

San Lorenzo contact Diego

Diego Maradona has joined a long line of candidates to take over Buenos Aires club San Lorenzo. San Lorenzo coach Ramon Angel Diaz stepped down Sunday after a 1-0 loss to Tigre. Club president Carlos Abdo said Tuesday there had been contact with representatives of Maradona. Among the other candidates so far named as possible replacements at San Lorenzo are former Colo Colo coach Diego Cagna, former Quilmes coach Leonardo Madelon and past Argentina national team coaches Alfio Basile and



Akram lands chief's job

Minhaz, Bashar the other selectors

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday announced the names of a three-member new national selection committee with former national captain Akram Khan as its chief.

Two other former stalwarts of Bangladesh cricket Minhazul Abedin and Habibul Bashar, both former national skippers, are the other members on the panel which will take over on June 1.

The decision was taken in yesterday's executive committee meeting of the BCB. Akram has the experience of working as a selector in Faruque Ahmed and Rafiqul Alam-led committees in last four years, but for Minhaz and Bashar it will be new roles in their careers.

"The board was unanimous about Akram Khan's selection as the chief selector while majority were in favour of Minhaz and Bashar. We will fix the terms and references after discussions with them within the next month. Definitely we will prefer a long-term contract but everything

will be decided after the discussions," said BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus after the meeting.

"We considered Akram's experience and stature as a player before selecting him as the chief. On the other hand, Minhaz was chosen despite having become a Level-3 coach because he informed us that

focus would be to ensure enough back-up players in the pipeline during his tenure.

"I'm very happy and at the same time I am ready to take new challenges. It's a big advantage for me to have worked as a selector for last four years and under two different chiefs.

"I'm lucky that the authorities kept

Akram was also excited about the fact that he had got the opportunity to work with Minhaz and Bashar.

"I was lucky enough to have worked under Faruque bhai and Rafiq bhai and I am now going to work with two fantastic guys of Bangladesh cricket. I firmly believe that we will be able to contribute something to Bangladesh



AKRAM KHAN



MINHAZUL ABEDIN



HABIBUL BASHAR

he was not enjoying the coaching role at all," Yunus added when asked why they picked up Akram when the axe fell on Rafiqul and Zahid Razzak Masum and whether it was a big loss for Bangladesh cricket to bring a coach into a selector's role.

Akram was excited about the new role and said that his main

faith in me. My main challenge will be to bring enough players in the pipeline. Right at this moment we don't have enough back-up players, so we must concentrate on the Under-19, Academy and A teams and we must expand our network to find new talent," said Akram when asked about his target as the chief of selectors.

cricket," hoped Akram.

There had been whisperings that the Rafiqul Alam-led selection panel had to bow to request from the highest authority and everybody will now be looking forward to see how the Akram-led committee faces this challenge.

"I don't think it will be a big issue.

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Sk Jamal conquer Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER



Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club recorded a 3-1 victory over neighbours Abahani as the second leg of the Bangladesh League kickstarted at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. The Dhanmondi Club dominated most of the match and courtesy of a few lapses in Abahani's defence, fashioned out their first win in four attempts over their more established neighbours.

It was a win cherished by the club officials as they declared a 5 lakh taka award instantly for the team while a team official announced taka five thousand each for every member of the side.

The win was sweet for Sheikh Jamal's Sri Lankan coach Packer Ali too. A star defender of Abahani in the '80s, Packer expressed his delight in his semi-fluent Bengali.

"The first goal was vital. Once we got that goal, we had the confidence of winning the match and that showed in our play," said the Sri Lankan.

"This win gives us a very good chance in the title race as we are only a point behind the leaders (Muktijoddha). We will be looking to win every match from here on," said Packer.

This win takes Sheikh Jamal to second

position in league standings, with 27 points from 12 matches, one above the Sky Blues who have 26, and one behind leaders Muktijoddha who have 28 points with a game in hand.

The first attack of the match came in the fifth minute when Abahani's veteran winger Mehedi Hassan Uzzal sped into the penalty box but shot it straight at Sheikh Jamal keeper Aminul Haque. For all the running from the wily winger, his age seems to have cruelly caught up with him. And that was as adventurous as the Sky Blues got in the first half.

The next move came at the other end two minutes later and resulted in the opener. Cameroonian striker Stephan Bouga darted inside the box from the left, missed the diving hands of the keeper and put the ball into the net from an acute angle.

Bouga's compatriot Emmanuel Ayuk had the easiest opportunity on the twenty eighth minute but he failed to poke in a cross from Nasir with only keeper to beat. Ayuk had a faint touch on the ball and the keeper parried it away for a corner. The resulting corner made it 2-0 for Sheikh Jamal as Ayuk provided a curling corner for defender Ariful Islam who headed the ball expertly into the net.

Sheikh Jamal should have been three nil up before the break had Bouga been able to

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BFF confirms Argentina, Nigeria tie

Messi appearance worked into contract

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Watching Lionel Messi, Angel Di Maria and Carlos Tevez from the galleries of the Bangabandhu National Stadium (BNS) is set to become reality as the emergency executive committee of Bangladesh Football Federation yesterday officially confirmed that an Argentina-Nigeria friendly match will be held in Dhaka in September this year.

There were whispers around the sports arena for the last one-and-half months that the country's football governing body was hoping to lure Messi's Argentina to Bangladesh after it was learned that Argentina would play an exhibition match against Venezuela in Kolkata on September 2. And yesterday, the BFF officially admitted the fact following an emergency meeting.

