

Nigeria players celebrate with the 2013 African Cup of Nations trophy after winning the final against Burkina Faso at the Soccer City Stadium in Johannesburg on Sunday.

AFP

РНОТО:

Nigeria end 19-yr drought

Football

AFP, Soweto

Nigeria ended a 19-year Africa Cup of Nations title drought Sunday with a 1-0 final victory over Burkina Faso at Soccer City thanks to a late first-half goal from Sunday Mba.

It was a result that took winning coach Stephen Keshi into the record books as he equalled the feat of late Egyptian Mahmoud El Gohary by winning gold medalsasaplayerandacoach.

Among the rewards for the Super Eagles was a \$1.5 million first prize and a place at the FIFA Confederations Cup in Brazil, where they will face world and European champions Spain, Tahiti and Uruguay.

Nigeria were forced into a late prematch change when striker and fourgoal leading scorer Emmanuel Emenike was ruled out by a hamstring injury sustained in the semi-final rout of Mali and experienced Ikechukwu Uche took his place.

Burkina Faso were able to retain the team that started against Ghana in a semifinal settled by a shoot-out after the red card given to midfielder Jonathan Pitroipa was rescinded when the referee admitted he erred.

It was only the third time the countries have met in the 56-year competition with Nigeria beating then-Upper Volta 4-2 in 1978 and Burkina Faso snatching a stoppagetime 1-1 draw in a Nelspruit group game last month.

The Mba goal gave the Super Eagles a deserved 1-0 half-time lead after 45 minutes that followed a predictable script with Nigeria dominating possession and scoring chances while the Burkinabe relied largely on counter-attacks.

Mba, one of two home-based stars

PAST WINNERS

2000: Cameroon 2002: Cameroon 2004: Tunisia 2006: Egypt 2008: Egypt 2010: Egypt 2012: Zambia

in the starting line-up, struck on 40 minutes with a penalty-box flick over Mohamed Koffi and a left-foot shot into the far corner past helpless goalkeeper Daouda Diakite.

It was an opportunist goal by Mba and his second of the tournament, having struck a superb matchwinner in the 2-1 quarterfinal defeat of pre-tournament title favourites

Nigeria should have taken the lead much earlier as Diakite spilled a cross on 10 minutes into the path of Brown Ideye, whose shot at an

unguarded goal was just too high. A combination of Nigerian

midfield creativity and a couple of defensive howlers by the Burkinabe offered several half chances to the Super Eagles that were squandered.

The early second-half exchanges mirrored the first period with the Nigerians pressing for a second goal that would leave opponents fielding a lone striker in Aristide Bance with a mountain to scale.

Diakiate did well to push away a hard, low Ideye cross-cum-shot and Moses should have done better in a two-on-one situation that favoured the Eagles only to timidly surrender possession with the Burkinabe goal in sight. Although Spain-based Uche was a

goal-scoring star of the qualifying campaign, he was making no impact on the final and gave way to Ahmed Musa nine minutes after half-time.

There was another Nigerian substitution not long after -- this time enforced -- with full-back Elderson Echiejile limping off to be replaced by Juwon Oshaniwa, while the Burkinabe introduced Wilfried Sanou for Florent Rouamba.

As the game moved into the final quarter there were chances at both ends with unmarked Musa slipping as he was poised to shoot inside the box and a Sanou drive at the other end finishing just wide of the far post.

Mamun, Mithun banned

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Russel KC will miss the services of Mamunul Islam and Mithun Chowdhury in their crucial encounter of the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League against Muktijoddha KC on Wednesday as the BFF disciplinary committee yesterday handed them one-match ban for misbehaviour with the assistant referee.

According to BFF press release, Mamun and Mithun were handed onematch ban as they hurled abuse toward the assistant referee following their 1-0 defeat at the hands of Mohammedan SC on Saturday.

Sheikh Russel official Shahjahan Kabir and ballboy Kalam have also been given stadium ban during the ongoing league as Shahjahan hurled abuse and hit the door of referees' dressing room after the match while Kalam assaulted the referee physically.

Sheikh Russel have also been fined for Tk 20,000 for the misdemeanour.

Rangpur

FROM PAGE 16 caught off Taijul Islam in the eighth over where as Shamsur departed in the 13th. Rajshahi's Mukhtar was the pick of the bowlers as he ended with figures of 3 for 25.

Zeballos denies Nadal

Tennis

AFP, Vina del Mar

Horacio Zeballos denied Rafael Nadal a fairytale finish to his comeback tournament on Sunday, rallying to hand the Spaniard a rare clay-court defeat in the 410,200-dollar ATP event here.

Zeballos, ranked 73rd in the world and playing in just his second ATP Tour final, rallied to beat the former world number one 6-7 (2/7), 7-6 (8/6), 6-4.

He became just the third player -- along with Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer -to beat Nadal in a clay court final, quite an achievement for the Argentinian despite the fact that Nadal was playing his first tournament in seven months.

"It's a dream for me," said Zeballos. "To be able to play a final against Nadal was already good enough for me. It's a moment that will stay in my memory for the rest of my life." Nadal was back in action this week for

the first time since a surprise secondround exit at Wimbledon in June. Since then he had been sidelined by a

torn tendon and inflammation in his left knee, with his return this year further delayed by a virus.

Now ranked fifth in the world, 11-time Grand Slam champion Nadal was the top seed and had lost just 14 games en route to

the final. "It was a great tournament for me," Nadal said. "If we take everything, it was

positive. "It's true I wanted to win the final but it wasn't possible. He made things better than me and I didn't play my best match.

"I just need to keep working, practising with hope, motivation and the right attitude. I hope it's the beginning of a lot of good things for me."

Neither player managed a break of serve in the first two sets. They traded breaks in the first two games of the third before Zeballos -- clearly gaining confidence -- broke Nadal at love in the final game to wrap up the victory in two hours and 46 minutes.

Nadal had saved two break points in his first service game of the first set -- the only break chances of the opening frame.

He dominated the tiebreaker but once again in the second set Nadal couldn't break through against Zeballos' potent serve.

Zeballos saved two break points in the fourth game, and worked out of a 15-30 jam in the 10th to hold serve and knot the set at 5-5.



Spain's Rafael Nadal cuts a forlorn figure after losing the ATP tournament final against Argentina's Horacio Zeballos in Vina del Mar on Sunday. PHOTO: AFP

Ash burns bright

intentions clear right from the very first over when he dispatched Forhad Reza for two boundaries. In the next over, Ashraful went one better as he smashed Zadran for two consecutive boundaries towards the midwicket region and smacked asix over long on off.

Despite Ashraful's brilliance the match was evenly balanced in the first half as Dhaka lost three crucial wickets --Tillakaratne Dilshan, Shakib Al Hasan and Anamul Haque -- in three overs. It seemed the stage was set for Ashraful -captaining the side in place of the rested Mashrafe Bin Mortaza -- to play a special hand after quite some time.

With Jason Cobb, he shared a 61-run stand for the fourth wicket, which took Dhaka to across the 100-run mark by the 12th over. Cobb scored a fluent 31 off 18 balls before being caught at deep midwicket in the 13th over. However, an unbeaten 74-run fifth-wicket partnership

between Stevens and Ashraful ensured that there were no further hiccups.

Earlier, the Khulna Royal Bengals overcame a horrible start to post a formidable 176. After crumbling to 10 for two in the second over - including the loss of in-form Shahriar Nafees -- they rode on a third-wicket partnership worth 120 off just 74 balls between Travis Birt and Jehan Mubarak, the only batsmen in the Khulna

> camp to make double figures. Birt, who scored six fours and six sixes in his 56-ball unbeaten innings, played to his strength and scored most of his runs down the ground. He frequently used the slog sweep against Dhaka's left-arm spinners and relied on his timing against the pacers. He found an able ally in Mubarak, who hit 65 off 43 and actually outscored Birt during their stand.

Alfonso Thomas was the pick of the bowlers for Dhaka as he ended with figures of three for 34. Shakib chipped in with 2 for 24.

Women's Volleyball

Rajshahi

take title

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi became unbeaten champions in the Walton Inter-District Women's Volleyball Championship with a 3-0 sets victory over Rajbari in the final at the Sultana Kamal Women's Sports Complex in Dhanmondi yesterday.

Women's cricket from Feb 16

SPORTS REPORTER

The 6th Women's Nationa Cricket League will get underway from February 16. Seven divisions --

Khulna, Sylhet, Dhaka, Barisal, Rangpur, Chittagong and Rajshahi -will take part in the competition.

The matches will be held at two different venues – the Shahid Kamruzzaman Stadium and the Rajshahi

District Stadium. The final will be held on March 9.

Suspected

FROM PAGE 16

driving license. When contacted, Dr Mallick, membersecretary of the Bangladesh Premier League's governing council said, "We will discuss the matter in detail. I can only comment on the matter after a thorough investigation."

When the pressure

has almost been a byword to his cricketing exploits. Pressure to perform, pressure to keep a baying crowd happy, and most of all pressure to be the star everyone was sure he would be. And the batsman did not miss a chance to allude to that.

"I am trying," said Ashraful. "Actually, the problem is that I scored a 100 today and tomorrow if I score 20 or 25, everybody thinks I am a flop. Sometimes a player gets out while playing good shots and there is nothing you can do about it," he said.

"If this pressure was a little less on me then it would be good The pressure is a little too much sometimes," he admitted.

And it seems that in T20 cricket, Ashraful might just have found the non-pressure cooker atmosphere he has been seeking.

"T20 captaincy is fun. It's a short version and you have to gamble. It might go for you or against you," said Ashraful. Wise words indeed.

BCB agrees to increase

committee chairman Jalal Yunus yesterday, adding that salaries across the board have been increased by 30 per cent over the last four years.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim, Abdur Razzak and Mahmudullah Riyad are in Grade A+ and their monthly salary reached Tk 1.50 lakh after the 10 per cent increase while Grade B players Rubel Hossain, Shafiul Islam and Nasir Hossain earn Tk 1 lakh. Jahurul Islam and Elias Sunny in Grade C earn Tk 75,000 per month and newcomers Shohag Gazi, Anamul Haque, Abul Hasan and Mominul Haque have been brought under BCB's rookie contracts for a monthly income of Tk 50,000.

The players also demanded a rise in match fees. Under the existing structure a player gets Tk 1 lakh for playing a Test match, a figure that increases to Tk 1.5 lakh if the match rolls into lunch on the fifth day. Match fees for ODIs is Tk 60,000 per match and Tk 35,000 per T20I.

Recently there has been a desire among the players to participate in the various T20 leagues around the world, but during the meeting the board high-ups made it clear that players must give national duty the highest priority. The board however decided to give all-rounder Shakib a NOC to play county cricket for the third successive season as his stint would not clash with national duties.

School chess

FROM PAGE 16

Govt High School shared the third position with five points each.

In Group B, Fahad Rahman of Gemcon Group beat Mawla to secure six points from as many matches while Jamim Al Hamid of Maulovibazar Lily Children Academy was in second position with five points after beating

Prottoy Chowdhury. In Group C, Tani of Motijheel Central Govt. Girls School beat Zannatul Ferdous to maintain her winning run and secured maximum six points from six matches. Shraboni Fatimatuzzohora of Bibi Marium School and Tasnim Rahman Mishel of Natore Chess Academy shared the second position with five points each.

Farashganj

FROM PAGE 16

Abahani goalkeeper Salimulla, but Pintu was there to punce on the rebound and he slotted the back right at the back of the net.

Earlier, State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarker declared the eight-team league open where BFF's senior vicepresident Abdus Salam Murshedy and sponsors Premier Bank's officials were also present.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 2 Silents 22 Sandy's 35 Legal 1 See mistress actress wrong 12-**37** Ship-Naldi 24 Long. Across 3 The wreck crosser 5 Scoun-25 "What aid gamut **39** Bill drel 4 Reprocan -8 Mine and ductive for **41** Sea entrance cell you?" 12 With 26 Made to 5 House eagle 42 Cover the 1-Across, style consume **27** Put in a 6 Boxer have cost up border, trouble front Muham-13 Bullring **45** Adjective mad as a modifier 7 Chalphoto cheer 49 Organism 29 Zero 14 Pianist lenge 30 Obtain 8 Reply Peter 51 Concept 15 Fermi's 52 Finished 9 Remove 33 Remit 53 Regret 36 Drunkhair 54 Whirlpool 16 Time on 10 Persia, ards 38 Groups of 55 Marries Earth now 56 Conclude 11 Chinaquail 57 Back talk **40** Lumhouse town 20 Deviating gang mox

19 Closed-21 Albacore, 1 Carpet style up tulip

off course **DOWN**

e.g.

23 — Aviv

24 Help on

aire"

28 Pealed

31 Commo-

tion

32 Nuptial

ment

heat

34 Dead

announce-

Million-

Solution time: 24 mins. I O T A S A S I M O V
E N M E S H M E N A G E
S T E P P E M I N U E T
P O N E P R O S N E O TOBEORNOTTOBE DOVEACT REDKELP T A R E Y E S A C E D S C A R C E I N S U R E

Yesterday's answer 1-7

17 Dine

attachment 43 Split 44 Bygone times 46 Icelandic epic 47 Cincinnati team 48 Chesapeake et al. RETELLKNEES

42 Winter

50 Scoot

truck

IAAM

12 13 16 15 29 | 30 42 | 43 46 47 54 53 56 57

CRYPTOQUIP

BIJRZNX BAOUJNJAO FSJBS

UA QAC NSJOM NAZUP FACIU

NA NSX

TAYFZYU

RAPN? TYAWWQ FXZNSXY.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BECAUSE SHE HAS A REAL KNACK FOR GETTING FOLKS HOOKED

ON POKER, IS SHE PRODUCING ANTE-BODIES? Today's Cryptoquip Clue: A equals O