

Star SPORT

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Fiorentina ask Berba to pay up

Fiorentina have asked Fulham striker Dimitar Berbatov to reimburse them the price of two first class flights after the Bulgarian striker's failure to show up to finalise contract talks. The Serie A club rushed to buy plane tickets for the player and his agent last week after Berbatov, it was claimed by the club, had agreed personal terms. Fans of Fiorentina packed Florence airport the morning of his expected arrival, but Berbatov failed to show. It was later claimed he had had a change of heart after some last minute



Stunning win for BD women

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's cricket team pulled off a nerve-wracking two-wicket victory over the visiting South Africa women's cricket team in the low-scoring first one-day international of the three-match series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Ritu Moni drove pacer Ayabonga Khaka to the fence to confirm their first major victory against a formidable side and brought relief to the home tent as Bangladesh battled to 78 for eight in 37.3 overs in reply to South Africa's paltry 75 all out.

But it was player of the match Lata Mondol who shaped the win with a magnificent 54-ball 31 that contained four boundaries after the two spinners Khadijatul Kobra and Rumana Ahmed laid the platform by taking three wickets each.

Wickets fell like ninepins in the match as not only the South Africans but the Bangladeshi batters also struggled to score in pursuit of a small total. Like their opponents Bangladesh also made a disastrous start but Lata was exceptional as she looked comfortable against the South African pace attack.

After Lata's dismissal with the scoreboard reading 56 for five, Bangladesh lost two quick wickets to test the nerves of the small but enthusiastic crowd but in the end Ritu kept her nerve to ensure a 1-0 lead. Ritu was unbeaten on 12 off 18 balls and only the second batter to reach double figures after Lata.

Sunette Loubser was the most successful bowler taking three wickets for 32 runs in 10 overs.

Earlier, the spinners did the job for Bangladesh as Bangladesh skipper Salma Khatun predicted before the match, even though the pitch helped the seam bowlers. The South Africans were found wanting against the spinners and it was captain Salma who initiated the rot in the South African innings removing Trisha Chetty for duck, after which the tourists slipped to 5 for three. Captain Mignon du Preez, along with Marizanne Kapp tried to repair the early damage in a 37-run fourth-wicket stand but their effort was not good enough to put up a fighting total on the board, mainly because of the tight bowling from off-spinner Kobra and leg-spinner Rumana.

Du Preez top-scored with 24 while Kapp added 11 and Sune Luus was the other batter who managed double figures with an

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Player-of-the-match Lata Mondol hits the ball away on the leg-side on way to her match-highest score of 31 in the Bangladesh women's cricket team's 2-wicket win over South Africa at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Tennis legend Roger Federer of Switzerland waves to the crowd after his US Open quarterfinal loss to Tomas Berdych of the Czech Republic at Flushing Meadows in New York on Wednesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Fed beaten by Berdych

Roddick's tearful bye to tennis

AFP, New York

Roger Federer saw his dream of becoming the first man in 87 years to win six US Opens destroyed by big-swinging Czech Tomas Berdych Wednesday in the Swiss legend's earliest New York defeat in nine years.

The 17-time Grand Slam title winner, bidding to reach his 33rd Grand Slam semifinal, and ninth in a row at the US Open, was beaten 7-6 (7/1), 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 by sixth-seeded Berdych.

"I have got to go back to the drawing board from here. The goal [of winning Wimbledon and getting back to number one] has been achieved, but this is very disappointing," said a despondent Federer.

Berdych was stunned by his triumph. "It couldn't be better. There's no better moment so far than this one," said the Czech.

It was world number one Federer's worst defeat at the tournament since losing to David Nalbandian in the fourth round in 2003.

Berdych, who went into the quarterfinal with a 4-11

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BCB XI win warm-up

SPORTS REPORTER

BCB XI got off to a good start with a 59-run victory in the lone T20 practice match against Tobago on Wednesday night.

The Tigers, who are playing under the banner of BCB XI, were scheduled to play their first match in the Trinidad Quadrangular T20 competition against Barbados last night, then play against Afghanistan today at the Queen's Park Oval in Port of Spain and finally contest their third and final match against Trinidad & Tobago tomorrow. They will then head directly for Sri Lanka on September 9 to take part in the ICC World Twenty20.

In the practice match, Bangladesh scored 169 for eight in the stipulated 20 overs.

Ziaur Rahman (34), Mushfiqur Rahim (32), Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (28), Junaed Siddiqui (27), Mohammad Ashraful (24) were the notable scorers.

In reply, Tobago finished with 100 for eight after 20 overs.

