

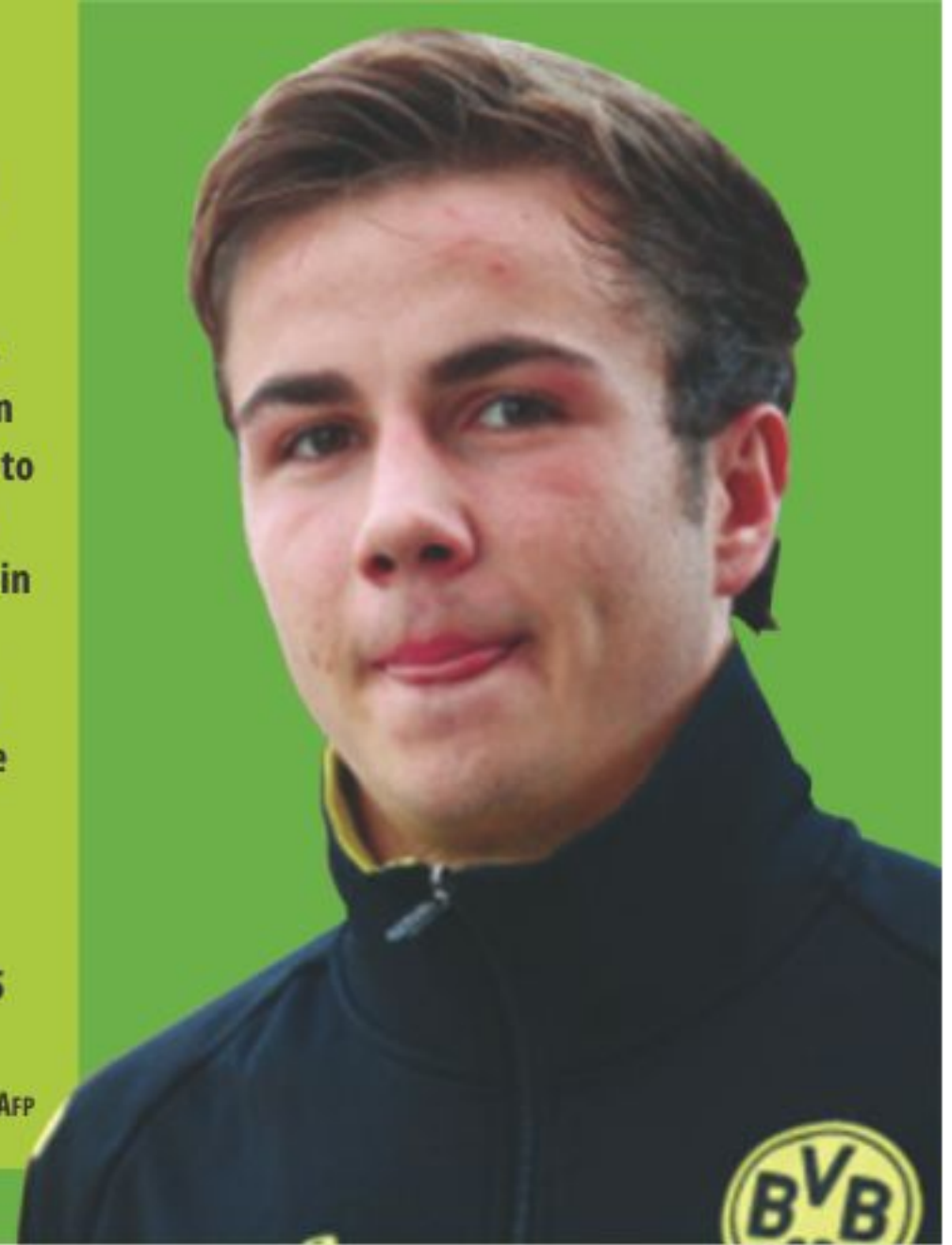
Star SPORT

DHAKA FRIDAY MAY 3, 2013, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

Goetze suffers torn hamstring

Borussia Dortmund's Germany star Mario Goetze is set to miss Saturday's Bundesliga showdown against Bayern Munich and faces a race against time to be fit for the Champions League final after tearing his left hamstring early in the semifinal at Real Madrid. The 20-year-old midfielder, who will join Bayern in July, pulled up with the injury after just 14 minutes of Dortmund's 2-0 defeat at Real on Tuesday as Borussia reached the European final at Wembley on May 25 having won the semifinal 4-3 on aggregate.

- AFP



Mushfiquur happy to be in Bulawayo

SAKEB SUBHAN from Bulawayo



The Bangladesh cricketers will probably breathe a sigh of relief when they walk into the picturesque, tree-lined Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo. Their pre-eminence at the venue where they have won six out of eight ODIs will certainly be a key factor during the three-ODI series against Zimbabwe which begins today.

After the seaming conditions of the Harare Sports Club, where they squared the two-Test series, the drier and slower surface of Bulawayo is a sort of homecoming for the Tigers.

Speaking at the pre-series press conference yesterday, skipper Mushfiquur Rahim admitted that it was a relief to be here. "Our record here is very good, we won both our matches here last time [in 2011]. In Harare we could not play the first Test to our capabilities, but we played well on all five days of the second Test. But this is a different ball game; it's one-day cricket, and they are playing in their own conditions."

But that it is ODI cricket should be a source of further confidence for the team. Apart from notching their fourth Test victory in Harare and drawing their first Test against Sri Lanka most of Bangladesh's and Mushfiquur Rahim's progress has been marked by ODI successes over the past two years. Before the current tour, they drew their first ODI series against Sri Lanka during the Sri Lanka tour in March.

"We have been playing consistently well in ODIs, so I am hoping that we can carry on that consistency here," said Mushfiquur. "The batsmen have been in good form, as are the pace bowlers. Among the spinners, there is Raj bhai [Abdur Razzak] in ODIs, and also Shohag Gazi. There are things we have to improve. But we have practised for the last two days here, and we had also practised in Harare before coming here. We will try our best to win tomorrow [Friday]."

Today may see the debut for Test series hero Robiul Islam. The man who bowled with great heart and skip to prise 15 wickets is likely to play the role of a spearhead

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PHOTO: COURTESY OF PHOTHOM ALO
Bangladesh captain Mushfiquur Rahim (L) and coach Shane Jurgensen enjoy a light moment during the Tigers' training session at the Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo yesterday.

Sk Russel's finest hour

ANISUR RAHMAN



Change has been the order of country's football for quite some time. Domestic football titles are no longer an exclusive property of two popular outfits that are Abahani and Mohammedan.

Two seasons back, Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club emerged from no where to win the Bangladesh Premier League.

On Wednesday night at the Bangabandhu National Stadium the professional football league produced a new champion when Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra came from behind to beat Sheikh Jamal 2-1.

And immediately after the triumph, Sheikh Russel's inspirational coach Maruf Haque dedicated the title to his critics.

"I want to dedicate this title to my

critics who never considered me as a coach," said Maruf acidly. He did not point his finger at anybody but it is understood that he was referring to a club he parted ways with three years ago in a most painful fashion.

The prestigious title triumph meant Sheikh Russel achieved a rare treble in a season after Mohammedan did it in 2002 by winning the Federation Cup, Premier League and National Football League titles.

But Maruf wants to rate this title above everything.

"Winning a league title is equal to 10 tournament trophies and I have been waiting for this since 2008," said an elated Maruf.

The 42-year-old coach said dedication, willingness, hard-work, discipline and finally positive response from the players were the key behind the success, and these were aplenty in their penultimate match where

Nigerian Alfred Emoeffe gave Sheikh Jamal a 38-minute lead before winger Zahid Hossain levelled the margin from close range nine minutes into the second half.

It was also fitting that striker Zahid Hasan Emily sealed the title five minutes from time, leaving Sheikh Russel with an unassailable 35 points from 15 matches, six and seven clear of second-placed Abahani and third-placed Sheikh Jamal DC.

Emily was overjoyed after hitting the winning goal that also made him a player who has been a key figure in all three clubs to win the professional football league title.

"It is a unique achievement in my playing career to win a treble in a season. We all worked hard in trying conditions for the last eight months and I want to thank coach Maruf bhai for keeping all of us in a thread," said

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Taylor optimistic too

SPORTS REPORTER from Bulawayo



Amid all the talk surrounding Bangladesh's previous successes at the

Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo, it is easy to forget that Zimbabwe have played quite well here recently. In their last match here they beat New Zealand by chasing down 328 to win by one wicket. Before that, they almost beat a formidable Pakistan side but went on to lose by five wickets.

But skipper Brendan Taylor was still cautious when appraising his team's chances against Bangladesh, who because of their superiority on paper and their strong record -- six wins out of eight matches -- will start the series as favourites. The last time they played Bangladesh here, in 2011, the Tigers won both the ODIs after having surrendered the series by losing the first three in Harare.

"I think when we came here 3-0 up maybe we relaxed. It's not so much a

Bulawayo thing for me, it's about getting out there and executing your skills. If we play the cricket we know we can play, then we are going to be very tough to beat. Bangladesh are going to be extremely confident after the last Test, which is going to make them even harder to beat. But we have covered all angles and it will be interesting to see how the wicket plays tomorrow," the home team skipper said.

There may be as many as four changes to the Zimbabwe side with Sean Williams set to return and a likely comeback for left-arm seamer Brian Vitori, Bangladesh's bogeyman on their last tour.

"Our top four batters have got the potential to score hundreds and that is big for us. We have got some quality, experienced spinners like they have," Taylor said when asked to name his team's main strength. "In the West Indies I think our bowlers bowled really well and contained some dynamic batsmen so we can take a lot out of that. They [Bangladesh] have got

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Cricketers' fitness camp from Sunday

SPORTS REPORTER

A fitness training camp for the discarded national players and A team players will start on Sunday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium.

Richard McInnis, head coach of the National Cricket Academy, will conduct the week-long camp. In recent times players' fitness became a major issue as a number of leading cricketers suffered injuries and that's the reason the Bangladesh Cricket Board has taken the initiatives.

"The main objective is to see the players' condition

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Same sorry Siddikur

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman got off to a disappointing start in the CIMB Niaga Indonesian Masters on Thursday when the ace Bangladeshi golfer finished the opening round at two-over-par 74.

He had three bogies against one birdie and shared a distant 92nd position in a long order led by Australian Scott Hend and Korean Hwang Inn-Choon after both shot a six-under-par 66.

Reigning Open Championship winner Ernie Els of South Africa was also in the mix after returning with a 68 at the 750,000-dollar Asian Tour event at the Royale Jakarta Golf Club.



PHOTO: STAR

Sheikh Russel players celebrate after their 2-1 win against Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Wednesday. The victory confirmed Russel's maiden Bangladesh Premier League title.

Abahani end on a low

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Abahani ended a miserable campaign with a shameful 4-1 defeat to Shakti Sangsad in their last match of the Bangladesh Premier League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Nigerian hitman Joseph Ozuumba struck twice while Zahed Parvez Chowdhury and Azmal Hossain Biddut netted one goal each for last year's runners-up Muktijoddha Sangsad. Abdul Baten Komol grabbed a consolation for the Sky Blues, who stuck glued to second with 29 points from allotted 16

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36 lakh for Mamunul?

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Playmaker Mamunul Islam is likely to be the highest paid player of the upcoming season. He will join Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club from treble-winning Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra in the next season for a reportedly whopping price of Tk 36 lakh.

Although actual transfer figures have never been disclosed officially in Bangladesh it was also learnt that the midfielder's price tag was Taka 30 lakh that Sheikh Russel had to pay last year. The transfer window is supposed to open in late August.

"I have decided in principle to move to Sheikh Jamal but nothing has been finalised yet," said Mamunul. He however refused to confirm the payment figure.

Sheikh Jamal are reportedly set to form a strong side for next season and have convinced eight national players so far -- Mamunul and defender Ashraf Mahmud Linkon of Sheikh Russel, defender Kesto Kumar and striker Toklish

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