Rahmatganj, Rampur qualify for Fed Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Rahmatganj MFS booked their place in the Federation Cup after emerging champions in the Feni venue of the Grameenphone Federation Shield with a 2-1 win over Noakhali Football Academy at the Bhasa Shaheed Salam Stadium yesterday.

Atique struck a brace for Rahmatganj MFS while Babu pulled one goal back for Noakhali FA.

Hosts' Rampur Boys Club also qualified for the season's curtain-raising tournament after beating Rangpur DFA 1 0, thanks to the decisive goal by Zummon in the 68th minute. Rampur Boys ensured their berth with 4 points from three matches. Noakhali FA and Rangpur DFA will face each other to decide the last qualifier from the venue. Both of the teams have a point each from two

Meanwhile, Jessore DFA and Bangladesh Police brightened their qualification chances after beating their respective rivals at the Shamsul Huda Stadium in Jessore yesterday.

matches.

Jessore DFA beat Uttar Baridhara Club 3-1, thanks to a hattrick from Titu while Police defeated BKSP 3-2 to record their second successive victory.

Jessore have four points from three matches while Bangladesh Police have six points from two matches.

ASIAN U-14 SERIES TENNIS

Mahin wins against Abel

SPORTS REPORTER

Five Bangladeshi players got off to winning starts on the opening day of the Asian U-14 Series Tennis Tournament at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday. Mahin Reza Khan's 6-1, 6-

1win over Abel Bonduelle of France was the highlight of the wins as the other four Bangladeshi winners had their victories over compatriots. Among them, Faruk Hossain beat Lasker Zuhayr Sami 6-4, 7-5, Amio Naimol Islam beat Sharif Bandhon 6-2, 6-1, Rubel Hossain beat Rageeb Atul 6-3, 6-0 and Kawsar Ali beat Mohammad Istiaq 6-3, 6-1.

Apart from the Bangladeshi participants, Pakistan's Kaleem Syed Nofi beat Bangladesh's Sadman Arif Wamin 6-0, 6-1, Malaysia's Suresh Darrshan beat Noor Mohammad of Bangladesh 6-1, 6-2 and Pakistan's Shaibzada Ali beat Jerome Rumualdez of

Philippines 6-4, 6-3. C'Ron

FROM PAGE 18

close with both teams happy with a point until Toure intercepted a short pass in his own half and made a wonderfully leggy sprint before playing in Dzeko who put City ahead.

The game burst into life and it was the English side who were enjoying the better chances. Dzeko and Toure went close as Luka Modric and Benzema were called

from the bench for the hosts. The changes had an immediate effect as Real levelled on 75 minutes when Marcelo, who had previously favoured his left, moved

onto his right foot to curl a shot in from 25 yards. City were now attacking at will and Kolarov took advantage to hit what looked like

the winner on 84 minutes from a free-kick wide on the right that evaded Iker Casillas in the Madrid goal.

Their lead, however, was short lived during a crazy final five minutes.

It was another substitute in Benzema who turned well before shooting to level on 86

minutes. And then Ronaldo, who had started the game on fire, finished it off with the last minute winner to break

'A very tough group'

BISHWAJIT ROY from Kandy



Bangladesh can draw inspiration from their last encounter with New Zealand before their first ICC World Twenty20 group match against the Kiwis

tomorrow as they whitewashed their opponents 4-0 in October 2010 in a one-day series in Dhaka.

But the Kiwis were not ready to look too far back ahead of their group opener against the Tigers, instead taking inspiration from their recent impressive results against the India.

"That series was two years ago. We can't really go back to that; we can go only to the last couple of weeks. We beat India a week ago in their own conditions. We have got to take the momentum. The last two warm-up matches against Australia and South Africa did not quite go to plan. We have got to put that behind us and come out with a plan," said Martin Guptill, the New Zealand toporder batsman who was not on that forlorn tour in 2010.

The two sides played only one T20I so far that Bangladesh lost by ten wickets at Seddon Park in February 2010 but Bangladesh have recently improved their standing in the shortest version of the game, playing fifteen matches over the last three months in different conditions. Guptill told the media after yesterday's training session at the Pallekele International Stadium that they were well aware of Bangladesh's strength.

