

Star SPORT

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Rover's manager charged

Blackburn manager Steve Kean has been charged with drink driving after failing a breath test hours after his team's 1-1 draw on Saturday which handed the title to Manchester United, a report said. The under-pressure boss was travelling along the M6 in northwest England when he was pulled over by Cheshire police and will now appear before Crewe magistrates' court on June 7, according to a Press Association report. Despite the impressive draw with the newly crowned Premier League champions, Rovers remain embroiled in a relegation dogfight with one match of



Argentina in Dhaka closer to reality

SPORTS REPORTER

The dream of a hundred million Bangladeshis' looks one step closer to reality as the Argentina Football Federation (AFA) released fixtures confirming a friendly against Nigeria to be held on September 6 in Bangladesh.

The Albiceleste have a busy few months ahead with the Copa America sandwiched in between two tours. The first of these tours will see Sergio Batista's charges travel to Abuja on June 1 to play Nigeria before going on to Warsaw on June 5. They will return to Argentina to play Albania in a friendly on June 20, just ahead of the Copa America.

Following South America's showpiece tournament, Argentina will hit the road again with Bucharest and Romania up in August 10 before coming to the South Asia leg of the tour to face Venezuela in Kolkata on September 2 and Nigeria again in Dhaka on September 6.

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) confirmed late last month that Argentina and Nigeria would

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PHOTO: STAR

WINNING PROTEST: Mymensingh players do a lap of the ground after defeating Comilla in the semifinal of the Inter-District Cricket Championship at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. They have stated that their progress in the tournament is a protest against the "misdeeds" of their local organisers.

M'singh triumph against odds



BISHWAJIT ROY

Mymensingh reached the final of the 31st Inter District Cricket Championship with a two-run victory over Comilla in the rain-interrupted first semifinal at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Mymensingh will play Friday's final against the winners of today's second semifinal between Sylhet and Rajshahi at the same venue.

Riding on Uttam Sarker's 89 and Arafat Salahuddin's 62, Mymensingh

scored 198 for seven in their stipulated 50 overs.

Due to rain, the target was revised for Comilla through D/L method and a 152-run winning target was set in 31 overs but Comilla managed only 149 for six in 31 overs despite captain Faisal Hossain's 54-ball 63 that contained four boundaries and two sixes. Faisal fell victim to a run out.

Shiehin Rifat claimed three wickets conceding 25 runs in 6 overs.

Earlier Comilla won the toss and sent their opponents into bat first. Pacer Habib gave his team a perfect start by taking three quick wickets and

Mymensingh lost half of their wickets for 55 runs. Salahuddin then joined his skipper Uttam Sarker to repair the damage associating 73 runs in the sixth wicket stand.

Uttam played the anchor role during his 132-ball 89 that featured nine fours and a six while Salahuddin contributed 62 off 78 balls with the help of five boundaries and an over boundary.

Mymensingh team captain Uttam was delighted with the outcome as he said that the players have been playing this tournament with a mission to make a protest against the misdeeds of

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Sports that cripple

ANISUR RAHMAN

While sport generates huge interest among people of all walks of life, there are just a handful of disciplines in the country that are really making any headway. A stark contrast from disciplines like cricket, football, shooting and tennis, which all seemingly have the ball rolling round the year, most of the other disciplines like hockey, athletics etc. struggle to come into the limelight. What is worse is that there is hardly any noticeable initiative from the respective federations to take these disciplines forward.

Which begs the question; why is the situation such?

The reasons are aplenty, most of which were discussed openly by some of the officials of different sports federations (hockey, athletics, volleyball, swimming, boxing, wushu, judo and table tennis), during this reporter's visits over the last two weeks.

Unsurprisingly, the key problems in all of those federations are very similar. Generally, there seems to be apathy from and differences amongst federation members (most of whom work voluntarily), a distinct lack of knowledge of sports management, acute financial crisis, the inactive role of the NSC and BOA, nominal patronization from the state, sub-standard quality of coaches and referees, insecure future in these sports and discouragement from parents. This has led to the stagnant state of most those sports in the country.

A closer look revealed that the daily management of these federations are done by part-time employees while the high-ups and members only pay a visit during championships, tournaments, training programmes or any meetings of the executive committee.

While this reporter was visiting the

hockey federation, one official was found jogging on the astro-turf. Presently, the general secretary Khondoker Jamiluddin arrived (later it was learnt that this was his first visit in three weeks) and was being briefed by the computer operator about the state of the federation.

But the state of the athletics federation was even more dire. General secretary Shah Alam arrived at about at 7:30pm after spending time with his BJMC volleyball team who were taking part in the national championship.

But the story got even worse.

No officials were found at both the swimming federation offices at the Mirpur Swimming Complex and the swimming pool adjacent to the Bangabandhu National Stadium while the wushu federation was found under lock and key on both visits.

However, the above scenario is not universal as there were some activities undergoing in some of the other federations.

The boxing federation is a case in point. At the time of the visit, two members were found arguing about cricket, football and the liberation war. Boxing, it seemed, was nowhere in the agenda. Soon enough, one of the two left the office to join in a political program. A while later, another member came to office and at least took the step of conducting a training session with four of five young boxers.

Officials of table tennis federation were found busy preparing materials ahead of a press conference while at the judo federation, the general secretary and a member were engaged in preparing a training programme schedule.

Active or inactive, the fact that these federations struggle to hold successful events and

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AFC PRESIDENT'S CUP

Abahani to leave for Cambodia tomorrow



SPORTS REPORTER

Like their previous three appearances, Abahani set their sights on the finals of the AFC President's Cup as the three-time Bangladesh League champions begin their Group A Qualifying campaign in Cambodia from Saturday.

The new format of the President's Cup is what gives Abahani hope of qualifying since the final round this time will allow six clubs instead of four. This comes as a result of increasing the number of participating from nine to twelve.

The twelve teams, split into three groups, will play in league format and top two teams from each group will qualify for the finals of this

third-tier club competition.

Abahani were eliminated from the group stages in all of their three previous appearances despite finishing joint-group champions at home soil in 2009 when they failed to qualify due to inferior goal difference. Last year they became group runners up while their first appearance in 2008 was the worst that saw them finish third after going down Nepal Police 4-0, Regar-Tadaz of Tajikistan 2-1 and winning against Wapda FC of Pakistan 1-0.

"Our performance was not bad in the last two editions where we were eliminated because of goal difference but this time I think the new format will help us advance to the finals which is our ultimate target," Abahani football manager Satyajit Das Rupu said yesterday.

A 30-member Abahani

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FIXTURE

May 21 - Abahani vs Nefthchi Kochkor at National Olympic Stadium

May 23 - Abahani vs Phnom Benh Crown at NOS

May 25 - Abahani vs Don Bosco SC

Barisal: Sowing seeds for success

The 12th National Cricket League has concluded on May 14, bringing an end to the country's first-class season. Eight months ago, The Daily Star Sport ran previews of all six divisional sides taking part in the competition. Now, as part of its evaluation of the campaigners, it is publishing today the third episode, that of Barisal's. Tomorrow, the fourth part of this series will be published.



MOHAMMAD ISAM

The fourth-placed team in a six-team competition doesn't draw too much attention. Moreover, they went winless and only just managed to enter the second phase.

Yet, Barisal's 2010-11 National Cricket League campaign is considered a watershed for cricket in the southern division because of the surprising progress their players made this season.

For years, the region has been regarded as the genuine backwaters of the game in the country but through the Bangladesh Cricket Board's decision to hand over selection decisions to the division and restrict the number of players from other regions, a new frontier for Barisal players has been opened.

It could have resulted in a disaster as there was a perception among many that let alone quality players, Barisal can't even make up a playing eleven. The virtually new side with just a few "outsiders" were supposed to face a stern test and they did. In fact their performance as a team wasn't up to the mark, but individual players made their mark and ensured that the future is in good hands, reason enough for everyone to take Barisal players seriously.

Back in August 2010, veteran coach Abdul Hadi Ratan was asked to run trials as well as get a team in shape. Though it was always going to be an uphill task to bring unknown talents under one umbrella, Ratan managed to turn them into genuine first-class players.

"This team did better than what was expected of them. The reason for that is definitely the emergence of



SOHAG GAZI

BARISAL

Position in 2010-11: Fourth (no wins)
Top scorer: Nasiruddin Faruque (632 runs)
Most wickets: Sohag Gazi (41 wickets)
High point: Sohag's five-wicket hauls
Low point: Slipping against Dhaka in the first

more local players. They have better understanding, coordination and discipline because they know they are less talented than the rest and have to do well or get dropped," said Ratan, who admitted of his surprise at how some of the players performed.

"There were always fewer local players in the Barisal team but this year, in the last game, we had ten players from the division. They lack first-class experience and are probably not too good, but they are to listen and work hard. But I'm somewhat surprised with the progress they made," he explained.

Particularly, it is off-spinner Sohag Gazi who has caught the eye with his 41 wickets, the highest wicket-taker in the competition. During the closing ceremony after the NCL final, many saw Sohag for the first time and were surprised at

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