

Ribery insists not being two-faced

Bayern Munich's under-fire France international Franck Ribery on Wednesday launched his bid to recapture the affections of his German fans, insisting the image given of him in the press was unfair.

"I'm not two-faced as the press in France portrays me. I had the impression that they always wanted to put me down and I'm happy to be able to now focus on Bayern," Ribery told Sport Bild.

"I'm disappointed (of my image in France) while in Germany it's different, it was less politicised."

- AFP



Jahurul to take dual role seriously

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

After Khaled Mashud's long stint, Mushfiqur Rahim came into the scene to stand behind the stumps. But unfortunately the Bogra lad has yet to prove his worth as a wicketkeeper, rather his inconsistent performance caused a concern for the team think-tank, especially ahead of the 2011 World Cup where Bangladesh is one of co-hosts along with India and Sri Lanka.

Given this circumstance, many were curiously watching Jahurul Islam's hard work donning his wicketkeeping gloves at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Is there any message for Jahurul to be considered as an alternative keeper?

"Actually I'm working hard with my keeping because I want to give best service as a wicketkeeper if needed. I also enjoy keeping," said Jahurul.

The 23-year-old batsman was also looking forward to establish himself as an all-rounder, akin to Adam Gilchrist and Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

"I'm taking wicketkeeping seriously and I want to establish myself as a wicketkeeper-batsman. I will play Premier League and the National Cricket League as a specialist wicketkeeper," confirmed Jahurul.

"I started my career as a specialist batsman and I played in the domestic cricket as a specialist batsman but kept wickets often. Now on I have a target to perform the keeping regularly. I have a dream to establish myself as an all-rounder," he added.

But there is an every chance that he would have to fight with Mushfiqur even in the

domestic circuit for a regular keeping spot as both are likely to continue their stint with Biman Bangladesh in the Premier League.

"I'm very much aware of the fact. In that case we can share the job. But this season I will desperately try to play as a wicketkeeper-batsman," he said.

Though Jahurul has so far played three Tests and six one-day internationals, this was for the first time he had the opportunity to practice in a training camp prior to any series. The Tigers have been training under the guidance of Jamie Siddons for the upcoming five-match one-day series against New Zealand in October.

A right-handed batsman, Jahurul, was drafted into the Bangladesh Test squad during the home series against England earlier this year following Rokibul Hasan's shock retirement.

"I was suddenly drafted into the national side and then played series and tournament one after another. I didn't get the opportunity earlier to take part in a training camp before any series. It's a fantastic experience and I am enjoying it. The facilities are excellent and one can't compare this experience with any other," said an excited Jahurul.

Jahurul however believe that one should have the courage to be successful in the international cricket.

"International cricket is totally different from others. I have some problem with my batting like lifting the bat and my bat swing. Still I was successful in the domestic cricket but I must rectify all those problems if I want to be a good batsman at the highest level," said Jahurul.

"But above everything I think someone has to have the courage to be successful in international cricket," he added.



JAHURUL ISLAM

Rangpur not in NCL

SPORTS REPORTER

The number of National Cricket League teams will remain at six after it was confirmed that Rangpur will play no part in this season's competitions.

The newest division of the country, proclaimed on January 25 earlier this year, has not been made completely functional yet and it means that the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has not received any communication from the authorities concerned.

"Rangpur is not being counted as a divisional team this season because the board hasn't received a gazette in this regard," said Hafiz Joardar, member and organising secretary of BCB's tournament committee.

Sporting activities in Rangpur are still being conducted by the district sports association, as opposed to the divisional sports association which is still in the process of creation.

"They also need to form a committee and there has to be a post for a secretary. So that whole process hasn't been completed yet. So the BCB is only concentrating on the six divisions," added Joardar.

This ends months of speculation among professional cricketers who play the first-class game or are in the fringes. Some, especially those in the fringe even after doing well in the Dhaka leagues, eagerly expected the expansion.

Several players from Rangpur also play in the competition, mainly for Rajshahi and some of them play for Barisal.

Having taken the mantle of the country's northernmost division, Rangpur consists of eight districts that are Rangpur, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Nilphamari, Dinajpur, Panchagarh, Thakurgaon and Lalmonirhat.

Siddiqui flies to Switzerland

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's vaunted professional golfer Siddiqui Rahman leaves for Switzerland today where he will participate in a 2.8 million dollars Switzerland Open after which he will be touring Japan, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand to take part in other professional tournaments.

