

Star SPORT

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Sawa's elaborate preparation

Japan's Homare Sawa was so determined to look elegant at the FIFA Ballon d'Or gala she took two people to Switzerland to help her dress and spent the whole day getting ready, she said Wednesday. The Japanese women's football captain, whose last-gasp equaliser helped Japan win the World Cup in July, is thought of as a powerful athlete at home, and is rarely seen in public with makeup on. But Sawa, who scooped the 2011 Women's Player of the Year, grabbed attention with her stunning light blue kimono at the ceremony in Zurich.



Azam outshines big stars

Mohammedan overpower Victoria

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The match turned into a battle for prestige and traditional giants Mohammedan Sporting Club came out with flying colours when they handed a seven-wicket defeat to big-spending Victoria Sporting Club in their Dhaka Premier League match at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Pakistani Hammad Azam overshadowed Victoria's two big guns Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim Iqbal as the right-hander's explosive unbeaten knock of 83 made it a one-sided affair as Mohammedan raced to 198 for three in reply to Victoria's 194.

The focus was on Shakib and Tamim -- the latter returning to action after a one-match suspension -- as the two big names left Mohammedan for Victoria this season, but

in the end two Pakistanis Yasim Mortuza and Azam hogged the spotlights to ensure Victoria's first defeat in four matches.

Away at BKSP, Marshal Ayub hit 91 as Abahani registered their third win with a five-wicket victory against the winless Surjo Tarun Club while Gazi Tank rode on Alauddin Babu's five-for to secure a hard-fought two-wicket victory against Kalabagan in a low-scoring match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Before the start of the matches, a one-minute silence was observed in honour of late BCB CEO Manzur Ahmed, who died of cardiac arrest on Tuesday morning.

MOHAMMEDAN-VICTORIA
Chasing 194, Mohammedan lost two quick wickets as pacer Alamin removed opener Imtiaz Hossain and Umar Amin with the scoreboard reading 26 but captain Naem

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BANG! Mohammedan Sporting Club's Pakistani recruit Hammad Azam slog-sweeps during his whirlwind 50-ball 83 against Victoria Sporting Club in a Dhaka Premier Cricket League match at the Fatullah Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Brothers bite the dust

Rahmatganj, Farashganj in last 8

SPORTS REPORTER

A day after Mohammedan's elimination, fallen giants Brothers Union followed the same route after they were held to a 3-3 draw in their crucial Group D match of the Grameenphone Federation Cup at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday. Away at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, Farashganj SC defeated Wari Club 2-0 to qualify for the quarterfinals along with their Old Dhaka neighbours Rahmatganj.

With two wins and a draw from three matches, Farashganj emerged group champions to set a quarterfinal clash against star-studded Muktiyoddha Sangsad while their neighbours Rahmatganj, who finished second with a win and two draws, will face newcomers Team BJMC in the quarterfinals.

At Kamalapur, Brothers Union needed a clear 3-goal margin victory over Rahmatganj to secure a place in the last eight and the All Oranges got off to a good start taking the lead in the 31st minute. Midfielder Kabir Hossain unleashed a powerful shot to put Brothers ahead after clearance off a Olalekan Joshua cross came his way.

Rahmatganj bit back in the stoppage time of the first half when Nigerian striker Lucky Divine, availing a through pass from Shankar Das, danced past two defenders before finishing with a placing shot.

The momentum shifted towards Rahmatganj as Divine put them in the lead two minutes into the second half taking advantage of a weak clearance from Brothers Union keeper Sabuj Das Raghur.

The pendulum swung again as Brothers found an equaliser through youngster Anik who latched on to a Kingsley cut-back before firing it home in the 58th minute. Brothers were reduced to ten men when Tara got his marching orders for a foul on Divine at the edge of the box and Guinean

playmaker Bangoura found the net with the free-kick in the 78th minute. Ten-man Brothers though never gave up and restored parity in the injury time when Nigerian Adams Jankasha converted a spot-kick, which was however too little for the All Oranges to avoid their ouster.

Farashganj held the upper hand in their match against Wari at the BNS, but due to the failure of their foreign and local strikers, could not break the deadlock in the first half.

Coach Kamal Babu sent in Pashban

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Farashganj forward Akbar Hossain Ridon tries to find his way past a Wari defender during their Federation Cup encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Women cricket begins today

SPORTS REPORTER

Narsingdi take on Gopalganj in the opening match of the 2nd National Women's Cricket Championship in Narsingdi today.

As many as 39 district teams will be participating in the competition in which the first round will be held in league format at five other venues of Pirojpur, Moulvibazar, Sherpur, Dinajpur and Narail.

Then in the second phase, the six venue champions will be divided into two groups with the group toppers facing off in the final.

School football reaches semis

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka Residential Model College, Rajdhani High School, Nahar Int'l School and Dolaipar High School reached the semifinals of the Dhaka Metropolitan zone of National School Football Islami Bank Tournament after winning their respective matches at the Dhaka Teachers Training College Ground yesterday.

In the day's matches, Nahar Int'l School beat Segun Bagicha High School 4-2, Rajdhani High School

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Sylhet franchise targets Akram

SPORTS REPORTER



Most of the franchises have started to move forward with their Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) teams following their acquisitions during the bidding programme on Tuesday.

The players' list has also been confirmed and given to the franchises. Eighty-two local players will be put together under three categories. Six top cricketers -- Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Mahmudullah Riyad, Abdur Razzak, Junaed Siddiqui, Imrul Kayes and Nasir Hossain -- have been placed in Grade A with a base price of 45,000 dollars while twelve more are in Grade B with a base price of 30,000 dollars and the rest in C with 20,000 dollars.

While the former national captains are the popular choice among the team owners as selectors, advisors or managers, Sylhet has already named Pakistan great Wasim Akram as their target for the coach's position.

Uday Hakim, a high official with the franchise, said that apart from Akram, they also want to rope in big Twenty20 names.

"Wasim Akram is our target as the coach. We want to put together a line-up to become champions," he said.

"Players like Shahid Afridi, Sanath Jayasuriya and Muttiah Muralidaran are in our sights while from the local bunch, we want to take young all-rounders. But we haven't decided who we would take as our advisor among the former national players," added Hakim.

On the day of the bidding programme, the Rajshahi franchise showed their cards by revealing former national captain Faruque Ahmed and former national opener Athar Ali Khan as part of the team's think-tank. The Dhaka franchise, bought by Europa Group, said that they have sought the services of Habibul Bashar, a former national captain and a current selector.

Bashar's boss on the selection panel, Akram Khan, is also in demand by the Barisal franchise although the owners haven't contacted their icon player Shahriar Nafees.

It was also learned that the Chittagong franchise will have

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Cook lifts England

AFP, Dubai

Opener Alastair Cook struck a fighting hundred to prop up a struggling England batting display against a Pakistan Cricket Board XI in their second three-day tour match here on Wednesday.

The 27-year-old left-hander hit an attractive 133 to lift England, sent into bat, to 269-9 declared on the opening day of the match played at the Global Cricket Academy.

In reply the PCB XI were 22-0 at close, with openers Nasir Jamshed on 12 and Afaq Raheem on 10.

Apart from Cook, Matt Prior (46) and Kevin Pietersen (38) were the only top-order batsmen to get some runs as Andrew Strauss (3), Jonathan Trott (0), Ian Bell (0) and Eoin Morgan (11) flopped again.

That left England much to think about ahead of the first Test against Pakistan, starting here from Tuesday.

Cook, who made 76 and 24 in England's three-wicket win in the first tour match, held the innings together by adding 83 for the third wicket with Pietersen and had a fighting stand of 90 with Prior for the sixth.

He was finally dismissed, caught behind by Sarfraz

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National hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Tangail, Joypurhat and Satkhira comfortably won their respective matches of the Trust Bank-Viyellatex 28th National Hockey Championship at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Tangail crushed Dinajpur by 8-1 goals in the first match of the day with Taposh striking twice while Shamsuddin Tuhin, Manik, Pintu, Sohag, Puskar Khisa and Titu getting one goal apiece. Rista scored the consolation goal for Dinajpur DSA.

In the second match, Joypurhat drubbed Narayanganj by 10-0 goals while Rupok Arman scored three goals and Rabbi Alam scored a brace. Satkhira blanked Jessore by 2-0 goals in the last match of the day.

MSC to bank on Emeka?

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan SC are apparently banking on their coach Emeka Euzegio and his Nigerian collection of booters for the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League even after a sorry campaign in the Grameenphone Federation Cup where they failed to cross the group stage.

The Black and Whites finished fourth among four teams with just a draw against a Bangladesh Championship League side Cox's City FC and suffered 10-0 and 6-0 defeats against Premier League sides Muktiyoddha Sangsad and Team BJMC respectively.

There were whispers that Emeka might get the axe for this poor performance. However, the club's director-in-charge Lokman Hossain Bhuyan dismissed any possibility of such action.

"The club will keep those people whom it needs," said Bhuyan yesterday adding that three to four foreign players may leave the club before the start of the league.

"The team can perform badly in a tournament which doesn't mean that they will continue to perform baldy in the future," Lokman said.

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Army win b'ball title

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Army clinched the title of Citycell 25th National Basketball Championship beating last year's champions Bangladesh Navy by 72-65 points in a keenly contested final at the Dhanmondi Indoor Basketball Gymnasium yesterday. The winning side led the first half by 39-31 points. Army's Mithun caged highest 24 points for his side while his namesake Navy's Mithun scored the match highest 29 points.

Earlier, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) finished third beating Khulna by 57-54 points, after leading the first half 27-26, at the same venue.

Minister for Information and Cultural Affairs Abul Kalam Azad witnessed the final as the chief guest and

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Jubilant Bangladesh Army players receive the trophy from Minister for Information and Cultural Affairs Abul Kalam Azad after winning the National Basketball Championship yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY