

First Everest, now Bangla Channel

SPORTS REPORTER

For most people, Everest is perhaps the pinnacle of their achievements. A sign that you have conquered all there is to conquer and now can rest on your laurels. Not so for Musa Ibrahim. The first Bangladeshi to ascend Mount Everest, continued his remarkable feats by swimming across the Bangla Channel at the Bay of Bengal on March 9.

Along with Lipton Sarkar, another amateur swimmer, Musa swam the 15 kilometres from Teknaf to St Martin in four hours and 57 minutes to add another feather to his cap of achievements.

Lipton, who has previously, swam the Channel four times acted as Musa's guide while another swimmer Fazlul Kabir Sina had also started the journey with the duo aborted his attempt two hours into the swim due to cramps. He had however, earlier, also swum the Channel.

The trio who attempted the feat were coached and trained by under-water photographer and scuba-diver Quazi Hamidul Haque, chairman of Extreme Bangla, who can lay claim to the demarcation of the Bangla Channel following three years of relentless work. He too has conquered the Channel.

The event was organized by North Alpine Club and Extreme Bangla and sponsored by Summit Group, Navana and Nitya Upahar.

Following this successful achievement, the organizers now plan to host an international meet titled the "International Bangla Channel

Swimming Challenge' in February next year.

"Except professional swimmers, those who are capable to swim non-stop for four hours will be eligible to take part in the adventure although we will select them in seven categories and two males and as many females from each of the seven categories will be selected for the finals where five foreigners will also join," said Musa Ibrahim at a press conference at the Press Club yesterday.

The meet will also see the demarcations of the Channel change slightly with the length extended to 20kms to finish the swimming at Chera Dweep instead of St Martin.

Musa believes that one day this meet will be turned into a brand and would showcase Bangladesh in the international arena.

"Our intent is to help individuals to set a target and achieve it through the spirit of adventure and one needs perfect training and passion to cross the Bangla Channel and I think this type of passion will help individual to achieve goals in their personal life," said Hamidul, chairman of Extreme Bangla.

"The success of Musa added another feather to our journey and I urge the young generation to come up with spirit to cross the Bangla Channel, which will be recognised internationally," said Pallab Mohaimen, vice-president of North Alpine Club.

Habibul Bashar, former captain of Bangladesh cricket team, hoped that the upcoming competition would be a successful one and that it would inspire the young generation to be more adventurous.

Arambagh pip Ctg MSC

SPORTS REPORTER

Arambagh KS recorded their third victory in the Grameenphone Bangladesh League when they handed a single-goal defeat to Chittagong Mohammedan SC at the Cox's Bazar Stadium yesterday.

Guinean recruit Bangura Ismael struck the all-import goal in the 14th minute of the game to take Arambagh to the eighth position with 13 points from 11 matches while Ctg Mohammedan slip to ninth with 10 points.

POINT-TABLE AFTER FIRST LEG

Teams	M	W	D	L	G/F	G/A	Pts
Muktijoddha	11	9	1	1	28	6	28
Abahani	11	8	2	1	16	5	26
Sk. Jamal	11	7	3	1	13	4	24
Sk. Russel	11	5	4	2	13	4	19
Rahmatganj	11	5	1	5	14	6	16
Brothers	11	3	4	4	13	11	13
MSC	11	4	1	6	10	12	13
Arambagh	11	3	4	4	8	11	13
Ctg MSC	11	3	1	7	9	21	10
Farashganj	11	2	3	6	6	15	9
Feni Soccer	11	0	6	5	9	17	6
Ctg Abahani	11	0	4	7	7	15	4

Rana's death anniversary observed

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

The fourth death anniversary of late cricketers Manzarul Islam Rana and Sajjadul Hasan Shetu was marked through different programmes here yesterday.

The Khulna District Sports Association (KDSA), Cricket Players' Welfare Association (CPWA) and Khulna District Sports Writers Association (KDSWA) chalked out the programmes that included a mourning rally, discussions and a milad mahfil.

At 4:00pm, a mourning rally was brought out under the banner of CPWA from Khulna Stadium.

Earlier in the morning, floral wreaths were placed at the graves of the two cricketers where large number of people of all walks of life offered fateha for peace of the departed souls.

Khulna District Sports Association will hold a discussion meeting to be followed by milad mehfil on Friday on this occasion, said its general secretary Kazi Shamin Ahsan.

Manjarul Rana and Shetu were killed in a fatal road accident on the afternoon of March 16 in 2007 at Chuknagar under Dumuria upazila.

