

Inter Milan centre-back Marco Materazzi is recovering in hospital after being stretchered off the field during Sunday's Milan derby following a clash with Zlatan Ibrahimovic. Materazzi went off midway through the second half after being caught in the face by Ibrahimovic's knee in a full-blooded challenge. However, Inter coach Rafael Benitez insisted there was nothing to worry about. "He was knocked out but it doesn't seem too serious," said the Spaniard, who refused to blame Ibrahimovic. "It's a bad challenge but it wasn't his intention so I can't say anything."



SPORT

DHAKA TUESDAY NOVEMBER 16, 2010, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

T20 women fly the flag

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh women's cricket team moved into the Twenty20 semifinals while the national hockey team scared their mighty opponents Japan before going down 3-1 in their first match of the 16th Asian Games in Guangzhou, China yesterday.

It was a mixed day for the chess players while the shooters, swimmers and weightlifters put up a poor showing in their respective events.

The women's team handed a 54-run defeat to Japan, thanks to an all-round performance by Shuktara Rahman at the Guangdong Cricket Stadium.

After opting to bat first, Bangladesh posted a challenging total of 111 for eight in their stipulated 20 overs riding on good contributions of the top-order batswomen.

Opener Farjana Haque fell on seven before Rumana Ahmed and captain Salma Khatun steadied the innings scoring 21 and 24 respectively as both batswomen hammered two fours each.

Shuktara came in at number four to strike 37 off 45 balls with the help of two boundaries while late order Tithy Sarkar and Tazia Akhter chipped in with five runs each to help their side cross the 100-mark.

In reply, Japan responded well to threaten Bangladesh before Salma broke the 33-run opening stand uprooting the stumps of Kuribayashi Ema, who scored a 30-ball 18 studded with two fours.

The dismissal of Ema sparked a quick collapse and Japan were reduced to 41 for six at one stage as Shuktara captured three for six in her four-over spell. Japan finally could manage 57 for eight in 20 overs.

At the Aoti Hockey Stadium, Krishna Kumar stunned Japan to put Bangladesh ahead in the very ninth minute through a field goal. They held the lead till the 47th minute before Japan bit back to win the game convincingly.

After going down against Bangladesh, the Japanese pressed hard to equalize the margin but they could not split the Bangladesh defense in the first half and took 12 minutes after the start of the second half to level the margin.

Yamabori Takahiko converted a penalty corner to level the

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Bangladesh keeper Zahid Hossain is faced with the daunting task of holding off Japan striker Kenji Kitazato during their Group B encounter in Guangzhou on Monday. Despite taking an early lead, Bangladesh lost 3-1. PHOTO: AFP

ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP HISTORY

1979: West Indian power exercised

Four years after lifting the Cup in the tournament's inaugural edition, Clive Lloyd and his team were back in England for a repeat performance of equal, if not greater, dominance. The 1979 Prudential World Cup followed the same format as the first -- two groups of four, with the top two from each group contesting the semifinals. Minnows Sri Lanka and Canada emerged through a qualifying tournament and joined the six Test nations.

Six of the eleven who contested the final in '75 remained. The likes of Gordon Greenidge and Vivian Richards, who were inexperienced during the earlier edition, had now built a formidable reputation for themselves. Greenidge hit a century in the first match of the Cup against India and topped the runs chart for the tournament, with Richards in second place, even with one of their matches, against Sri Lanka, being washed out. Richards reserved his best for last -- a match-winning century against England in the final.

Desmond Haynes, who was to form the most destructive opening pair in international cricket with Greenidge over the next decade, was still a youngster at the meet. Besides them, the batting rested in the hands of skipper Clive Lloyd, Alvin Kallicharan, Collis King and wicketkeeper Deryck Murray. There was a nice balance between strokeplayers and batsmen who could drop anchor if required.

Like in the previous tournament, here too the bowlers were instrumental in West Indian dominance. A look at the wickets chart will reveal that only one, Michael Holding, was in the top five. They still had the best attack on show, because the West Indians hunted in packs and shared the wickets. This was the start of the legendary four-pronged pace attack. Each of the four -- Andy Roberts, Holding, Joel Garner and Colin Croft -- bowled at express speed and each were menacing in different ways.

