

Racism storm over Reina ad

Liverpool goalkeeper Pepe Reina on Thursday faced accusations of racism over a television commercial in his native Spain but the insurance company which made the advert denied it was offensive. Reina came under fire from anti-racism campaigners Operation Black Vote (OBV) over the advertisement for the Spanish division of Groupama, showing the player in a jungle being greeted by a spear-carrying tribe and their chief. OBV director Simon Woolley said: "I'm shocked on so many levels. Firstly, how would the Spanish feel if the English stereotyped Spanish people as backward, stupid, and animalistic"



BU pip Sk Russel

SPORTS REPORTER

An ever-improving Brothers Union notched up their first win of the season when they defeated Sheikh Russel KC in their Grameenphone Bangladesh League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Kingsley Chigozie, the Nigerian recruit scored the decisive goal in the 79th minute of the match to inflict the first defeat to Sheikh Russel. The win takes Brothers up to sixth position with five points from five matches while Sheikh Russel remain in third position with eight points from the same number of matches.

The match was contested fairly evenly where chances were few and far between. The first attempt on goal came in the 26th minute when Sheikh Russel striker Anwar Hossain collected a square pass from Yeamin Ahmed and tried to beat the advancing goalkeeper Uttam Barua with a half-shot-half-chip, but the Brothers goalie acrobatically tipped it over the bar to clear the danger. At the other end, Brothers came close to winning a penalty as Chigozie was barged inside the danger zone by Sheikh Russel defender Uttam Kumar Bonik in an off-the-ball incident, but the referee overlooked the incident.

The second half brought changes to both line-ups and it was Sheikh Russel who started the stronger and should have found an opener in the 53rd minute when Bukola played a superb through ball for Yusuf, but the diminutive winger's shot lacked both direction and power. Sheikh Russel forward Anwar was unlucky not to give his the lead in the 73rd minute as his long range effort beat the keeper before it rasped off the post. When it was looking like Brothers' winless start would be stretched, Chigozie scored in the 79th minute to make the difference. Substitute midfielder Jamal Hossain had floated in a cross and the tall Nigerian made good contact with his head to place it at the back of the net.

The Brothers coach Syed Nayeemuddin praised the work ethic of his charges after the first victory in the league. "The opponents were a very good team, but we kept our spirits high. We capitalised on the one good chance we got and that's what made the difference," said the veteran coach.

The losing coach, Maruful Haque blamed the over-confidence of the players and injuries for the defeat.

"After the game against Mohammedan, which we won with ten men, the boys became overconfident which is affecting our

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Nigerian striker Kingsley Chigozie (L) leads Brothers Union's celebration after scoring the decisive goal against Sheikh Russel in their Bangladesh Premier League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Asia Cup squad on March 6

SPORTS REPORTER

The Tigers will start their training from March 7 for the Asia Cup to be held at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur from March 11.

"We are yet to talk about the team as the BPL is just finished. A 15-member team will be announced by March 6," said chief selector Akram Khan.

"We are not in favour of making big changes from the last squad which played against Pakistan at home but we have to take the opinion from our national physio regarding the fitness status of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Tamim Iqbal," added the former Bangladesh captain.

Pace spearhead Mashrafe will be considered if he is declared fit in place of Rubel Hossain, who is out of consideration due to a shoulder injury he had suffered during the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20 tournament.

Mohammad Ashrafal was not in the last squad but the former national skipper may get back his chance and in that case Alok Kapali will make way for him.

BJMC, F'ganj fined

SPORTS REPORTER

Team BJMC and Farashganj SC were fined Tk 10,000 and Tk 20,000 respectively for disciplinary incidents during their match of the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League in BJMC's home venue Tangail on February 25.

BJMC were fined as the match started five minutes later than schedule due to logistical issues while during the half-time, local supporters came invaded the pitch. The fine on Farashganj was slapped as their players and officials held up play for three minutes in protest of a decision by the referee. The decisions were taken by the disciplinary committee of Bangladesh Football Federation on Thursday.