"I am feeling very confident now that I have won the Brunei Open. I want everyone to pray so that I may do well and bring more success for the country," said an emotion-choked Siddiqui at a reception accorded for his triumph at the Brunei Open earlier this month. The reception followed by Ifar at the Radisson Water Garden Hotel was arranged jointly by Siddiqui's sponsors Grameenphone and Bangladesh Golf Federation (BGF).

The 26-year-old golfer, who became the first Bangladeshi to win on the an event of the Asian tour by taking the Brunei Open on August 1, spoke of his delight.

"I thank the Almighty Allah that I have been able to bring this glory for my country. It was a dream come true for me to win the tournament," said Siddiqui.

Siddiqui was handed a crest and a bouquet of flower by General Mohammad Abdul Mubin, chief of Army Staff and president of BGF and Odvar Hesjedal, CEO of Grameenphone.

The Army Chief Mubin talked of Siddiqui's hard work over the years and hailed him as a hero in the country's sporting arena.

"Siddiqui has brought tremendous pride for the nation. He has set an example for the upcoming golfers. From a humble beginning, he has grown into a huge stature through hard work," said Mubin and thanked Kurmitola Golf Club and Grameenphone for nurturing the talent of Siddiqui.

Grameenphone CEO Odvar Hesjedal also was CEO



PHOTO: AFP

On-song India opener Virender Sehwag shows thumbs up after completing a century in the one-day international against New Zealand at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium yesterday.

India oust New Zealand

Take on Sri Lanka in final on Saturday

Cricket

AFP, Dambulla

Praveen Kumar grabbed three early wickets and Virender Sehwag smashed a superb century as India entered the Micromax Cup tri-series final with an emphatic 105-run win over New Zealand on Wednesday.

India, with 10 points from four matches, will clash with Sri Lanka (11 from four) in the final on Saturday. New Zealand finished their league engagements with seven points.

Paceman Kumar finished with 3-34 as New Zealand, chasing a 224-run target, were shot out for 118 in 30.1 overs -- their lowest total against India in one-day internationals.

India were indebted to Sehwag for posting a competitive total as the hard-hitting opener cracked one six and 16 fours in a 93-ball 110 for his 13th one-day hundred.

India virtually wrapped up the match when they sent New Zealand struggling at 22-4 in the ninth over, with Kumar taking three wickets.

Tail-ender Kyle Mills hammered an entertaining 52 for his second half-century in one-dayers, but his knock came too late to stop India from the winning the match.

Mills hit three sixes and seven fours in his 35-ball knock.

Kane Williamson (13), Grant Elliott (11) and Tim Southee (10) were the others to reach double-figures in New Zealand's disappointing batting performance.

Fast bowlers Munaf Patel (3-21) and

Ashish Nehra (2-10) were India's other main wicket-takers.

New Zealand paceman Southee (4-49) and off-spinner Nathan McCullum (3-35) earlier shared seven wickets to bowl India out for a modest total despite Sehwag's century.

India were tottering at 66-4 in 13 overs after electing to bat when Sehwag propped up the innings with a 107-run stand for the fifth wicket with skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni (38).

Southee, Mills (2-42) and Andy McKay (1-31) tested the Indian batsmen with pace and bounce in their lively opening spells to help New Zealand seize the early initiative.

Dinesh Karthik, Virat Kohli, Yuvraj Singh and Suresh Raina all failed to reach double-figures.

Southee took two wickets while Mills and McKay grabbed one apiece before Sehwag and Dhoni steadied the innings with their sensible knocks.

Although wickets fell at regular intervals from one end, Sehwag kept playing attacking strokes from the other and raced to his half-century off 41 balls when he hit seamer Scott Styris through the covers for his ninth four.

Sehwag then hit McCullum for a straight six and a four through the covers off successive deliveries. He took 46 more balls to complete his century, with a single off spinner Williamson.

The Indian opener fell playing shots, caught at deep mid-wicket by Bradley-John Watling off McCullum in the 33rd over.

McCullum struck again when he had

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MSC take steps to go limited

SPORTS REPORTER

A seven-member committee has been formed in a bid to take forward the process of turning Mohammedan Sporting Club into a limited company.

"The newly-formed committee will take proper steps to turn the club into a limited company as well as scrutinise the club members as there is a controversy over the number of club members," said convener Kutubuddin Ahmed after the ad-hoc committee meeting yesterday.

"Besides, there are inconsistencies in the draft constitution and the committee has asked to remove those and define the club officials' responsibilities which were not inserted in the draft," he added.

The committee comprises of the convener, member secretary Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan and members Jahed Ali Chowdhury, Kabir Hossain Bhuiyan, Aminul Haq Moni, Mahbub Anam and Mustaque Ahmed.

The meeting also discussed the proposal of the football committee.

"They have placed a budget for football and the meeting asked them to place another plan of how they would go forward and spend the budget," said Kutubuddin adding that he urged the members to come forward to meet the football committee's budget.

"It is not impossible to provide football committee's demand of Tk 2.5 crore if all the members come forward as well as manage donors or sponsors," opined the new convener.

Sadiya fails to qualify

SPORTS REPORTER

Shooter Sadiya Sultana was eliminated from qualification after finishing 10th in the 10m air rifle women junior event of the Youth Olympic Games in Singapore yesterday.

Sadiya, who won gold medals in both the SA Games and the Commonwealth Shooting in a pairing with Sharmin Akhter Ratna, made 390 firing 96, 98, 99 and 97 and finished tenth out of 20 shooters in the event.

Momin takes FIDE Rating chess title

SPORTS REPORTER

Abdul Momin became unbeaten champion in the Federation Open FIDE Rating Chess tournament through tiebreak at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall room yesterday.

Momin of Nebula Chess Club and Aminul Islam of Titas had earned 7.5 points each after drawing their final boards against Robin and Farhad respectively. Later, the tie was broken by progressive scores.

Div I football

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Dautia Bulbul Club thumped Sonali Atit 3-1 in the Hafizul Islam Khan Uttu Smriti First Division Football League at the Shaheed Miraz-Tapan Stadium here yesterday.

Rubel took Dautia Bulbul Club ahead with a goal in the 38th minute. Banto of Sonali Atit paid the goal in 61st minute and brought the teams to equal terms.

Later Alamgir and Ahad scored one goal each for the winning team in the 67th and 84th minutes.

Tiger Sporting Club and Century Association will face each other today.

Rumi quits taekwondo

SPORTS REPORTER

Sharmin Farzana Rumi confirmed today that she plans to quit her preferred sport of Taekwondo due to persistent physical problems. But the woman who captured the gold medal in that discipline in the South Asian Games earlier this year, stressed her commitment to remain attached to sport after her recovery.

"It is a very tough game and I cannot bear it any longer. At present I have been suffering from a lot of physical problems and a gynecologist suggested that I consult with a surgeon. Considering the circumstances, I have sought an exemption from the discipline of Taekwondo," said Rumi yesterday.

Rumi was interviewed by Ansar's deputy director general (training) Dr Forkanuddin on Tuesday and the official was convinced about the problem Rumi is facing.

"She has genuine physical problems and has

sought exemption from a hard game like taekwondo. Besides, taekwondo was an additional game for her because she was originally a handball player. We have no obstructions to release her from taekwondo because we can't enforce anyone to stick to a particular discipline," said Forkanuddin yesterday.

"She will be exempted if the experts seems the documents are justified," said the Ansar official.

However, it has been learnt that the taekwondo federation is very strict on training regardless of whether the players are sick or not. In many circumstances they have often forced the players to stay in the camp despite illness.

Before switching to taekwondo, Rumi was a handball player and was named best player of the national championship when her team Ansar clinched the title beating Faridpur in 2008.

Rumi also won a gold medal in her taekwondo event before the SA Games.



SHARMIN FARZANA RUMI

BOA bends on chess issue

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) is finally going to include chess in the Asian Games-bound Bangladesh contingent after the Bangladesh Chess Federation (BCF) pulled out their names in protest of sending players only in the individual event.

"The BOA has agreed to send the players in both men's and women's team events on conditions of bearing the expenditure of the three women players and send all five GMs in the men's team," said BCF general secretary Mokaddes Hossain yesterday.

"We have accepted the BOA's offer and included two GMs in the men's squad because three others are out of reach," said Hossain.

He informed GM Ziaur Rahman has been training the Malaysian national team and GMs Rakib and Razib are out of the game for a long time.

The BOA training and development committee axed chess from its contingent as they only considered the performance of the South Asian Games that was held in Bangladesh from earlier this year.

In the last Doha Asian Games in 2006, Bangladesh won only a

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PHOTO: STAR

Chief of Army Staff and president of Bangladesh Golf Federation General Abdul Mubin (C) hands over a crest to Siddiqui Rahman as Grameenphone CEO Odvar Hesjedal (L) looks on at a reception at the Radisson Water Garden Hotel yesterday.

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SPORTS POLL
TODAY'S QUESTION
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