

ITF lifts ban on BTF

SPORTS REPORTER

The International Tennis Federation (ITF) has recently withdrawn the suspension on Bangladesh Tennis Federation (BTF) to allow them to hold ITF tournaments, said a federation official yesterday.

In July, the sport's ruling body imposed a fine of 2,500 dollars on BTF and suspended two ITF tournaments after an Israeli player was denied visa for a tournament here in February.

Over the last 24 years BTF has been hosting the ITF Junior Tennis in Dhaka and gradually expanded it to Rajshahi and BKSP. But ITF has suspended the tournaments of Dhaka and Rajshahi and relegated the BKSP event to Grade 4 from Grade 3.

"Considering the voting rights, all countries have been divided into the three categories and Bangladesh has been placed in Category C that means Bangladesh will host two ITF junior tournaments from next year," said BTF general secretary Ishtiaq Ahmed Curren yesterday adding that they however had to pay the 2,500 dollars as fine. He added that they had to make the ITF understand that the federation had nothing to do with the visa issue as Bangladesh had no diplomatic relation with Israel and the ITF finally understood the matter and withdrew the suspension.

Women booters have a surprise

SPORTS REPORTER from Cox's Bazar

An unlikely visitor at the Cox's Bazar Stadium turned the first off-day of the SAFF Women's Football Championship into a temporary uproar and media frenzy. As the players of the four semifinalists along with Maldives were preparing for a football festival organised by FIFA, all the attention suddenly shifted as former president Hussain Mohammad Ershad barged into the field, entourage in tow.

The former president had arrived in the city on the previous day on a five-day personal visit. A former sportsman and sports-enthusiast Ershad met the teams and took photographs with them. Ershad said that he went there to encourage the teams and said that he had followed Bangladesh's progress in the tournament. "I know they are through to the semifinals. But Bangladesh need to develop a lot. They are not physically as strong and have less stamina than others. They need to have more practice to compete well," opined Ershad who is a part of the current Awami League-led coalition government.

Meanwhile, some 70 schoolgirls from the district took part in the hour-long festival organised by FIFA. The girls had the opportunity to play with the players and take part in a joint photoshoot. They were later distributed with jerseys, shorts, socks and balls by sponsors Puma.



OVER THE MOON: Australia fast bowler Ryan Harris (R) celebrates one of his six wickets with Phil Hughes on the fourth day of the third Test against England at the WACA in Perth yesterday.

Antithesis of the Indo-Pak rivalry

ATIQUÉ ANAM from Cox's Bazar

If it were cricket or hockey, this match would have been dubbed as a mouth-watering contest. Even a men's football contest would have had the makings of a fierce battle. But in women's football India and Pakistan are poles apart and hence today's semifinal of the SAFF Women's Championship that will take place at the Cox's Bazaar Stadium is almost a forgone conclusion.

The last time, and the only time so far that these teams played, was in the SA Games in January this year where India walked home with a 6-0 victory. And it is not expected to be anything different after the performances that these two teams have put on so far in the tournament.

Regional powerhouse India have comfortably won all their matches in the group phase scoring a staggering 31 goals and are yet to concede any. On the other hand, Pakistan started their campaign well with two wins against relatively weak oppositions, but when they came up against a strong Nepal side, they

were helpless as they suffered a 12-0 demolition.

The gulf of difference between the two sides affords India coach Shahid Jabbar to contemplate resting a couple of his key players for the semifinal.

"We are not thinking about anything but a win. It doesn't matter how many goals we score, we just want to win the match. If the players play their natural game, we will win easily," said a relaxed Jabbar.

At the other extreme was Tariq Lutfi, a long-time men's team coach who has recently been entrusted with the job of coaching the women's side. Demoralised at the thumping defeat against Nepal, where their defensive and goalkeeping frailties were severely revealed, Lutfi conceded that they are far weaker opponents: "We are only at the initial stage of international football while our opponents have been in the circuit for more than three decade. So, obviously they are way ahead of us. But we will try to give our everything in the semifinal."

