

League to make way for national camp

SPORTS REPORTER

Following non-cooperation from the clubs, the National Team Management Committee (NTMC) of Bangladesh Football Federation has proposed to start the residential camp for the U-23 side ahead of the Olympic pre-qualifiers against Kuwait after completion of eighth round of the ongoing Bangladesh League.

"Since we did not get any support from the clubs for continuing the training of the U-23 side, the meeting has proposed to run the residential camp from February 12 to March 2 and recommended the Bangladesh League committee to halt the league during the camp," said NTMC chairman Badal Roy after the meeting at the BFF House yesterday.

Bangladesh were initially scheduled to face Kuwait in the away game on February 23 and host them on March 9, but after invitation from the Kuwait Football Federation we will likely play back-to-back matches in Kuwait subject to approval from the authority concerned in a bid to not disrupt country's professional football league.

Croat coach Robert Rubic was forced to cancel the scheduled practice match amongst the U-23 booters on January 19 after a number of selected players failed to appear at the venue and the national coach has sought for a four-week preparation before taking Kuwait.

Badal Roy said that the meeting also recommended the game's governing body to take initiatives so that the training of the national team is not hampered in future.

Shakib

FROM PAGE 16

professional and hopefully, a better player and I have realised how important a role the championship plays in the development of cricketers," said Shakib.

"Shakib is still ranked as the world's leading one-day all-rounder, above the names of [Shane] Watson and [Jacques] Kallis," commented Worcestershire's director of cricket Steve Rhodes.

"We are delighted to welcome back someone of such stature who will be a valuable asset to our LV Championship and Friends Provident campaigns during his stay."

"His commitments with Bangladesh means that his stay is only for a short period, but expect some 'fireworks' from Shakib in the middle of the season," he added.

Worcestershire has already signed Australian Damien Wright and Pakistan international Saeed Ajmal in the last week.

Knowing

FROM PAGE 16

sweetest memory of all. When we represented our country Bangladesh and had the flag in front of us with thousands watching us, I felt really proud. I was having goosebumps. I will never forget the day.

DSS: What is your expectation of the 2011 World Cup?

TB: BCB have a lot of responsibilities and I hope they carry it well.

Other than that we have a balanced team now and also performed well recently. Honestly it won't be easy to win against other nations but we have the capability to beat them.

If the players manage to give another 20 percent, which I am sure they will, we can win against big teams. I wish Bangladesh cricket team all the best.



PHOTO: AFP

Belgian superstar Kim Clijsters at full stretch during her fourth round match against Russia's Ekaterina Makarova at the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday.

Kim scrapes through

AFP, Melbourne

Third-seeded Belgian Kim Clijsters downed a feisty Ekaterina Makarova of Russia 7-6, 6-2 in a high-quality match to move into the quarterfinals of the Australian Open here on Monday.

The tournament favourite battled through a tight first set then raced away with the second to set up a showdown with 12th-seeded Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland.

Clijsters defended brilliantly throughout the match, her speed across the court and retrieving ability forcing Makarova to try to hit closer and closer to the lines, which in turn led to a high error rate from the Russian.

The left-handed Makarova tried hard throughout, but once she lost the first set Clijsters quickly gained control and there was nothing the Russian could do to make an impression on the world number three.

Clijsters opened the match in a rush, gaining an early break to lead 2-0, but Makarova fought back to get the set back on terms.

The Belgian was steadier on serve than Makarova, who faced six break points as the set went on but saved them all, including two set points at 5-6 to send the set into a

tiebreak.

However, that dominance was reflected in the tiebreak, with Clijsters jumping out to a 5-2 lead and holding on to take the first set in 57 minutes.

Both women had similar serving percentages in the first set, but Clijsters picked hers up in the second set while Makarova went slightly off the boil.

It was enough for Clijsters, who pounced to break Makarova at the start of the set and gain the early advantage. She then broke again to move to 5-2, and showed no nerves as she served out the match to love.

It is the sixth time Clijsters has reached the quarterfinals of the Australian Open, although she has yet to go on and win it.

Second seed Russian Vera Zvonareva recovered from a slow start to ease past Iveta Benesova of the Czech Republic 6-4, 6-1 and move towards her third straight Grand Slam final, as she targets a maiden major win.

Zvonareva will next face the Czech Republic's Kvitova, who downed Italian 22nd seed Flavia Pennetta 3-6, 6-3, 6-3.

Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska saved two match points before defeating Peng Shuai in three sets, leaving Li Na as China's lone hope for a first Grand Slam singles title.

Inzy slams PCB over captaincy hesitation

AFP, Karachi

Former Pakistan cricket captain Inzamam-ul-Haq Monday accused the sport's authorities of creating factions within the national side by delaying the naming of a captain for next month's World Cup.

Pakistan is the only one of 14 competing teams to have failed to name a captain for the tournament, to be jointly hosted by India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh from February 19 to April 2.

Inzamam, who played 120 Test matches for Pakistan scoring 25 centuries, said the delay had disrupted the team's preparations for the showpiece event and stoked divisions among the squad.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) last week named a 15-man squad for the tournament but did not name a captain, fanning speculation that current one-day captain Shahid Afridi could be replaced with Test captain Misbahul Haq.

"With only three weeks left to the World Cup, Pakistan have no captain and the blame goes to the PCB for creating an impasse which has divided the team into two groups, supporting Afridi and Misbah," Inzamam said in an interview.

"In this scenario one cannot have high expectations for the team."

Inzamam was at the helm when Pakistan crashed out in the first round of last World Cup in 2007 -- a tournament overshadowed by the sudden death of coach Bob Woolmer a day after the side's shocking defeat against Ireland.

The team also tumbled out in the first round of the 2003 tournament.

The Pakistan Cricket Club Cup

FROM PAGE 16 Academy by 4 wickets. In Mymensingh, Pragatoshil Shadishi Shanga of Tangail won by 8 wickets against Joydebpur Cricket Club from Gazipur.

Khulna's KKSP beat Kushtia's Amlapara Sporting Club by 5 wickets.

All the winning teams progressed to the second round.

The first match at Chittagong's MA Aziz Stadium took place yesterday where Taltala Sporting Club from Chandpur emerged victorious against Rangamati's Shahid Sukkur Athletic's Club by 4 wickets.

But in 1992 Inzamam's inspired innings in the semi-final and final helped propel Pakistan to their only World Cup triumph.

"I am surprised, why does it always happen to Pakistan?" said Inzamam, who managed just 19 runs in the 2003 World Cup and was blamed for the team's poor performance.

"The PCB has failed to control the situation and if Pakistan fare badly in the World Cup, people will accuse the players and not the board."

Inzamam accused the PCB of in selecting the 15-man World Cup squad without consulting one-day captain Afridi or coach Waqar Younis.

AmEx

FROM PAGE 16 and 2009 champion Ramzan Ali Mollah while the Indian contingent will feature players such as Gaganjeet Bhullar, Chiragh Kumar, Vijay Kumar, Sujjan Singh, Manav Jaini, Shamim Khan, Raju Mollah and others.

At the press meet, a dummy 30-lakh taka cheque was handed over by the City Bank CEO to the organisers.

The prize money will be distributed among first fifty finishers with the champion winning Tk 4.84 lakh, while the runner-up grabbing Tk 33.4 lakh.

The event will have one-hour airings of each round on satellite channel Desh TV on the following days, first time in the country that the game will be broadcast on any tv channel.

Super League

FROM PAGE 16 Siddons) for the upcoming World Cup will resume tomorrow at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Abahani are now leading the table after the first round with 20 points while their traditional rivals Mohammedan followed them with 17 points.

DOHS and Gazi Tank finished the first round with 16 points each while CCS has 12 points from eleven matches.

Asif rescues BKSP

SPORTS REPORTER

BKSP won their crucial relegation match-up yesterday against Orient SC at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium by four wickets, and in the process all but confirmed their visa to stay in the Premier League for one more year.

With the win, BKSP now have the upper hand in the points table with 6 points from 12 matches, ahead of both Orient and Doleshwar.

Winning the toss, Orient batted first and posted a total of 160 runs on the board. At one point they were 72 for two in 13 overs and looked set for a big total. But the BKSP bowling, led by skipper Asif Ahmed, cramped their innings.

Asif took 3 wickets for 33 runs.

Chasing the total BKSP were in trouble losing 5 wickets for just 56 runs, but once again Asif came to the rescue and played a sensible knock of 47 runs with able support from Abid Hossain who remained unbeaten on 46.

BRIEF SCORES

ORIENT: 160 all out in 39.3 overs. (Nayem Hafiz 37, Ahsanul Haque 36; Asif 3-33, Zakaria Masud 2-33)

BKSP: 162-6 in 47.4 overs. (Asif 47, Abid 46; Muksudul Hasan 2-27, Asraful Haque 2-32)

Result: BKSP won by 4 wickets.

Nadal gallops to qtrs

AFP, Melbourne

Rafael Nadal stormed past Croatia's Marin Cilic into the Australian Open quarterfinals Monday in his bid to unite the Grand Slam titles, as Andy Murray went through and Robin Soderling crashed.

