

Peace prize for Divine Ponytail

Italian football legend Roberto Baggio has been selected as the annual winner of a special prize bestowed by Nobel Peace Prize laureates. The 43-year-old has been recognised for his lifetime contributions to charities across the world. The former Italy international has helped fund money for hospitals, earthquake victims and charities combating world disease since retiring from football in May 2004. Baggio will receive the world peace award 2010 on Sunday on the last day of the 11th world summit of Nobel peace laureates.

-INTERNET



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh paceman Mashrafe Bin Mortaza runs in to bowl during a centre-wicket net session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

100 days to World Cup

AGENCIES



ICC Cricket World Cup 2011

The 100 days countdown of the 2011 World Cup will be officially inaugurated at midnight tonight. Deputy speaker Shawkat Ali will inaugurate the countdown at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad which will be followed by a fireworks show.

The campaign has already started with the airport branding and a total of 12 mascots (Stumpy) will be placed in Dhaka and three in Chittagong on November 11.

It is the countdown ahead of the February 17 opening ceremony in Dhaka with the International Cricket Council (ICC) giving a thumbs-up to the work done by the three host nations -- India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

"I am confident we will get a good tournament," ICC chief executive Haroon Lorgat told AFP. "Preparations have been going on well and there has been good co-operation between the three host nations."

"With mega-events like these, there will always be something that needs to be done till the end, but we are in control of things."

The World Cup returns to the sub-continent, the nerve-centre and financial powerhouse of cricket, after India and Pakistan co-hosted the event in 1987 and were joined by Sri Lanka for the 1996 tournament.

Pakistan were also due to co-host the 2011 party, but were stripped of their rights due to security concerns in the volatile nation in the aftermath of the terror attack on the Sri Lankan team in March last year.

The 43-day, 49-match tournament will be played under a new format with India hosting a majority of matches (29), including the final at

the new-look Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on April 2.

Sri Lanka's 12 matches will be held at three venues, including two brand new 25,000-seater stadia in Pallekele near the hill resort of Kandy and Hambantota in the deep south.

The third venue, the existing Premadasa Stadium in Colombo, is being re-built from scratch to host seven matches, including a quarterfinal and semifinal.

The eight matches allotted to Bangladesh will be played at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur on the outskirts of Dhaka and the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong.

India will use eight regular Test venues for its 29 matches, having re-constructed the Wankhede Stadium and renovated the Eden Gardens in Kolkata and the Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai.

ICC president Sharad Pawar, who also heads the tournament organising committee, said the new venues would be ready on schedule.

"I can assure everyone that they will be attending an exciting event staged in the most modern of cricket facilities," said Pawar.

"All stadia will be completed by November 30 and all playing facilities will be match-ready by December 31."

Unlike major sporting events like the Olympics where visas are exempted for accredited personnel, everyone including players, officials, media and spectators will need visas to travel to the World Cup.

Lorgat said Pawar, a senior Indian government minister, had stepped in to ensure that visas are granted easily to genuine ticket-holders.

The safety of the tournament will be looked after by a special Security Directorate of the

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Daily Star in qtrs

SPORTS REPORTER

The Daily Star moved into the quarterfinals of the DRU-Pepsi Media Cup cricket tournament with a nine-run victory over Independent TV at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Batting first, Daily Star put up a fighting total of 66 for the loss of four wickets with an unbeaten 31 from eventual man-of-the-match Nazmul Alam Nobin. His knock comprised five fours and a six. But he had to retire after crossing 30 as per the bylaws, when Azad Abul Kalam came and smashed a quick 20 to take Daily Star to the good total.

Independent TV made a good start and required 12 off the last over when Wasim Bin Habib came for his second over. But Wasim hit twice to shatter Independent's chances. They finished their chase at 57 for four.

In the other matches of the day, Jugantor beat New Nation

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Booters lose by 3 again

SPORTS REPORTER



Guangzhou 2010

Bangladesh's hopes of qualifying for the second round in the Asian Games all but evaporated when the U23 football team suffered a 3-0 reverse against United Arab Emirates in their second Group E match at the Yingdong Stadium in Guangzhou, China yesterday.

Bangladesh, who conceded an identical 3-0 defeat against Uzbekistan in the first match, remain glued at the bottom of the group and will play their last match against Hong Kong tomorrow. Meanwhile, Hong Kong stunned 2004 champions Uzbekistan 1-0 in the other match of the group yesterday. UAE and Hong Kong are now level on four points while Uzbekistan have three points and Bangladesh have none.

Bangladesh's strategy of protecting their own territory and going on counterattacks went seemingly in the right direction till the end of the first half which ended goalless. Bangladesh made three changes to the starting eleven from the match against Uzbekistan with fit-again Zahid Hossain replacing off-form striker Zahid Hasan Emily.

The changes almost paid off in the sixth minute but Zahid failed to capitalise from an Enamul Haque cross at a one-on-one situation with the opposition goalkeeper, according to a

message received here yesterday.

"We played better in the first half and got some early chances but could not capitalise on those. Our opponents grew confident and played attacking football after taking an early lead in the second half," assistant coach Saiful Bari Titu was quoted as saying at the official website of the Bangladesh Football Federation.

However, the match statistics at the AFC website showed that UAE were more dominating throughout the game with a 60 per cent ball-possession and also mustered 20 shots on target against Bangladesh's three.

After resumption, things changed rapidly as UAE, who are 51 places above Bangladesh in FIFA rankings and won against Bangladesh all four times they played, took the lead a minute into the second half when Aljenaiby Ahmed side-volleyed a cross from Alabry Ahmed.

Abdalla Mohamed Fawzi doubled the margin in the 63rd minute with a left footer when a clearing header from Bangladesh defender Rezaul Karim came his way and the forward sealed the game striking his second goal eight minutes from time as his shot found the back of Bangladesh net with deflection from defender Rezaul Karim.