Shafiqul took two wickets for 13 runs and Mashrafe, Abdur Razzak, Elias Sunny, Abul Hasan, Mahmudullah Riyad and Nasir Hossain captured one wicket each.

Nine in the lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Nine players shared the lead in the Azimuddin Bhuiyan Trust 32nd National Sub-Junior Chess Championship at the close of the third round held at the Bangladesh Chess Federation (BCF) hall room yesterday.

All nine players have secured maximum three points from as many matches.

The leading players are junior champion Abdullah Al Saif, Ikramul Haque Siam, holder Fahad Rahman, Tanjina Akter Tani, Rafsan Bin Omer, Newaz Ayon, Rezaul Alam Raju, Farkan Ahmed Jhinuk and Saad Md. Junayed.

Sights set on Round 3

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh National Hockey Team returned home yesterday afternoon with heads held high after becoming champions in Round 1 of the Hockey World League in Singapore.

With three straight victories over Hong Kong, hosts Singapore and Thailand, Bangladesh emerged champions to storm into the Hockey World League's Round 2 where they are slated to play against India, Fiji and a team from the Middle East next February.

The top two teams from the four will qualify for Round 3 and coach Mahub Haroon believes Bangladesh's chances of qualification depends on the quality of preparation leading up to the event.

"This group of boys are much committed to the game as well as the nation. That was one of the reasons for success in Round 1," said Haroon after arriving from Singapore yesterday.

"We are well aware of India's prowess, Fiji are a side ranked lower than Bangladesh and we are expecting Oman to qualify from the Middle East Zone. So we see a good chance of qualification to Round 3 but we need at least two months' training including a few practice matches outside country," said Haroon, urging the government to extend financial assistance for preparation as Bangladesh had won international tournaments -- the AFH Cup and World League Round 1 -- in the span of only five months.

Striker Russel Mahmud Jimmy also echoed the same sentiment of his coach and urged the authorities concerned to arrange five to six practice matches against Indian provisional and club teams ahead of Round 2.

"We put up an improved performance compared to AHF

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BD golfers slide in Selangor

SPORTS REPORTER

Thursday was an ordinary day for Bangladesh's golfers participating in the Worldwide Holdings Selangor Masters in Malaysia as Siddikur Rahman, Jamal Hossain Molla and Shakhawat Hossain Sohel all found themselves in a worse position at the end of the second round, with Sohel failing to make the cut.

After the first day Jamal was in joint fourth position, having shot a round of three-under-par 69, but an ordinary second round in which he recorded a one-over-par 73 saw him slip to joint 36th position with an overall tally of two-under-par 144 at the Kota Permai Golf and Country Club. He played solidly on the front nine with birdies in the third, fifth and ninth holes being offset by a bogey in the eighth. His back nine performance however, in which he carded three bogeys to go with a solitary birdie, let him down.

Siddikur started early to complete his first round

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'Tough win is sweeter'

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's team captain Salma Khatun said yesterday after her team's two-wicket win over South Africa that sometimes a hard-fought victory is sweeter than an easy one.

"We are happy that in the end we won the match. It was not at all easy but sometimes a hard-fought win is much sweeter than an easy win," said an excited Salma.

"Actually, we are not habituated to playing the kind of quality pace bowling like South Africa has and that's the reason we struggled to score against them. The more we play the more we will learn, so it is a really important victory for us. We have to work on our batting and hope it will better in the next game," she added.

Player-of-the-match Lata Mondol however enjoyed batting against the South African attack, but she was a little disappointed as she could not finish off the match.

"It's a nice win and this success gives us confidence to play much better cricket in the next matches in the series. True, we had to fight hard but ultimately we won the match. Our batters struggled against the South African attack but I enjoyed my batting," said Lata.

"It could have been much better for me if I could have finished the game," she added.

South Africa skipper Mignon du Preez was surprised by the behaviour of the pitch and said that they will bounce back in the second match.

"Bangladesh played good cricket and credit must go to them. We were however surprised as the pitch was not slow and low as we expected. Pace bowlers got the swing. We are confident that we can bounce back in the series," said a confident du Preez.



Members of the Bangladesh national hockey team pose with the Hockey World League Round 1 trophy upon their return from Singapore at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Four buy schedule

SPORTS REPORTER

Only four companies bought the schedule before the end of the revised purchase date yesterday for the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB)'s international tender for worldwide media rights.

"Four companies bought the schedule before the end of the deadline. The question is not with the quantity; rather the quality is important for us. We are not unhappy but the important thing is how many companies drop the schedules," said BCB's media committee chairman Jalal Yunus yesterday.

BCB introduced some leniency to one clause to attract more bidders but

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