

Star SPORT

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Rooney's Euro hope in balance

England coach Fabio Capello will await the outcome of Wayne Rooney's appeal against a three-match UEFA suspension to decide whether to pick the Manchester United striker for Euro 2012. Rooney's appeal against a three-match ban, which would see him miss all three group matches against France, Sweden and Ukraine in next year's European championships, will be heard by UEFA on Thursday. He picked up the UEFA suspension for kicking out at Miodrag Dzudovic in England's final qualifier in Montenegro in October.

-- AFP



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

AIR OF ANTICIPATION: In-form Nasir Hossain (R) and Elias Sunny watch practice at the Zohur Ahmed Stadium in Chittagong yesterday. The third ODI will be held today.

Some life in dead rubber

3rd ODI in 'lucky' venue today

SPORTS REPORTER



The third and final one-day between Bangladesh and Pakistan turned into a dead rubber after the visitors confirmed the series by winning the first two games, but still the lacklustre home side stand to achieve a lot at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium today.

A win at their lucky ground in the port city will not only be a real boost for the tamed Tigers

the ad of their two-match Test series, but also break the long jinx against Pakistan whom Bangladesh are yet to beat since their elevation to the elite level.

The happy memories at this ground, where the Tigers

all their last four limited-over encounters, should inspire Stuart Law's charges to bounce back from their disappointing performance so far in the series, but above all the Tigers must apply themselves in their batting against a formidable Pakistan bowling attack. Fans would love to see the local boy Tamim Iqbal get back among the runs in the last game to give Bangladesh a start but the bad news is that he will miss his regular opening partner Imrul Kayes, who suffered a groin injury, forcing the team think-tank to shuffle the batting order again.

The pathetic top order can take inspiration from Nasir Hossain who showed his character in the second game to score his maiden hundred. The heroics of Nasir might have salvaged some pride but the batting remains a grave concern for Bangladesh in this series as it seems that they have simply forgotten the art.

Handling the world-class Pakistan attack has become the main issue for the Tigers and Bangladesh vice-captain Mah mudull ah Ri ya d echoed the s e n t i

ment.

"They have a very good bowling attack in which all of the bowlers are confident. Maybe we are not playing like we want to. We lost wickets because we were in a hurry. The wicket was really good in the last game. Shakib and Nasir played well, especially Nasir who has taught us some stuff like how to be patient against this attack," observed Riyad hoping that the fans will see something positive in today's match.

When asked about the lucky ground, Riyad said: "These small things help us get inspired. Everyone says this is our lucky ground. Let's see what happens. We have some good memories at this ground. We'll try to rectify the mistakes we've made in the last games."

One might have thought that Pakistan would take the game lightly after a series victory but captain Misbahul-Haq issued a warning by saying that they want to win all matches in the series but hinted at a few changes in the playing eleven.

"We are not relaxed. There is still one match to go in the one day series and we have two Test

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BPL T20 Game On for Tk 400 crore

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has approved Game On Sports Management as the event management firm for the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) Twenty20 tournament.

In an emergency meeting yesterday, the BCB directors discussed the BPL governing council's evaluation report regarding financial offers received on November 30 from three event management firms. According to a BCB statement, Game On's offer of a guaranteed amount of approximately Tk 400 crore for six editions of the meet is 83 crore taka higher than the second best offer.

Chairman of the governing council Gazi Ashraf Hossain said that the letter of intent (LoI) will be issued soon, though the MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) will be signed once the BCB gets the bank guarantee.

The BPL is proposed to be held in February next year.

Imrul to miss today's ODI

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh opener Imrul Kayes will miss today's third and final one-dayer against Pakistan due to a groin injury.

The out-of-form batsman suffered the injury during a warm-up at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

The left-handed opener has been advised to take two days' rest and he has a very slim chance of playing the first Test of the two-match series starting from December 9 at the same venue.

"Imrul will miss tomorrow's match. He has been asked to take rest for two-three days and after that we will examine further to know his condition," said BCB's physician Dr. Debashish Chowdhury.

There have also been some minor injuries with all-rounder Naeem Islam and pacer Nazmul Hossain but Debashish said that their condition was not serious.

Bangladesh need a win and more

ANISUR RAHMAN from Delhi



SAFF CHAMPIONSHIP INDIA 2011

Bangladesh coach Nikola Ilievski is set to revert to an attacking strategy and bring changes to his starting eleven as his charges are faced with a must win situation against Maldives in their last Group B match of the SAFF Championship at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium today.

The 57-year old Macedonian has been tinkering since his appointment as Bangladesh coach and seemingly is still not sure what his ideal formation and starting eleven should be. The unsettled Red and Green performed poorly in the two matches of the competition regarded as the World Cup of the region, drawing the first match 0-0 against Pakistan and losing the second against Nepal 1-0. With his back against the wall, Ilievski is set

to revert to an attacking 4-3-3 formation in the last Group match against Maldives today, which could very well be the last for the 2003 champions.

"We don't have any other option but to win against Maldives tomorrow (Tuesday). This team is not losing for the first time but the time to wake up has come as we have to



win anyway," realised Ilievski.

"We can come back any time but our strikers have to score in order to turn back," added Ilievski. The Macedonian knows Bangladesh will have to score, for the first time in the tournament, to upend last edition's champions in order to have any hope of making the semifinals.

