

Leaders clash in NCL today

SPORTS REPORTER

It will be the battle of the table toppers at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi when Dhaka Metropolis take on Khulna in the seventh round game of the National Cricket League.

Chittagong take on Rangpur in nearby Bogra while in Jessore, Barisal face off with Rajshahi. Bottom-of-the-table Dhaka are up against Sylhet at the Sylhet Divisional Stadium.

The Mohammad Ashraful-led Dhaka Metro are on top of the pile with five wins from the six previous games while Khulna are a step down with four wins from as many outings. The game will determine the positioning of the two sides as they have both qualified to the second phase, which will begin on December 11.

Ashiqur dies in road crash

SPORTS REPORTER

Ashiqur Rahman, son of BCB director Shafiqur Rahman Munna, died in a road accident in Chittagong in the early hours of yesterday. He was 32.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board and Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) expressed their deep shock and bereavement at the tragic death and extended heartfelt sympathies to the family of the deceased.



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS
Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal, along with his teammates, heads into the hotel in Chittagong yesterday for final one-dayer against Pakistan on Tuesday.

Heartbreak at the death

ANISUR RAHMAN from Delhi



Bangladesh's chances of making it to the semifinals of the SAFF Championship almost evaporated after they fell to a 0-1 loss against Nepal at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi yesterday.

The crushing loss came in the 95th minute courtesy of a fifty metre free-kick which was taken by the Nepal captain Sagar Thapa and badly misjudged by the otherwise brilliant Bangladesh custodian Sahidul Alam Sohel. The young goalkeeper misjudged the flight of the ball as he came out from his line and failed to stop the curling shot which eventually awarded Nepal their first win over Bangladesh in 18 years.

Bangladesh will now have to beat Maldives, who drew 0-0 against Pakistan in the other match of the day, on Tuesday and hope that other result goes their way to have any chance of advancing to the semifinal stage.



A half-hearted Bangladesh, who played out a goalless draw in their opening match against Pakistan, were on the backfoot right from the beginning and spent some anxious time in the first half before reorganising to mount some pressure in the second half.

In the absence of fever-hit midfielder Mamunul Islam, Bangladesh looked helpless in the middle with Nepal taking full control as they launched attacks through both wings with well-judged crosses and neat passing.

Nepal went close to taking the lead in the fourth minute but Anil Gurung's floated corner went over the cross-piece, much to the relief of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh had their first effort in the 35th minute when Zahid Hasan Emily curled in a free-kick from outside the box for the unmarked Rezaul Karim and Abdul Baten Komol, but neither where alert to the situation.

Nepal came agonisingly close to opening the score in the 42nd minute when strikers Santhosh Shahu Khala and Anil

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Ilievski rues Sohel error

SPORTS REPORTER from Delhi



Terming the defeat against Nepal as bad luck, Bangladesh's Macedonian coach Nikola Ilievski said he was still hopeful of making it to the semifinals of the SAFF Championship.

"Conceding a goal in the last minute is a disappointing one and I am sorry for that. Goalkeeper Sohel was not in his right position under the post and also failed to judge the flight of the free-kick despite performing really well throughout the game," said a frustrated coach at the post-match press conference at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium yesterday.

"Such a goal from 50-metre distance is scored once in 50 matches" said the 57-year old coach adding that it would be really hard to boost the players for the next match after losing the match in the last minute.

The coach also mentioned that

Bangladesh were not awarded a penalty in the dying minutes as a Nepal player handled the ball inside the box.

"The scenario could have been very different had we been awarded the penalty but I don't know why the referee overlooked it," said Ilievski adding that Bangladesh were unlucky despite dominating the second half.

Despite being in a scary situation, Ilievski said he still has hope of qualifying for the semifinal stage.

On the other hand, Nepal captain Sagar Thapa was ecstatic after winning over Bangladesh after 18 years.

"It is always pleasing to win against a side have not lost against us for a long time. But, this time we were more confident about beating Bangladesh and other opponents in the group as we have come here with good preparation," said Sagar Thapa.

