

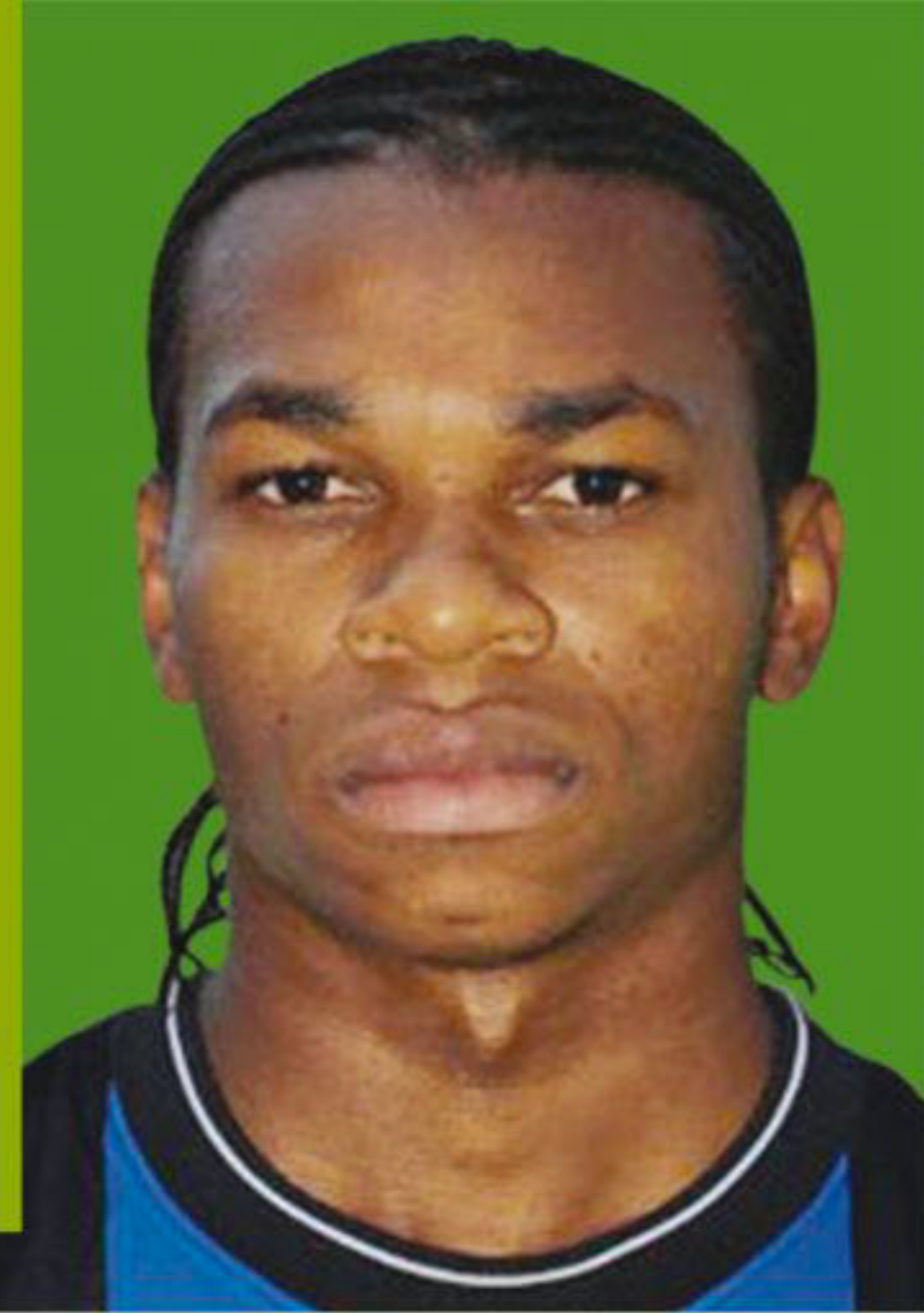
Chukwuma burgled

Inter Milan and Nigeria midfielder Joel Obi Chukwuma has fallen victim to burglars in Milan, according to reports Friday.

Chukwuma discovered the infraction upon returning home in the early hours of Friday morning, according to a report from the ANSA news agency.

The report did not say which items were taken by the burglars.

Inter Milan qualified for the last 16 of the Europa League on Thursday thanks to a 3-0 away victory over Cluj for a 5-0 aggregate win over the Romanians.



ALL EYES ON THE PINK BALL: Walton Central Zone batsman Rokibul Hasan pulls one as BCB North Zone's wicketkeeper Jahurul Islam (C) and fielder Naeem Islam (R) follows its path during the opening day of the BCL final at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. The pink ball made its debut in Bangladesh through the 5-day day-night affair.

PHOTO: STAR

Late flurry secures cut for Siddikur

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman fired six birdies late Friday afternoon to not only avoid the embarrassment of missing the cut, but also to take a respectable position after the second round of the Zaykabar Myanmar Open yesterday.

Starting the day on one-over-par, Siddikur traded two birdies for two bogeys in the front nine at the Royal Mingalardon Golf and Country Club yesterday morning, needing a further four-under-par on the back nine to make the cut. The 28-year-old golfer then fired six birdies out of the nine holes, including five on the trot, to make the cut with ease. His late exploits propped him up to joint 29th position with an aggregate score of

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World Hockey League Bangladesh take on Fiji today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will be hoping to secure their third consecutive victory in the World Hockey League Round 2 when they play against lowly Fiji at New Delhi's Dhyanchand Stadium today.

Bangladesh, the 40th ranked side in the world, will be the favourites, both on paper and form, against the 71-ranked side. Bangladesh are currently in fourth position with six points from three matches, with two excellent wins against China and Oman in their last two matches. Fiji, on the other hand, are yet to register a point as they have lost all three of their matches by big margin.

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Pink suits Rokibul

SPORTS REPORTER



Walton Central Zone's Rokibul Hasan was the only batsman who seemed comfortable against the pink ball in Bangladesh's first ever day-night first-class match played at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. He scored 18 boundaries and a six in his 125 on the first day of the five-day Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) final against BCB North Zone.

Central were bundled out for 277 in 75.5 overs and in reply, North Zone ended the day on 23 for no loss in 11 overs.

Wary of the dangers of facing the pink ball for the first time, North Zone's captain Jahurul Islam elected to field first after winning the toss. The decision paid dividends early on as the Central batsmen lost quick wickets. Central Zone tried to experiment with their opening combination as they sent Elias Sunny up the order. Sunny however was caught behind for five in the sixth over. Shamsur Rahman was the next to fall as he played on in the 13th over. Marshall Ayub, who along with Shamsur is in contention for a place

in the national squad for the tour of Sri Lanka, was caught and bowled by Forhad Reza for six in the 17th over.

Rokibul, who played 204 deliveries, held one end up while wickets fell regularly at the other end. He reached his 50 off 103 balls and upped the tempo after lunch, smacking Suvasish Roy for three consecutive boundaries in the 60th over and reached his fourth first-class century in 165 balls.

He was the eighth wicket to fall, trapped in front by Reza in the 75th over. Reza struck twice in the over as he bowled Shahadat Hossain off the very next delivery. The last wicket fell in the next over, with Suvasish claiming his second wicket, having Nurul Hasan caught behind. Reza was North's best bowler, claiming four wickets while Sanjamul Islam took three.

The BCL began on December 27 and saw selected players from four zones of the country battle it out in the longer version of the game. While the group stages of the tournament

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SCORES IN BRIEF

CENTRAL ZONE: First innings 277 all out in 75.5 overs (Rokibul 125, Nurul 31; Farhad 4-18)

NORTH ZONE: First innings 23 for no loss in 11 overs

'Need time to adjust'

SPORTS REPORTER

The pink cricket ball's debut in Bangladesh's first-class scene received mixed reactions from players of the Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) final yesterday. While Walton Central Zone's Rokibul Hasan did manage to adjust to the day-night conditions and the ball to eke out a composed century, his team-mates found life a bit more difficult.

The players' comments at the end of play mainly centred on the 'slowness' of the new ball. "Whether you deliver a slow ball or you put effort into it, the result of the delivery after the bounce is almost similar," said Mosharraf Hossain Rubel, captain of Central Zone.

Mohammad Ashraful echoed his captain's

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Shakib out of SL tour?



SPORTS REPORTER

Shakib Al Hasan may miss Bangladesh's upcoming Sri Lanka tour as the star all-rounder has been advised by a physician in Sydney to undergo surgery.

Shakib, who went to Australia on Wednesday night for a second opinion on his shin bone injury, had an appointment with Dr. Scott Burne yesterday. After checking all the reports the Sydney expert suggested that the all-rounder have surgery on his calf to eliminate the stiffness that has been causing him problems for some time.

"I talked with Dr. Burne today and he said that it would be better for Shakib if he goes under the knife. There are some stress reactions and you know he has carried these sorts of things. Shakib has been suffering from three complications (Exertional Compartmental Syndrome, Tenoperiostitis and a stress reaction) and he needs to be operated for Exertional Compartmental Syndrome," said the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) sports physician Debashish Chowdhury yesterday.

"I informed our board president (Nazmul Hassan Papon) of the developments and I also talked with Shakib, and it is likely that he

will have the surgery very soon. He will be out of action for up to six weeks after the operation. We felt that it would be better for him to skip the upcoming Sri Lanka tour so that he can be fully fit for the Zimbabwe tour in April. You know Dr. Burne is a specialist in this matter, so it would be wise for us to take his advice," he added.

Chowdhury informed that a biomechanical test will be held today and after that everything will be clear about the two other complications.

"You know there was no difference between our observation and Dr. Burne's observation. Injury management is very important for Shakib. To avoid uncertainty before every series, it would be better for everyone if he has the surgery to fully recover from the injury," said Chowdhury.

The Bangladesh team will leave for Colombo on February 28 to play two Tests, three ODIs and a T20I besides a tour opening three-day during the month-long tour.

Shakib had earlier missed the one-day series against West Indies in November-December last year after being diagnosed with a shin injury but played the recently concluded Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) where he was adjudged the player of the tournament.

CLEMON INDOOR CRICKET

Fanfare on opening day

SPORTS REPORTER

The Clemon Indoor University Cricket Tournament, a competition organised by the cricketing stars of Bangladesh's yester years - Khaled Mashud, Akram Khan and Athar Ali Khan - began with a glitzy opening ceremony at the Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor Stadium at Mirpur yesterday.

Education Minister, Nurul Islam Nahid inaugurated the event.

The competition, which is being played between 32 universities, will continue for a week with the knock-out stages on Thursday.

The opening ceremony witnessed a group of skaters perform a patriotic act which was synchronized to the tune of the song 'Ami Banglai Gaan Gai'. The young crowd's excitement coupled with the

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Pistorius gets bail

REUTERS, Pretoria

A South African court granted bail on Friday to Oscar Pistorius, charged with the murder of his girlfriend, after his lawyers argued the "Blade Runner" was too famous to pose a flight risk.

The decision by Magistrate Desmond Nair drew cheers from the athlete's family and supporters, although he appeared unmoved. Pistorius had broken down in tears earlier in the week-long hearing.

The court set bail at 1 million rand (\$113,000) and postponed the case until June 4. Pistorius was ordered to hand over firearms and passports, avoid his home and all witnesses in the case, report to a police station twice a week and not to drink alcohol. The decision followed a week of dramatic testimony about how the athlete shot dead Reeva Steenkamp at his luxury home near Pretoria in the early hours of February 14, Valentine's Day.

Prosecutors said Pistorius, 26, committed premeditated murder when he fired four shots into a locked bathroom door, hitting his girlfriend cowering on the other side. Steenkamp, 29, suffered gunshot wounds to her head, hip and arm.

Pistorius' defense team argued the killing was a tragic mistake, saying the

athlete had mistaken Steenkamp for an intruder. They said he was too famous to pose a flight risk and deserved bail to prepare for a case that has drawn worldwide attention.

"He can never go anywhere unnoticed," his lawyer Barry Roux told the court on Friday.

The 26-year-old Olympic and Paralympic star's lower legs were amputated in infancy and he has raced on carbon fiber blades.

The Olympic and Paralympic star faces life in prison if convicted of premeditated murder.

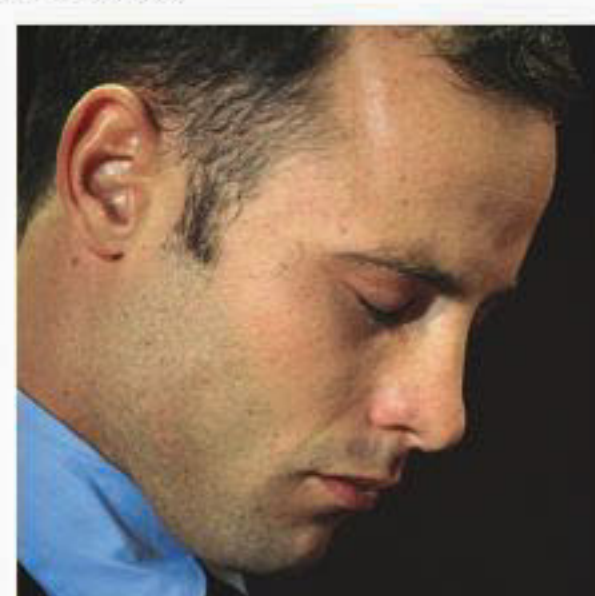
Prosecutors had portrayed him as a cold-blooded killer.

"You cannot put yourself in the deceased's position. It must have been terrifying. It was not one shot. It was four shots," prosecutor Gerrie Nels said on Friday.

In an affidavit read out in court, Pistorius said he had been "deeply in love" with Steenkamp, and Roux said his client had no motive for the killing.

Pistorius contends he was acting in self-defense after mistaking Steenkamp for an intruder, and feeling vulnerable because he was unable to attach his prosthetic limbs in time to confront the perceived threat.

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OSCAR PISTORIUS

Dutch prep for players



SPORTS REPORTER

Dutch coaches Lodewijk de Kruij and Rene Koster conducted a brief classroom session with the national booters to give them some idea about Dutch style of football, after their arrival in Dhaka yesterday. The Dutch duo has come here to guide Bangladesh to the AFC Challenge Cup Qualifiers in March.

In the brief session, the Dutch duo focused on four key moments - recovering possession with a plan, keeping possession, planning what to do with possession and what to do if you lose the ball. The class also emphasised on the build up of attack from defence, without using the long ball while at the same time exert maximum pressure on the opposition midfield and backline to score. The formation used by the coaches was 4-2-3-1.

"I talked a little bit about the Dutch school of football and football in general. I also talked about the differences and the comparisons between European and Asian football and how we want to play," said De Kruij after the session at the BFF House yesterday.



Lodewijk De Kruij (L) and Rene Koster speaking at a press conference at the BFF House yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Later De Kruij conducted a training session under the floodlights at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The Dutchman also said that they discussed tactical things but didn't want to pressure the players at the moment.

"You want results and that is what we will be working on. Practically we don't know much about the players and the opponents -- Palestine, Nepal and Mariana Island - which is the difficult thing, but we can't run away from them," said De Kruij.

"I've seen 80 per cent of the players of the national team during the

league matches, even though it was not adequate for judging them. We have to start from somewhere and we want to build a good team," said the Dutchman. "The job will be to judge the quality of the players and the level of their adaptation, and then we can sort out the areas that we will have to work on."

De Kruij said he watched video footage of the recent match between Palestine and India which Palestine won 4-2. "Definitely we have to be prepared well to produce a good result against them [Palestine]. We will have plan for them."