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PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

ANOTHER CAKEWALK? Pakistan stalwarts Younis Khan (L) and Shahid Afridi (R) joke with coach Mohsin Khan during training at the Zohur Ahmed Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

Sammy, Rampaul make it 2-1 Players grimly determined

Cricket

AFP, Ahmedabad

Late order blasts from skipper Darren Sammy and Andre Russel, and a 4-wicket haul by pacer Ravi Rampaul meant that the West Indies kept the three-match ODI series against India alive with a tense 16-run victory in the third ODI at the Sardar Patel Stadium in Motera yesterday.

Chasing 261 to win, the home team were in early trouble as the pivotal duo of captain Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir went for golden ducks in Rampaul's first over, the second of the innings. Virat Kohli was soon to follow with the score on 43, and Parthiv Patel, who battled for a while against disciplined West Indian bowling, fell with the score on 79.

The scene was set for the in-form Rohit Sharma after Suresh Raina's dismissal with the score on 84 and Ravindra Jadeja's fall at 105. He then built a momentum-changing 91-run partnership with Ravichandran Ashwin in 19 overs, making sure that India were abreast of the required rate. It was however, too big an ask as Ashwin fell with the score on 196 and Sharma followed 20 runs later to a run-out engineered by Sammy. Tailenders Abhimanyu Mithun and Umesh Yadav briefly threatened a miracle with some lusty blows, adding 28 runs from 3.1 overs, but it all came to an end when man-of-the-match Rampaul got his fourth wicket, that of Mithun leg-before.

Earlier, skipper Sammy and Russell plundered 79 runs off the last 34 balls to help the West Indies post 260-5 in the third one-day international against India on Monday.

Sammy smashed two sixes and five fours in his 17-ball 41 not out while Russell cracked two sixes and four boundaries in his unbeaten 40 off 18 balls as the tourists set a challenging target for India in the day-night match.

The West Indies skipper's sixes came in the penultimate over off seamer Mithun before Russell hit paceman Yadav for two fours and a six in the last over.

The West Indies scored 93 runs in the

last seven overs after being put in to bat, thanks to Sammy and Russell.

Marlon Samuels earlier steadied the innings with his 22nd half-century in one-dayers after the West Indies lost openers Lendl Simmons and Danza Hyatt on 42 runs.

Samuels added 55 runs for the third wicket with Darren Bravo, who retired due to a hamstring injury. His best came in the 19th over when he hammered Yadav for a six over long-on and two fours.

Denesh Ramdin and Kieron Pollard then put on 55 for the fourth wicket

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West Indies needed a brilliant direct hit from their captain Darren Sammy (C) to dismiss a rampant Indian batsman Rohit Sharma to win the third one-day international at the Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Players grimly determined

SPORTS REPORTER from Delhi



SAFF CHAMPIONSHIP INDIA 2011

Just four months ago, Bangladesh football was on a relative high. Having trumped Pakistan 3-0 at home, they followed up a disappointing showing against Lebanon in the Middle East by humbling the giants 2-0 in a famous win at Dhaka.

It was then with great expectation that the greater football community were looking forward to the SAFF Championships, a tournament that has traditionally been a happy hunting ground for Bangladesh.

But an insipid draw against Pakistan and a shock loss to Nepal later, the dejected national footballers were happy to lock themselves away in their rooms and catch up on some much needed shut-eye.

The only break came during the team meeting presided over by coach Nikola Ilievski.

All is not lost for Bangladesh however and the players now need to show some of the spirit that propelled them to that victory over Lebanon after a thumping loss in the away leg. Now, with their backs against the wall, they must call on their self-confidence, be united and play with determination to see of Maldives; a side which have won just one in eight games against Bangladesh so far.

Luck perhaps, has also deserted Bangladesh and the Nepal match was all set to be a draw until a freak 50 meter free-kick sailed over the young goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Sohel and into the Bangladesh net.

"Most of us, including me, could not sleep yesterday (Sunday) after losing to Nepal and it was my mistake to miss the flight of the free kick. But we all are aware that we have no alternative but to win against Maldives if we want to play in the semifinals," said the young Sohel.

Sohel, however, was praised by his senior goalkeeping teammates Biplob Bhattacharjee and Mamun Khan for his otherwise brilliant performance under the post.

"If we can produce the second-half play what we put up

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Afghanistan, India win

SPORTS REPORTER from Delhi

Holders India and Afghanistan brightened their chances of moving to the semifinals of the SAFF Championship beating their respective rivals at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium yesterday.

Afghanistan came from behind to beat Sri Lanka 3-1 while India handed an emphatic 5-0 defeat to Bhutan, thanks to a brace each from Sunil Chettri and Clifford Miranda.

It was the first win for both sides after they played out a 1-1 draw in their first matches. Both India and Afghanistan have now four points from two matches but India are on top in Group A, courtesy of a better goal difference. Sri Lanka have three points while Bhutan remain have no points.

India took 29 minutes to open the account through Syed Rahim Nabi before Clifford doubled the lead in the 44th minute. The midfielder then made it 3-0 in the 58th minute before Chettri struck twice in the 69th and 84th minutes respectively to ensure a comfortable victory for the hosts.

In the day's first match,

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