

Zlatan fights with Oguchi

AC Milan players Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Oguchi Onyewu were involved in a furious training-ground bust-up on Friday, according to reports. The pair had to be separated by team-mates following a fight at the Milanello training complex, Ansa reported. The incident was sparked by a hard challenge between Sweden forward Ibrahimovic and United States centre-back Onyewu. Coach Massimiliano Allegri took the pair to one side and suspended training for a few minutes until things calmed



Nat'l players to play NCL 2nd phase

SPORTS REPORTER

The national players are likely to play in the second phase of the National Cricket League one-day competition that begins tomorrow.

"It has been decided that they will play all the matches of the second phase of the tournament," said BCB tournament committee chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain yesterday.

However Tamim Iqbal, who has reportedly recovered from his wrist operation, is unlikely to take part as his team, Chittagong, has also not qualified.

Leaders Dhaka will take on Khulna in the first game of the second phase at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur while Barisal face Rajshahi at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

The format for the second round will see points from the first phase being carried over.

The final will be held at the home of cricket on November 14.

Visitors save their blushes

SPORTS REPORTER

A rearguard half-century from Shuvam ensured a face-saving draw for the CAB Under-17 side in their three-day game against Bangladesh Under-17s at the Comilla Stadium yesterday.

The visitors batted out the final day of the game, scoring 137-7 from 114 overs.

Shuvam, an opener, made 67 off 213 balls with six boundaries.

He hardly found any support but in the end, Pritam and Adrish battled it out as they hardly gave the home side a chance to take the eighth wicket.

The next game will be held in Sylhet.

GM chess

SPORTS REPORTER

GM Ziaur Rahman of Biman is once again in solo lead of the Berger Grandmasters Chess tournament with 5.5 points after end of the eighth round at the Tulip Lounge of Uttara Club yesterday.

FM Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar of Destiny 2000 is in second position with five points while GM Niaz Murshed and FM Abu Sufian Shakil of Biman hold joint third position with 4.5 points each.

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Mohammad Ashraf (C), who signed for CCS, shares a joke with Aftab Ahmed of Old DOHS and Surjo Tarun's new recruit Abdur Razzak (L) during the opening day of the inter-club players' transfer at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Muted opening to transfers

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The two-day bourse of the Premier Division Cricket League began at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday, without much excitement.

One of domestic cricket's biggest ceremony lost its enthusiasm and turned business-like as the country's two most popular outfits, Mohammedan and

Abahani, decided to complete their deals on the final day.

Last year's runners-up Bangladesh Biman however made their presence felt on the opening day bringing in their old boys Mushfiqur Rahim, Jahirul Islam, Shafiqul Islam and Mosharraf Rubel along with new inclusions Dollar Mahmud and Monwar Hossain, all attired in their new kit.

The national cricketers, who came on the first day to put pen to paper for their respective clubs, however echoed with the sentiment that the transfers might

have lost its charm but the much coveted domestic competition is still as important as it had earlier been for the leading and upcoming players.

"I can still remember what an exciting affair it was in the first two seasons of my career but gradually it has lost its zeal. The drama and excitement is definitely missing but whatever the fact is, the competition is still important for any cricketer and everybody feels pressure when they play for any club," said left-arm spinner Abdur

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Depleted Bangladesh face Uzbekistan today

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh have been further handicapped on the eve of their first match against Uzbekistan today after the skipper and veteran goalkeeper Aminul Haque was struck down by fever. He joins the long list of probable absentees that include defenders Wali Faisal, Atiqur Rahman Meshu and winger Zahid Hossain, who are also expected to miss today's match due to injuries.

The Group E match starts at 2:00pm (Bangladesh Standard Time) at the Yingdong Stadium in Guangzhou. Even though the Games proper will start on the November 12, the football event gets underway today.

In the other match of the group, UAE will

face Hong Kong later in another venue.

Even without the injuries, Uzbekistan are considered firm favourites in this match, considering the huge gulf in the two countries' footballing standings in the FIFA rankings.

The Central Asian nation are ranked No 96, some 54 places above Bangladesh. The gulf in the rankings has obviously been reflected in their meetings, with Bangladesh losing all three times the two sides met, conceding a total of 15 goals and failing to score any.

However, Bangladesh hope to spring a surprise since this is not a meeting of the full national sides. The teams taking part in the Asian Games are under-23 sides with a maximum of three over-aged players allowed. Bangladesh arguably picked three very good over-aged players, though only one seems to be

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Navy, BDR cruise in nat'l b'ball

SPORTS REPORTER

Khulna, Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Rifles won their respective matches of the Citycell 24th National Basketball Championship at the Dhanmondi Basketball Stadium yesterday.

Khulna beat Bangladesh Air Force 77-73 in a closely-fought affair where they led the first half by 32-28 points. Nahid scored highest 21 points for the winners.

Navy beat Chittagong 80-57 after having a first-half lead of 44-28. Rashed scored 24 points while Mithun netted 21

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Fountain of hope

Cricket

MOHAMMAD ISAM

Abdur Razzak, hardly the captain's most trusted fielder, never ran so fast, that too under a swerving ball that hasn't yet passed over his shoulder. Grant Elliott's top-edged sweep off Shakib Al Hasan that took off over square-leg began its abrupt descent while Razzak was still a few metres short of being under it.