Roberts now was the undisputed leader of the attack and he developed many variations that kept the batsmen guessing, while always threatening with his deadly bouncer. Michael 'Whispering Death' Holding was fearfully fast, the fastest of the lot according to most observers. Garner, nicknamed Big Bird because of his 6ft 8in frame, used to be able to get steep bounce from a length and also possessed a deadly yorker. Colin Croft, though he played for only five years, was ultra-aggressive, and

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What's wrong in soccer?

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh U23 football team were the first to leave the country to take part in the 16th Asian Games in China.

Ironically, they became the first side to return home on Sunday night after an early elimination from the group stages with a disappointing performance that saw them finish bottom of the 24 teams.

Of the 25-member squad, 12 players and assistant coach Saiful Bari Titu returned on Sunday while the remaining players and the coach Robert Rubic are scheduled to return today.

Bangladesh were drawn

alongside Uzbekistan, United Arab Emirates, and Hong Kong in Group E from where all the three other teams qualified for the 16-team second round. Neighboring India also secured a second-round berth while the other two South Asian nations Maldives (17th) and Pakistan (22nd) finished above Bangladesh.

Bangladesh officials had expressed hope of upsetting either of their powerful group opponents who are ranked much higher in FIFA rankings, but on field hardly offered any resistance against Uzbekistan and UAE going down by 3-0 margins before being eliminated with a 4-1 defeat against Hong Kong.

Assistant coach Saiful Bari Titu believes that lack of fighting attitude and professional approach among the players was a reason for going down easily against UAE and Uzbekistan, who he thought were much better in every department.

"To be fair, our boys could not cope with the pace and technique of the UAE and Uzbekistan players but played well against Hong Kong in terms of ball possession," observed Titu.

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Siddikur ends on a high

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman, Bangladesh's first and only golfer in the international circuit to date, got richer by a matter of 57,900 US dollars when he finished in joint 25th position along with five other

golfers to cap a memorable Barclay's Singapore Open at the Sentosa Golf Course yesterday.

The prodigy of Bangladesh golf though wasted no time flying to Hong Kong yesterday where he would once again be vying with the sport's elite in the 2.5 million dollar UBS Hong Kong Open that starts on November 18.

Meanwhile, Australia's Adam Scott won the six-million-dollar title in Singapore with a final round three-under 68 for a three-shot victory.

Anders Hansen of Denmark finished second, three shots behind Scott while US Open champion Graeme McDowell tied for third with Swede Rikard Karlberg at 13-under 271.

Siddikur finished 6 under par in the fourth round with a score of overall 5 under par 284 after the fourth round. His only blemish in the last round was in the 4th hole where he bogeyed. Rest of the holes went at Par.

With this performance, Siddikur remains in the top 10 of the Asian Tour's order of merit, where with Korea's NOH Seung-Yul at top despite missing the cut in Singapore for the first time this season.

When asked how he would feel if he became the highest earning Bangladeshi sports person of the year, Siddikur answered in his usual humble way: "I do not play only for the prize money, it is a natural consequence if you play well, I'm just enjoying my game and trying to enhance my skills and learn few things from the world best golfers."



PHOTO: COURTESY

An all-smiles Siddikur Rahman speaks at the press conference after a successful finish to the Barclay's Singapore Open at the Sentosa Golf Course yesterday. Siddikur finished joint 25th ahead of greats like Phil Mickelson and Colin Montgomerie.

Tigers on Eid holidays

Captaincy question remains

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The national cricketers will get back to business on November 21 after Eid holidays to carry on the preparation for next month's one-day series against Zimbabwe; their last international engagement before the 2011 World Cup.

The Tigers are scheduled to travel to Chittagong after the vacation for three days as the last two games of the five-match series is planned to take place at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in the port city.

But there is an uncertainty about holding the last two games in Chittagong as the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) was not fully confident about whether the venue, which is preparing for the two World Cup matches, will be ready by that time to host international match.

Zimbabwe arrive in Dhaka on November 26 and play the first one-dayer on December 1 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. The last two matches of the five-match series are scheduled for December 10 and December 12 at Chittagong.

"It's not officially cancelled yet, so as per schedule the practice will be resumed in Chittagong on November 21. The schedule will be changed accordingly if the authority cancel the matches in Chittagong," said chief selector Rafiqul Alam yesterday.