The world number one was in devastating touch against the 15th seed, who struggled throughout and double-faulted on match-point to go down 6-2, 6-4, 6-3 after 2hr 31min on a cool evening at Rod Laver Arena.

Nadal, who caught a virus this month and sweated buckets in Saturday night's encounter with Australian teen Bernard Tomic, said he was now feeling "perfect" just three matches away from a non-calendar year Grand Slam.

"I didn't sweat as much tonight," he smiled. "Two days ago I was sweating like crazy and I felt tired, but today is the first day that I felt perfect physically."

With the win, Nadal moves to 25 consecutive Grand Slam match victories, equalling runs by Jimmy Connors and Pete Sampras in the 1970s and 1990s. Only Rod Laver (29) and Roger Federer (27, twice) have longer streaks.

Nadal will meet David Ferrer on Wednesday in the Australian Open's first all-Spanish quarterfinal in 14 years. The French Open,

Dhoni blames batting

Cricket

PTI, Centurion

India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni on Sunday attributed the ODI series loss against South Africa to the batting failure but refused to believe that it will be a cause of worry for his side with the World Cup less than a month away.

"I think our batting department did not do well in the ODIs. That was the main reason why we lost the ODI series. But, hopefully with the World Cup coming up all will be set right," he said at the post-match conference after India lost the fifth and final ODI by 33 runs and the series 2-3.

"Throughout the series our batting department has not scored a lot of runs. It is Virat Kohli who has done well and it's Yusuf down the order who has done well. We really need to perform as a unit. But it is a matter of one innings or two and some of the batsmen did not get enough preparation time, quality practice sessions. It always plays in your mind but at the end of the day experienced players have gone through a phase like this. It happens in cricket and specially with us as we play 30-35 ODIs a year. So you see the form going up and down in the year. We are used to deal with situations like this," Dhoni said.

Indian top order collapsed while playing rash shots but Dhoni defended his batsmen, saying it was part and parcel of the game. "It is part and parcel of cricket. You get off to a start, 10 overs, 28 runs one wicket then you are asked why was there no hurry?"

Wimbledon and US Open champion can become the first man to hold all four major titles since 1969.

Earlier Murray barely gave Austria's Jurgen Melzer a look in his 6-3, 6-1, 6-1 win which maintained British hopes of ending a men's Slam drought dating back to Fred Perry's 1936 US Open victory.

The world number five, beaten by Federer in last year's final, said he was surprised by the easy win over the 11th seed which,

like Nadal, puts him into the last eight without dropping a set.

"I've played Jurgen in the Slams a few times, including here two years ago, and I was expecting a tough match and I was surprised by beating him in three sets," Murray said.

"I hit the ball well from the start of the match and I played some of my best tennis (here) last year. I don't want to get carried away as I haven't won this kind of thing (major) before."



PHOTO: AFP

Spanish world No.1 Rafael Nadal celebrates his victory over Marin Cilic of Croatia in the fourth round of the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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1 Back talk 46 Bright at native
4 Young night 3 Masses for short
8 Suspend 50 Charged 4 Agree 29 Dr. Seuss book
12 Commotion 51 "— 5 N.
13 Stench 52 Sucker 6 Rich soil 30 Persian Gulf noble
14 Hydrox 56 Gilligan's 7 Poultry 31 Stamina
15 Haughty 57 Screen- 8 Nasty 33 Changed the
17 Split 19 Move 9 Saharan 10 Actress 35 Cleve-land hoopster, for short
18 Tar 19 Move 10 Actress 35 Cleve-land hoopster, for short
19 Move 20 Nay 16 Squid 38 The whole enchilada
21 Sans 21 Greet 40 Cell overseer
24 Catcher's place? 22 Eager 43 Italian metropolis
25 Actress 23 Space-craft 45 Luau bowlful
26 Filch 26 Greet 40 Cell overseer
28 Lucy's partner in mischief 21 Greet 40 Cell overseer
32 Virtue's opposite 22 Eager 43 Italian metropolis
34 One of the Dwarfs 23 Space-craft 45 Luau bowlful
36 A handful 26 Filch 40 Cell overseer
37 Plant swelling 28 Lucy's partner in mischief 21 Greet 40 Cell overseer
39 — Mahal 32 Virtue's opposite 22 Eager 43 Italian metropolis
41 Glutton 34 One of the Dwarfs 23 Space-craft 45 Luau bowlful
42 Shade provider 36 A handful 26 Filch 40 Cell overseer

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CRYPTOQUIP

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SEDRRM PUEFD BQXVQE BQXVQ.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BOY IN A FAMOUS LONG-RUNNING COMIC STRIP WHO HOPES TO OWN A HEFTY MOTORCYCLE: HARLEY BROWN.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equals I