Nepal coach Graham Paul Roberts said his charges toiled hard till the last minute

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Sreesanth out for 8 weeks

CRICINFO, Delhi

Shanthakumaran Sreesanth, the India seamer, has said he could be out of action for a further six to eight weeks as he continues his rehabilitation from a toe injury that has sidelined him during the ongoing Ranji season.

The injury has ruled him out of contention for the four-Test series in Australia starting later this month. The national selectors meet on Monday to pick a replacement for the injured Praveen Kumar.

Sreesanth said he had decided against surgery on the left toe. "I did a bit of ayurvedic treatment and it [the pain] has really come

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World Cup year jinx on



SPORTS REPORTER

Very few times in the past decade have the Tigers bucked the trend and it is no different in 2011. It is yet another mediocre year that has gotten worse after the World Cup, eventually slowing up development of the team for the future.

After losing the second game in the ongoing series against Pakistan, the Tigers have now conceded their fourth consecutive series after losing to Australia, Zimbabwe and the West Indies since April.

But all this has happened before; every World Cup year has seen the trend of terrible performance after

the showpiece event. Though the 1999 situation saw the Tigers play only two ODIs against West Indies, the next one was a disaster. In 2003, the Tigers first had a winless campaign under Khaled Mashud but the change of leadership after the event saw no change in fortunes as Khaled Mahmud and Dav Whatmore were bedding into the job.

The 2007 World Cup was remarkable for the Tigers who were led by Habibul Bashar, who also presided over a winning lead-up to the tournament. But Bashar lost the captaincy after just one

series following the World Cup and the Tigers, under Mohammad Ashraful, suffered two series losses.

The tendency has come into effect this year too after Shakib Al Hasan led in a World Cup that can be best described as a "hit and miss" competition for the co-hosts.

Given his predecessors' luck with the previous World Cups, Shakib continued for two series after the tournament but was unceremoniously sacked from the job midway through the year. Mushfiqur Rahim, despite his personal good form with the bat,

hasn't seen a series win against West Indies and now Pakistan, though the latter opponents were always the favourites.

It sounds like a never-ending cycle and in practicality it is. Over the past 12 years, the Tigers have always appointed captains and hired coaches keeping the World Cup in mind. This time it was slightly different as Shakib was given the captaincy in January for the whole year. The plan changed due to the all-rounder's failure in the Zimbabwe series in August, when Stuart Law also took over as the coach from Jamie Siddons.

Changes at the top as well as that of personnel in general occur for

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Sports science course from Dec 7

SPORTS REPORTER

The 3rd Sports Medical Science Courses will be held from December 7 at the Nuclear Medicine & Ultrasound Auditorium at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University in the city.

Bangladesh Institute of Sports Sciences (BISS) is arranging the weeklong programme under the theme, "sports for health, performance through sports sciences and sports medicine". BISS president Dr Mohammad Zubayer and general secretary Faruqul Islam will supervise the course.

All interested participants are requested to contact the course secretariat in Kaylani Diagnostic Pathological Laboratory at 346, Elephant Road in the capital.

India go for series

Third ODI against WI today



PTI, Ahmedabad

With a 2-0 lead in hand, India are firmly on course to record a second successive one-day series triumph at home as they take on West Indies in the third one-day international of the five-match rubber at the Sardar Patel Gujarat Stadium in Motera on Monday.

Although it has not been without some hiccups, the hosts look all set to hand out another defeat to the visiting side and take a winning 3-0 lead at the ground where they dethroned 2007 champions Australia on March 24 on their way to grabbing cricket's most coveted crown -- the World Cup.

India, by all counts, are holding all the trump cards and should clinch the series unless they self-destruct or the Windies punch above their weight. A win on Monday would give a consecutive series triumph to India after they mauled England 5-0.

The Virender Sehwag-led hosts have shown exemplary tenaciousness in the face of deep trouble to win the first two games of

the series at Cuttack (by a narrow one wicket) and Vishakhapatnam (by five wickets).

It would be interesting, however, to see what the captain who wins the toss does in the third game after India's Sehwag inserted the tourists in to bat in the first two matches, probably to factor in the effects of dew.