SL in final, India out

Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

Sri Lanka held their nerve to end India's late bid for a tri one-day series finals spot with a gripping nine-run win over hosts Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Friday.

The Sri Lankans dismissed David Hussey with five balls to spare, clinching their place in the best-of-three match finals against the Australians, which starts in Brisbane on Sunday.

World Cup champions India, who narrowly failed to leap-frog Sri Lanka into the finals after a sensational run-chase in Hobart last Tuesday, will return home this weekend after a dismal tour of Australia.

Sri Lanka triumphed in a thrilling game which saw medium pacer Dan Christian take a hat-trick for Australia, before the visitors -- defending a low total -- bowled out the Australians with five balls to go.

Hussey hit a run-a-ball 74 and finished the group stage of the tournament as the top run-scorer among the three teams with 412 at an average of 82.40.

Lasith Malinga finished with four for 49 as skipper Mahela Jayawardene

chopped and changed his eight bowlers to defend Sri Lanka's below-par total.

It was Sri Lanka's third consecutive victory over Australia in the series, making them favourites for the finals.

"The boys showed character (after the loss to India)," Jayawardene said. "It was fantastic support, it's like playing in Sri Lanka. We lifted our game. I'm sure the crowd will follow us now, the lift that we got (from them), it pushed us in the last few overs."

Although requiring just 4.7 runs an over after dismissing Sri Lanka for a low total, the Australians, led by Shane Watson in the absence of rested skipper Michael Clarke, struggled under pressure.

Watson scored 65 off 83 balls and Mike Hussey 29 off 56, but it was David Hussey, who almost got Australia home with his skilful farming of the strike with the tailenders.

"A brilliant game of cricket... you never knew who was going to win. Dave Hussey batted beautifully, as he's shown through the summer so far," Watson said.

Allrounder Christian captured a hat-trick as Australia dismissed Sri Lanka for 238 off the last ball in their innings after Jayawardene had won the toss.

Christian became only the fourth

Australian to claim an ODI hat-trick in his career - best five for 31 off nine overs.

Sri Lanka lost momentum when Christian struck in the 44th over, removing Thisara Perera (5), Sachithra Senanayake (0) and Kulasekara (0) with consecutive deliveries.

Perera fell to a spectacular juggling catch by Mike Hussey on the boundary rope at deep mid-wicket, while Senanayake and Kulasekara were lbw for ducks, although replays suggested the Kulasekara dismissal was dubious with the ball missing leg-stump.

Christian also captured the wickets of Angelo Mathews (5) and last man Malinga (2) to slow the Sri Lanka run-rate after they were 186 for four in the 39th over and heading for a score of 250-plus.

James Pattinson, playing his first match for Australia since a stress injury in his left foot which had sidelined him since early January, was also among the wickets with four for 51 off 10 overs.

Australia began well dismissing both openers Jayawardene (5) and Dilshan (9) for just 17 runs before Kumar Sangakkara and youngster Dinesh Chandimal restored the innings with a stand of 123 for the third wicket.

The experienced Sangakkara, playing

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Visa woes dash Siddikur's dream

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's ace golfer Siddikur Rahman's dream of qualifying for the Open Championship through International Final Qualifying was dashed before the start of the tournament as he failed to attain a visa for Thailand.

The Asian tour winner golfer was slotted to play in the International Final Qualifying in Thailand which began on Thursday, for a ticket to The Open Championship, the third Major of the year which will be held in England in July.

But despite Siddikur's best efforts, he failed to attain the visa and had to stay back.

"I tried for the visa from New Delhi last week and then from home but I was not given visa despite having proceeded on time. I don't know why they did not grant

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LOCAL snippets

SPORTS REPORTER

Rais emerged champion in the men's singles final of the Prime Bank Pallima Sangsad Badminton Tournament while Parash became runner-up in the tournament at the Pallima Sangsad premises on Thursday.

However, Parash pairing with Sumon won the men's doubles crown beating the Rais-Saifuddin pair while the Lal Chand-Dulali pair became mixed doubles champions beating the Goutam-Rozina pair.

Rais was awarded Tk 20,000 while Parash received Tk 15,000 as prize money, the winners of men's doubles were given Tk 30,000 and runners-up Tk 20,000. The winners of the mixed doubles were awarded Tk 15,000 and runners-up Tk 10,000 respectively, said a press release yesterday.

A total of Tk 1,75,000 were distributed among first to eight finishers of all three events with sponsor Prime Bank and managing director Ehsan Khasru distributing prizes.

2nd Div Football

Bangladesh Boys Club and Karwanbazar Progati Sangsad won their respective matches in the Destiny Group Second Division Football League at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

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Sri Lanka pacer Nuwan Kulasekara (R) is congratulated by teammates after he took the final Australian wicket to give his side a nine-run win in their ODI at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

Security team off to check Pakistan measures

SPORTS REPORTER

A nine-member security team flew for Pakistan yesterday to evaluate the security arrangements ahead of Bangladesh's proposed tour in April.

The team comprises of two officials each from the Sports and Home Ministries, one Police official, the BCB president AHM Mustafa Kamal, director GS Hasan Tamim, acting CEO Nizam Uddin Chowdhury and head of the board's security committee Intiaz Ahmed Shamsul Huda.

"This team will evaluate everything regarding security issues before returning home on March 5 to prepare a report," said Nizam Uddin Chowdhury from Dubai.

The BCB had promised to send a security team when Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) president Zaka Ashraf visited Dhaka December last year. The PCB are desperately looking to revive international

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Ryder dropped

NZ name squad for SA Test

Cricket

AFP, Wellington

Troubled New Zealand cricket star Jesse Ryder was dropped Friday from the squad for the first Test against South Africa but selectors said the move was due to form, and not his latest drinking bout.

The 13-man squad includes Rob Nicol and Andrew Ellis, yet to make their Test debuts, and marks the return of captain Ross Taylor who has been sidelined for nearly six weeks by injury.

The Test starts in Dunedin next Wednesday.

Ryder's exclusion was announced a few hours after he and pace bowler Doug Bracewell were dropped from Saturday's third and final one-day international against South Africa following a drink-fuelled bar incident.

Team manager Mike Sandle said the pair broke team protocols by going out drinking and had "verbally reacted to taunts from the public" about New Zealand's six-wicket defeat in the second ODI in Napier.

Bar patron Brendon Arkwright told the Rotorua Daily Post he had asked Ryder why he was "drinking like you've won the game when you didn't score any runs. He and one of his mates has taken offence to that and gone off on me."

Ryder, 27, has a Test batting average of 40.93 and an ODI average of 34.37 but his career has been marred by incidents involving alcohol.

Officially Ryder will miss the next ODI as punishment and the first Test because of form, but New Zealand coach John Wright told reporters standards had to be upheld.

"He's a talented cricketer and it's up to him and certainly everyone has the opportunity to play if they perform and are fit and abide by some of the rules that go with being in the team," he said.

"There are certain standards that have to be adhered to and there have to be consequences."

Asked if other players should be helping Ryder in social situations, Wright said: "That can be difficult. Most players at that time of night are in bed... the professional ones."

Meanwhile, New Zealand selection manager Kim Littlejohn said rookies Nicol and Ellis had performed well in the ODI series against South Africa and deserved their Test starts.

"Both Rob and Andrew have shown promise against South Africa in limited overs cricket and we believe they can transfer their form across to the Test matches."

TEAM

Ross Taylor (captain), Brent Arnel, Trent Boult, Doug Bracewell, Andrew Ellis, Martin Gupthill, Chris Martin, Brendon McCullum, Rob Nicol, Tim Southee, Daniel Vettori, BJ Watling, Kane Williamson.