Lutfi knows that his players will have to play out of their skins if they are to stop topscorer Sasmita Mallik and her colleagues from reveling in yet another goalfest.

Aussies level in style

Cricket

AFP, Perth

A resurgent Australia levelled the Ashes with a comprehensive 267-run victory on the fourth day of the third Test against England at the WACA on Sunday.

Set 391 to win, England resumed at 81-5 and offered little resistance, lasting just 10 overs and less than an hour into the opening session, as bustling seamer Ryan Harris ran through the tail to finish with a career-best 6-47 in his fourth Test, dismissing the tourists for a mere 123.

Only days ago Australia were consumed by self-doubt in the face of a rampant English side anticipating their first series victory down under for years, but the scene is now set for a Boxing Day blockbuster in Melbourne.

One downside for the Australians was a finger injury to captain Ricky Ponting, who added fitness concerns to his form woes and watched from the pavilion as his side completed the victory.

Ponting suffered a fracture of his left little finger trying to complete a slips catch late on Day Three, but said he expected to be fit to play in the fourth Test in Melbourne, starting on December 26.

The home side's comprehensive win in Perth seemed unfathomable when Australia made just 268 on the first day after being sent in to bat, and even less so when England cruised to 78-0 early on the

second day.

However, recalled fast bowler Mitchell Johnson's stunning four wickets in 27 balls on Day Two as part of his first-innings haul of 6-38 turned the series on its head and another century from the rejuvenated Mike Hussey (116) in Australia's second innings sealed England's fate.

Ponting said the controversial move of playing four fast bowlers worked and praised Johnson's second-day spell for turning the match, and possibly the series.

England had won by an innings in Adelaide in the second Test and another victory for the tourists would have guaranteed they retained the Ashes, but instead Australia notched up their first win in six Tests.

Despite suffering their first loss of the tour, England captain Andrew Strauss said his side would not panic and traced the result to the second day of the match.

He said England's top order batsmen were to blame for the loss.

"We are very disappointed," he said. "Especially being 80-odd for nought, chasing 260, we were in a position to take control of the game."

"We dropped off this game, but if we can retain the levels of consistency we have a great chance of going on and winning the series."

"Now is not the time to panic."

Strauss said the series was delicately poised heading to Melbourne, and did not rule out changes to the English side.

"The Boxing Day Test match is going to be

a huge match for all sorts of reasons," he said.

"We have to play better than we have done this game, but I have every confidence that we will do."

If England did harbour any hope of a record fourth-innings chase it was quickly erased late on day three, when their top five batsmen all went cheaply, including Paul Collingwood falling for 11 to the final ball of the day.

It was only a matter of time on Sunday for the Australians, who were led by Michael Clarke in Ponting's absence.

Harris starting the rout by clean bowling nightwatchman James Anderson for three, and England lost their last seven wickets for only 39 runs.

Man-of-the-match Johnson picked up 3-44, he and Harris both claiming nine wickets for the Test.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: First innings 268 (Johnson 62, M Hussey 61, Haddin 53; J. Anderson 3-61, Tremlett 3-63)

ENGLAND: First innings 187 (Bell 53, Strauss 52; Johnson 6-38, Harris 3-59)

AUSTRALIA: Second innings 309 (Hussey 116, Watson 95; Tremlett 5-87, Finn 3-97, Collingwood 1-3, Anderson 1-65)

ENGLAND: Second innings 123 all out (Strauss 15, Trott 31, Cook 13, Collingwood 11, Bell 16; Johnson 3-44, Harris 6-47, Hilfenhaus 1-16)

Result: Australia won by 267 runs and level series 1-1.

Man-of-the-match: Mitchell Johnson.