Rana, who was born on May 4 in 1984 at Mujgunni under Khalishpur police station of Khulna city, stole the show against the visiting Malaysias as a member of the under-17 cricket team while he was a student of Khulna Zilla School.

A left-handed middle order batsman and also a left-arm spinner, Rana went on to play six Tests and 25 ODIs that included a brace of man-of-the-match winning performances against Zimbabwe in 2005. He had one half-century and two four-wicket hauls in his short career.

Shetu was a league cricketer, born on September 25, 1978. The day before his death, he played a first division game at the Fatullah Stadium.

Afridi willing

FROM PAGE 16
Pakistan have eight points from their five matches and could top Group A if they beat defending champions Australia in their last match on Saturday.

Afridi says his team fear no opposition. "The kind of cricket we are playing we fear no venue and no opposition, so India in India, and Australia in the last group match are no problems," said Afridi, who played down threats from extremists groups in India.

"What ever is the response, we will get to know it when we go there because we will be going there after a long time," said Afridi.

"We have played in India in worse situations," added Afridi, referring to Pakistan's tour in 1999 where Hindu militants dug up the pitch in New Delhi.



PHOTO: AFP

Manchester United striker Javier Hernandez is ecstatic after scoring one of his two goals against Marseille during their Champions League second round clash at Old Trafford on Tuesday.

Hernandez fires MU

AFP, Manchester



Manchester United edged into the Champions League quarterfinals as Javier Hernandez's double-strike clinched a 2-1 win over Marseille in the last 16 second leg on Tuesday.

Sir Alex Ferguson's side were far from convincing for long periods at Old Trafford, but the predatory finishing of Mexico striker Hernandez moved United into the last eight for the fifth successive year with a 2-1 aggregate victory.

This was Ferguson's 100th Champions League victory and few of the previous 99 would have caused him quite so much anxiety as this.

Marseille gave United's defence too many scares for the Scot's liking and Wes Brown's late own goal ensured a tense finish for the Premier League leaders.

Despite the latest in a long line of underwhelming displays, United are closing in on the final at Wembley and remain on course for a treble.

There had been good and bad news for Ferguson before kick-off as Portugal star Nani was cleared to return from injury ahead of schedule, while captain Nemanja Vidic missed out with a calf problem suffered against Arsenal on Saturday.

United, held to a 0-0 draw in the first leg, tore into Marseille at the start and it took only five minutes to open the scoring as a brilliantly constructed move pierced the French defence with surgical precision.

Wayne Rooney was the architect of Marseille's downfall as he played a sumptuous pass out to Ryan Giggs on the left wing and then surged into the penalty area to take the return ball.

Rooney's instant control gave him time to assess the situation and he drilled over a low cross towards Hernandez, who timed his run perfectly to beat the offside trap and tap into the empty net.

That dream start lulled United into a false

sense of security and their defence was dozing as Andre-Pierre Gignac ran onto Andre Ayew's flicked pass.

Gignac had time and space to pick his spot, yet with the goal at his mercy he tamely lofted a chip way over the crossbar.

Steve Mandanda almost gifted United a second goal as the goalkeeper's woeful clearance fell to Nani just outside the penalty area, but the winger strangely decided not to shoot and his delayed pass to Rooney allowed Marseille time to regroup and clear.

United's own frailties at the back kept Marseille in the game and Taye Taiwo was left unmarked to cross towards Souleymane Diawara, who was also unopposed as his mistimed header drifted wide.

It didn't help that right-back John O'Shea limped off with a hamstring problem and Marseille, growing in confidence, threatened again when Benoit Cheyrou tested Edwin van der Sar with a long-range effort.

Hernandez appealed in vain for a penalty when he collided with Taiwo while trying to reach Giggs's cross, but Didier Deschamps' side were quickly back on the attack and Loic Remy blasted over with a fierce strike.

Ferguson sent on Antonio Valencia in place of Nani after an hour and the Ecuador winger's volley immediately forced Mandanda into action.

Another injury, this time to substitute Rafael da Silva, forced further reorganisation in United's defence as the Brazilian was stretched off.

Cheyrou had a golden opportunity to take advantage when he ghosted onto Remy's cross, only to shoot straight at van der Sar from close-range.

Ferguson's side made Marseille pay for their wayward finishing in the 75th minute. Valencia played a clever reverse pass to Giggs and his low cross was met with a typically predatory finish by Hernandez.

That should have been the end of the French champions, but Brown briefly gave them hope when he headed Lucho's corner into his own net in the 81st minute.

BD-SA tickets available from today

SPORTS REPORTER

Tickets of the ICC Cricket World Cup match between Bangladesh and South Africa will be available for collection from today at the Shaheed Sohrwardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur.

