

SPORT

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Yaser kicked out over attitude

Qatar coach Bruno Metsu on Thursday explained that star midfielder Hussain Yaser was kicked off the hosts' Asian Cup squad due to his disruptive influence on team morale. Team officials revealed on Wednesday that Yaser had stormed out of a training session the day before, reportedly in anger at having lost his place in the side to youngster Mohamed Al Sayed. The 28-year-old former Manchester City player, who currently plays for Egyptian giants Al Zamalek, started the opening game against Uzbekistan but was substituted in the second half and did not play against China or Kuwait.



5-day break for Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER

After the completion of the first round of the Premier Division Cricket League, the national cricketers are now going on holiday for five days.

The Tigers will be back to business on January 26 to prepare for the upcoming ICC World Cup that will start with the match between Bangladesh and India on February 19 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

The 15-member squad, which was announced on Wednesday without leading paceman Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, will travel to Chittagong on February 1 for a short camp at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

Tigers will play their two group matches against England (March 11) and Netherlands (March 14) in the port city.

The Tigers will not be available for the Premier Division Super League matches as they train under the supervision of Jamie Siddons.

Meanwhile, the injured Mashrafe is likely to fly for Sri Lanka within two days to meet with Australian surgeon Dr. David Young in Colombo.

The former national skipper is fighting to regain his full fitness before the start of the World Cup. Despite his omission from the 15-member squad the team management didn't rule out his chances of playing the World Cup.



Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan (L), Rokibul Hasan (C) and Abdur Razzak are seen leaving Dhaka's Sonargaon hotel after the Tigers' light training session yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP TALK

'Lucky to be a part of the tournament'

Rajin Saleh, an often underrated but valuable member of the Bangladesh team, was unlucky not to play a match in the 2007 World Cup. In a chat To The Daily Star Sport, he relives his memories of the historic event.

Daily Star Sport (DSS): How did it feel when you heard that you would play the 2007 World Cup?

Rajin Saleh (RS): When I was playing the Premier League before the World Cup squad was to be announced, I was a bit tense thinking that I might not be selected. There were new, talented players like Tamim Iqbal coming in. But after scoring two hundreds in the league matches I was more confident of my chances.

I came to Dhaka and called Sumon Bhai (Habibul Bashar) the day before the team was to be finalised, and he told me that he could not say anything at that point. Then, after the meeting and before the team was announced, Sumon Bhai called and told me that I was in the Bangladesh team. The feeling on hearing that I was part of the World Cup team is not something I can describe in words. I was very happy to know that I was among the top fifteen in the country and I felt very lucky to be taking part in a World Cup.

DSS: Were you frustrated about not playing a match during the tournament?

RS: It was a source of some pain that I didn't get to play a match in the World Cup. But in life there are ups and downs, and I just consider myself lucky to be a part of the tournament.

DSS: What is your sweetest memory?

RS: In 2007, the best memory was beating India. The previous day Manzarul Islam passed away, and that caused us a lot of pain and grief. Then beating India, and later South Africa was very special for us.

DSS: Which one would you say was the most special?

RS: As I said, beating India in our opening match was the best. We were all very upset about Rana. Rana was a very close friend of mine. It was a very upsetting and sad moment for us. Javed Bhai (Javed Omar) and I sat on the hotel floor and cried when we heard the news. From that low point, beating India the following day lifted our spirits.

DSS: What are your expectations from the 2011 World Cup?

RS: I think that in 2011 Bangladesh will play even better than we did in 2007, and it is my hope that Bangladesh will play the semifinals, InshahAllah.



RAJIN SALEH

Sheikh Jamal invite seven foreigners

SPORTS REPORTER

Despite the fact that there is still more than seven weeks to go until the mid-term players' window for the Bangladesh League, title contenders Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club are all set to bring seven more foreign recruits for test before signing them for the second-leg of the ongoing professional football league.

Sheikh Jamal are currently languishing in seventh position in the 12-team table with only five points while Sheikh Russel lead the table with 10 points after four games.

Big-budget Sheikh Jamal, who finished behind champions Abahani in the Federation Cup in their first appearance, had signed up three Serbian and two Cameroon booters for the season but they have only availed the services of Serbian defender Dragon Perisic and Cameroon midfielder Modo Hugues, whose performance has reportedly not been satisfactory.

