

SPORT

Young-Pyo quits int'l football

South Korean veteran Lee Young-Pyo has confirmed his retirement from international football after his side went out of the Asian Cup in the semifinals. "I have decided to retire from the national team," said the 33-year-old left-back, who has enjoyed a long career with PSV Eindhoven, Tottenham Hotspur, Borussia Dortmund and Al Hilal. Despite his age he played every minute of Korea's campaign in Qatar, including consecutive extra-time contests. But after 126 appearances, he said the time had come to step aside.



Abahani's Ghanaian midfielder Twum Frank (L) blows a kiss to fans after scoring the only goal of a heated Bangladesh League match against Brothers Union at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Powerplays under focus

SPORTS REPORTER

There has been no shortage of confidence for the Bangladesh team ahead of ICC Cricket World Cup 2011 as the Tigers are heading into the mega event on the back of two impressive series victories over New Zealand and Zimbabwe at home.

But there is still room for coach Jamie Siddons to work closely, with some particular areas need to be taken care of during the preparations. The team had been struggling to fully capitalise on the batting Powerplay and without Mashrafe Bin Mortaza things would be difficult for the Tigers to get the thrust in the lower-order.

"We are very much aware of this fact and that's why we have some special plans to ensure improvement in this area. The players are practising how they can play over the top. It's actually a matter of swinging the bat well to get the maximum advantage," said chief selector Rafiqul Alam.

"We have a player like Sohrawordi Shuvo in the late-order who has coped with his bowling in international cricket but yet to show his abilities as a batsman. Shuvo has proved his ability as a batsman in the domestic scene as well as with the A team and we hope he will prove his worth also in the international cricket soon," he added.

Siddons however was not worried after the way Mahmudullah Riyad and Mushfiqur Rahim batted in

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AMEX GOLF

Shamim takes lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Shamim Khan of India took top spot after round two of the American Express Bangladesh Open 2011 with a six under par at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday. His cumulative score of eight under par took him two strokes clear of Indian Raju Ali Mollah and Bangladeshi Mohammad Zakiruzzaman, who were tied for second place with six under par at the end of the second day.

Shamim (70-66) dropped his only bogey of the day on the opening hole after missing a chip-putt from the edge. He then hit a purple patch with five successive birdies from the third to the seventh. He sank a couple of 15-footers on the third and sixth and chipped-in from about 35 feet on the fourth. A three-time winner on the Aircel PGTI, Shamim added two more birdies on the 11th and 14th.

Raju Ali Mollah's (69-69) second straight 69 of the tournament featured six birdies and three bogeys and placed him joint-second.

Bangladeshi amateur Zakiruzzaman (71-67) posted a 67 to share second place along with Raju Ali Mollah. Zakiruzzaman, a member of the Bangladeshi team that won the gold medal at the 2010 South Asian Games, made seven birdies against two bogeys in his second round.

Gaganjeet Bhullar and Bangladesh's Siddikur Rahman, two of the pre-tournament favourites, were

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Abahani edge feisty tie

SPORTS REPORTER

Holdings Abahani maintained their supremacy over a 10-man Brothers Union after edging a tense encounter with a 1-0 scoreline in the Grameenphone Bangladesh League at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Ghanaian midfielder Twum Frank separated the sides by striking his fourth league goal on 60 minutes in a game that was marked by physical tussles among players. A player and a club official were sent off and there were heated exchanges among players, officials and cops after a police official hurled abuse toward Abahani manager and former national player Satyajit Das Rupu.

Their third straight win in six matches means that the Sky Blues take the lead for the first time in the 12-team table with 13 points, one less than Muktijoddha Sangsad, who today play their sixth game against giants Mohammedan SC.

In the past, both sides had served up a number of classic battles and the seventh meetings between them in the professional league was also entertaining though the first half was marked by excess physicality with referee Hannan Miron forced to book four players.

Abahani were the better side in the first half and produced three scoring chances as striker Shahkawat Hossain Rony was put as a lone striker with Ghanaian duo Awudu Ibrahim and Twum Frank playing behind Rony. But the Sky Blues could not avail any of those chances and Rony squandered a number of presentable opportunities.

Abahani even failed to cash in on an open net after Brothers Union goalkeeper Mitul Hasan was put down outside the box to restrict Abahani's match-winner Frank on the half-hour mark and the goalkeeper was forced to leave the field with an injury.

After the resumption, Brothers pressed Abahani with their crisp movements and flank attacks and the pressure almost paid off for them when Bitcha Richard hit a shot straight at Abahani goalkeeper Shohel in the 48th minute while their Argentine midfielder Rafael Vivaldo floated one over the crossbar from inside the box on 69 minutes.