Night temperatures are yet to dip steeply in this textile city and experts reckon dew may not be that big an issue in the third game of the series.

TEAMS

INDIA (from): Virender Sehwag (captain), Gautam Gambhir, Virat Kohli, Ajinkya Rahane, Suresh Raina, Ravindra Jadeja, Parthiv Patel, R Ashwin, Abhimanyu Mithun, R Vinay Kumar, Umesh Yadav, Varun Aaron, Rohit Sharma, Manoj Tiwary, Rahul Sharma.

WEST INDIES (from): Lendl Simmons, Adrian Barath, Marlon Samuels, Darren Bravo, Danza Hyatt, Kieron Pollard, Denesh Ramdin, Darren Sammy (captain), Andre Russell, Ravi Rampaul, Kemar Roach, Anthony Martin, Sunil Narine, Kieran Powell, Jason Mohammed.

WINDIES SERIES

Sachin likely for last two ODIs

PTI, Ahmedabad

His 100th international century eagerly awaited across the nation, veteran Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar is likely to play the last two one-dayers against the West Indies.

Tendulkar, who failed to reach the milestone despite coming close at least twice during the Test series, might be selected for the last two matches of the ongoing ODI series when national selectors meet on Monday.

India lead the five-match rubber 2-0 with the third ODI scheduled on Monday. Tendulkar had been rested from the squad for the first three matches but sources say the 38-year-old wants to play the remaining two matches of the series

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Dr Socrates no more

REUTERS, Sao Paulo

Brazil's 1982 World Cup captain Socrates, the 'Golden Heel' renowned as one of the great playmakers of his generation, died in hospital on Sunday of septic shock at the age of 57, his doctors said in a statement.

A smoker and drinker even in his playing days, Socrates had been on a life support system in Sao Paulo's Albert Einstein Israeli Hospital since Thursday when he was admitted suffering from food poisoning.

"The (hospital) announces with profound sadness the death of ex-player Socrates Brasileiro Sampaio de Souza Vieira de Oliveira at 0430 (local time) as a result of septic shock," the statement said.

It was signed by doctors Fernando Luis Pandullo and Ben-Hur Ferraz Neto and the director of medical practice Oscar Fernando Pavao dos Santos.

Socrates, who had a degree in medicine himself and was known at the height of his fame as 'Dr Socrates', had been taken to hospital three times since August, when he spent nine days there due to a digestive haemorrhage caused by excessive drinking.

The former attacking midfielder, who played for Brazil at the 1982 and 1986 World Cups, spent 17 days in the hospital in September with liver trouble and had been recommended for a transplant.

Born on Feb. 19, 1954 in Belem, a northern city on the banks of the Amazon river, Socrates started out at Botafogo-Ribeirao Preto where he became their top player despite also studying at the local university.

He joined Sao Paulo club Corinthians in 1978 and stayed for six years.

Bearded, thin and popularly known as 'Magrao', or the Big Skinny One, Socrates



was part of a golden Brazilian generation that included midfielder Zico, Junior, Falcao and Eder.

The brilliant Brazil side of 1982 was regarded as one of the best never to win the World Cup title after they were upset by eventual champions Italy in the second group phase of the tournament in Spain.

An astute passer and reader of the game, he earned his nickname of 'The Golden Heel' with a

uniquely nonchalant playing style, using the backheel to telling effect and scoring memorable goals with both feet.

His languid penalty-taking style, eschewing the traditional run-up to merely step up to the ball and lift it into the net, backfired at the 1986 World Cup where Brazil lost to France in the quarter-finals on penalties after one of his lazy efforts was saved.

Winner of 60 caps with Brazil, Socrates scored 21 goals and was also known for strong views on both football and politics.

At Corinthians, during a time of military government, he was a leading figure in the Democracia Corinthiana movement where everything was decided by a vote of directors, technical staff and players.

The team would send messages to the country's government by taking to the field with banners demanding 'Direct elections now' or 'I want to vote for President'.

Socrates had a short and unhappy playing spell in Italy with Fiorentina and, shivering from the cold in a bizarre postscript to his career, also made a brief appearance in 2004 as a substitute for English non-league side Garforth Town.

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