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DHAKA MONDAY MAY 17, 2010, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net



25
DAYS
TO GO

Football comes home

No prizes for knowing the outcome of this World Cup. Even Alf Ramsey knew the final result when in 1963 he proclaimed that England would win the tournament they were set to host. But, beforehand, the outcome was anything but a forgone conclusion. Brazil possessed many of the stars of 1962, Portugal had their greatest-ever team featuring Eusebio, Jose Torres and Mario Coluna, and both the Germans and Russians had their best teams in a generation.

England, whose status as host was chiefly down to Sir Stanley Rous's presidency of FIFA, were also given the slightly unfair boon of being able to play all their home games at Wembley. Nevertheless, they initially struggled, with Uruguay providing solid opposition in a dour 0-0 opening draw. Ramsey was still looking for the right combination in attack and midfield and he also lost predator supreme Jimmy Greaves to a nasty gash on his shin in a 2-0 win over Mexico in the second match.

Ramsey was soon to abandon wide attackers, thus creating the legend of his 'wingless wonders', in a formation that gave full-backs George Cohen and Ray Wilson licence to bomb forward and provide service to his strike force. Against a decent France side, it was Liverpool's Roger Hunt who benefitted twice from the new system as England again won 2-0 to qualify for the quarterfinal stage.

The last eight brought the challenge of Argentina, who had qualified from a group also containing a West Germany side that, in Franz Beckenbauer, had a young player of incredible talent.

But the most exciting group was that featuring champions Brazil, a resurgent Hungary and the glittering Portuguese, featuring many of the Benfica side that had been one of the best teams in European club football for half a decade. Bulgaria made up the numbers but played a crucial role in Pele's tournament. In the group's opening game, the Bulgarians took it in turns to foul Pele and he was eventually carried from the pitch. The sight of him stricken, covered in a blanket on the touchline, remains one of that tournament's enduring images.

TO BE CONTINUED



PHOTO: AFP

THE INVENTORS HAVE WON IT: Joyous England players celebrate with the ICC World Twenty20 trophy after beating Australia in the final at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown yesterday. It was England's first major international one-day trophy after losing in three World Cup finals in 1979, 1987 and 1992 and the 2004 Champions Trophy.

Nazimuddin to lead A team

SPORTS REPORTER

After the decision to send Shamsur Rahman to England, Nazimuddin has been chosen as Bangladesh A captain for the two four-day matches against West Indies A.

The first unofficial Test begins today at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur against a side that has shown great quality in the tri-nation one-day tournament that ended on Friday.

Left-hander Mehrab Hossain will take the place of Shamsur the batsman while middle-order batsman Farhad Hossain comes in for Aftab Ahmed who is unavailable due to personal reasons.

The second four-dayer will take place at the BKSP from May 23.

SQUAD

Nazimuddin (captain), Sahagir Hossain (vice-captain), Shahrar Nafees, Rokibul Hasan, Faisal Hossain, Marshall Ayub, Sohravordi Shuvo, Mahmudul Hasan, Nur Hossain, Nazmul Hossain, Syed Rasel, Dollar Mahmud, Mehrab Hossain, Farhad Hossain.

Tigers suffer first loss

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh suffered a five-wicket loss to Essex on the third and final day of their warm-up match at the County Ground in Chelmsford yesterday.

Essex reached 130 for five in 43.2 overs after Bangladesh were bowled out for 211 in the second innings on the previous day.

The visitors took five quick wickets but Grant Flower (34 not out) and Adam Wheatley (19 not out) steered Essex to the winning target.

Robiul Islam took two wickets while there was one

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Dordoi hold Abahani

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani's hopes of winning a final round berth in the AFC President's Cup were dashed when Dordoi Bishkek held the hosts to a goalless draw in the final Group A Qualifier at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The draw meant that two-time champions Dordoi advanced into the finals as winners from the group with seven points from three games, two more than Abahani who have been eliminated from the qualifying round for the third successive year.

Dordoi will now join Group B champions FC Vakhsh of Tajikistan, Group C champions Yadanarbon of Myanmar and best runners-up Turkmenistan ITTU, who got ahead of Abahani on goal difference, in the finals.

Abahani went into the match needing to win to leapfrog Dordoi. And the boys of Abahani coach Amalesh Sen did a fantastic job of keeping Dordoi, who scored eight goals in their previous two games, at bay.

The home side also put one past the Dordoi goalkeeper when left-back Atiqur Rahman Mishu fired the ball home in the 39th minute but his effort was ruled out by the referee, for handball. It was a belated call from the referee after the linesman spotted that Mishu handled the ball while taking a lob from Ujjal

on his chest.

Abahani, however, might take consolation from the fact that they held a side, which have played all five AFC President's Cup finals and won the title twice.

With their backs against the wall Abahani made a promising start picking up a free-kick on the edge of the box but defender Mishu hit the wall much to the relief of goalkeeper Volkov Vladislav.

Two-time Bangladesh

League champions, Abahani, however struggled to control the midfield like in their match against Hasus NTCPE and tried their luck from distance on the rain-soaked pitch, but those efforts were hardly on target.

Dordoi grew in confidence to take control of the midfield and the real scare for Abahani was when Mysikov Alexander, availing a back-heeled pass from Tetteh David Bruce, let

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PHOTO: STAR

Abahani's Ghanaian forward Awudu Ibrahim skips past a Dordoi Bishkek defender during their clash of the AFC President's Cup Qualifiers at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

ICC vigilant: Morgan

Cricket

AFP, Bridgetown

World cricket's top administrator has insisted officials are 'extremely vigilant' when it comes to 'spot-fixing' after Pakistan's Danish Kaneria was arrested in a betting probe.

But International Cricket Council (ICC) president David Morgan, in an interview with AFP here in Barbados on the eve of the World Twenty20 final between Australia and England, insisted: "I can honestly say to you that I have no knowledge of any spot-fixing that I am refusing to tell you about."

Kaneria and a colleague at English county side Essex, Mervyn Westfield, have been arrested in connection with a police investigation into betting, a club official confirmed Saturday.

Both Test leg-spinner Kaneria, 29, and 22-year-old pace bowler Westfield were questioned on Friday before being released on bail.

It is understood the match under scrutiny was a 40-over win against Durham last September. The investigation centres on the practice of 'spot-fixing' whereby money is placed on individual details in a match.

"I've been aware of the potential problem at Essex for a little while," Morgan told AFP at his Barbados hotel here on Saturday, ahead of

Sunday's showpiece match at the Kensington Oval. "And I was made aware by [Haroon] Lorgat [the ICC chief executive] yesterday [Friday] that those two cricketers had been seen by the Essex police," Morgan added.

"There is a police inquiry and therefore there is absolutely nothing I could or would wish to say [about Kaneria and Westfield's arrest]," insisted Morgan, a former chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board.

In its recent past, cricket has had to deal with several match-fixing scandals, most notoriously including betting scams involving the late former South Africa captain Hansie Cronje. But in an era of spread betting, the issue of spot-fixing, where events such as the number of wides in an over can be gambled on, is potentially even a bigger problem for cricket as results do not have to be "fixed" for an underhand betting coup to take place.

Turning to the issue of spot-fixing in general, Morgan said: "Cricket is full of discreet events -- overs of six balls, powerplays, in first-class cricket the morning, the afternoon and the evening [sessions]."

"There are lots of these discreet events that attract people who gamble." However, he insisted the ICC's anti-corruption and security unit, which is about to be headed up by Sir Ronnie Flanagan, formerly the senior police officer in the British province of Northern Ireland, was on the case.

New Road win a goal-fest

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

New Road of Nepal finished third in the AFC President's Cup Group A Qualifiers with a 4-3 win over Hasus NTCPE in their last game at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

After two consecutive defeats against Abahani and Dordoi Bishkek, the Nepalese champions put up a spirited display against Hasus, who held hosts Abahani to a goalless draw on Friday and lost to Dordoi 5-0 on the opening day.

Ranjit Shrestha, Ghavghani Mosavi Shayan, Jeevan Sinkemana and Nabin Neupane scored one goal apiece for New Road while De Cai Su struck twice and Po Liang Chen netted the other for the losers.

Hasus took a 17th-minute lead through a strike by De Cai Su before Ranjit Shrestha levelled the margin with a groundner two minutes from the break. Danish striker Shayan then gave the

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Shamsur to join Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER

Shamsur Rahman will join Bangladesh cricket team in England as a precautionary cover for Tamim Iqbal and captain Shakib Al Hasan.

He was supposed to fly out last night, but the London-bound flight was cancelled after Heathrow airport was shut down following another spell of ash cloud.

Tamim was given the green signal to play in the Test series by the doctor in London but he hasn't recovered sufficiently for the warm-up matches that are in progress.

And with Shakib struck by a bout of chickenpox, the team management asked the selectors to send a back-up batsman.

"In view of the injury to

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BCB to suggest A team FTP

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is considering to propose to the ICC a separate Future Tours Programme (FTP) for a teams of all Test-playing nations.

This, among other topics, was discussed when the board directors sat for a meeting on Friday.

After the successful tri-nation one-day series held between Bangladesh A, West Indies A and South Africa A, the cricket board wants cricket's governing body to step in and schedule tours.

While the logistics can be taken care of, the A team tours are financial straining to BCB. The board-to-board contact to schedule these tours are also

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Oman champions

Hosts finish fifth, qualify for Asiad

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh ended their Robi Asian Games Hockey Qualifiers campaign on a high beating eventual winners Oman 4-1 in the last match of the tournament at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

A 41st minute strike from Krishna Kumar gave hosts the lead, only to be cancelled by Basim ten minutes later. But hosts showed some spirited performance as they took the lead again through a penalty corner conversion by Mamunur Rahman Chayan before Kamruzzaman Rana made it 3-1. The finishing touch was provided again by Chayan as he converted another penalty corner with virtually the last shot of the game.

Despite losing, Oman finished top of the qualifying campaign with 11 points followed by

Singapore with 10 and Hong Kong at third with 9. Bangladesh grabbed fifth position ahead of Sri Lanka on better goal difference as both finished on 8 points with wins on the final day.

The match between Bangladesh and Oman saw a much improved performance from the hosts. They played a good attacking game from the beginning, the players looked more in tune with each other as the passing, receiving and the combined attack showed much improvement from the previous games.

The finishing touch once again faltered while the conversion of penalty corners showed some improvement.

The Oman team, with the knowledge that they were champions regardless of what happened in that game, sat back from the beginning and since falling behind played catch-up against hosts. Apart from the goal scored, they hardly threatened the Bangladesh defence and should have conceded a bigger margin of

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PHOTO: STAR
Members of Oman team, who became champions in the Asian Games Hockey Qualifiers, celebrate at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh League
Feni Soccer Club v Ctg
Mohammedan
Time: 3:30pm
Venue: Feni Stadium
Shuktara v Farashganj
Time: 3:30pm
Venue: Narayanganj Stadium
Muktijoddha v Rahmatganj
Time: 4:00pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium