



PHOTO: STAR
National football players stretch along the centre circle of the artificial turf during their practice session at the BFF premises yesterday afternoon.

Shakib goes wicketless

SPORTS REPORTER

Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan played his second match in the Friends Life Twenty20 Cup yesterday as Leicestershire faced Derbyshire. Shakib finished with figures of none for 37 and scored four runs. Derbyshire scored 173 for three in 20 overs.

Earlier, the left-hander had scored a 14-ball 31 and took 1 for 35 in his first match on Friday. Shakib's side ended up losing by seven wickets.

Star-like start

SPORTS REPORTER

Football critics were in the spotlight from Saturday when some hundred journalists, putting their trusty pens and cameras aside for a while, happily demonstrated their skills under the banner of different media houses in a carnival called the Kool-BSJA Media Cup football tournament.

The exuberance on the artificial turf next to the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) House was quite fascinating. Journalists are better known as nocturnal and an early morning assignment is often considered a curse. But the pure love for the game brought them to the ground for even a 9 o'clock assignment.

Among the mostly out-of-shape would be athletes was an editor of an English daily. He was happily enjoying a morning stroll before getting down to the serious business of standing under the bar in a match in which he conceded one goal in a respectable 1-1 draw.

The Daily Star also had their field day on Saturday, the opening day of the week-long meet. The former champions won 4-0, a margin that can flatter to deceive their youthful side considering the strength of their opponents Manabzamin.

Rafiqul Islam struck a brace in the second half after Quazi Zulquarain Islam's only first-half goal. Rakib added the other in a match where the presence of two strikingly contrasting defenders of an almost six-foot Fahd Mannan and the diminutive Fazlur Rahman made sure The Daily Star goalkeeper had a nap. The 4-0 win of The Daily Star was the biggest of the day until Channel i tormented New Nation 8-0 in a match where the vanquished had to borrow just to field the numbers in a seven-a-side game.

ACSU report in August Dhaka League gets the nod

ANSAR AHMED ULLAH from London



Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon has said that the board is expected to receive the much talked about reports from the Anti-Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU) on suspected match-fixing in Bangladesh by the first week of August.

Speaking to reporters last night at the Royal Garden Hotel in London, the BCB boss said that ACSU requires more time to hand over the report as the unit wants to interrogate a number of foreign players to gather more information.

"Hopefully we will get the report in the first week of August. We were supposed to receive the report in this meeting but then they told me that they want to interview a number of non-Bangladeshi players before submitting the report," said Papon, who is expected to return to Dhaka tomorrow after having attended the ICC Annual General Meeting in London.

"[Mohammad] Ashraful has already confessed regarding his involvement in fixing. We don't know if any other names will emerge in the report. Whatever be the case, we will take strong action. If needed we will form a separate tribunal to make sure that the guilty don't go unpunished," he added.

The president had earlier stated that he wanted to receive the ACSU's report before starting the Dhaka Premier League. However, he told reporters last night that he had received a positive signal from the ICC and that the league could start without Ashraful, who had earlier publicly confessed to his wrongdoings.

The other important issue in the ICC meeting for Bangladesh was regarding the slow rate of progress in preparations of a venue for next year's Twenty20 World Cup.

"They had questions regarding venues at Sylhet and Cox's Bazar but we have assured them that the venues would be ready in time. We also told them that we have additional venues that are capable of hosting international matches apart from the selected venues for the world cup," said Papon.

"There was a question regarding accommodation in Dhaka, but we managed to assure them that there would be no such problems," he added.

A few days before the ICC AGM, Papon hit the headlines with a sensational disclosure saying that the game's governing body was considering an alternate venue for the mega event due to the slow progress at the Sylhet Divisional Stadium, one of the venues for the global tournament that will begin in Bangladesh in March next year.

Former BCB president and now the ICC vice president AHM Mustafa Kamal was also present during the press briefing.

NSC U-turn over Kamalapur

SPORTS REPORTER



The National Sports Council (NSC) is seemingly backing off from signing a lease agreement with the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) over the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.

The BFF had asked for a lease over the use of the stadium where they wanted to install an artificial turf with the assistance of FIFA under the Goalproject-4. According to BFF officials the NSC had responded positively to BFF's request. But the executive committee of NSC decided in a meeting recently that they would come to an agreement with BFF to let them use the venue, but not allow any lease.

The decision comes as a disappointment for the BFF since the FIFA does not finance any project on a venue if it is not owned or at least taken as lease by the federation.

BFF vice-president and development committee chairman Badal Roy has expressed his surprise at the news. "They had verbally committed during a meeting previously, in presence of the sports minister, to lease us the venue on a 20-year-term. I could not attend the latest meeting on 26 June, where I heard it has been decided to sign an MoU about use of the venue, not a lease. This decision will impact FIFA's financial assistance adversely," said Roy.

Gregarious, Europa in virtual final

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Europa Youth will play against current runners-up The Gregarious in the title deciding match of the Citycell Premier Division Basketball League at the Dhanmondi Indoor Basketball Gymnasium on Monday. The two teams are tied on the same number of points, hence the last match of the league has turned into a virtual final.

On Friday night, Europa Youth defeated Eagles by 94-61 points, thanks to 32 points scored by Yves and 17 by Shaon. In the other match of the night, The Gregarious thrashed Dhumketu by a massive 139-34 points, with Gregarious' American recruits Holmes and Burrows scoring 31 and 26 points each.

In yesterday's match, Old DOHS beat Flame Boys by 57-45 points after leading the first half by 35-27 points.

Sharmin wins TT title

SPORTS REPORTER

Sharmin of Feni clinched the title of the women's inter-district table tennis competition which concluded at the Sultana Kamal Women's Sports Complex in Dhanmondi yesterday. Sharmin defeated Rahima of Barguna by 4-3 sets in the final. In the team final, Barguna outplayed Feni in 3-1 sets to win the title.

