

SYLHET FOOTBALL ACADEMY Minister urges swift completion

SPORTS REPORTER

Having inspected the BFF football academy in Sylhet yesterday, state minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarker expressed his desire to get the ball rolling as soon as possible and instructed his staff to provide him with an estimation of necessary requirements to start the academy.

A talent hunt programme with a focus on finding and locating players for the newly-built academy has already started this month and is due to be completed by October.

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) initially planned to start the academy as soon as they complete the talent hunt, but there are a number of other issues that need to be taken care of and this has cast doubt about an actual starting date. The academy in Sylhet was originally built as the regional centre for the Bangladesh Krira Shikha Protisthan (BKSP) before it was handed over to the BFF in December last year for five-years.

The academy has one student dormitory, one administrative building, one coach quarter, one staff quarter, one swimming pool, two football grounds and one tennis court. Currently though, all of the buildings are without furniture, there is no filtration system at the swimming pool and the pitches are unplayable. Thus, the federation has urged the government to put the necessary

steps in place and provide some support staff.

"The minister inspected all the buildings, swimming pool and football pitches and instructed his staff to estimate the requirements in consultation with the BFF officials as well as make the football pitch playable," said BFF acting general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag adding that he however did not give any deadline to complete the academy.

Shohag said that we would sit with the officials of the National Sports Council staff tomorrow morning (Wednesday) and place their requirements to them.

The sports minister also watched the talent hunt programme in the Sadar Upazilla and handed over 'Yes' cards to ten budding players in the afternoon before flying back to the capital of Dhaka.

Meanwhile, funds under the FIFA allotted goal project have already reached the BFF coffers. A total of seven hundred thousand dollars (700,000 dollars) have been allotted to Bangladesh and three hundred thousand (300,000 dollars) have already reached the BFF last month.

Ahad Ali was also accompanied by Youth and Sports Ministry's joint secretary Mostafizur Rahman, National Sports Council director (planning and development) Abdur Rahman, BFF vice president Badal Roy and BFF technical director BA Jubair Nipu.



State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarker (C) visits the Sylhet Football Academy along with NSC and BFF officials on Tuesday. PHOTO: COURTESY

DIV I HOCKEY Railway, Uttara win

SPORTS REPORTER

Uttara Hockey Club and Bangladesh Railway SC recorded victories in their respective matches of the Green Delta Insurance First Division Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Uttara Hockey Club defeated Barnak Samaj 3-0 with Bellal, Plaban and Krishna scoring one goal each while Railway SC thrashed Victoria SC 6-0, thanks to three goals from Touhiduzzaman. Apart from Touhiduzzaman's strikes, Saddam Hossain scored two goals and Akib Javed netted one goal in the one-sided affair.

Meanwhile, the two-day inter-club players' transfer for the Second Division Hockey League will get underway from today instead of Saturday, said a press release yesterday. Ten clubs will take part in the league.

Play like

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all-rounder will play a major role in the tournament. "I'd put my money on him (Riyad). He's got the ability to change the entire scenario of a game," he said.

Echoing Hassan's views, another former captain, Faruque Ahmed felt that the team's middle-order needed to be more consistent. "I watched the team play in Ireland and the batsmen were looking for big shots even when the required run-rate was quite manageable. We need to concentrate on this area," he said. He also reckoned that left-handed batsman Junaed Siddiqui could do well with the long handle and that he should make it through to the starting eleven.

Faruque's judgement was reflected in the last two warm-up games, where the Bangladesh middle order found it difficult to carry on the momentum set by the top three.

Fed Cup from Oct 5



SPORTS REPORTER

The Grameenphone Federation Cup will begin on October 5 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium instead of the earlier schedule of September 24.

The qualifying round for the tournament, the Federation Shield, is scheduled to be completed by September 23 and top three finishers from each of two venues will join ten clubs of the professional football league in the Federation Cup.

The decision was taken yesterday at a meeting of the professional football league committee, which also rejected Rahmatganj MFS's appeal to allow them to play in the Bangladesh Premier League despite being relegated from the top flight last season.

The meeting however accepted the same appeal from Chittagong Abahani for allowing them chance to play in the Bangladesh Championship League, a second-tier professional football league, despite being relegated.

"We want a team outside the capital in the Bangladesh Championship League. That's why we accepted the appeal of Chittagong Abahani," Abdus Salam Murshedy, chairman of professional football league, told the reporters after the meeting.

The committee also watched the video footage of Brothers Union football manager Amer Khan's comments on the fixed match at Ekattar TV but the committee again decided to request the authority the television channel to provide full uncut video footage instead of three minutes and 28 seconds that was provided recently.

"It is not possible to reach a decision on the basis of video footage of three minutes and 28 seconds and we will request them again. If they won't provide full video footage, then we will try to reach a conclusion," said Salam.