A moment later, he just about held on to the catch, the 25th of his ODI career, which gave Bangladesh a lift in a game that they eventually won. The catch has been a focal point in the marked improvement of the Tigers' fielding during the series against New Zealand, mainly because one of the seniors and perennially 'weak' fielders made an important contribution.

But Junaed Siddiqui's two dropped catches and Mahmudullah Riyad's misjudged effort in the next match threatened to undo some of the progress made during the series. The victory in the last match and the overall fielding in the series put that thought away, but it is a reality that fielding coach Julien Fountain seems to be comfortable with.

The 40-year-old Englishman is one of two inclusions in the coaching staff that is crucial to the team's prospects in the upcoming World Cup. He joined at the end of August and found himself surrounded with players often vilified for their distinct lack of discipline when not batting and bowling.

It was supposed to be very tough, but Fountain's lack of acquaintance with Bangladesh cricket coupled with the players' eagerness to work hard was always going to

work in his advantage.

"The guys have been very responsive. They have learned lots of new things, we have tweaked some of their skills and showed them some new things," said Fountain yesterday during a break in training at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

"Above all, they changed their aggression level. They are now more aggressive and competitive, which is what you need as an elite player," he added.

Fountain is a vastly experienced coach, armed with the UKCC ECB Level 3 coaching degree. He has worked as a fielding coach in England, Pakistan and West Indies (once with the national team and the Stanford Superstars in 2008) before coming to Bangladesh and is a good source for a pragmatic view of fielding in the region's cricket. "I think sub-continent teams, generally speaking, have had a bad reputation for fielding. Teams [here] traditionally love to bat and bowl. Sri Lanka changed that 8-9 years ago," opined Fountain.

He was confident however to say that the Tigers are certainly up there somewhere, but still have a few miles to catch up on. However, his short contract (till the World Cup) is a handicap as the players are hardly available for even half the period of his contract. "When I came here, the time and basically, the more they stay away from us, the less we have them," said Fountain, who has used a "fielding analysis system" software to help him analyse every aspect of fielding.

During matches, he is mainly based in the media centre, tracking down his charges and collecting relevant data.

Unmistakably, he has been the hardest

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Kushtia ease past Magura

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi, Kushtia, Dhaka University, Natore, Mymensingh, Chapainawabganj, Bandarban and Madaripur won their respective matches on the opening day of the EXIM Bank 20th National Men's Handball Tournament yesterday.

The matches were held in two different venues in the city after the inauguration ceremony was held at the Handball Stadium in Paltan.

Rajshahi beat Khulna 32-13, Kushtia pounded Magura 30-2, Dhaka University outplayed Dinajpur 25-17 and Natore

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PHOTO: STAR

Tigers fielding coach Julien Fountain imparts throwing tips to Junaed Siddiqui during a training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Jesse, Kane halt India

Cricket

AFP, Ahmedabad

Jesse Ryder struck a remarkable 103 and shared a 194-run partnership with debutant Kane Williamson to defy world number one India on the third day of the first Test against New Zealand on Saturday.

Ryder struck 10 fours and a six in his 205-ball knock while Williamson was equally impressive in making 87 not out as New Zealand reached 331-5 at stumps at the Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad.

That left the visitors 156 runs adrift of India's first-innings 487.

Ryder completed his third century -- all of which have come against India -- with a delightful four through the covers but was trapped lbw by Shanthakumaran Sreesanth one ball later in the day's last over.

India's bowlers struggled in unhelpful conditions, with a dodgy caught behind decision involving Williamson and a dropped catch of Ryder adding to their woes.

The 20-year-old Williamson, who scored his maiden one-day century

during New Zealand's recent tour of Bangladesh, however showed remarkable application in his nearly five-hour stay at the wicket.

He even dealt calmly with a chest-high beamer from Sreesanth, which prompted Australian umpire Steve Davis to have a quiet word with the fast bowler.

Ryder was dropped on 11 in the slips by Rahul Dravid, who failed to latch on to the catch on his right despite getting his fingers to the ball, the unlucky bowler being Sreesanth.

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PHOTO: AFP

Kiwi batsman Jesse Ryder (R) celebrates his century with Kane Williamson in Ahmedabad.

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Australia v Sri Lanka
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Live from 9:20am
- NEO Cricket**
India v New Zealand
First Test, Day 4
Live from 10:00am
- ESPN**
English Premiership
Arsenal v Newcastle
Live from 7:25pm
- Liverpool v Chelsea
Live from 9:55pm
- STAR Sports**
MotoGP World Championship
Valencian Grand Prix
Live from 3:57pm
- F1 World Championship**
Brazilian Grand Prix
Live from 9:45pm
- TEN Action**
Primera Liga
Villarreal v Athletic Club
Live from 9:55pm
- Getafe v Barcelona
Live from 11:55pm
- Real Madrid v Atletico
Live from 1:55am (Monday)

SPORTS POLL
Should the public have access to more WC tickets?
Yes 94.7%
No 5.3%

TOTAL VOTES: 757

TODAY'S QUESTION
Who do you think should be Bangladesh's captain in the World Cup?

Visit the sports page of www.thedailystar.net to cast vote

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