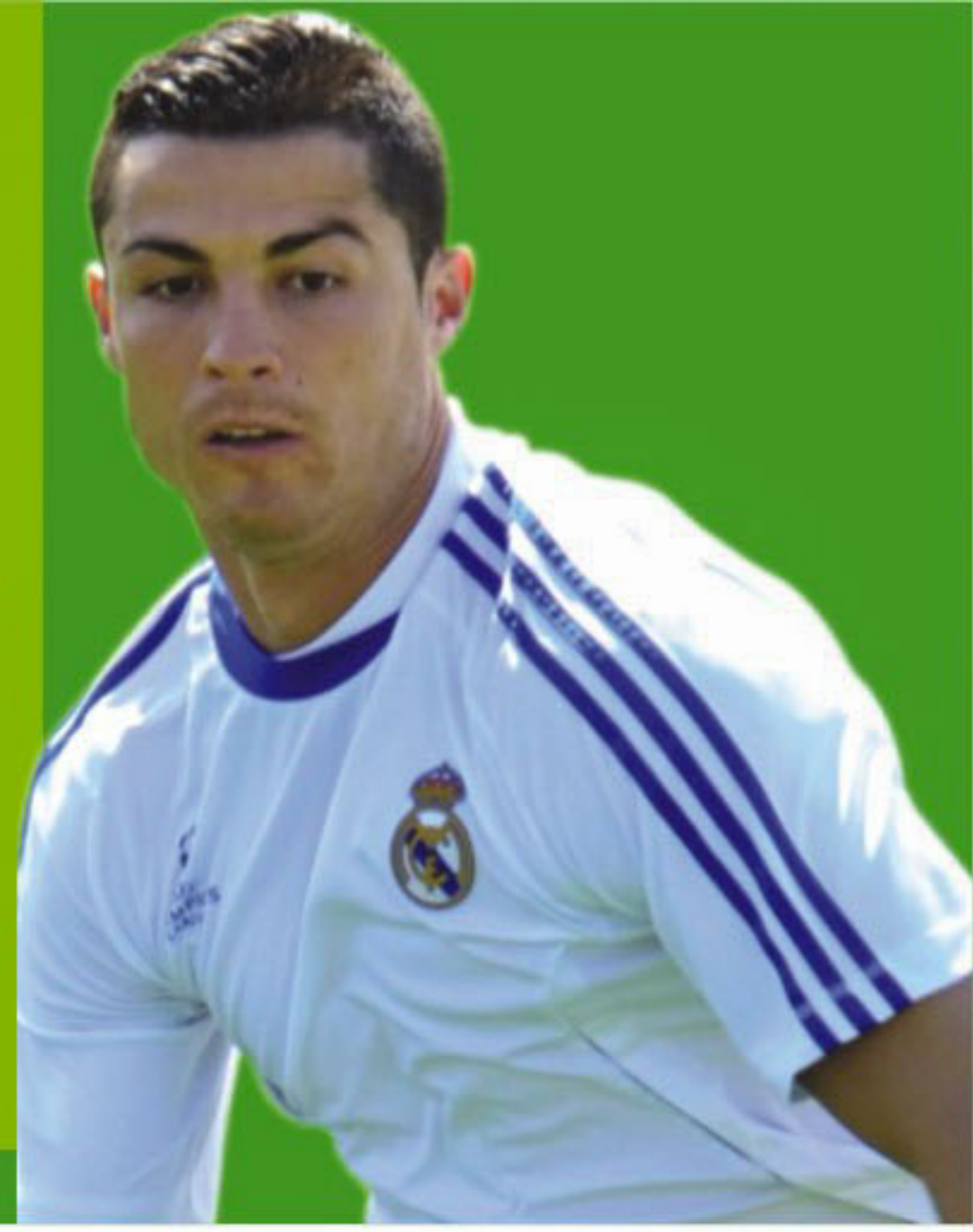


Fergie rules out C'Ron return

Sir Alex Ferguson has ruled out any prospect of Cristiano Ronaldo making a dramatic return to Manchester United following hints of a rift between the player and Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho. Ronaldo, who left United for Real in 2009 for a world record £80 million, expressed his dismay at Mourinho's negative tactics after the club's stormy Champions League semifinal defeat to Barcelona this week. The striker was subsequently dropped by Mourinho from the squad for Madrid's La Liga match against Real Zaragoza.



MEET THE PRES

Venue: Bangladesh Football Federation
Date: 30 April 2011



BFF president Kazi Salahuddin (C) celebrates the completion of his third year in office by confirming the international friendly match between Argentina and Nigeria in Dhaka on September 6 in a press conference at the BFF House yesterday.

Messi's Bangladesh visit confirmed

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Argentina's national football team, including Barcelona star Lionel Messi, will be in Bangladesh to play a FIFA International Friendly match against the Nigeria national side on September 6 this year, confirmed Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin at a press conference at the BFF House yesterday.

"The contract is a binding one which will ensure Messi comes," said BFF boss adding that the presence of two of the world's footballing powers will create a tremendous resurgence of football among the young generation and also showcase to the world

that Bangladesh have the logistics and infrastructure to organise such a big international football match.