Those who have earlier collected vouchers from banks can collect their tickets providing documents at the Indoor Stadium's booths from 10am to 6pm.

The match will take place on March 19 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

All the tickets have already been sold out for the match, said a press release yesterday.

All eyes on

FROM PAGE 16

From the England line-up, Andrew Strauss has the highest individual ODI score, his 105 coming at Providence in 2009. Shivnarine Chanderpaul has the most runs between the two sides from the current teams, hammering 908 runs at an average of 47.8 from 25 games.

As far as the bowlers are concerned, Dwayne Bravo's 4-19 in 2009 stands out but none of these England bowlers have taken a 4-wicket haul against West Indies so far, though James Anderson has 37 wickets against this opponent over the past seven years.

Tons light up dull NCL

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

With much of the focus on the World Cup, three centuries were scored on the second day of the National Cricket League's second round of games in three venues across the country yesterday.

After the end of the second day, Dhaka, Rajshahi and Chittagong were in safe positions against Sylhet, Barisal and Khulna respectively.

Rajshahi's Farhad Hossain and Dhiman Ghosh and Khulna's Sahagir Hossain were the centurions who would do well to stake their claims for the upcoming Bangladesh A tour to South Africa.

DHAKA-SYLHET

Winning the toss at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium, Dhaka skipper Mohammad Sharif chose to bowl first on Tuesday and despite Sylhet opener Imtiaz Hossain's effort, they were bundled out for 234.

Imtiaz missed his century as he was caught on 99 off Mahbul Alam. Sharif took three wickets for Dhaka.

At the end of Day Two, Dhaka took the lead scoring 273 runs losing seven wickets. Middle-order batsmen Shamsur Rahman (61), Mehrah Hossain (63) and Shuvogoto Chowdhury (65) all looked to play promising innings but could not capitalise on the opportunity.

Nasir Hossain of Sylhet took two wickets.

RAJSHAHI-BARISAL

Rajshahi did not seem to miss the likes of Junaed Siddiqui, Mushfiqur Rahim, Naem Islam, Shafiqul Islam and Sohrwardi Shuvo in their match with Barisal at Bogra's Shaheed Chandu Stadium.

Farhad's brilliant strokeplay saw him

score 186 and with Dhiman scoring 101 coming in at number eight. Rajshahi posted a massive total of 434 for nine before declaring their first innings. Left-arm spinner Monir Hossain took three wickets for Barisal giving away 132 runs.

In reply, Barisal ended their day with 132 losing two wickets. Opener Fazle Rabbi was out on 41, while Nasiruddin Faruque remained unbeaten on 54.

KHULNA-CHITTAGONG

At the Sylhet Divisional Stadium, Khulna decided to bat first after winning the toss and declared their innings at 359 for nine. Sahagir played a steady hand, making 114 runs with top-order batsmen Amit Mazumder (56) and Taposh Ghosh (51) chipped in with half-centuries. Left-arm spinner Nazmul Hossain Apu was the pick of the Chittagong bowlers as he took four wickets giving away 58 runs.

In reply to Khulna's 359, the port city side division looked in a comfortable position at the end of Day Two with 261 on board losing four wickets. Two set batsmen Nazimuddin (74) and Faisal Hossain (80) were unbeaten at the crease while Mominul Haque scored 52 earlier.

BRIEF SCORES

SYLHET: First innings 234 all out (Imtiaz 99, Saikat Ali 33; Sharif 3-48, Mosharraf 2-35).

DHAKA: First innings 273-7 (Shuvogoto 65, Mehrah 63; Nasir 2-21, Rajib 1-12).

RAJSHAHI: First innings 434-9 dec (Farhad 186, Dhiman 101; Monir 3-132, Gazi 2-55).

BARISAL: First innings 136-2 (Nasiruddin 54*, Rabbi 41; Nasir 1-34, Sajib 1-17).

KHULNA: First innings 359-9 dec (Sahagir 114, Amit 56; Nazmul 4-58, Iqbal 2-89).

CHITTAGONG: First innings 261-4 (Faisal 80*, Nazimuddin 74*, Rasel 2-41, Taposh 1-22).

AFC CHALLENGE CUP QUALIFIERS

Shahed ruled out

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Shahedul Alam Shahed has been ruled out of the AFC Challenge Cup Qualifiers after the midfielder sustained a ligament injury to his left leg during his club, Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club's league match against Brothers Union on Tuesday.

Shahed did not turn up for reporting to coach Robert Rubcic yesterday as a three-day camp for the qualifiers got underway at Bangabandhu National Stadium.