"Seven footballers from Cameroon are supposed to arrive here by January 25 and we will see them for one month before signing them during the mid-term players transfer in March," said Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi club's team manager Anwarul Karim Helal adding that they were not satisfied with the performance of the current batch of foreign recruits except defender Dragon.

A hartal with a difference

SAKEB SUBHAN



Hartals have almost exclusively been associated with political parties wanting to prove a political point. Over time, what was originally an expression of dissent by ordinary people against injustice has been twisted into an exercise to serve the narrow interests of the powers-that-were.

Yesterday, the district of Narail revived an old tradition when the locals, ordinary people all, took to the streets to protest the perceived injustice of the exclusion of their favourite son, Bangladesh fast bowler Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, from the country's 15-man World Cup squad.

The hartal at Narail and protests at Dhaka University and Mohakhali in the capital brought into focus two things: Mashrafe's immense popularity, and how much the upcoming showpiece event, the first World Cup to be held in Bangladesh, means to the man on the street.

Mashrafe has always been the

favourite of the common man; the courage and resilience he displayed in coming back from numerous injuries and his lion-hearted performances on the field have undoubtedly struck a chord with the people of a struggling nation. The tears he fought back and finally succumbed to after the announcement of the squad on Wednesday resonated with millions of his admirers and underscored that he, like his countrymen, places great emotional value on the World Cup at home.

The best fast bowler in the country was a shoo-in for the team to play the World Cup starting February 19 until he injured his troublesome left knee during a domestic game on December 21. The team management have said that if he recovers in time for the showpiece event -- an unlikely scenario -- he will be selected.

All things considered, the hartals and processions -- which were conducted peacefully -- may not have been born of anger, but out of a feeling of solidarity that the nation wants to express for their wounded Tiger.



Dhaka University students through the campus streets to protest the omission of Bangladesh fast bowler Mashrafe Bin Mortaza yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Prime Bank badminton

SPORTS REPORTER

Four shuttlers advanced into the next round of the Prime Bank Pallima Sangsad Badminton tournament beating their respective rivals on the opening day at the Sangsad premises at Khilgoan yesterday.

In the men's singles, Rana, Humayun Kabiar, Lal Chand and Pesta defeated Sony, Deen Islam, Biplob and Lion respectively all by 2-0 sets while the Pesta-Ulash pair defeated the Kabir-Deen pair in the men's doubles event.

State minister for Youth and Sports MAhad Ali Sarker inaugurated 26th edition of the meet while sponsor Prime Bank chairman Azam J Chowdhury and Pallima Sangsad chairman Siddik Ullah were among others present.

7-member team leaves today for Myanmar

SPORTS REPORTER

A seven-member tennis team leaves today for Myanmar to take part in the ITF U-14 and 14 Asian Championship 2011 Group-2.

Competitors from Myanmar, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Macao, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Vietnam will take part in the two competitions, scheduled for January 24-27 and January 29 to

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Ludicrous scenes at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday, which is designated as a practice facility during the World Cup starting on February 19. Workers are seen digging holes into the turf to put up structures for a concert arranged by a private telecom company without any regard as to the detrimental effect it will have on the field or the pitch.

PHOTO: STAR

First phase finishes

SPORTS REPORTER

The Premier Cricket League first round finished yesterday with Old DOHS, Gazi Tank and Victoria Sporting Club winning their respective matches at different venues.

Old DOHS and Gazi Tank have already confirmed their Super League berths and both finished with 16 points from eleven matches. League leaders Abahani, defending champions Mohammedan, Cricket Coaching School (CCS) and Biman, who finished on same 12 points along with Kalabagan but got through by virtue of head-to-head advantage, are the other teams in the Super League which is expected to start on January 24.

BKSP, Prime Doleshwar and Orient will play in the Relegation League.

third place with a massive 124-run victory over bottom-side Orient Sporting Club at BKSP.

DOHS rode on Tanvir Haider's 81 to score 236 for seven in the stipulated 50 overs. Tanvir smashed seven boundaries in his

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POINTS TABLE

Teams	M	W	L	T	Pts
Abahani	11	10	1	0	20
MSC	11	8	2	1	17
DOHS	11	8	3	0	16
Gazi	11	8	3	0	16
CCS	11	6	5	0	12
Biman	11	6	5	0	12
Kalabagan	11	6	5	0	12
Victoria	11	5	6	0	10
Surjo Tarun	11	4	7	0	8
BKSP	11	2	9	0	4
Doleshwar	11	1	9	1	3