

Shakib on top again

STAR SPORT DESK

Ace allrounder Shakib Al Hasan reclaimed the world number one spot on the ICC Player Rankings for ODI all-rounders with a rating point of 376. He overtook Pakistan's Mohammad Hafeez. Currently Hafeez and Australia's Shane Watson are jointly ranked second with 370 rating points each. Shakib's gain was mainly due to Hafeez's drop in form. The Pakistan allrounder took just seven wickets and scored a meagre 159 runs in the last ten matches. Shakib, on the other hand, just played three ODIs this year and also missed out on Bangladesh's recent series-win against New Zealand as he was suffering from dengue.

Super Kings, Kwality win

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Team Kwality and Prime Super Kings won their respective games in the CJKS Corporate T20 Cricket Tournament at the MA Aziz Stadium here yesterday. In the first match, Mohammad Sharif's Team Kwality beat Mominul Haque's Banoful Deer by six runs. Batting first, Kwality rode on Khairul Islam Nayan's 27-ball 29 and Sharif's 14-ball 26 to post 125. In reply, Banoful were bundled out for 119 runs in their 20 overs. Mominul Haque scored an unbeaten 55. The day's other game saw Auge & Bennett Eleven get bundled out for just 45 runs in 16 overs. The winners then reached their target in 6.1 overs for the loss of just one wicket.

Tushar finishes 15th in F4

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Mahfuzur Rahman Tushar, country's lone Formula 4 driver, finished 15th in the 16th JK Tyre Racing Championship at the Buddha International Circuit (BIC) in India on Saturday. Tushar finished ahead of seven competitors. Tushar's race team 'Team Avalanche' put four cars on the grid with Sumit Maluja, Rohit Khanna, Kapil Khanna and Tushar behind the steering. Sarosh Hataria emerged champion while Vishnu Prasad and Kartik Krishan finished second and fourth respectively.

Kingsley fires Mutkis into semifinals

SPORTS REPORTER



A second-half brace from Nigerian hitman Nkwocha Kingsley fired three-time champions Muktijodha Sangsad to a 2-0 win over Brothers Union at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday to ensure a place in the last four of the Walton Federation Cup. Kingsley put his side ahead after the hour-mark with a tap-in before making sure of a semifinal clash against today's winners between holders Sheikh Russel KC and Team BJMC with a well-judged header few minutes later. Having beaten defending champions Sheikh Russel in their previous game, the All Reds were expected to enjoy a cakewalk against Brothers Union, but that hardly happened as the Oranges made them work hard in the first half and kept them at bay with an even contest. But things changed at the start of the second half and Muktijoddha availed two of the three chances they created and Kingsley changed the fate of the match in space of seven minutes. The Nigerian opened the scoring with an easy tap-in in the 62nd minute when a header from Mohammad Biplob off an Enamul Haque corner fell in front of him

inside the six-yard box. The Nigerian doubled the advantage seven minutes later by heading in a well-judged cross from Shafiqul Islam Bipul from an unmarked position. Kingsley should have got a hattrick in the dying moments had his strike partner and compatriot Eleta Kingsley passed the ball to him inside the box instead of shooting over on-rushing goalkeeper which sailed over the bar. "The players might have taken Brothers lightly after the win against Sheikh Russel and they looked disorganised in the first half but bounced back in the second half. They got the rhythm back and grew in confidence after the first goal," said Muktijoddha Sangsad coach Shafiqul Islam Manik at the post-match press conference. Brothers Union's Indian coach Syed Nayeemuddin blamed the lack of combination and understanding among the players for the defeat but vowed to put up better performance in the upcoming professional league. "I had little time to prepare the boys which is why they had lack of combination and understanding. I think they need time to improve but I am happy as they fought against Muktijoddha till the last minute," said Nayeemuddin, who is guiding Brothers for the fourth time.

NAIMUL KARIM



When Bangladesh begin their ICC Twenty20 World Cup campaign in three months time they will be up against a task that they were more familiar to back in the 90s; when they were one among the non-full member cricketing nations, battling to break into the big league. Till date, that epic moment -- when Bangladesh reached the finals of the ICC trophy in 1997 and confirmed their spot in the World Cup -- remains crystal clear in the minds of supporters and has become a landmark in Bangladesh's cricketing history. 16 years on, the Tigers will face a similar challenge -- this time in their own backyard -- when they take on the likes of Afghanistan, Nepal and Hong Kong in the first round of the ICC World T20. The scenario though is a lot different. For the Tigers, who have scaled new heights, theoretically, this should be a mere walk in the park. However, the 'ifs' and the 'buts' have never been short in supply in T20 cricket and adding to that is Bangladesh's dismal run in this format of the game. The associates have nothing to lose here but for Bangladesh the stakes are high. It's about maintaining the high expectations and being successful in a grand event that the coun-



Muktijodha Sangsad's Nigerian striker Nkwocha Kingsley (R) runs in celebration after scoring one of his two goals against Brothers Union during their quarterfinal clash of the Walton Federation Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Int'l badminton meet from tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

The Yonex-Sunrise Bangladesh Open International Badminton Challenge 2013 -- a third-tier tournament of the Badminton Asia Confederation (BAC) -- gets underway from tomorrow at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium with ten countries taking part in the five-event meet. "We have earned the rights for the Bangladesh Open through bidding. The BAC are providing all the technical support while the Bangladesh Badminton Federation (BFF) is just hosting the tournament," said BFF general secretary Jobaidur Rahman Rana at a press conference at the Bangladesh Olympic Association auditorium yesterday. According to the speakers, some 100 registered shuttlers of the Badminton World Federation including 22 women from ten countries -- India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Nepal, Chinese Taipei, Maldives, New Zealand, Australia and Bangladesh -- will be taking part in quest of increasing their individual ranking that will make the tournament a competitive one from Day One. Hsu Jen Hao of Chinese Taipei, who is

ranked 31st in Asia, is the top seed in the men's singles, followed by India's Subhankar Dey (105), Malaysia's Yogendran Khirshnan (156), Sri Lanka's Dinuka Karunaratne (165) and Sri Lanka's Dharma Alrie Guna (186). In the women's singles, Pai Hsiao Ma of Chinese Taipei, who is 24th in the Asian ranking, is the top seed while India's Saili Rane (77), Malaysia's Sannatasah Saniru (108) and India's Trupti Murgunde (126) are the next three seeds. Among 14 shuttlers from Bangladesh in the men's singles, only three players -- Rais Uddin (1227), Saif Uddin (1467) and Anamul Haque (1467) -- have rankings and the others are not ranked at the Asian level while the four Bangladeshi female shuttlers have no ranking as well. "Despite the political turmoil, we cannot let our young generation from going forward and this tournament will be a good platform for the young shuttlers," said BFF president Rubaba Dowl. "We had an inter-ministerial meeting regarding the event where Police and RAB have confirmed they will ensure the security of the players on their way to the venue and back to the hotel." The tournament has a total prize money of 15,000 dollars.

Siddikur 4th in Indonesia

SPORTS REPORTER



Siddikur Rahman produced another excellent performance to finish fourth in the Indonesian Open which concluded at the Pantai Indah Kapuk Course of Damai Indah Golf Club yesterday. The Two-time Asian Tour winner returned with a card of four-under-par (67) on the last day to finish with 12-under-par (272). However, it was not enough for Bangladesh's best golfer as overnight leader Gaganjeet Bhullar raced away with the title with an aggregate score of 16-under-par (268). Nicholas Fung of Malaysia and Chapchai Nirat of Thailand grabbed the joint second position at 13-under-par (271). Siddikur gave himself an excellent chance of winning the title early on as he birdied the first four holes of the day to inch within one shot of leaders Bhullar and Jazz Janewattananond of Thailand. But the 29-year old failed to keep up the momentum and bogeyed the sixth and 15th holes to slip out of the race. Birdies on the 16th and 17th holes however ensured that Siddikur would finish the event on fourth position, with a paycheque of 37,500 dollars. "I had a really great start today with four birdies in a row. My putting was very good and I was hitting the ball awesome today," said Siddikur after the day's play. "I did think of winning after the four birdies. Unfortunately, I couldn't get my putting going after that but still managed to get birdies on the 16 and 17 to make amends for the two bogeys." The day though belonged to Bhullar who kept his cool and returned with a flawless three-under-par (68) to win his 135,000-dollar winner's cheque. The victory propped Bhullar up to fourth position in the Asian Tour Order of Merit while Siddikur remains at number three.

First Test from Tuesday

Injuries worry NZ, form Windies

AFF, Wellington



New Zealand have injury concerns over captain Brendon McCullum and batsman Kane Williamson as they prepare for this week's opening Test against the West Indies, with the hosts chasing their first series win for five years. Williamson, recovering from a broken thumb, said on Sunday there was no guarantee he would play in the Dunedin Test starting on Tuesday while McCullum requires painkillers for a back injury. "It comes down to the medical staff and myself talking," said Williamson, who bats at number three for the Black Caps. "We need to discuss [the risk] because it won't be 100 per cent, and the way it can be managed still needs to be discussed depending on the recovery in the next few days." McCullum, who returned home early from the recent tour of Bangladesh because of his back problems, said he is in regular pain but has dismissed reports that he could be forced to retire.

the countries in the final round. For us not to qualify will be a very big upset," said former chief selector Faruque Ahmed, who is tipped to regain the post shortly. The new chairman of Bangladesh Cricket Board's Cricket Operations Committee, Akram Khan, who will have to chalk up a proper programme to ensure the national team's success in the World Cup, echoed Faruque's sentiments. "A T20 game may go out of hands in just an over or two, but at home conditions we should be in good form. There were a few Afghans who performed well against the clubs here, and things will probably be a bit easier for them. But it won't be easy for them to replicate the performance against the national team," said Akram. Off field analysis will no doubt gather pace as the grand event draws closer, but eventually what's going to be is how Bangladesh perform on the field. While there might be a hint of pressure on the players, there definitely won't be any room for complacency. As Shohag Gazi puts it, "We will play against these teams as we normally do against any other big team, with full effort. No team can be taken for granted. I have seen the Afghan players during the Dhaka Premier League. While their style of play may not be as mature, they are talented."

Inspectors of ICC in Dhaka

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An ICC inspection team arrived in Dhaka yesterday to have a final look at the venues that will be involved in the hosting of the ICC Twenty20 World Cup in March next year. The team will visit the Khan Shaheb Osmani Stadium, which will be used as a practice ground, at Fatullah today. They will then visit Chittagong on Tuesday and Sylhet on Wednesday. While majority of the stadiums received ICC's approval, there were certain issues with regard to the Sylhet Divisional Stadium, which will be hosting majority of the Women's World Cup and six first-round matches of the men's event. Thus the BCB was given time till November 30 to prepare the venue. The matches of the ICC Twenty20 World Cup next year will be played at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong and the Sylhet Divisional Stadium.