"Shahed picked up the injury during Tuesday's game and he is not going with us," said Rubcic, who was also unaware of goalkeeper Aminul Haq's one match international suspension which he is about to serve in then next match following his sending off against Sri Lanka in the AFC Challenge Cup finals in 2010.

"No one informed me about that incident. But he (Aminul) is very good goalkeeper, probably the best in country and I am looking at him for the second match," said the Croat coach yesterday after the players reported to him at the BFF office.

The inclusion of Aminul was a surprise to everyone, and especially assistant coach Saiful Bari Titu came under criticism for not informing Rubcic about Aminul's suspension.

"Titu left the federation with his passport on Tuesday without informing anyone and since then his mobile phone has been turned off. So we could not reach him," said BFF member Hasanuzzaman Khan Bablu adding that Titu might not be going at all with the national team in Myanmar.

However, Rubcic extended his support to Titu saying that even the best coaches turn to the coaching staff when picking the squad.

Rubcic has picked a mixture of young and experienced players with a long term view on the players as the coach has a further six months remaining to his contract with Bangladesh Football Federation.

Rubcic's charges will play a practice match against Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club today before leaving the country tomorrow morning.

Focus is on

FROM PAGE 16

Tom Cooper -- was probably down to re-adjustment to the international circuit than anything else, but Nafees vowed not to make such a mistake in the next game. "If I can start well, I want to make the best of it. I also want to prevent the mistake I made in the last game when I got out. If I can start well, I want to play a long innings," he said.

Bangladesh have found some new match-winners in this World Cup, something that has not gone unnoticed even by the Tigers and Nafees said that contributions from everyone is definitely a huge plus to the team's cause.

"The first match was high-scoring but after that, the wickets haven't been batsman-friendly. You can see that our opponents also can't score much.

"It is also obvious that nobody is winning it single-handedly. Everyone is making some sort of contributions," said Nafees, adding that the team has gained a lot of confidence through the turnaround following the 58 all out debacle against West Indies on March 4.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Haven't paid yet
4 Battery measure
8 Sacred bird of Egypt
12 Coop occupant
13 Sandwich treat
14 Staff member?
15 Lots of power?
17 Huffed and puffed
18 First victim
19 Appears ominously
20 Christmas tree topper, often
22 Someone who's gonna get it?
24 Porter's "Let's —"
25 Total abstinence from meat and dairy

29 Curry of NBC News
30 Stogie
31 Old French coin
32 Considered
34 Clay-rich soil
35 Young horse
36 Insurrectionist
37 Distorted
40 Top-notch
41 Actress Perlman
42 Major French airport
46 Layer
47 Oil cartel
48 Meadow

49 Hourglass stuff
50 Lillian of silents
51 Melody

DOWN

1 Resistance unit
2 Tiny
3 Attractive
4 Purchase from Pat?
5 Exam format
6 Allow
7 Youngster
8 Natural
9 Philippine knife
10 Particular
11 Stitches
16 Help criminally
19 Tale weaver

20 Hebrew month
21 Zilch
22 German philosopher
23 "Zounds!"
25 "Livin' La — Loca"
26 Columbus' benefactor
27 Aching
28 Think (over)
30 Singer Sheryl
33 Frightened, in dialect
34 Carte
36 Kitchen pest
37 — and crafts
38 Actor LaBoeuf
39 Acute
40 A very long time
42 Pooch
43 Over (Pref.)
44 Mainlander's memento
45 Listener

Solution time: 25 mins.

D	E	A	R	T	A	R	L	A	U	D		
E	D	G	E	H	I	E	E	R	G	O		
L	E	O	N	O	D	D	A	C	H	E		
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A	T	T	A	R	H	A	M	V	E	T		
F	E	E	L	C	U	T	M	E	T	A		
E	R	E	M	O	M	E	A	S	E	L		
W	I	N	D	O	W	P	A	N	E			
A	R	A	B	E	D	E	W	A	R	D		
Y	O	G	A	E	M	S	E	C	H	O		
E	V	E	N	L	A	O	S	E	E	R		
P	A	R	K	L	O	P	T	R	A	Y		

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41					42	43			44	45
46					47				48	
49					50				51	

CRYPTOQUIP

Q F S A Q P K V W P H H Q W S I T R I
G R L L O I W W T Q P K V W I R G I
K S R H O F D A T S F S J S G I T S M ' G S
D O J S F I T S T Q H - H Q G I P F O I M .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN STUDENTS EXIT THE ROOM AFTER CALCULUS CLASS, I WOULD OFTEN REFER TO THAT AS MATH EXODUS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: I equals T