Rahima earlier paired up with Lopa to win the women's doubles title beating Sharmin and Nahima of Feni by 3-0 sets in the final.

PARTILLE CUP

3 teams from Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER

Three school handball teams from Bangladesh will participate in the Partille Cup in Sweden which will be held from July 1 to 6. Scholastica U-14 boys' team, Scholastica U-14 girls' team and St. Gregory's U-12 boys' team will represent Bangladesh in the meet, said a press release from Bangladesh Handball Federation yesterday. Salahuddin Ahmed, executive member of the federation, will lead the teams.

Novak, Serena cruise

AFP, London



Novak Djokovic and Serena Williams cruised effortlessly into the Wimbledon fourth round Saturday as the first week's shockwaves left just eight of the top 20 seeds still standing.

World number one Djokovic destroyed French 28th seed Jeremy Chardy, 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 in just 86 minutes, in the process notching his 50th career grasscourt win. He will tackle veteran Tommy Haas for a place in the quarter-finals.

Women's defending champion Serena Williams was equally ruthless taking just over an hour to carve out a 6-2, 6-0 win over Japanese 42-year-old Kimiko Date-Krumm. It was the 600th win of Williams's career as the American continued her gentle cruise towards a sixth Wimbledon title and 17th Grand Slam crown.

Laura Robson became the first British woman to make the last 16 for 15 years when she defeated New Zealand's Marina Erakovic, 1-6, 7-5, 6-3.

France's Kenny De Schepper beat Argentine 22nd seed Juan Monaco, 6-4, 7-6 (10/8), 6-4 to book a last-16 spot at a major for the first time. Poland's Lukasz Kubot reached the last-16 by beating 25th seed Benoit Paire 6-1, 6-3, 6-4. De Schepper will face experienced Fernando Verdasco after the Spanish former top 10 player cruised past Latvian Ernests Gulbis, 6-2, 6-4, 6-4. Russian 20th seed Mikhail Youzhny defeated Serbia's Viktor Troicki 6-3, 6-4, 7-5 and goes on to face British second seed Andy Murray. Spanish fourth seed David Ferrer managed to escape the caranage but needed five sets to beat Ukraine's Alexandr Dolgoplov 6-7 (6/8), 7-6 (7/2), 2-6, 6-1, 6-2.

Czech seventh seed Tomas Berdych overcame South Africa's Kevin Anderson 3-6, 6-3, 6-4, 7-5 and takes on unseeded Australian Bernard Tomic who put out French ninth seed, Richard Gasquet, 7-6 (9/7), 5-7, 7-5, 7-6 (7/5).

Italian 23rd seed Andreas Seppi beat Japan's Kei Nishikori, 3-6, 6-2, 6-7 (4/7), 6-1, 6-4. Seppi will face Argentine eighth seed Juan Martin Del Potro who defeated Slovenia's Grega Zemlja 7-5, 7-6 (7/3), 6-0.

In the women's draw, Polish fourth seed Agnieszka Radwanska defeated Madison Keys of the United States 7-5, 4-6, 6-3. She will face Tsvetana Pironkova of Bulgaria who defeated Petra Martic of Croatia, 6-1, 4-6, 6-2. Chinese sixth seed Li Na survived a roller-coaster of a battle to edge Czech veteran Klara Zakopalova, 4-6, 6-0, 8-6.

The 2011 champion Petra Kvitova reached the fourth round with a 6-3, 2-6, 6-3 defeat of Russian 25th seed Ekaterina Makarova.



Andrew Strauss (front L), Geoffrey Boycott (2nd from L), Alastair Cook (front R) and Andy Flower (above Cook) discuss 'cricket' at the Centre Court of Wimbledon on Friday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

India meet WI today

AFP, Kingston

Exactly one week after clinching the Champions Trophy in England, undisputed world one-day champions India take on a confident West Indies team on Sunday at Sabina Park in the second match of the tri-nation series.

Fresh from a convincing tournament-opening victory over Sri Lanka at the same venue on Friday, home captain Dwayne Bravo is nevertheless mindful that Mahendra Singh Dhoni's side are an altogether different proposition given their considerable strengths in all departments of the game.

Gayle guides WI home

AFP, Kingston



Chris Gayle notched his first one-day hundred against Sri Lanka as he led West Indies to a crushing six-wicket victory with more than 12 overs to spare in the opening match of the three-nation international series at Sabina Park on Friday.

Replying to the visitors' modest total of 208 all out in 48.3 overs, the hard-hitting opening batsman delighted his fellow Jamaicans with another dominant effort on the way to his 21st ODI century.

His 109 came off 100 deliveries and was embellished with seven sixes and nine fours. That pushed his team on to 209 for four off 37.5 overs and they earned a bonus point as well for reaching their target before the conclusion of the 40th over.

That extra point is likely to be significant in the latter stages of the competition, espe-

cially with World Cup-holders and recent Champions Trophy winners India entering the fray on Sunday against a West Indies team that will be buoyant following their comprehensive opening triumph.

Any anxiety that home fans may have had about the target facing them were erased by the confidence of Gayle's start.

The former captain dominated an opening partnership of 115 by the 21st over with Johnson Charles, who rode his luck for a supporting but struggling 29 before he fell off the bowling of left-arm spinner Rangana Herath.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA: 208 all out in 48.3 overs (Mathews 55 not out, Jayawardene 52, Tharanga 25; Narine 4-40, Rampaul 3-38)

WEST INDIES: 209 for 4 in 37.5 overs (Gayle 109, Charles 29; Herath 1-37)

Result: West Indies won by 6 wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Chris Gayle.