V-Day tennis starts today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Victory Day Open tennis tournament, sponsored by Runner Group and organised by Bangladesh Tennis Federation (BTF), begins at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna today.

Some 224 players are to take part in eight different events -- men's singles and doubles, women's singles and doubles, boys' U-16, girls' U-16, boys' U-12 and the girls' U-12. The preliminary round will be held here in Dhaka and after that the round of 16, the quarterfinals, semifinals and finals will take place in Naogaon.

"Naogaon has great heritage of tennis since the East Pakistan regime and produced a few good players, but in recent past we can't see players coming from this northern district. So we decided to stage the second part of the event in Naogaon in a bid to give tennis a new birth in the district," said BTF general secretary Ishtiaq Ahmed Curren at a press conference at the federation office yesterday.

The second phase will start in Naogaon from December 24 after a two-day round in Dhaka.

"We believe this tournament will play a good role in reviving tennis in Naogaon," said tournament committee director and BTF vice-president Mohammad Ali Deen, who is also a director of Runner Group.

Anwarul Azim, another director of the sponsors, said that it was the fourth time that they were sponsoring tennis and wished to be associated with the federation for longer. But he demanded a re-evaluation of BTF's commitment in searching talent through tournaments like these.

Under-23 booters draw against Mukhtijoddha

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh U-23 football side played out a goalless draw against Mukhtijoddha Sangsad in their first practice match ahead of the February-March Olympic pre-qualifiers against Kuwait at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishthan ground yesterday.

However, both sides missed the services of their key players as the U-23 side's midfielder Mezbabul Haq Manik is injured, five players are away with Abahani in Thailand and two players of Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club have been asked by their coach not to leave the club's training while Mukhtijoddha did not field players like striker Alamu Bukola Olalekan and defender Dami Emanuel.

Bangladesh's Croatian coach Robert Rubcic had last week picked 26 players from 56 through a one-day trial but he got only 20 players on the first day of a four-day training at BKSP yesterday.

Mohammed defender Bipul and U-17 striker Sohel Rana have been included to the preliminary squad after Sheikh Jamal stopped

striker Towhidul Alam Sabuj and Mintu Sheikh, two key players of the national team, from joining the camp.

"First we will try to know about the club decision on Sabuj and Mintu and then let you know, but we hope all clubs will come forward to help the national team as the training schedule of the national team has been designed in such a way that the club would not face any trouble before the domestic competitions," said Badal Roy, chairman of the national team management committee, about Sheikh Jamal's decision.

Now the players will receive a three-day technical and tactical training and they will square off against Mohammedan on December 23 in Dhaka before all of them join their club training the next day to prepare for the Bangladesh League, which starts December 27.

Meanwhile, Abahani played a 1-1 draw against Old Sifa in one of their two practice matches in Thailand.

Old Sifa is the sixth placed team in the Thailand Premier League, said a press release.



Bangladesh football coach Robert Rubcic (R) shouts instructions during a practice match between Mukhtijoddha and the national under-23 side at the BKSP yesterday.

World Cup road show from today

SPORTS REPORTER

Festivities for the 2011 World Cup begins today through a road show that will go through all 64 districts across the country.

The programme styled "Catch Bangladesh Catch" will start off with a rally from National Eidgah to the Paltan Ground this afternoon at 4:00pm.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarker will be the chief guest at the inauguration ceremony while Bangladesh Cricket Board president AHM Mustafa Kamal will inaugurate the road show.

Australia first

FROM PAGE 16

Going only one way after that.

The rest of the middle order were made up by the elegant Damien Martyn, left-handers Darren Lehmann and Michael Bevan, and allrounder Andrew Symonds, whose big-hitting prowess coupled with tidy medium pace bowling gave the side an extra edge.

The bowling, even without Warne, was exceptional, especially on hard, pacy South African pitches. Leading the field was the great Glenn McGrath, who finished third on the bowling charts with 21 wickets.

