

Windies touch down today

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The West Indies cricket team are scheduled to arrive in Dhaka today at 8:00 am to play what will be their fifth series against hosts Bangladesh. A glance at the matches between the two teams reveals a comparatively better statistic for Bangladesh than its record against the other Test playing nations.

So far, the teams have faced each other eight times in the Test arena with the West Indies winning four of them. The two matches that Bangladesh won took place in 2009 in West Indies when the Tigers swept aside a weakened West Indian line-up 2-0. However, the West Indies had their revenge last year, thrashing the Tigers at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium by 229 runs after a Chittagong draw to take the series.

In One Day Internationals (ODIs), the visitors have come out victorious in 14 of the 20 face-offs. The latest series took place last year in October when the West Indies won the ODI series 2-1.

The scenario leading into the upcoming series however isn't remotely similar to the team's previous visits. West Indies arrive in Bangladesh as the world Twenty20 champions and will definitely be exuding confidence.

In Sunil Narine, they have got a spinner who has deceived the best in the world. He is bound to be at his destructive best on the slow pitches of Bangladesh. Throw in spinners Narsingh Deonarine and Verasammy Permaul, who recently had a good run in Bangladesh with the West Indies High Performance team into the mix and it makes for a pretty lethal spin-attack. Chris Gayle's return to the national fold in June has changed the fortunes for the visitors in all versions of the game and he along with Marlon Samuels will play a pivotal role in their team's batting line-up.

The West Indies have won two out of the eight Test

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WHAT EYES CAN'T SEE, MIND DOES

This young man (above) and two others (inset) are three of one hundred visually impaired athletes who gathered at the Bangladesh Chess Federation Hall Room yesterday to engage in a cerebral warfare called the Grameenphone 11th National Special Chess tournament. The four-day meet will produce an academic winner come Wednesday from a triumphant collective soul with a common goal of defying adversity.

PHOTOS: FIROZ AHMED

Rain disrupts 2nd round

SPORTS REPORTER

Rain and clouds dominated the National Cricket League (NCL) yesterday as the third day of three out of the four games of the second round were washed off due to incessant rainfall. The match at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna was the only game which saw the light of day. Although the match between Rangpur and Khulna was briefly halted, the day did see 70 overs.

Continuing from their overnight score of 112 for 4, the hosts were bowled out for 249 runs. Mohammad Mithun was Khulna's mainstay, scoring a fluent 89, an innings which saw 15 boundaries. Alauddin Babu continued his good run and added three more wickets to his name yesterday, to finish with 6 for 56.

However, whatever lead the visitors gained was nullified after their batting order collapsed in the second innings. The Rangpur batsmen

ALAUDDIN BABU ... 6 for 56

shared between Soumya Sarkar and Abdur Razzaq. Khulna captain Razzaq avoided using their strike bowler Shakib Al Hasan in the slippery conditions yesterday.

Currently Rangpur lead by 205 runs and will want to make the most of their last three wickets today, in order to set a challenging target on the last day. With a day gone due to

incessant rain, the majority of the other games are headed towards stalemates, especially as the forecast is for more rain over the next two days. The game at the Shaheed Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi is almost bound to see no result as the hosts are currently positioned at 466 for 3 in their first innings against Barisal. Sylhet are yet to end their first innings at the BKSP, trailing Chittagong by 179 runs. The match in Dhaka between Dhaka and Dhaka Metro might see a result yet with Dhaka Metro ahead by 168 runs in the second innings with four wickets in hand.

SCORES IN BRIEF

RANGPUR: First innings 388 all out in 117.3 overs (Naeem 127, Ariful 75; Razzaq 5-103, Shakib 3-111). Second innings 66 for 7 in 30 overs (Ariful 17; Soumya 4-18, Razzaq 3-27)

KHULNA: 249 all out in 81.1 overs.

Siddikur finishes on 76th

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's premier golfer Siddikur Rahman finished 76th in the WGC HSBC Champions which concluded at the Mission Hills Golf Club in Dongguan, China yesterday. The 27-year old golfer carded an even par round in the last day to tally 13-over-par 301 over the four rounds. Siddikur carded three birdies and three bogeys on the day to match the par score on the final day. The slightly better performance didn't help him much as he started the round in 76th, thanks to 77, 76 and 76 respectively in the first three rounds.

A total of 78 golfers

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Riyad's focus on performance

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Contrary to popular belief, Mahmudullah Riyad, the vice-captain of the Bangladesh cricket team believes that he isn't just another 'automatic entry' to the national squad. Riyad, who hasn't had the best of starts in the National Cricket League (NCL), believed that it would take some time for players to shift gears from Twenty20 cricket to the longer version of the game.

"Honestly speaking, I never think that way. I have to perform to be a part of the team and it's as simple as that. I don't play with the vice-captain tag in my mind. I play as a normal player, whatever the situation," claimed Riyad.

Despite his ordinary performance at the NCL, Riyad is likely to feature in Bangladesh's squad against the West Indies, as the national selectors claimed

that they were mostly focussing on the players' 'reputation rather than their performance in the league'.

Riyad who has so far scored a total of 29 runs in his last three innings for Dhaka, claimed that the conditions in Mirpur were 'difficult' to bat on. "The match against Rajshahi was played on an uneven pitch. The pitch that we are currently playing on (Dhaka vs Dhaka Metro) is comparatively better. The conditions here are not that easy," said Riyad.

He further stated that playing in Mirpur right before the West Indies series can give the national players an advantage over the visitors. "The West Indies have a strong bowling attack. But the conditions in Mirpur are difficult and playing here might give us an edge," said the vice-captain.

Riyad stated that while it was difficult to enter the 'Test mode' after playing a series of Twenty20 games over the last six

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Groundsmen at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur unroll the pitch covers as rain sets in yesterday morning. The third day's play of the National Cricket League match between Dhaka and Dhaka Metro was washed out because of periodic rains throughout the day.

PHOTO: STAR

PFCA kicks off for professionalism

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

A nine-member convener committee for the Professional Football Club Association (PFCA) was formed in a bid to strengthen professionalism in every sector of club, players and football federations. But instead of focusing on internal professionalism, the officials highlighted the typical issues like league schedules, players' payment and sub-standard refereeing following their first meeting at a city hotel yesterday.

The initiative of forming a club association is certainly a positive move, provided the intent is to bring internal professionalism into the running of a football club. But the reality is that the clubs hardly function with paid employees, hardly ever

conduct internal audits, do not sign players to long-term agreements and most importantly, have no long term growth agenda as regards developing youth systems or coaches. Instead, the meeting only served to highlight the current problems the clubs themselves have been facing.

There had been another club association before the start of the professional football league in the 2006-07 season but that association had a poor reputation of depriving the booters through 'gentlemen agreement' and introducing 'pool quota'. Hence, there was an obvious question to the clubs officials from the journalists whether the club association is going to control the players again.

But according to the line of the officials, the formation of this club association has no such ill-motives and is rather for the

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Maruful takes steps to UEFA A license

SPORTS REPORTER

Maruful Haque, an AFC A-license coach, is all set to participate in the UEFA A-license preparatory course. The head coach of Sheikh Russel KC is scheduled to leave here for United Kingdom on November 7.

Maruful is so far the first Bangladeshi football coach who is going to take part in the seven-day UEFA A-license preparatory course. Last year he refused to take part in the UEFA A-license course directly.

"The duration of the preparatory course is seven days. After that, I

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