

Poor start  
again by  
Siddikur

SPORTS REPORTER

In what has become a pattern for ace Bangladesh golfer Siddikur Rahman, he got off to a horrendous start at the Barclays Singapore Open with a score of four-over-par 75 seeing him finish in joint 132nd position after the first round yesterday.

It was an entirely different experience for first round leader Thomas Bjorn of Denmark who carded a five-under-par 66 to take the solo lead, leading Simon Khan of England, Pablo Martin of Spain and Chinnarat Phadungsil of Thailand by a stroke at the Sentosa Golf Club.

Siddikur, who is tenth on the Asian Tour Order of Merit, endured a particularly nightmarish back nine in which he triple-bogeyed in the tenth hole before adding two more bogeys in the twelfth and fourteenth. The only bright spot was a birdie in the first hole, which was more than offset by his poor performance over the rest of the day.

**Nat'l A chess underway**

SPORTS REPORTER

Healthcare Pharmaceuticals Ltd 38th National A Chess Championship got underway yesterday at the Media Center of Bangladesh Olympic Association without two Grandmasters Abdullah Al Rakib and Enamul Hossain Rajib who skipped the championship citing tiredness following two successive international tournaments in India.

The Bangladesh Chess Federation and commerce minister Ghulam Mohammed Quader inaugurated the championship while managing director of sponsor company Alauddin Ahmed, BCF general secretary Shayiful Tarique were among others present.

Holder GM Ziaur Rahman, runner-up GM Niaz Mursheed, GM Reefat Bin Sattar, IM Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar, FM Nasir Ahmed, FM Debaraj Chatterjee and Golam Mostafa Bhuiyan won their respective first round games.

**Forget the past**

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The Tigers, who began their national camp at 9 am yesterday, went through a series of drills before hitting the nets at the Bangladesh Cricket Board's National Cricket Academy. "It's a shame that the practice games couldn't go ahead... But I was extremely happy with our practice sessions. We have four more days of practice and my aim is to train the boys in the best possible way," said Jurgenssen.

The newly appointed coach stated that his main focus would be on the first session of the match. "We have to start well on day one. As far as I am concerned, we have to play the first session well. We have to take it session by session," he said.

The Tigers will continue with their training schedule in the morning. The West Indies on the other hand will be taking the day off.

# Boost for DFAs

## Football

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A day after his claim that Bangladesh is targeting the 2022 Football World Cup, Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin took the first small step towards that goal when he announced yesterday that the federation will spend FIFA's yearly allocation of 2.5 lakh dollars (Tk 2 crore) to develop district football.

Since the formation of DFAs in 64 districts and seven divisions in 2008, football activities at district level have reduced drastically due to a lack of funds as the government only allocates funds to its affiliated bodies of District Sports Associations (DSA).

Even BFF president Salahuddin could hardly pay any attention to the revival of district football in his first four-year stint, save for a Tk 50,000 disbursement to each district, but the BFF boss promised to take care of district football after being elected for his second term in April this year.

"There might have been a misunderstanding among us about why I didn't give attention to

Reviving district football was one of

Salahuddin's three election manifestos, the other two being the formation of a strong national team and starting a football academy in Sylhet.

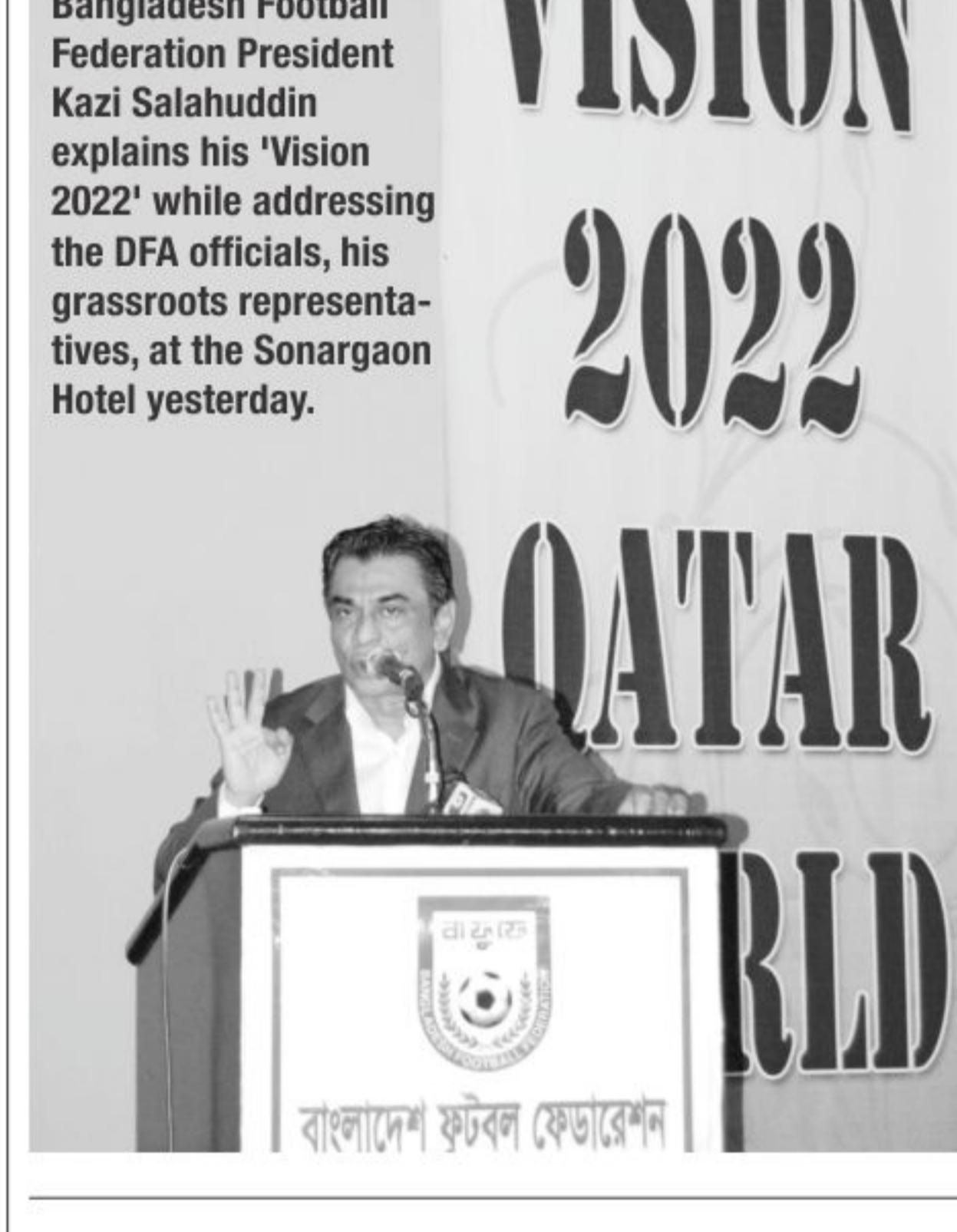
"It is a day I have long been waiting for and I am announcing that from now on the FIFA donation will be spent behind the development of district football. I hope you will see the benefits in district football after four years," said Kazi Salahuddin in his welcome speech to the football leaders of the districts and divisions at the Sonargaon Hotel yesterday.

Having pledged support for the DFA leaders to develop the country's football, Salahuddin instructed them to start the district league by December.

Manjur Kader, the chairman of the BFF District Football Association Committee, assured that his committee is ready to help the DFAs in every sector, saying that they are even willing to visit each of the districts to talk with the DC and SP to solve the problems regarding the grounds, which are properties of the government.

AIM Nasir, chairman of Chittagong Divisional Football Association and president of District Football Associations, ensured that they would help the BFF to succeed in all programmes but urged the game's governing body to ensure security in each of the grounds and provide referees of requisite quality.

Nasir also urged the BFF boss to place priority on allocating more funds to the least developed districts instead of distributing equally.



## Bold pick by selectors

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TV screen (smiling). There had been talk about an off-spinner for a long time and because of that I had a target to fill the vacuum. But I know I have a long way to go to establish myself in the national team," added the young bowler.

The question for the chief selector was whether the panel would be able to patient with Shohag as it is common knowledge that it often takes time to establish an off-spinner in the team.

"You know our policy is to give a player enough opportunity once he gets the call and it will be no exception for Shohag Gazi. We are really hopeful about his success," said a confident Akram, who with his panel trimmed the squad from a 22-member preliminary squad.

Many were however surprised to see left-arm spinner Enamul Haque not in the squad but Akram said that Enamul lost out to Elias Sunny for the second left-arm spinner's role behind Shakib Al Hasan.

"Enamul is bowling brilliantly, but there's a lot of competition among the left-arm spinners here. We discussed with Saqlain [Mushtaq] and decided to go with Elias Sunny, because he did well in the last Test. His economy rate too is very good," Akram explained the reason behind the absence of Enamul.

There was however a lack of clarity about some batting selections as the selectors had to go on reputations and performances in the last two Tests.

"We wanted the three-day match to be played because we are concerned about two or three places. We considered reputation, the last two Test series and overall experience of the players to pick the first Test team.

"We have tried to play the same team in ODIs and T20s. We play fewer Tests and we haven't played one in 11 months. I think there are a few places that are up for grabs, and no one has established themselves in those positions," said Akram.

## BCB president

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While I will also talk with NSC by next Sunday," said Papon yesterday at the BCB's headquarters in Mirpur.

"Everything now depends on NSC but one thing I want to make sure is that we will progress according to the law so that we don't face any legal complications in the future," he added.

He however hinted that he will love to see the present organisers running the show after the expiration of the present committee's tenure.

"I would not mind if this current committee gets an extension but it may set a bad precedent. On the other hand, if there is an interim or ad-hoc committee the personnel would not be much different from the current committee, but as I said everything is in the hands of the NSC," opined Papon.

district football during my first four-year tenure. Actually, I wanted to regularise tournaments and leagues in Dhaka and now that it is in a steady position I have shifted my focus to district football.

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## Aus-SA first Test starts today

AFP, Brisbane

Skipper Michael Clarke wants Australia's batsmen to blunt the vaunted South African pace attack by waging a war of attrition.

The Proteas boast Test cricket's two top-ranked bowlers -- Dale Steyn and Vernon Philander -- but Clarke says Australia's best chance of dethroning the number one ranked South Africans is to wear down their strike weapons.

The tourists have only brought four pace bowlers to Australia and Clarke senses an opportunity to erode their effectiveness throughout the three Tests.

Clarke, who has still to decide on his own bowling attack, wants batsmen to occupy the crease for long periods to test the physical endurance of Steyn, and Philander.

## Azharuddin relieved

AFP, New Delhi

A court in India on Thursday overruled the life ban imposed on former national cricket captain Mohammad Azharuddin in 2000 for match-fixing, posing a major challenge to the sports' ruling body.

The Andhra Pradesh High Court in Azharuddin's home city of Hyderabad upheld his petition against the ban, which followed a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) report in 2000 that found the cricketer guilty of corruption.



BCB director GS Hasan Tamim (C) declares Social Islami Bank Ltd as the official ticket vendor for Bangladesh's home series against the West Indies at the board's Mirpur headquarters yesterday. Also seen in the picture are SIBL managing director Shafiqur Rahman (L) and Rizwan Bin Farouq, managing director of Axiom Technologies Ltd.

PHOTO: STAR

## Tickets on sale from Sunday

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