Sharing the new ball with him was one of the world's two fastest bowlers, Brett Lee, who went one better than his opening partner with 22 wickets. The third seamer's spot was contested for a while between Jason Gillespie and Andy Bichel. After Bichel's brilliant all-round performance against England (seven for 20 and 34 not out), he was the one the selectors put faith in for the rest of the tournament. The sole specialist spinner was Brad Hogg, the left-arm chinaman bowler, who kept things tight and made crucial breakthroughs in the middle overs.

With the exception of one match against England where it went down to the last over, Australia were not even stretched in any of their matches. They obliterated India in the final, and became the first country to boast three World Cup trophies.

DOHS

FROM PAGE 16
Boundaries in his 63-ball 53 while fellow left-hander Nasiruddin Faruque was unbeaten on 48 off 45 balls.

SCORES IN BRIEF
OLD DOHS: 251-7 in 50 overs (Bilal 77, Tanvir 34; Waqas 2-33, Ashraf 2-43)

CCS: 187 all out in 45.5 overs (Shahbaz 44, Amit 41; Hanif 5-33, Shaiful 3-27)

Result: Old DOHS won by 64 runs.

GAZI TANK: 232-8 in 50 overs (Kapali 50, Sabbir 39; Kamrul 4-41, Monir 2-31)

VICTORIA: 193 all out in 49.4 overs (Mominul 61, Tarek 52; Sanjamul 4-50, Al-Amin 2-16)

Result: Gazi Tank won by 39 runs.

BKSP: 118 all out in 42.5 overs (Abid 25, Shoumya 21; Mahmudul 2-14, Arafat 2-23)

KALABAGAN: 121-1 in 20.4 overs (Sadat 53, Faruque 48 not out; Zakaria 1-18)

Result: Kalabagan won by nine wickets.



Gen Abdul Mubeen, the Chief of Army Staff, poses with winners during the prize giving ceremony of the Gemcon Victory Day Cup poolside at the Kurmitola Golf Club on Saturday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
1 Slender nail
5 Blond shade
8 Police action
12 Dolly material
13 "7 Faces of Dr. —"
14 Grooving on
15 Shrek, e.g.
16 Commotion
17 Morse morsel
18 Paging device
20 Let gravity take over
22 Game show hosted by Steve Harvey
26 Board meeting prop
29 Payable
30 Hit the slopes
31 Tax
32 Edge
33 Goblet feature
34 Prior to
- DOWN**
1 Amor-phous mass
2 Anger
3 Farm fraction
4 Cook onion rings, maybe
5 More than just startle
6 Blue
7 Thug
8 Done with, once and for all
9 Poetic feet
10 Part of TGIF
11 Play —
- ACROSS**
35 Egg yung
36 No longer fashionable
37 Michael J. Fox sitcom
40 Novelist Seton
41 "Step on it!"
45 Throw hard
47 Writer Deighton
49 Tittle
50 Met melody
51 A pair
52 Cheese choice
53 Rodents do it
54 Nevertheless
- DOWN**
19 Dine
21 "Catcher in the —"
23 Fool
24 String instruments
25 It ain't worth a nickel
26 Staff leader?
27 Zeus' sister
28 Rosary recital
32 Kings and queens
33 More impertinent
35 Aviate
36 Shell game prop
38 Acquired relative
39 Other-wise
42 — list
43 Hellenic H's
44 St. Louis team
45 Crone
46 Grecian vessel
48 Lamb's dam

Solution time: 25 mins.



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53				54				55			

CRYPTOQUIP

Y O X D B P O D Y B C X M K V O J H P
T O Z O V K Z X R Y J F A D H O C Y F
A M O V O J K C , R T K B J L P D F
A M O F T O Z O X K G G D C - L O O Z O L .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THIS PRODUCT IS MOST DEFINITELY NOT A GOOD VALUE. A PERSON MIGHT EVEN SAY IT'S COST-DEFECTIVE.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals E