



Sheikh Russel coach Maruful Haque (C) watches his charges train at the BUET ground yesterday, ahead of their Super Cup semifinal against Brothers Union at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today. PHOTO: STAR

Daunting Russel in Brothers' way

SPORTS REPORTER



They narrowly avoided relegation in the league and did not make the last four of either the Federation or Independence Cup, but Brothers Union are dreaming big when they take on treble-winners Sheikh Russel KC in the first semifinal of the Super Cup today.

The game gets underway at 6:00pm with state-own Bangladesh Television beaming the match live from the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

With a side based around youth, Brothers Union put up a spirited showing in the group stages to overcome mighty opponents like Sheikh Jamal, Team BJMC and Mohammedan to ensure their first semifinal appearance in the Super Cup since 2009.

"Actually we wanted Sheikh Russel in the semifinal because we have some

special plan with them," Brothers coach Mahidur Rahman Miraz said. "If the boys can play accordingly like they performed in the last three matches, then we can hope to reach the final.

"After qualifying for the Super Cup as the last team, we have nothing to lose at this stage but we are committed to bring back some of Brothers' past glory. Our first target to advance to the semifinal has been fulfilled and we are still on the right direction," said Miraz at the official pre-match briefing at the BFF House yesterday.

With a 30-member team, rotation has been Brothers' biggest strength but they will still rely on the young players like hitman Jewel Rana, who struck three in two matches, winger Yusuf Sifat, Rubel Mia, Komol Islam and Mahbubur Rahman Titu.

Despite this, Sheikh Russel are still firm favourites and they will look to complete a unique quadruple after already winning the Federation Cup, Independence Cup and Bangladesh

Premier League. They are understandably confident of victory over an opposition they have beaten thrice this season already; each time after coming from a goal down.

"We want to maintain the consistency what we showed throughout the season and ensure the final berth of the Super Cup," said Sheikh Russel coach Maruful Haque, who however termed Brothers a good side with the inclusion of some young players from the Bangladesh Championship League.

"They deserved this spot as they put behind second, third and fourth sides of the league table but we are ready to face them," said Maruf, who may have some worries with his backline after stopper Mamum Mia was sent off in the last match.

"Weakness in backline is a problem but there is nothing to be worried rather I have a problem in finishing line-up and I will work on it today (Thursday)," said the successful coach.

It's India v England

REUTERS, Cardiff



World champions India outplayed Sri Lanka in all departments of the game on Thursday to advance to the final of the Champions Trophy against hosts England.

After restricting Sri Lanka to 181 for eight from their 50 overs under the floodlights on a gloomy Cardiff day, India eased to an eight-wicket victory with 15 overs to spare.

The final will be staged at Edgbaston in Birmingham this Sunday.

Shikhar Dhawan, the tournament's top scorer before Thursday's semifinal with 264 runs including two centuries, cut loose again when India set off in pursuit of the modest target.

Dhawan passed 50 for the third time in the tournament off 73 balls with six fours and a six. He survived three dropped catches to reach 68 when he was stumped by Kumar Sangakkara off leg-spinner Jeevan Mendis with victory already assured.

Virat Kohli (58 not out) then took charge, hitting a six to reach his half-century, as India romped to victory before a noisy crowd of predominantly Indian supporters.

Sri Lanka needed Lasith Malinga to produce something special if they were to have any hope of beating the form team of the

tournament.

But the Indian batsmen know all about the Sri Lanka strike bowler, playing against him regularly in the Indian Premier League, and before Thursday his wickets against India had cost 40.88 runs each.

The two teams have played each other 45 times in the past five years and India, who beat Sri Lanka in the 2011 World Cup final in Mumbai, have now won seven of their last eight games against their Asian rivals.

Dhawan should have been out twice on 18 caught off Nuwan Kulasekara. Sri Lanka captain Angelo Mathews dropped the left-hander diving to his right at first slip. Sangakkara, standing up to the stumps to the medium pacer, then missed a thin outside edge.

Mathews top-scored for Sri Lanka with a battling 51 from 89 deliveries after his opposite number MS Dhoni had opted to field under heavy cloud cover with moisture in the air following a 30-minute rain delay.

Dhoni set attacking fields throughout and even relinquished his wicketkeeping kit after the 22nd over to bowl his medium-pacers. In 222 previous one-day internationals Dhoni had bowled only two overs.

Dinesh Karthik, also a specialist wicketkeeper, took over from Dhoni who won an lbw decision against Mahela Jayawardene with his second delivery.

SCOREBOARD

SRI LANKA: Perera c Raina b Kumar 4, Dilshan not out 18, Sangakkara c Raina b I Sharma 17, Thirimane c Raina b I Sharma 7, Jayawardene b Jadeja 38, Mathews c Kumar b Ashwin 51, Mendis st Dhoni b Ashwin 25, Perera c Dhawan b I Sharma 0, Kulasekera b Ashwin 1, Malinga not out 7, extras (lb-2, w-11) 13 Total: (For 8 wickets in 50 overs) 181 Did not bat: Herath

Fall of wickets: 1-6, 2-36, 3-41, 4-119, 5-158, 6-160, 7-164, 8-171

| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
|----------|----|---|----|---|
| Kumar | 9 | 2 | 18 | 1 |
| Yadav | 8 | 2 | 30 | 0 |
| I Sharma | 9 | 1 | 33 | 3 |
| Jadeja | 10 | 1 | 33 | 1 |
| Dhoni | 4 | 0 | 17 | 0 |
| Ashwin | 10 | 1 | 48 | 3 |

INDIA: R Sharma b Matthews 33, Dhawan st Sangakkara b Mendis 68, Kohli not out 58, Raina not out 7, extras (b-1, lb-5, w-10) 16 Total: (For 2 wickets in 35 overs) 182

Did not bat: Karthik, Dhoni, Jadeja, Ashwin, Kumar, I Sharma, Yadav Fall of wickets: 1-77, 2-142

| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
|------------|----|---|----|---|
| Kulasekera | 10 | 0 | 45 | 0 |
| Malinga | 8 | 0 | 54 | 0 |
| Perera | 6 | 0 | 25 | 0 |
| Mathews | 4 | 0 | 10 | 1 |
| Herath | 4 | 0 | 14 | 0 |
| Mendis | 3 | 0 | 28 | 1 |

Result: India won by 8 wickets.

Siddikur in tenth spot

SPORTS REPORTER



After the near-miss in Queen's Cup, Bangladesh's ace golfer Siddikur Rahman had a mixed bag in the opening round of the Worldwide Holdings Selangor Masters in Malaysia yesterday.

Siddikur hit an eagle in the sixth hole and was looking good with a birdie against a bogey in the first half of the day. But he lost the way a bit in the second session, hitting three more bogeys against two birdies to finish the day at 1-under-par 70 to share the crowded tenth position with eight other players.

The 28-year-old, who had a one shot lead going into the final round in the Queen's Cup earlier this week, suffered a stunning collapse and eventually finished sixth after a 6-over-par in the last round in Thailand.

Thailand's Pariya Junhasavasdikul stormed into the lead with a five-under-par 66 with eight birdies against one bogey and a double bogey at a sun-baked Seri Selangor Golf Club to lead by one from Korea's Baek Seuk-hyun in the 400,000-dollar tournament.

Rahmatullah panel wins BHF elections

SPORTS REPORTER

The election commission of the Bangladesh Hockey Federation polls yesterday declared the Khaza Rahmatullah panel, backed by Abahani and Usha KC, as unopposed winners for a four-year stint.

"On the last day of nomination withdrawal, five vice presidents, one general secretary, three joint secretary and 25 other candidates withdrew their nominations and the following candidates have been primarily declared winners unopposed as there were no additional candidates than the required posts," said a National Sports Council circular yesterday.

On Wednesday, the Sajed-Munir panel pulled out of the elections citing the unethical, unlawful practice.

KNEE INJURY

Taskin to go to Australia

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has decided to send promising paceman Taskin Ahmed to Australia for an assessment of the injury in his left knee.

The 18-year-old right-arm bowler is considered as a future hope for the Bangladesh's vulnerable pace department, but his progress has been hindered by the injury.

"As the board considers him as a prospect for future, that's why we want to make sure that his injury is managed properly. He will go to Australia on June 26. We are sending him just for an assessment," informed BCB's physician Dr Debashish Chowdhury yesterday.

Olympic Day run tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) will hold the 2013 Olympic Day Run tomorrow simultaneously at all six divisional headquarters and 57 districts of the country with the participation of athletes, organisers, journalists, students and children.

The main attraction, however, will be in Dhaka with the procession starting at 6.40am from the Ramna National Tennis Complex and end at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Tamim to tie the knot with a buzz

BISHWAJIT ROY

If marrying is the beginning of a new innings in a cricketer's life, then Tamim Iqbal is padding up today. And the opening Bangladesh batsman's partner at the non-striker's end is Ayesha Siddiqua, a bachelor in business administration. And their eight-year relationship is getting public with the gaye holud programme and the wedding ceremony, today and tomorrow, in Chittagong.

Then comes the walima, the grand reception, on the 27th of June at the Golf Garden of Army Golf Club and this is how one of the country's biggest stars will start his new innings.

But before all this is a Mezban, a traditional public feast of Chittagong, which was held yesterday in memory of the late members of the Khan family including the left-handed batsman's father Iqbal Khan.

Tamim has invited around 10,000 guests from all walks of life. The invitees include the prime minister and the leader of the opposition. In short it is an occasion which has taken the centre stage in the sports fraternity -- a stark contrast to the muted affair that was the wedding of Tamim's good friend and the world's best all-rounder, Shakib Al Hasan.

"Many wrote that I'm spending Tk 2.50 crore for the programme but it's not true," Tamim told with a laugh when he was talking with The Daily Star Sport yesterday. But the left-hander made it clear that he didn't leave any stone unturned to make the occasion memorable because he has very simple philosophy in his life: "earn money to spend."

Tamim is well-known for his good taste and he drives a luxury BMW, one of his first acquisitions after making it big as a cricket player. He is also often seen using the most fashionable cell phones and posh brand items. For his wedding shopping, Tamim made a detour in Dubai upon his return from the Zimbabwe tour. "The

list I got from my in-laws' house was really interesting. I enjoyed that," informed Tamim.

The vastness of his marriage ceremony is just a reflection of his character. "I'm not a person who would like to feel sorry in future for something not done today," was the saying of the Chittagonian.

Shakib might have preferred the quite route but Tamim has a different belief. "I don't know if it might be good as a cricketer if I arrange the programme in small scale but to me and my family this is very important to be in touch with all kind of people and this kind of occasion gives you that chance. You invite someone means you show him respect. And since Allah gave me the opportunity then why not I take this chance?" said Tamim.

But the most important question was how it felt to finally crown a relationship that had stretched eight years.

"I had only Tk 5,000 in my account when she [Ayesha] went for higher education in Malaysia and it was very tough to maintain regular communication with her. But luckily I got a national call-up and I bought a laptop and an air ticket with the match fees from my first international match. There were lot of ups and downs in our relationship but we had the patience to make today's occasion possible," was the reply from the

dashing left-hander.

"I was not a starter when we fell in love eight years back and she has little interest in cricket. So one thing is very clear; she loves Tamim the person, not Tamim Iqbal the cricketer," continued the 24-year-old.

Tamim has many besides him including his uncle and former national skipper Akram Khan and his elder brother Nafis to make the occasion successful, but still he could understand how big the deal is. "Things might have been totally different if my father was still alive," he reminisced in a heavy voice.

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