

StarSPORT

DHAKA MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2013

Coach goes on hunger strike

Bulgaria's national wrestling team coach Armen Nazaryan has started a hunger strike to protest the IOC decision to drop wrestling from the Olympic program from 2020. The country's wrestling federation said on Sunday that Nazaryan "will not eat until the start of the European Championship on March 22 in Tbilisi, Georgia ... and will only take juices." The 39-year-old Nazaryan won Olympic gold for his native Armenia in 1996, and for Bulgaria in 2000. He is now head coach of Bulgaria's Greco-Roman wrestling team. Bulgarians have won 16 Olympic titles, making wrestling the most successful Olympic sport in the Balkan country.



# Gazi takes five but Tigers leak runs

BISHWAJIT ROY from Matara



On the first day of the three-day warm-up match, off-spinner Shohag Gazi emerged as the most successful Bangladesh player by taking five wickets against the Sri Lanka Development Emerging Team at the Uyanwatte Stadium yesterday. His effort on the day provided clear evidence that he would have to take the maximum workload in the upcoming Test series in the absence of left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan as the off-spinner bowled 30 overs in the day.

His success was however tempered by the fact that the upcoming Sri Lanka cricketers amassed 398 for nine, courtesy of an entertaining unbeaten 157 from Kithuruwan Vithanage who played some particularly eye-catching cover drives during his stroke-filled innings.

"It was a bit disappointing to give away nearly 400 runs. The wicket was very good to bat on, so there was a lot of hard work. It was always going to be difficult to get any batsman out. Having said that, I am happy with the five wickets, but I really had to put in a lot. The wickets didn't come easy and I had to use a lot of variations. I tried to

SCORES IN BRIEF

EMERGING XI: First innings 398-9 in 98.5 overs (Silva 29, Jayasundera 20, Jayasuriya 26, Vithanage 157 not out, Priyanjan 83, extras 25; Rubel 1-71, Gazi 5-103, Riyad 1-35, Sunny 2-74).

entice them into false shots because if a batsman decides to defend 60 deliveries on this wicket, he can easily do so. It was tough work out there, but I tried to vary my flight," said Gazi after the day's play.

Coach Shane Jurgensen however was not altogether unhappy as he believed that it was a good workout in the middle, but was rather disappointed by the refusal of the home team to allow the tourists to field additional players in order preserve the first-class status of the match.

Shahadat Hossain, Robiul Islam, Marshall Ayub and the injured Tamim Iqbal were left out of the playing eleven and if the team management had plans of fielding a pace attack spearheaded by Rubel Hossain and Abul Hasan in the Tests, then the latter's departure from the attack after six overs' bowling remained a concern. Hasan was struck down by the heat and left the field after having a vomiting fit. National team physio Vibhav Singh later informed that he was suffering from dehydration but will be okay before the start of the second day's play.

The absence of Hasan forced Rubel to take on extra load and encouragingly enough, the right-arm paceman bowled brilliantly in trying conditions, even though he claimed only one wicket. Coach Jurgensen also expressed satisfaction over the pacer's performance.

Bangladesh skipper Mushfiqur Rahim might have gotten some relied through the variation of Gazi and the impressive spell by Rubel, but the team should be

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Bangladesh's off-spinner Shohag Gazi celebrates one of the five dismissals against Sri Lanka Development Emerging Team during the first day of the three-day practice match at the Uyanwatte Stadium in Matara yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Sanath at ease amid dispute

BISHWAJIT ROY from Matara



Sri Lanka's cricketing great and local Matara hero Sanath Jayasuriya hogged the spotlight on the opening day of the three-day warm-up match between the touring Bangladesh team and the Sri Lanka Development Emerging Team at the Uyanwatte Stadium yesterday. The 43-year-old star of the 1996 World Cup-winning Sri Lankan team returned from Kuwait yesterday to grace the ceremony held before the start of the match commemorating the occasion of the beach town hosting an international team after a long break.

There were however more reasons for the 'Matara Hurricane' to take centre stage after Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) told its selectors not to consider 23 top cricketers for international cricket, including the Bangladesh series, until they agree to their new contract terms. As the situation stands, even players from the Emerging XI can make a breakthrough to the national side if the deadlock between the board and players continues. Therefore Jayasuriya, who took over as chairman of the new selection panel on February 1, is now faced with a difficult first assignment -- naming a Test side for the first Test against Bangladesh at Galle starting from March 8.

But the ever-smiling man in charge looked undaunted by the major crisis, and was hopeful that the crisis would be resolved in time. "No matter what the team is, the Sri Lanka team will play the first Test," he responded when asked about which team will play the match -- a make-shift one or the full-strength team.

"This kind of situation never happened before but I'm hopeful that it will be solved in time and the full-strength team will play the match," added a diplomatic Jayasuriya, who is also a member of parliament, where he represents the ruling United People's Freedom Alliance of President Mahinda Rajapakse.

Bangladesh players have displayed a lot of confidence ahead of the series, despite their poor record in the country, as Sri Lanka are considered a weaker team since the retirement of their spin colossus Muttiah Muralidaran,

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# Skipper not worried

SPORTS REPORTER from Matara



Will this Sri Lanka tour be a mirror image of the July 2009 series in West Indies when the Tigers came away with their first overseas Test victory? That was the question doing the rounds following the deadlock between Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) and the country's top cricketers over contractual terms. The main talking point yesterday was whether the crisis will be resolved before the start of the first Test at Galle on March 8.

Many were looking forward to the meeting between chief selector Sanath Jayasuriya and the frozen-out players last night but the tourists were not ready to focus on the issue, instead looking forward to getting accustomed to the conditions before the first Test.

Coach Shane Jurgensen seemed unaware of the whole episode when he talked with reporters after the first day's play of the warm-up match, but captain Mushfiqur said: "We heard of it but it's their problem. We are not worried about what is going to happen. We are fully focused on our preparations."

The Bangladesh team however were rather disturbed by the outcome of the hearing held after the first day's play. Match referee Nalliah Devarajan called captain

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# Win or bust

## Bangladesh take on Nepal today

SPORTS REPORTER



Smarting from a disappointing 1-0 defeat to Palestine, Bangladesh will be looking to bounce back in the AFC Challenge Cup Qualifiers when they take on hosts Nepal today at the Dasarath Stadium in Kathmandu, Nepal.

The defeat against Palestine almost ruled out any chance of Bangladesh qualifying for the finals and they now must beat Nepal to avail even the remotest hope of qualifying alive. If Bangladesh can finish group runners-up with two wins, then they will still have a chance to advance to the final round as one of the two best runners-up among five groups where the top teams will also qualify for the 2014 eight-team finals.

The boys in red and green will be hoping to cross the hurdles of Nepal, who are much improved and beat Bangladesh in the SAFF Championship in 2011 after 16 years while also playing out a 1-1 draw in August last year in a FIFA friendly.

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Hence, Nepal additionally inspired by their 6-0 win over Northern Mariana Island will be expecting to extend their unbeaten run against Bangladesh before facing Palestine on Wednesday.

Nepal are also expected to come with full-strength side with the inclusion of four key players, who were rested against Mariana Island and the inclusion of those four players will certainly make Bangladesh's task harder.

"Having watched their match, we could not judge Nepal properly as their match against Mariana Island was not a standard one. I think they rested some players yesterday (Sunday). Definitely they are good side but I am hopeful about a win against them," said Bangladesh coach Lodewijk De Kruif at a pre-match briefing according to a BFF message.

Bangladesh team had a light warm-up session instead of full training at the Army Training Centre yesterday. Striking duo Shakhawat Hossain Rony and Toklish Ahmed were given more importance in the light training as both spent time in

# Shakib to return on March 6

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is set to return to the country on Wednesday. Shakib, who underwent surgery on his right leg in Sydney last Tuesday, began walking slowly yesterday after a week's rest, informed the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) physio yesterday.

"It's the initial stage. He is a bit scared but he is doing alright and began walking. He has an appointment with the doctor and the physicians on Monday. They will address his situation and provide a confirmed verdict regarding his return," said BCB physio Debasish Chowdhury.

"As per the doctor's advice he has booked his

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# Swadhin Bangla booter Siru no more

SPORTS REPORTER

Former footballer Dewan Mohammad Sirajuddin Siru, a member of the Swadhin Bangla Football Team, passed away yesterday morning at his residence in Gulbagh.

He was 62. He had been paralysed for the last two years following a brain haemorrhage.

Siru, who played for East End Club and Victoria SC as a stopper in 1970s, left behind his wife,

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# Simmons seals big win

AFP, North Sound

Lendl Simmons's third half-century and an unbroken 85-run third-wicket partnership with Dwayne Bravo guided the West Indies to an eight-wicket win over Zimbabwe in first T20 International on Saturday.

Replying to Zimbabwe's 130 for eight, the opening batsman smashed six sixes, the last ending the match at the start of the 17th over, in finishing on 63 not out and taking the player of the match award.

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PHOTO: COURTESY

Bangladesh national team's coach Lodewijk de Kruif (C) relays his ideas to his charges during a training session at the Police Headquarters Ground in Kathmandu yesterday.