A contract to the effect was signed by BFF with sponsors Beximco Group and Kolkata-based event management company Celebrity Management Group (CMG) who are brokering the deal to bring Argentina to Kolkata on September 2 where they will play an exhibition match against Venezuela.

BFF president Kazi Salahuddin, director of Beximco Group Shayam F Rahman and chief executive officer of CMG Dharamdutt Pandey signed on behalf of their respective sides. Other high officials of the three parties were also present at the conference.

The press conference also disclosed details

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'I am a technician, not a magician'

On April 30, 2011 Kazi Salahuddin completed his third year in a four-year term as president of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF). The legendary ex-striker for the national team had taken over in a blaze of glory, promising to 'take football from the tables to the ground and keep it rolling around the year.' Despite some visible improvements, the jury, however, is still out on his impact in moulding 'the beautiful game' in a country where it lags behind its more popular counterpart in cricket. But on the event of his third year anniversary, The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman and Quazi Zulquarnain Islam caught up with the president to discuss the last three years and what the future holds.

The Daily Star (DS): First of all, congratulations on completing three full years as BFF president. You will agree that these are exciting times for football?

Kazi Salahuddin (KS): Yes, indeed. Tomorrow (Saturday) we will complete the signing of the contract to bring Argentina and Nigeria to Dhaka to play an international friendly. It will be a tri-partite deal between the BFF, the Celebrity Management Group (CMG) and Beximco.

DS: Do you feel that bringing Argentina here represents a major coup for the BFF?

KS: I would like to think so. An international match of this magnitude in the country will definitely help pique the interest for the game amongst sports fans. As I said, that is the number one intention. Also, as per the terms of our deal with Beximco, any profit they make from this venture will be ploughed back into BFF for football development, and any losses will be covered by them. I feel that it is as good a deal as any I have struck so far and kudos to Beximco for that as well

DS: ...it is interesting. On face value this looks like a great deal considering the difficulties the BFF have faced with sponsors so far.

KS: (sighs) you are right, finding sponsors have been our and personally my biggest challenge so far. People are screaming about so many things that have not been done and have not been completed. Every day I see people on talk shows giving me theoretical suggestions on how to do what. I tell you that I know how football works. I have a vision but the challenge is getting someone else on board with resources to fund that vision. That is the hardest task and no one has been able to give me a solution to that problem. But hopefully things will be brighter from now on.

DS: ...with the Grameenphone deal in the offing?

KS: Yes, we have almost ironed out all the details regarding that deal. We should be signing it soon enough. Also we now have Beximco on board as well. I feel that with such dedicated sponsors we can bring football forward and, to pre-empt a question I know

you will ask, target grassroots development.

DS: So you agree that grassroots development has not been executed as well as you would have liked? The DFA's for example are not yet active and the Pioneer League has just taken place once in your three years...

KS: ...but it has taken place, no? The key here is to understand that everything is tied into money. I would like to do so many things, but finding the sponsors to fund that has been difficult. About the DFA's, it is true that we have not mobilized them effectively but sometimes you need to look at them too and say that they could do more. I have consistently funded the DFA's and I have doubly rewarded associations who have organised tournaments in their own endeavour. With the Pioneer League, it has happened once and I am confident that we can continue it in the future. The same with the National School Championships. We have completed the Dhaka Metropolitan zone and now we will roll it out to the country.

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Tour ends in defeat

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh A ended their South Africa trip with a massive 60-run defeat in the fifth and final one-day against their South African counterparts at the Sahara Willowmoore in Benoni on Friday.

The out-of-favour Junaed Siddiqui stroked 96 off 108 balls with the help of seven fours and a six before he fell victim to a run-out, but his effort was not good enough for the second string Bangladesh side to chase down the massive total of 320 to finish the tour on a high note.

With the comfortable victory, South Africa A took the five-match one-day series 3-1 after securing the two-match unofficial Test series by a 1-0 margin.

In chase of a challenging total, Ban-

gladesh A lost their first wicket at 15 when Nazimuddin returned to the dressing room for seven runs but wicketkeeper-batsman Sahagir Hossain joined Junaed to steady the ship by associating for 124 runs in the second wicket stand.

Bangladesh A were 139 for two in 27.5 overs when Sahagir Hossain walked back to the dressing room for an 88-ball 54. The visitors needed something special from captain Mohammad Ashraf to threaten the home team, but the right-hander seemed to go into the familiar hibernation mode after making a hundred in the first match.

Ashraf was dismissed for 5 while Nadif Chowdhury's 32 off 39 balls with two fours and the 16-ball 26 came from Farhad Reza were small contributions that only reduced the margin of defeat.

Pacer Craig Alexander claimed three

wickets but was also the most expensive home bowler, conceding 61 runs in his ten-over spell while Vernon Philander and Ethy Mbalati took two wickets each.

Earlier South Africa A piled up 320 runs riding on Heino Kuhn's 141 and Dean Elgar's 66 runs.