BANGLADESH: Aminul Haque (Nehal), Nasirul Islam, Wali Faisal, Ariful Islam, Rezaul Karim, Zahid Hossain, Mamunul Islam, Enamul Haque, Mamun Mia, Abdul Baten Komol and Imtiaz Sultan Jitu.

Feasibility study for sports complex

SPORTS REPORTER

The National Sports Council (NSC) has decided to appoint an advisory company to assess the feasibility of building Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's promised sports complex with modern facilities at the east bank of the Padma Bridge.

The decision was taken yesterday at the executive committee meeting of the NSC, which also decided to extend the land leasing period of the Football Training Center to be built in Barisal under the FIFA tsunami fund to 20 years from 10 years.

The meeting also decided to build a mural consisting of Bangabandhu's elder son Sheikh Kamal's effigy at the main gate of the Sheikh Kamal Stadium in Gopalganj as the initiative has been taken to turn the stadium into an international standard.

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PHOTO: AFP

South Africa players Morkel (L) and Dale Steyn go under water to see the World Cup trophy during a ceremony at the Dubai Mall Aquarium yesterday on the eve of the 100 days countdown to the event.

Trophy on display

AFP, Dubai



ICC Cricket World Cup 2011

The cricket World Cup trophy was displayed by South African players Morkel and Dale Steyn in the Dubai aquarium as the 100-day countdown to the event began here Tuesday.

Morkel and Steyn, who were later joined by members of the South African and Pakistani teams, dived into the aquarium to start the ceremony which was also attended by officials of International Cricket Council (ICC).

The opening ceremony of the World Cup will be held in Dhaka, Bangladesh on February 17. India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka jointly host the 10th World Cup from February 19 to April 2.

"It was spectacular to watch the 100-day countdown ceremony and the ICC and the three host countries are gearing up for the World Cup," ICC chief executive Haroon Lorgat told reporters.

Pakistan were also due to co-host the 2011 party, but were stripped of their rights due to security concerns in the volatile nation in the aftermath of the terror attack on the Sri Lankan team in March last year.

Lorgat said he feels for Pakistan's fans. "Due to unavoidable circumstances we had to shift the matches from Pakistan and I welcome all the fans there to come to Sri Lanka and support their team as they always do," said Lorgat.

Pakistan will play all its group matches in Sri

Lanka.

The 43-day, 49-match tournament will be played under a new format with India hosting a majority of matches (29), including the final at the new-look Wankhede stadium in Mumbai on April 2.

Lorgat said the ICC had learnt lessons from the past World Cup, especially the problem of low turnouts due to the high prices of tickets in the last event held in the West Indies three years ago.

"I hope lessons learnt from the 2007 event will help us and we have done everything to make this event in the sub-continent a special one," said Lorgat, who also hails from South Africa.

Pakistan coach Waqar Younis hoped Pakistan do well in the World Cup.

"It was nice to begin the 100-day countdown here," said Waqar, who was Pakistan captain in the 2003 World Cup. "We still have one series to play in New Zealand and hope that we remain focused to win the mega event."

South African captain Graeme Smith said he hoped the World Cup will be a success.

"The World Cup is a prestigious event and being held in the sub-continent, where cricket is a passion, makes it a special event," said Smith whose country has never won the mega event since re-admitted to international fold in 1992 after a lengthy ban due to apartheid.

"Every team wants to win the World Cup and we will also make extra effort to win it," said Smith.

Threatened, Haider quits

To apply for asylum in UK

Cricket

THE GUARDIAN

Pakistan's wicketkeeper Zulqarnain Haider has announced his retirement from international cricket, one day after he fled the team hotel in Dubai and travelled to London claiming he was receiving threats from match-fixers.

"I have decided it is best for me to retire from international cricket since my family and I are constantly getting threats. It is best I leave international cricket," Zulqarnain told Pakistan's Geo News channel from London.

The 24-year-old reportedly received threatening messages following his part in Pakistan's victory in the fourth one-day international against South Africa, in which he made 19 not out and hit the winning runs.

He then failed to report for duty at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium, with reports claiming he had made his way to Britain. In an interview reported to have been given from a hotel at Heathrow, Haider told Geo News: "I received death threats to lose the fourth and fifth one-day internationals against South

Africa, but I could not compromise the dignity of my country. I would rather flee away than sell out the dignity and respect of my motherland."

He added: "I can assure you that I am safe and sound. I'm not arrested but I cannot tell where I am hiding for the sake of protection of my life." He is

planning to seek political asylum in Britain. "Immigration officials in the UK were kind to me and offered me to chance to use the services of a counsellor but I am yet to reach a decision. I understand there is a rule in Britain that if you are right and if you are not a criminal, then they always protect you."

Haider has been assured of all manner of help by Pakistan's High Commissioner to the UK, Wajid Shamsul Hasan, who said: "we will give him any consular assistance that he requires," but the player himself is adamant that his family is also in danger from

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PHOTO: INTERNET

Zulqarnain Haider arrives at the Heathrow Airport in London on Monday morning from Dubai after leaving the Pakistan team. The wicketkeeper announced his retirement from international cricket over threats he claimed to have received from match-fixers.

SPORTS POLL
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
 Follow The Daily Star Sport on **twitter**
 www.twitter.com/dssport

What to WATCH
ESPN
 English Premiership
 Man City v Man United
 Live from 1:45am (Wednesday)
STAR Sports
 English Premiership
 Chelsea v Fulham
 Live from 1:45am (Wednesday)

DAY'S EVENT
 Nat'l Cricket League
 Dhaka v Rajshahi at SBNS
 Barisal v Khulna at DCS