"It's a very tough group and it's going to be a tough game (the first match against Bangladesh), we can't take them for granted, they have got some world-class players in their side and we know that, we have respect for them and we can only control how we play. So that's the way to focus leading up to the game," the New Zealander responded when asked about whether they are in the proverbial 'group of death' with Pakistan and Bangladesh making up the formidable three-team Group D.

According to Guptill, New Zealand is not overly worried about Bangladesh's spin attack, which is their main strength.

"The way we played spin against India in Chennai in the Twenty20 match, if we can do exactly the same and just be positive I think we are going to do pretty well and give the runs on the board that we need," he explained adding that he has got a couple of partnerships with James Franklin in Twenty20 cricket over the years and hoped that he can continue with that.

But the 25-year-old batsman, who has an impressive strike rate of 124.88 and an average of 32.72, believed that T20 is an unpredictable game where one can singlehandedly take away the game from others.

"I have played some Twenty20 cricket and what I feel is that it's an unpredictable and funny game because only one person can take a game away from the other side. We are going to be on our toes in these next two games, so we can go to the Super Eights," he opined.

Commissioner Gold Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka, Munshiganj and Mymensingh moved to the zonal final of Waltan Dhaka Divisional Commissioner Gold Cup football tournament beating their respective rivals at different venues yesterday.

Four venue champions will qualify for the semifinals which will be held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on September 24 and 25.

Dhaka beat Kishorganj 1 0 to set up the Gazipur zone final against the hosts, Munsiganj beat Tangail 2-1 to book the Manikganj zonal final berth against Narayanganj.

Mymensingh defeated Jamalpur 4-3 in tiebreaker after the regulation time ended in a 1-1 draw at the Netrokona Stadium. Mymensingh will play the Netrokona.

At the Shariatpur Stadium, Faridpur beat Madaripur 1-0 to set up a semifinal clash against Rajbari.

An African affair

AFP, Hambantota



High-flying South Africa batsman Hashim Amla said his team was ready for their African neighbours Zimbabwe in their Group C match of the World Twenty20 at Hambantota on Thursday.

Zimbabwe were smarting from a big 82-run defeat at the hands of hosts Sri Lanka, with mystery spinner Ajantha Mendis registering best figures of 6-8 in all Twenty20 internationals in the tournament opener here on Tuesday.

Amla, 29, said Zimbabwe will come down hard in their last chance to stay in the tournament.

"Zimbabwe are a professional team, they must want to improve on their performance but we are coming well prepared so whatever they bring to the party, obviously we need to be better than that," Amla said on Wednesday.

Labelled as perennial "chokers" for their slumps in major events since being readmitted to international cricket in 1992, South Africa look to end their 14-year title wait after winning the ICC's knock out tournament in 1998.

For that, Amla thinks, a winning start was important. "I think we need to start well, each T20 game is different

and getting a victory for a good start, that's what we are looking for. That has been our aim, fortunately we've had a good preparation coming here," said Amla.

Led by the gutsy AB de Villiers, South Africa boost of a strong batting line-up with Jacques Kallis as their mainstay besides having a varied attack with Dale Steyn and Morne Morkel spearheading the pace department and Johan Botha and Robin Petersen as quality spinners.

Amla said South Africa's recent showings in all three zonal final against hosts forms of the game has lifted their confidence.

"A lot of people have said that there are few favorites (in the event), suddenly we take confidence that we have played good cricket over the last year or so but it's too early to tell that who the favorites are," said Amla.

Team manager Mohammad Moosajee said all-rounder Albie Morkel will give a fitness test after suffering lower back spasm.

This is Tigers

FROM PAGE 16 group matches," hoped Akram.

Akram however firmly believed that there is no scope for the young players to improve their skill by playing only T20 cricket; rather they have to make sure that they come into the team after preparing themselves.

"We are also going through a learning curve and what we understand is that one should prepare oneself before entering the shortest format of the game and the best possible way to prepare is by playing more longer-version and one-day cricket because there is no chance to improve their skill by playing T20 matches," opined Akram.

He also said that at this point in time they have no scope to think about a separate T20 team.

"We have very little options to make different teams for different versions, so we have to stick to a group of players and make sure they are good in all three formats, but things may change in future if the options wide open," said Akram.

Nafees in BD A

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Left-handed batsman Shahriar Nafees who is on a 'suspended sentence' after being found guilty of misconduct while playing in a tournament in India, has been included in the Bangladesh A side to face the West Indies High Performance (WIHP) team in a four-day game beginning on Saturday.

Nafees, who captained the A side that participated in the Shafi Darashah Tournament in Bangalore last month, was sent home just a day before the final four-day match on disciplinary grounds.

As per the action taken by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), the player will face a six-month ban and a financial penalty if he commits a similar offence in the future.

The former national opener was reported to have lost his 'cool' after he was adjudged out in a game against the Karnataka State Cricket Association XI. "I realised my mistake. I was the captain of the side and I should have taken more responsibility," Nafees had said on the day of his hearing.

Rokibul Hasan has been made the captain of the side and opener Imrul Kayes was appointed his deputy.

SQUAD

Rokibul Hasan (Captain), Imrul Kayes (Vice Captain) Shahriar Nafees, Nasiruddin Faruque, Anamul Haque, Mominul Haque, Naeem Islam, Farhad Hossain, Shahadat Hossain, Nazmul Hossain, Kamrul Islam Rabbi, Enamul Haque (Jr.), Saqlain Sajib, Dhiman Ghosh

NCA escape with draw

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER.

The four-day game at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna, between the BCB National Cricket Academy and the West Indies High Performance team ended in a draw as the Academy side, after being asked to follow-on, survived a late scare to end the fourth day at 217 for 9. In reply to the visitors' mammoth total of 535, the NCA were bowled out for 199 early on the fourth day after adding 15 runs to their overnight score.

The home side had a comparably better start to their second innings as former Bangladesh U-19 teammates Soumya Sarker and Anamul Haque shared a century stand for the second wicket. However, the Bangladesh batsmen suffered a familiar collapse after leg-spinner Yannic Cariah sent Haque back to the pavilion. The NCA lost their next eight wickets for a mere 96 runs.

It was a nerve-wracking finish to the day as the last Bangladesh pair successfully denied the visitors a deserving victory. Opener Sarker, amidst the gloom, managed to score a steady 118 that eventually helped the home side steal a draw. Cariah's leg-breaks were a constant threat to the Bangladeshi batsmen as the 20-year-old bowler ended up with figures of 5 for 79, taking his match tally to 8 for 115. Spinner Permaul Verasammy who had picked up three wickets in the first innings, took three more wickets in the second including the

prize scalp of Sarker. Kyle Hope was declared the man of the match for his emphatic double-century in the first innings. The visitors will be travelling to Dhaka to play the second four-day game against Bangladesh.

England win Div-I hockey warm up

AFP, Colombo

Reigning World Twenty20 champions England overcame a batting failure to bounce back and defeat Pakistan by 15 runs in a warmup match in Colombo on Wednesday.

England, shot out for 111 after electing to take first strike, hit back to restrict Pakistan to 96-9 on a bowler-friendly pitch at the PSara Oval.

Siddikur's

FROM PAGE 16 the return after a two-and-ahalf-month break, Siddikur has struggled to find that form, first missing the cut in the Omega Masters in Switzerland earlier this month and later finishing in 37th position at the Yeangder Tournament Players Championship in Taipei earlier in the week.

Siddikur has specifically shown vulnerability in chilly and windy conditions whereas in most cases he flourished as soon as the sun came out. Provided the weather remains mild and sunny, Siddikur will be expected to at least make it to the top ten this time at the Higashi Hirono Golf Club. The 1.9 million dollar event will feature the big guns of the Asian tour including Thaworn Wiratchant and Thongchai Jaidee of Thailand, Jeev Milkha Singh and Gaganjeet Bhullar of India and a host of Japanese and Korean stars.

Siddikur will be teeing off at 8:21am local time as part of the 10th group which also includes Brad Kennedy and Cho Min-gyu.

South Africa's Morne Morkel takes a break from practice at the Suriyawewa Mahinda Rajapakse International Cricket Stadium in Hambantota yesterday. His side take on their southern African neighbours Zimbabwe in the World Twenty20 here today. PHOTO: AFP

Kandy poses tricky test

FROM PAGE 16

responded the Bangladesh head coach when asked about the new behaviour of pitches in Sri Lanka.

"It (the spinners) is one of our core strengths, and we have different types of spinners. We could use six or seven spinners if we wanted to. I am also pleased with the seam attack. We have a raw fast bowler in young Raju (Abul Hossain), we have some high quality swing and seam from Mash (Mashrafe Bin Mortaza) and Shafiul (Islam). And a few overs from Zia (Ziaur Rahman) and also have an all-rounder like Forhad Reza," he added.

Pybus was very much optimistic with his team's chances in the tournament despite seeing his side lose the last warm-up match against Ireland.

"We have to play well to win the game. On the day it could be anybody's game, but I'm pretty happy where we are at now. Bottom line is our focus is on the first game. I thought we were pretty poor against Ireland and it could be because we spent three days

travelling to the West Indies, four days playing and another three days to travel back. So I will give the boys a bit of grace there. But we had a good training day today and another training day tomorrow to get back into the game," he explained when he was asked about his team's realistic target

Though there was talk about the middleorder batting problems over last few days, the Tigers coach however emphasises on the improvement of the fielding performance as he believed there was a lack of intensity in

New Zealand team by saying that the Kiwis have pretty good depth in their batting and bowling and they are a very good unit, but said that he was looking forward to the first

"It's important we are on top of our game; being calm and composed is one of the biggest things in Twenty20 cricket," Pybus opined adding that he would not call Group Dagroup of death.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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"MTNDYWJ CUEOYFRQYHV." Saturday's Cryptoquip: WHEN I READ OF THAT BREATHTAKING FEAT IN THE WORLD RECORD

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: M equals T

Left-arm spinner Brag Indies in their final group World T20 in the Caribbean, Hogg, the oldest player in game in Colombo on Saturhad briefly slipped below the tournament at 41, struck Ireland in the T20 rankings with his second delivery earlier this month. when he trapped Gary The slump started with

Aussie lesson for Ireland

Wilson leg-before for five. the first ball of the innings, Kevin O'Brien top-scored which skipper William with 35, adding 52 for the Porterfield hooked down fifth wicket with elder fine-leg's throat to the great brother Niall (20) after delight of bowler Watson. Ireland had slipped to 33-4 In-form batsman Paul by the eighth over. Stirling was caught at third

man off Mitchell Starc and

Ed Joyce holed out to mid-off

against Glenn Maxwell after

making 16.

The O'Brien brothers were dismissed in the space of four balls from Watson. Australia play the West

day. Ireland take on the West Indies on Monday. Two teams from the group will advance to the Super Eights round.

SCORES IN BRIEF IRELAND 123 for 7 in 20 overs (O'Brien 35, Joyce 16; 28 Standard 31 Bakery Watson 3-26, Starc 2-20) AUSTRALIA

Warner 26, 0'Brien 1-18) Result: Australia won by 7 wickets. Man-of-the-match: Shane Watson.

125 for 3 in 15.1 overs (Watson 51 not out,

Mukto Bihanga and Dhaka Wanderers Club recorded victories in their respective matches of the Green Delta Insurance First Division

SPORTS REPORTER

Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday. Mukto Bihanga defeated Shishu Kishor Sangha 2-1 with Parvez Rashid and Robin scoring one goal each while

Ashraful pulled one back for

Shishu Kishor Sangha. In the day's other match, Dhaka Wanderers Club thrashed Bachelors SC 3-0, thanks to a goal each from Nitin Kumar, Sumon Aliand Mohsin.

B chess

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master Abu Sufian Shakil took solo lead in the Access Group 38th National Chess B Championship at the close of the fifth round at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall

room yesterday. Shakil defeated FM Taibur Rahman to secure maximum five points from as many matches while three players -- FM Debaraj Chatterjee, FM Mohammad Javed and FM Nasir Ahmed -- shared the second position with 4.5 points each.

Booters pray

FROM PAGE 16 the practice session due to fever, according to a message from physio Dolilur Rahman who informed that Sujan

might miss the friendly today. If the match takes place, it will be the first-ever international friendly for Bangladesh, who won nine times against the Himalayan nation in their

16 meetings so far. Bangladesh's tour to Nepal for the two international friendly matches is estimated to cost Tk 16 lakh. Bangladesh requested the Nepal Football Association (NFA) to organise the tour and stage the matches

during the pre-season,

informed BFF acting general

secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag. He also informed that the month of September usually sees pleasant weather in the Himalayan nation which is likely to host the next SAFF Championship in September,

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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target

A T M M I L S L E O N G R A S P S O N L I N E REARED STYES

47 Egyptian

50 Ram's mate

goddess

BOOK, I CRIED "GUINNESS GRACIOUS!"

fielding in the last two games. Pybus highly praised the strength of the game against the New Zealand team.