"We are taking all necessary preparations to get Argentina to the country and our discussions have almost reached the final stage. It is likely that we will put pen to paper on Friday," said BFF president Kazi Salahuddin after the meeting at the

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PHOTO: STAR

Abahani player Twum Frank is about to shoot at the goal during yesterday's match against Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. Frank scored the consolation goal in Abahani's 3-1 defeat.

BD A go down 2-1

SPORTS DESK

The Bangladesh A team in South Africa went down to another defeat at the hands of South Africa A at Senwes Park in Potchefstroom, giving the hosts a 2-1 advantage in the five-match unofficial ODI series. The third ODI was rained off, and yesterday's six-wicket defeat means that captain Mohammad Ashraful's men will have to win the last match on April 29 to come away with a share of the spoils, and something to bring back after losing the unofficial two-Test series 1-0 earlier.

Asked to bat first, the A team could only manage 218, with the top-order failing and only Nadif Chowdhury and Nasir Hossain's 103-run seventh wicket partnership providing a semblance of respectability. The tourists were tottering at 88 for six when the pair was brought together, and the duo's

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BCCI doubles cash reward

AFP, Mumbai

India's cricket chiefs on Wednesday doubled the cash bonus for each member of the World Cup winning team amid reports that the players had complained about being poorly rewarded.

"The cash incentive to the members of the World Cup winning Indian team has been increased from 10 million rupees per player to 20 million rupees," the Board of Control for Cricket in India said in a statement.

India won the April 2 final, beating Sri Lanka at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium and triggering wild celebrations across the country.

But press reports said some players were unhappy about the size of their bonus.

"A player's life is very uncertain. Who knows what will happen next?" one anonymous player told the Indian Express last week.

A string of state governments and private companies also showered the team with plots of land, luxury houses and money.

Fletcher India coach

Cricket

AFP, Mumbai

Former England cricket coach Duncan Fletcher was appointed to the high-pressure post of India coach on Wednesday, less than one month after the country won the World Cup on home soil.

India had been on the look-out to replace South African Gary Kirsten who stepped down from the role following his success in guiding the cricket-crazy nation to victory in the showpiece event.

Fletcher, a former Zimbabwean all-rounder who came to prominence as a coach when reviving the England team over several years and helping them regain the Ashes in 2005, has been awarded a two-year contract.

Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary N Srinivasan made the announcement in Mumbai, naming Fletcher over other possible choices including New Zealander Stephen Fleming and Zimbabwean Andy Flower.

Fletcher, a taciturn 62-year-old, takes over one of the biggest jobs in cricket before India tour the West Indies in June

followed by an important tour of England from July to September.

"The contract with Fletcher is for two years. He may not join the team in the West Indies as he has some prior



DUNCAN FLETCHER

commitments," Srinivasan told reporters after a BCCI meeting.

India are currently ranked number one in Test cricket, and number two in

one-day internationals.

Fletcher, who played six one-day internationals for his country, was credited with turning around England's fortunes in Tests under captain's Nasser Hussain and Michael Vaughan during his eight-year stint.

After taking the reins in 1999 as England's first foreign coach, he oversaw Test series wins over Sri Lanka, Pakistan and the West Indies.

With Vaughan, he helped England win their first Test series in South Africa in the post-apartheid era in 2005, before guiding them to the historic Ashes victory the same year, their first since 1986-87.

However he could not taste similar success in one-day internationals and resigned following England's disappointing 2007 World Cup campaign in the Caribbean where his team failed to qualify for the semifinals.

Vaughan said Fletcher would enjoy the challenge of working with Indian players but might struggle under the constant press attention.

"Duncan will work well with all the talent," he wrote on Twitter. "His biggest

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Big win for Chennai

INTERNET, Mumbai



Just two days after they first faced each other, Chennai Super Kings beat Pune Warriors India again by eight wickets in their Indian Premier League match at the DY Patil Stadium on Wednesday.

After restricting hosts Pune for 141, Chennai achieved the target comfortably as Subramaniam Badrinath (63) stayed the course with Suresh Raina (34) and Murali Vijay (31) providing useful support.

For Yuvraj Singh's Pune, this is the fourth loss on the trot after they had begun the tournament with two wins. MS Dhoni's Chennai have jumped to the second spot on the points table with four wins from seven games.

Chennai visitors lost opener Michael Hussey (9) early but a stand of 61 runs for the second wicket between Vijay and Badrinath further broke the spirits of their opponents.

With Badrinath and Raina in sublime touch, Chennai had little trouble staying in touch with the required rate, winning with three balls to spare. Badrinath cracked six fours and two sixes in his 44-ball knock to

help his team continue with their winning momentum.

Yuvraj struck four sixes while making 62 in 43 balls but Pune's inexperienced batsmen provided little support. Chennai left-arm pacer Doug Bollinger grabbed 3-21, including the new-ball wickets of Jesse Ryder and Mohnish Mishra.

The Australian made the first breakthrough when opener Ryder mistimed a pull shot for a simple catch to Anirudha Srikanth at mid-wicket. Two balls later, Mishra fell in the same fashion.

Manish Pandey and Mithun Manhas too departed in quick succession to leave Pune Warriors 41 for four in the eighth over on a nice, hard wicket at DY Patil.

Yuvraj added 42 with Robin Uthappa and 40 with Mitchell Marsh, but 141 proved too little a score before Chennai's formidable batting line-up.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PUNE WARRIORS: 141-6 in 20 overs (Yuvraj 62 not out, Uthappa 31; Bollinger 3-21)

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: 145-2 in 19.3 overs (Badrinath 63 not out, Raina 34 not out, Vijay 31)

Result: Chennai Super Kings won by eight wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Doug Bollinger.