siddiqui family claimed in February 2008 that Shoaib had married Ayesha on June 3, 2002, through a telephonic nikah (marriage) after a prolonged Internet love affair. But the cricketer said he was only engaged to her and the marriage was called off because of problems between the families.

There was more to this affair that India Today revealed: Ayesha met Shoaib in a Dubai restaurant in 2001 along with her friend, Maha. While Ayesha is a little plump, Maha was pretty and Shoaib fell for her.

On returning to Hyderabad, Ayesha -- posing

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A Bollywood story!

SPORT DESK

If everything goes according to the script then April 15 will be the nuptial of the year with Pakistan star cricketer Shoaib Malik and Indian tennis sensation Sania Mirza set to tie the knot.

Monday's news that Shoaib is engaged to marry Sania is perhaps the last twist of a long tale that Bollywood filmmakers can consider seriously for their next love story.

While it broke a few million hearts including Ayesha and Sohrab Mirza, the

announcement immediately sparked resentment in Sania's home city of Hyderabad where activists of a regional political party in Coimbatore held a protest against the much-specified marriage.

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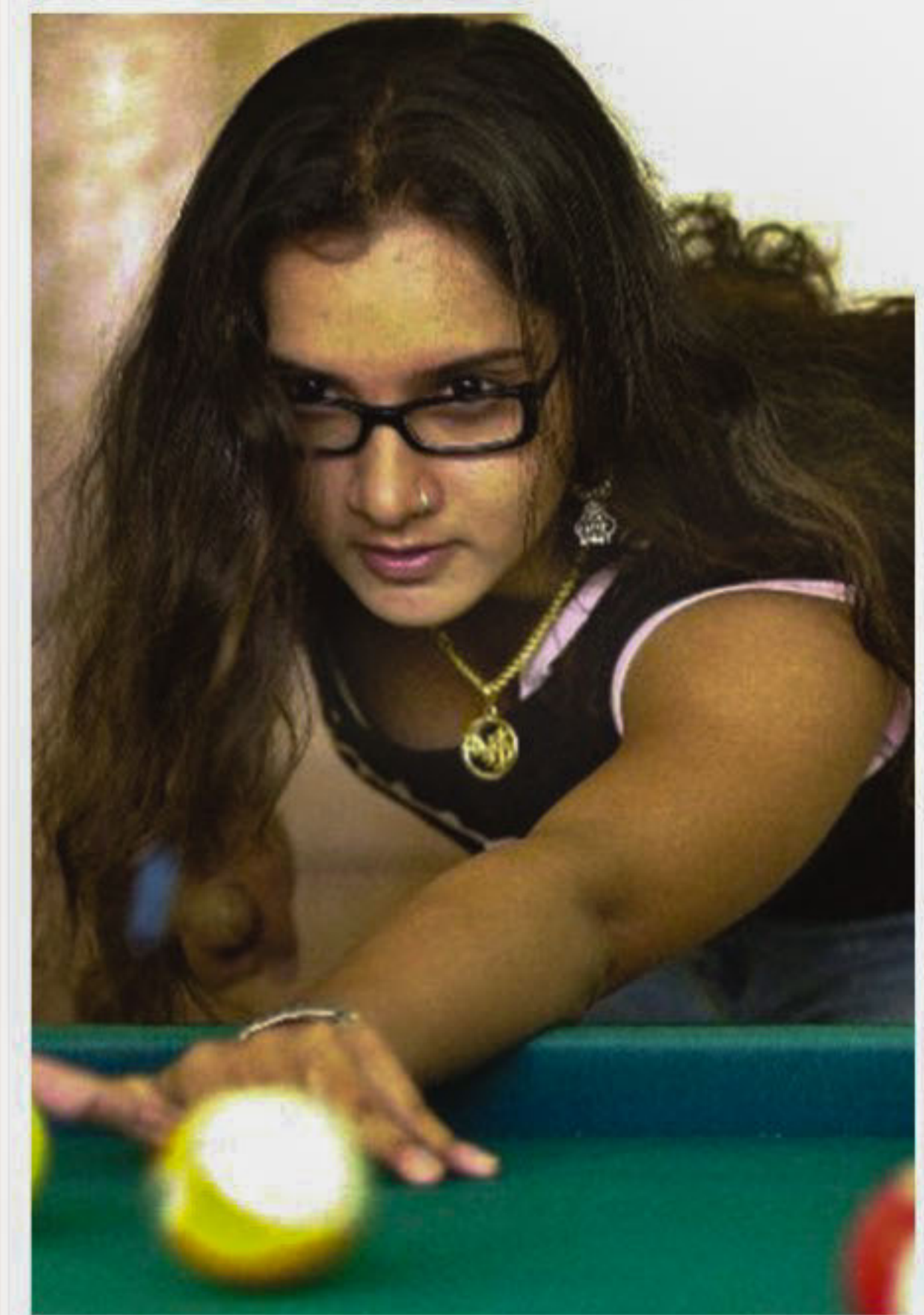
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SANIA MIRZA

NATIONAL CRICKET BKSP & Ankur to fight it out

SPORTS REPORTER

BKSP and Rajbari's Ankur School and College moved into the final of the Standard Chartered National Cricket Tournament with comfortable wins against their respective opponents at different city venues yesterday.

BKSP posted a massive 167-run victory against Willes Little Flower School and College at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium in the first semifinal. BKSP scored 261 for six in stipulated 50 overs with Kamran making the team highest unbeaten 55.

In reply, Willes Little Flower were bundled out for 94 runs in 32 overs. Salehin made the damage by taking four wickets for 19 runs and later was adjudged man-of-the-match.

At the City Club ground, Toukir Islam's brilliant

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ATN Bangla
Port City League
Live from 5:00pm

SuperSport2
Indian Premier League
Kolkata Knight Riders v
Deccan Chargers
Live from 8:30pm

ESPN
Sortscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

SuperSport3
UEFA Europa League
Benfica v Liverpool
Live from 1:00am (Friday)

SuperSport7
UEFA Europa League
Fulham v Wolves
Live from 1:00am (Friday)