But Abahani launched a quick counter-attack to find the decider in the very next minute.

Frank's initial header into the box was cleared by a Brothers defender but the Ghanaian pounced on the rebound with a dipping drive from 30 yards out that crashed into the back of the net.

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CHENNAI OPEN Niaz finishes thirteenth

SPORTS REPORTER

GM Niaz Morshed finished 13th in the Chennai Open International Grandmaster Chess Competition at the close of the eleventh and final round in India yesterday.

Niaz secured eight points from 11 games while GM Ziaur Rahman finished 24th with 7.5 points followed by FIDE master Abu Sufian Shakil, who got seven points to finish 50th.

Sharif Hossain with 6.5 points, FIDE Master Minhazuddin Sagar (6 points), Chanchal Kumar Gosh (six points), and Abdullah Al Saif (5.5 points) finished 99th, 105th, 127th and 155th respectively as a total of 315 players took part in the event.

ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP TALK

'2007 my favourite WC'

Mohammad Ashraful, the youngest Test centurion, and architect of memorable Bangladeshi wins, including one in the 2007 World Cup, talks to The Daily Star Sport about the World Cups he has played in, and what he expects from the one round the corner.

Daily Star Sport (DSS): How did it feel when you heard that you would play the 2003 World Cup?

Mohammad Ashraful (MA): I played in the national team for two years before the World Cup. I was very happy to be selected. I played the under-19 World Cup in 2000 in Sri Lanka, in New Zealand in 2002, and I played the Champions Trophy. But having never played an actual World Cup, I was really excited, and the aim was to play well.

DSS: But that aim was not fulfilled...

MA: Unfortunately that did not happen, it was a bad World Cup for us. We lost the first match against Canada, which was a very bad result for us. I wasn't playing in that game



MOHAMMAD ASHRAFUL

but I played all the others including the one against Sri Lanka, when I was part of Vaas's hat-trick in the opening over.

DSS: How was the team atmosphere in South Africa?

MA: Everyone was upset. As a Test-playing country, the defeat to Canada in the opening game was a hard pill to swallow. And the following day being Eid-ul-Azha, we felt especially bad as we had disappointed the whole nation. We all hoped that we would win against Canada and Kenya at least, but we lost those two games. On a personal front, I got my first ODI fifty, against New Zealand, and it gave me satisfaction that I got my maiden ODI fifty in a World Cup match.

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Awaiting a grand opening

QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM

The eyes of the world will be fixed firmly on the Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS) in Bangladesh on February 17 as it will play host to the opening ceremony of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2011.

And Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president AHM Mustafa Kamal yesterday assured that all possible efforts were being made to make the day a truly memorable one for millions across the country and beyond.

"All our efforts are geared towards making the opening ceremony a massive success," Kamal told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that the programme would be, "a grand affair, with a scale unlike anything seen before in the country."

The nearly two-hour long event will be declared officially open by Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and will feature a wide variety of innovative offerings ranging from laser and holographic shows, LED kites and massive coordinated fireworks. Famous artistes, both legendary and contemporary from the region and beyond will also be present during the event which is being

organised by Indian event management firm Wizcraft who are working with Asiatic as their local partners.

"Our aim is to make the opening ceremony as engaging as possible," said Kamal, stating that he was sure people would get their money's worth from the 115-minute show.

There had been recurring fears that Bangladesh would be under-represented in the opening cere-

"Not only will the giant screens telecast the whole opening ceremony live, but there will also be cultural programmes held at each location and a synchronised fireworks display"

mony as they are co-hosts with India and Sri Lanka, both giants in the game, but Kamal brushed aside such concerns.

"The opening ceremony is being held in Bangladesh, so we will of course focus primarily on Bangladesh.

"Each country is assigned a specific time-limit to showcase their culture, heritage and heroes," informed Kamal adding that Bangladesh's skit will be 20 minutes

long, while India and Sri Lanka would each be represented for 12 minutes.

"The Bangladeshi segment will touch on all aspects of our culture, heritage and history including the Language Movement of 1952 and the Liberation War in 1971," confirmed Kamal.

"It will also focus on the future and will highlight Bangladesh's dream of achieving the status of a middle-income country in the near future.

"There will be very few speeches with only the Prime Minister, ICC president and BCB president scheduled to speak at the event."

The prevailing fear amongst the public, however, is that with only a few thousand tickets up for grabs, many will miss out on the festivities at the BNS.

But Kamal said that contingencies were in place for those who would be unable to get the privileged ticket or pass.

"We are setting up giant screens in zilla stadiums of all 64 districts and in a total of 90 locations across the country," he said. "Not only will the giant screens telecast the whole opening ceremony live, but there will also be cultural programmes held at each location and a synchronised fireworks

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