

Star SPORT

DHAKA THURSDAY JUNE 21, 2012, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

Prandelli takes 21km walk

No one expected coach Cesare Prandelli, his backroom team and federation vice president and former midfielder Demetrio Albertini to take the walk at 3 a.m. local time, shortly after arriving back in Krakow from beating the Irish 2-0 in Poznan.

The Camaldolese monks, whose origins are in Italy but who run a monastery 21 km from Italy's base outside Krakow, met the squad before the tournament and the team staff promised to make a pilgrimage to the monastery if they



Portugal superstar Cristiano Ronaldo (2nd from L) trains with teammates at their base camp in Opalenica yesterday on the eve of their Euro 2012 quarterfinal against the Czech Republic. PHOTO: AFP

Siddikur seeks a better show

Golf

SPORT DESK

Siddikur Rahman believes that he is ready to bounce back from the disappointment of last week by resuming his title charge at the inaugural Volvik Hildesheim Open J Golf Series which tees off at the Hildesheim Country Club today.

The 27-year-old was on the verge of ending a two-year Asian Tour title drought at last week's Queen's Cup in Koh Samui but his game fell apart when his putter went cold on the back-nine.

Siddikur is however hopeful of staking a place in the winner's circle again as he has been a figure of consistency all season.

"I've been playing well since the start of the season and I'm confident that I can continue to do so again this week," said Siddikur, who has enjoyed three top-five finishes this season.

"It's always exciting to play in a new event and I'm looking forward to going out there and show the Korean fans when I can do," added Siddikur who has yet to miss a single cut in nine starts.

The Volvik Hildesheim Open is jointly sanctioned with the Korean Golf Tour and will be the 12th leg of the 2012 Asian Tour Schedule and also the third event to be staged in Korea this season.

Tamim in doubt for today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh team management will make a call on Tamim Iqbal's fitness today, a few hours ahead of their third game of the Twenty20 triangular series against Zimbabwe.

The left-handed opener missed the Tuesday game against South Africa after suffering a grade one tear on his left quadriceps. He was hurt during the tournament's opening game against Zimbabwe on Sunday in which he made 38.

Anamul Haque played in place of Tamim against South Africa and will continue to do so if the left-hander isn't deemed fit enough to take the field.

Jahurul Islam however

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Relying on Ronaldo

AFP, Warsaw

Portugal have rallied around captain Cristiano Ronaldo ahead of Thursday's Euro 2012 quarterfinal against the Czech Republic here.

It will be the third meeting between the two sides in the last five championships, with each side having won one apiece -- the most important belonging to the Czechs in the 1996 quarterfinals on their way to losing to Germany in the final.

Paulo Bento's Portugal have got where they are thanks to their team ethic and after seeing Ronaldo finally click into gear in Sunday's game against the hapless Dutch to score both goals in the 2-1 win.

They have been accused of creating a cult of personality around their 27-year-old captain but the team have circled the wagons in the face of what they see as unjustified criticism.

"The important thing is that Ronaldo is one of the most professional players I have ever come across," said midfielder Raul Meireles.

"He gives his all at every training session. He is our leader and, on the



CZECH REP 1 WIN

pitch, there is no one who wants to win more than him.

"He scored twice in the last match; before he had drawn a blank but he had still helped us out in other ways."

The Czech's outstanding goalkeeper, Petr Cech, acknowledges the Portuguese are favourites for this match and says the team is made up of more than just Ronaldo.

"They are among the world's top 10 teams. It's a team full of personalities and outstanding players and they play very well. Against the Netherlands on Sunday, they were excellent up front," said the Chelsea number one.

"They also have enough experienced players. The team has matured and it's really strong."

Although they are not amongst the overall favourites here, Cech's club-mate Meireles believes Portugal can emulate Chelsea and

HEAD TO HEAD

Played: 2

Draws: 0



PORTUGAL 1 WIN

shock Europe.

"Chelsea won the Champions League when nobody considered them as favourites," he said referring to their penalty shootout win over Bayern Munich in May.

"When we began this tournament, nobody mentioned Portugal as one of the favourites.

"If we manage to do the same (as Chelsea) it will be the realisation of a dream."

They received a boost in their preparations for this match as Real Madrid centre-back Pepe resumed training on Tuesday after sitting it out on Monday with sore ankles.

The news is not so good for the Czechs, though, with captain Tomas Rosicky set to miss out as he struggles to recover from an inflamed Achilles tendon.

"Will he be able to play from the start? I don't think so," said Czech team manager Vladimir Smicer.

"He hasn't trained for eight days, only doing some work on a bike."

Rosicky had been receiving treatment in Prague since Sunday but is now back with the squad in Warsaw.

But the Czechs are no strangers to difficulties, not least in this competition which they began by being mauled 4-1 by Russia.

And much-maligned coach Michal Bilek believes the tough times they have endured together has made them stronger.

"In those two-and-a-half years, we have always managed to overcome the critical moments -- and there have been quite a few," said the 47-year-old.

Portugal, finalists in 2004 when Ronaldo was the baby of the team, have also showed spirit, having started like the Czechs with a defeat -- 1-0 to Germany.

But the cautious Bento, who like Bilek has had his fair share of criticism, dismissed the notion his side are favourites to reach the last four.

"We don't claim to be favourites (against the Czechs) and it won't be easy. We have to keep up our work and the quality that we have shown so far. Then maybe we can even reach the semifinals."

AFC U-22 QUALIFIERS BD keep losing

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh crashed out of the AFC U-22 Championship group D qualifiers when they lost their third consecutive match, going down 3-0 against Jordan at the Dashaarath Stadium yesterday.

Jordan took the lead in the 22nd minute when Khalil Zayed headed an Oday Zahran cross from inside the six yard box.

The lead was doubled in the 29th minute when Mahmud Zatarat tapped in a low cross from Ibrahim Daldoom.

Bangladesh goalkeeper Sabuj Das Roghu saved the team from conceding a third couple of minutes later as he dived to the feet of Zatarat to snatch the ball.

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EURO 2012
TODAY'S MATCH
Quarterfinal 1: Warsaw
Czech Republic v Portugal
(1245am, June 22)

NAT'L SHOOTING C'SHIP

Armin shines

SPORTS REPORTER

Armin Asha retained the women's 10m Air Pistol gold in the IFIC Bank 26th National Shooting Championship when she shot 471 points out of 500 at the National Shooting Complex in Gulshan yesterday.

It was the fifth gold medal in the national shooting championship for the Narayanganj Rifles Club shooter and her ninth overall 10m air pistol gold medal including Air Gun Championship medals.

The achievements put Armin in head and shoulders above the rest in the event, even though doesn't believe that there is no one else who can beat her.

"I won't say that I'm unparallel in the 10m air pistol event but I always try to improve my performance when I come into any competition. This time my target was to break the national record (473.9) which was set by myself, but I had to be satisfied with just a gold, scoring 471 points," said Armin.

Armin may have nine 10m air pistol gold medals at domestic competition, but she is yet to have success at the international level except for the South Asian Games.

"Lack of experience at the international level is a big factor as we don't take part in international meets regularly. I only practiced for 10 days before taking part in the National Championship this time," said Armin.

Antora Islam of Dhaka Rifles Club finished behind Armin with a score of 452.7 points while Miti Dewan of the same club won bronze medal with a score of 446.6 points.

In men's 50m Rifles 3 Position event, Toufique Shahriar Chandan of Kushtia Rifles Club won the gold medal scoring 1133 points while Ramjan Ali (1131) and Anwar Hossain (1103) from Army Shooting Club won silver and bronze respectively.

Zim stun SA

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Zimbabwe downed favourites South Africa by 29 runs yesterday at the Harare Sports Club to reach the top of the points table in the Twenty20 triangular series. They now have two wins out of two while Hashim Amla's men have one.

Bangladesh must defeat the hosts in today's encounter to stay alive in the tournament. To even achieve survival, the Tigers must show some of Zimbabwe's courage and enterprise which was in abundance in yesterday's game.

A brilliant century stand between Hamilton Masakadza and Vusi Sibanda set up a competitive total -- 176 for four in 20 overs -- after skipper Brendan Taylor decided to bat first. But it was the effectiveness shown by the Zimbabwe bowlers, particularly Christopher Mpofu and Graeme Cremer which led to the big win.

After removing the South African captain Hashim Amla early in the chase, Mpofu took care of Colin Ingram (48 off 39 balls) and Robin Peterson (13 off 11 balls) at a critical stage when the result could have gone either way. The legspinner Cremer too bowled very well, removing three middle-order wickets while Robinson Muzhange provided four steady overs taking two wickets.

Earlier it was yet another fine start provided by Sibanda (58 off 50 balls) and Masakadza (55 off 39 balls), adding 114 in just 13.3 overs which laid the foundation. Taylor too joined the party, smashing three fours and two sixes in his 38.

The South African bowlers struggled for the second game in a row though Wayne Parnell improved slightly. He took two wickets while Peterson and Marchant de Lange took one each.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ZIMBABWE: 176-4 in 20 overs (Sibanda 58, Masakadza 55, Taylor 38; Peterson 1-29, de Lange 1-23, Parnell 2-33).

SOUTH AFRICA: 147 all out in 19.2 overs (Ingram 48, Levi 40, Peterson 13; Mpofu 3-20, Cremer 3-29).

Result: Zimbabwe won by 29 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Christopher Mpofu.

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