Tigers enjoy day

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use the next two days before the match, so the break is important," said Mashrafe with a smile.

But it was not fully possible for them to keep away from talking about cricket as they had to talk to the media during the break and it was Mashrafe's turn yesterday to talk about their preparation and chances in the ICC World Twenty20.

The "Narail Express" talked about the importance of the first match against New Zealand on September 21.

"Probably it is the most important game for us. Over the last few months all our preparations have been centred on the two group matches and this one in particular. We have played a good number of Twenty20s and there have been a lot of positives that have come out. I firmly believe that if we execute our plans right and every player plays at least between 70 to 80 percent of their capability then we will be a very tough opposition to beat," opined Mashrafe adding that New Zealand always do well and are formidable in world tournaments.

Describing the team as a settled one, the experienced campaigner however said that it would have been great for

them if they could play against some tough opponents over the last six months.

"Obviously, if you consider the last practice match against Ireland then I would say it was very disappointing to lose. However, that is a wakeup call and a chance for us to fine tune the areas where we need improvement. Maybe the opposition we faced were not close to the standards of New Zealand or Pakistan but the good thing is that we have had excellent match practice over the last

SL-ZIM SCOREBOARD

FROM PAGE 16				
Chigumbura b A Mendis				19
Ervine st Sangakkara b J Mendis				10
Waller lbw b J Mendis				0
Cremer b J Mendis				17
Utseya c Jayawardene b A Mendis				1
Jarvis lbw b A Mendis				0
Mathews	2	0		7
Perera	2	0		16
J Mendis	4	0		24
				3

Rain mars BD-Nepal friendly

SPORTS REPORTER

Heavy downpour in Kathmandu ruined Bangladesh's first-ever international friendly match against Nepal yesterday as the match commissioner deemed the pitch condition at the Dasrath Stadium unplayable.

Following consistent downpour in the last few days in the capital of Nepal, there was a major concern over holding the match as the Nepalese organisers have also been struggling to hold domestic league matches due to poor condition of the field.

The cancellation of the first friendly means Bangladesh are getting two more days to prepare for the second and final friendly against the same team on Thursday.

WIHP rule Day 3

SPORTS REPORTER

A five-for by slow-left-arm Shaker Ahmed was the only bright spot for the BCB National Cricket Academy as they slumped to 184 for 7 on the rain-hit third-day of the four-day game, after the West Indies High Performance side declared at 534 for 9.

Despite a decent start, the Bangladeshi batsmen lost their way as openers, Soumya Sarkar and Mizanur Rahman, were sent back to the pavilion in consecutive overs. The Academy side were caught in a spin-web of sorts as Carlos Brathwaite and Jahmar Hamilton rocked the top order. The spinners shared five wickets between them. Verasammy's arm-ball in particular was difficult to read as the bowler got three crucial wickets.

A 43-run partnership between captain Mahmudul Hassan and Mominul Haque briefly revived the innings, before Mominul was caught off Verasammy, while playing a defensive shot. Tail-ender Shaker Ahmed and Muktar Ali safely negotiated the last few overs of the day as the NCA avoided the embarrassing prospect of being bowled out within a day.

Earlier, Shaker Ahmed got the priced wicket of Kyle Hope, who was caught in front after adding just three runs to his overnight score. Ahmed ended the day with figures of 5 for 115.

SCORES IN BRIEF
WEST INDIES HP: 534-9 in 121 overs (Hope 217, Fletcher 105, Lesporis 97, Verasammy 42; Shaker 5-115, Apu 2-127, Dollar 1-73)
BCB NCA: 184 -7 in 66 overs (M Hasan 46, M Hoque 32; P Verasammy 3-69, C Brathwaite 2-22)

Commissioner Gold Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Walton Dhaka Commissioner Gold Cup football tournament began yesterday at four different venues with all the hosts except for Manikganj winning.

Hosts Shariatpur defeated Rajbari 1-0 at the Shariatpur Stadium with Saifur Rahman scoring the decisive goal, Gazipur also recorded an identical 1-0 win over Narsingdi at the Gazipur Stadium, thanks to a match-winning strike by Pranab while hosts Netrokona defeated Sherpur 4-1. Takhlish Ahmed struck a brace while Robin and Awal netted one goal each for Netrokona.

But hosts Manikganj suffered a 4-2 defeat against Narayangnj in tiebreaker at the Manikganj Stadium after the regulation time produced a 1-1 draw.

Gafur put Manikganj ahead but the lead was cancelled by Parvez. 17 district teams are taking part in the knockout tournament and four venue champions will advance to the semifinals to be held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.