Bangladesh A Pacer Sahadat Hossain was punished heavily by the South African batsmen, the right-arm pacer giving away 104 runs in ten overs without any success.

Bangladesh A lost the first four-day match badly due to poor batting and the second unofficial Test match ended in a draw due to rain.

Bangladesh A started the one-day series in style thanks to a blazing hundred from Ashraf but the home team bounced back strongly to win the series quite comfortably.

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INTER-DISTRICT CRICKET 2nd round from May 7

SPORTS REPORTER

The second round of the Inter District Cricket Championship will see the 12 qualified teams split into four groups and compete at two different venues, Bogra and Jessore, from May 7.

Group A is made up of Comilla, Kushtia and Chapainabaganj while Sylhet, Narayanganj and Brahmenbaria will fight it out in Group B. These two groups will play at Bogra.

Meanwhile Mymensing, Khulna and Rangpur from Group C will play at Jessore along with Group D contenders Barisal, Rajbari and Rajshahi.

The top team from each group will move to the semifinal of the championship.

Tourists square series

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The South Africa Academy team bounced back strongly to level the series as the visitors posted an eight-wicket victory over GP-BCB National Cricket Academy in the second one-day of the three-match series at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

The Bangladesh batting was found wanting in the second game as they were bundled out for 150 runs in 40.4 overs after deciding to bat first. The South Africa Academy team reached the target with 153 runs for two wickets in 33.2 overs to level the three-match series at 1-1. The home team won the first game by four wickets at the same venue.

Marchant de Lange inflicted the majority of the damage by claiming five wickets for 33 runs.

New ball bowler Hardus Viljeon started

the rot by removing Rony Talukder for four runs and then Lange took three quick wickets to see the home side scoreboard read 24 runs for four wickets.

Number five batsman Mominul Haque restored some honour for his side as he top scored with 53 off 84 balls with four boundaries and a six while the second-highest individual score of 36 came from number eight batsman Alauddin Babu, who smote two boundaries in his 57-ball innings.

In reply, Lenert Van Wyk and captain Joshua Richards gave the visitors a solid start as they shared 51 runs in the opening stand before Richards offered a return catch to left-arm spinner Sanjamul Islam, who also dismissed the other opener for 19 runs. Lenert Van Wyk made 48 off 56 balls, including seven fours and a six.

Cody Chetty was not out on 50. Both teams now return to Dhaka to play the third and final one-day-dayer tomorrow at

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BALLANTINE'S GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP Siddikur moves up

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh golf sensation Siddikur Rahman could not make much headway towards the right side of the leaderboard on the truncated third-day of the Ballantine's Championship in South Korea yesterday.

Siddikur started on the back nine, but could not finish the third round due to inclement weather which he and the rest of the golfers will do when play starts at 8am today with Round 4 scheduled to commence at 9.20.

The 27-year-old did however improve on his Round 2 position of 38 with a round of one-under-par so far and a cumulative score of two-under-par, ending the third day in joint 28th. It could well have been two-under-par, but his two birdies on the 18th and 2nd holes were offset by an early bogey on the 11th. The 11th hole has turned out to be literally a 'bogey' hole for Siddikur, as he went two-over-par at the same hole in Round 1.

The Bangladeshi started the championship on the wrong foot, hitting an even-par in the first round, while improving only slightly in the second round with a one-under-par 71 in the second round on Friday.

The leaderboard saw some changes at the top as Miguel Angel Jimenez of Spain shared the No.1 spot with Australian Brett Rumford with a round of three-under-par to take his cumulative score to eight-under-par. Rumford relinquished his lead courtesy of a round of even-par. World No.2 Lee Westwood finished in 11th position with a cumulative score of six-under-par.



IT'S MY TURN NEXT: Arambagh's would-be hattrick hero Bangoura Ismael (L) watches striker Subair Mohammad (C) celebrates his first-half goal against Rahmatganj in the Bangladesh League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Bangoura hattrick fires Arambagh

SPORTS REPORTER

Guinean striker Bangoura Ismael slammed a second-half hattrick as Arambagh KS thrashed Rahmatganj MFS 4-0 in their mid-table clash of the Grameenphone Bangladesh League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Arambagh led the first half 1-0, courtesy of a Subair Mohammad strike in the 23rd minute, before taking a stranglehold of the game in the second half. The win catapults the Motijheel-based club to fifth position, thanks to their superior goal difference, with 16 points from 12 games while Rahmatganj are in seventh position with the same number of points from the same number of matches.

The first chance fell to Idris Kasirye of Rahmatganj in the eighth minute when he raced between two defenders but he somehow managed to chip the ball over the keeper's head.

Arambagh missed an easier opportunity at the other end in the 25th minute, when Bangoura failed to find the net having gone round the keeper only to see his shot at goal saved by Ddumba Micheal from the goal line.

But two minutes later Nigerian striker Subair Mohammed opened the scoring, dodging two defenders inside the box before beating the goalkeeper with a diagonal shot.

There were no more goals in the first half, but in the second, as Rahmatganj pressed in search of a goal, their defence

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