The three-member selection committee led by Alam was yet to decide about the announcement of the final team for the series.

"We want to take time and the advantage as the hosts. There are some injury problems also

as Rokibul [Hasan] has a groin injury and Tamim [Iqbal] is yet to bat in a match-scenario since being operated on his left wrist," informed Alam.

He however said that Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, who has been out of competitive match practice since he had twisted his ankle during the first one-day match against New Zealand on October 5, has been getting fitter everyday.

Fit-again Mashrafe and the performance of the national players in the just concluded National Cricket League (NCL) apparently gave the selectors ample food for thought before picking the 14-member squad.

"I think it's not a very hard job to pick the team for the series because our target is not to focus on the best players, rather the right combination," said Alam.

He was also not too excited with the performance of the Tigers in the NCL as he believes that it's the national players' customary duty to excel above the other players in any domestic competition.

"It's not a big deal that they [national players] made the difference in the just concluded league, because they are enjoying the best facilities and opportunities compared to the others," he observed.

The question was however not with the announcement of the team. Rather, everybody was surprised that the board is dilly-dallying in selecting the captain with the World Cup only three months to go.

The board is apparently looking to fit-again Mashrafe but many believe that it would be highly risky for the team to give the demanding job again to the Narail Express.

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Hurricane Gayle

Cricket

AFP, Galle

Chris Gayle put Sri Lanka's attack to the sword with an explosive double-century as the West Indies posted a huge 362-2 on the opening day of the first Test on Monday.

He hammered eight sixes and 26 fours in his 247-ball 219 not out for his 13th three-figure knock in Tests, and his first in the sub-continent, as the tourists made the most of winning the toss on a good batting pitch.

Shivnarine Chandernaul was unbeaten on 20 at the stumps.

Gayle's score was also his best in an away Test, surpassing 197 against New Zealand at Napier in 2008, and his second-highest overall after his triple-century against South Africa at home in 2005.

Openers Gayle and Adrian Barath (50) put on 110 after Darren Sammy won the toss in his first Test as captain, the West Indies' second century partnership for the opening wicket in the last four years.

Former skipper Gayle then consolidated his team's position with a record 196-run stand for the second wicket with debutant Darren Bravo, who scored a solid 58.

The West Indies' previous best for the second wicket against Sri Lanka was 134 between Dwayne Bravo and Ramnaresh Sarwan in Guyana in 2008.

Darren Bravo reached his fifty when he drove unorthodox spinner Ajantha Mendis through the covers for a four. He hit six fours before being caught by Thilan Samaraweera at deep square-leg off Mendis while trying to pull.

Sri Lanka, playing their first Test series after the retirement of match-winning spinner Muttiah Muralidaran, struggled for success as they could grab just two wickets in three sessions.

Off-spinner Muralidaran quit Test cricket in July with a world-record 800 wickets and his replacement Suraj Randiv has rarely put pressure on the West Indies.

Randiv removed young Barath in the morning session, but conceded 144 runs in his 32 overs. Mendis finished the day with 1-90 off 29 overs.

Sri Lanka seamers Thilan Thushara and Dammika Prasad also failed to test the West Indies as Gayle, Barath and Bravo gathered runs

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West Indies opener Chris Gayle raises his arms after reaching the double century on the first day of the first Test against Sri Lanka at the Galle International Cricket Stadium yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

TEN Sports
Asian Games Day Four
Live from 8:00am
Sri Lanka v West Indies First Test, Day 2
Live from 10:30am
WEDNESDAY
Asian Games Day Five
Live from 8:00am
Sri Lanka v West Indies First Test, Day 3
Live from 10:30am
THURSDAY
Asian Games Day Six
Live from 8:00am
Sri Lanka v West Indies First Test, Day 4
Live from 10:30am
FRIDAY
Asian Games Day Seven
Live from 8:00am
Sri Lanka v West Indies First Test, Day 5
Live from 10:00am

NEO Cricket
India v New Zealand Second Test, Day 5
Live from 10:00am

TEN Cricket
Pakistan v South Africa First Test, Day 5
Live from 12:00pm

What to WATCH

SPORTS POLL WEEKLY QUESTION

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