Bangladesh national football team players engage in a light practice session at the Nepal Police Sports Ground in Kathmandu yesterday, after the scheduled match against the Nepal national team was called off due to heavy rain. PHOTO: COURTESY

Kick-boxer Ruqsana wins bronze

ANSAR AHMED ULLAH from London

Ruqsana Begum, a British kickboxing champion of Bengali origin, won a bronze medal at the Muay Thai Kickboxing World Championships in Russia recently. Ruqsana broke the Eastern European dominance at the World Championships to win the bronze medal.

The Muay Thai kick-boxer from East London reached the semifinal in the 48kg competition, where she lost on points against her Belarusian opponent. Across the weight categories professionally trained fighters from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus stood the plucky British Bengali fighter.

Ruqsana, who beat an opponent from Mauritius in the quarterfinal, before losing her semifinal match, was delighted with her performance. She said, "They're like superstars over there. I was up against some really tough opponents so I'm very proud."

"Fighters in Russia and Belarus have funding to train full-time, they have



RUQSANA BEGUM

professional coaching and nutritionists, for example, and I gave them a really hard time. "I knocked my opponent down in the first round of the semi-final, so I was really pleased. The 28 year old is the current British female Muay Thai Champion and captain of the British Muay Thai Team. Ruqsana has held her title since November 2010, and has also won a gold medal at the European Club Cup in Latvia in July 2011.

The Bengali woman has her family's full support and has become a very popular figure in East London. As well as training, Ruqsana is a coach at the charity which uses boxing as a prevention and rehabilitation model to confront the problem of child and youth participation in crime, gangs and gun violence within disadvantaged communities.

Ruqsana is also a part-qualified architect and works two days a week as a science technician at a local school. She took up boxing after she turned 18 and fights in the amateur Atomweight division.

No room for KP

AFP, London

Kevin Pietersen has been left out of England's Test squad for the tour of India as the controversial batsman pays the price for the text message scandal that has left his international career in tatters.

Pietersen was dropped for the final Test against South Africa after sending texts to opposition players that contained criticism of then England captain Andrew Strauss.

The South Africa-born star has since met England coach Andy Flower for clear-the-air talks, but there are still issues to be resolved and that meant there was no place for Pietersen on the plane to India.

'Batting issues mental'

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mindset," he explained. "I think there is no problem with the skill; rather it's a psychological problem," he added.

The fourth version of the mega event has widely been considered the most open tournament, in which case Bangladesh should be looking forward to their chances in the meet.

"Previously we never took such a preparation before the tournament as this time we played 15 matches in different conditions. We achieved 80 to 85 percent of our expectations. There might be some problems with individual improvements but overall our preparation is not bad. What we must ensure is that we do not get over-excited with the tournament. True, it's a World Cup match but it is also just a cricket match and we must think along those lines," responded the

wicketkeeper-batsman, who won nine matches out of fifteen, while reiterating that there is no small or big team in this version.

He admitted that as a captain it was painful for him when they lost the match against Ireland but like star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, he also said that he wants to take the positives from the defeat. "Rather than focusing too much on the defeat, the Tigers apparently seemed to be focused on their next challenge against New Zealand on September 21 at the Pallekele National Cricket Stadium.

"We have to do extra hard work in the next two days before the match against New Zealand. We are accustomed to the weather and now we have to adjust to the conditions where uncharacteristi-

cally pace bowlers get the favour. But our strength is spin bowling and you know our opponents have number of left-handed batsmen," said Mushfiqur.

The Bangladesh captain thus hinted that they are not interested in tampering with the combination that played the last two warm-up games.

Aus, India

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"Teams like Ireland have shown that the best can be beaten and we are inspired by that. We too want to beat a big team."

Mangal said it was important to live up to the expectations of fans back home in the war-ravaged nation.

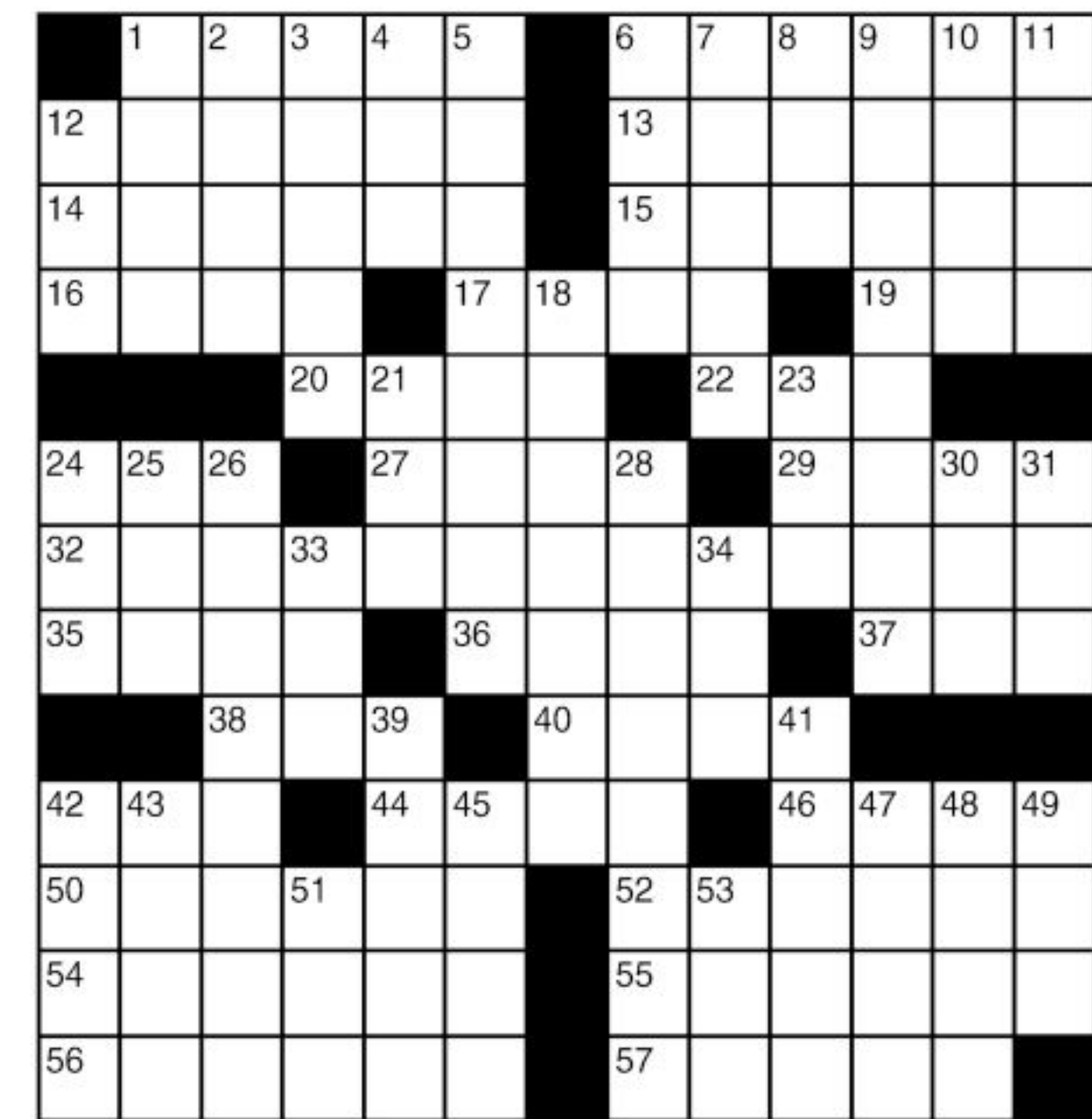
"They expect a lot from us now," he said. "Earlier our fans just wanted us to match the big sides, now they want us to beat them."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	40 "The Thin Man" pooch	3 Off abbr.	21 Wanted-poster abbr.
1 Abacus components	42 Green machine?	4 Calendar abbr.	23 Alien of TV lore
6 America's Cup contenders	44 Wire measures	5 At the wheel	24 Help
12 Cyclist's need	46 Author Uris	6 Bigfoot's cousin	25 "CSI" evidence
13 Ottoman, for one	50 Clutches	7 "Moon-struck" subject	26 Rough guess
14 Ill will	52 Using the Web	8 Book-keeper (Abbr.)	28 Collagist's tool
15 Perfectly	54 Give the same old story	9 Become friends	30 "The Matrix" role
16 Touse	55 Brought up	10 Not kosher	31 Always, in verse
17 Eastern potentate	56 Sailor's assent	11 Wit-nesses	33 Skater Babilonia
19 Conditions	57 Eyelid problems	12 "Let me think ..."	34 Can. prov.
20 Ganges garment		18 Strong wind of southern France	39 Suggest
22 Corrode			41 Soothe
24 Citric quaff			42 City of India
27 Smooch			43 Deuce defeater
29 Unrivaled			45 Land in the water
32 Quick pick-me-up?			47 Green acres?
35 Information			48 Change for a five
36 Cheshire countenance			49 Homer's neighbor
37 Supporting			51 Vast expanse
38 Mid-afternoon, in a way			53 Trawler need

Solution time: 27 mins.

H	I	D	B	L	A	M	V	A	L	E
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P	O	P	S	S	A	S	S	R	E	S



CRYPTOQUIP

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O F X Z A X R M F X A I F F U, C
M X C R A "V Y C S S R T T V X P M C F Y T!"

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I ASKED THE CHAUFFEUR IF WE WERE HEADED IN THE CORRECT DIRECTION, AND HE SAID "WEST ASSURED."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: H equals T