

# SPORT

## First Div Twenty20 cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Swapan Kumar Dey's 65-ball 82 led the Dhaka Wanderers Club to a 38-run win over Orient Sporting Club at Fatullah yesterday in the First Division T20 tournament. Batting first, Dey hit 11 boundaries to help his side post 168. In reply, Orient were restricted to 130 for 8. At BKSP-3 a 50-ball 67 from Jubayer Rahman helped the Magnum Cricketers ease past Dhanmondi Progoti Sangho's first innings total of a 110. Magnum Cricketers reached the target with four wickets and 3.1 overs to spare.

The rest of the games of the day were either shortened or abandoned due to inclement weather. At the BKSP-3 Indira Road Krira Chakra (67-3) beat Young Cricketers (55-3) by 12 runs in a five-over contest. At the outer stadium in Fatullah, City Club (45-3) beat Bangladesh Boys (39-7) by seven wickets in an eight-over game. The rest of the matches were called off.



Celebrated shooter Abdullah Hel Baki (R) bears the national flag as he leads the Bangladesh contingent during the opening ceremony of the 17th Asian Games at the Incheon Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Games kick off in style

ANISUR RAHMAN from Incheon



South Korean pop stars and performers enthralled the crowd at Incheon's 61,000-seat stadium as the 17th Asian Games got off to a glittering start last night. Spectators and athletes joined in pop star Psy's signature horse-riding dance as he belted out an electrifying rendition of his popular number 'Gangnam Style'.

Wearing a glittering black suit and backed by a team of glamorous dancers, the star brought the three-hour spectacle to a thumping finale, heralding the start of 15 days of competition with 9,500 athletes.

After the brilliant display of One Asia, the march past of participating nations began with Nepal appearing first and hosts South Korea last. Bangladesh came in the middle with shooter Abdullah Hel Baki bearing the national flag.

The chiefs of Incheon Asian Games Organising Committee and Olympic Council of Asia delivered their short speeches before Korean president Park Geun-hye declared the meet open.

The torch was carried round the stadium by a series of Korean sports stars, including world number two woman golfer Park In-Bee and speed skater Lee Kyoo-Hyuk.

Korean actress Lee Young Ae along with two promising young athletes -- Kim Youngho, a 12-year old diver and Kim Joowon, a 13-year old gymnast -- lit the torch before Psy brought a raucous end to proceedings.

The 17th Asiad includes the full Olympic programme plus Asian favourites like kabaddi and wushu, making for a packed schedule of 36 sports with 439 gold medals on offer.

The organisers will hope that the glittering opening ceremony will inject some buzz among the people of South Korea, who have so far been largely apathetic to the event. They will also hope that the complaints from the athletes of the 45 participating nations about the poor facilities being provided will abate once the competitions kick off in earnest.

## 'Upset with myself'

NAIMUL KARIM



From picking up a five-wicket haul in his debut ODI against India to being dropped twice in the ODI series in the West Indies, in a short span of three months 19-year-old Taskin Ahmed has tasted both glory and disappointment in international cricket.

The first ODI in the West Indies saw Taskin bowl the fastest delivery of the match—145.6 km/hr. He however, gave away 46 runs in seven overs—a crime considering that Bangladesh had only 217 runs to defend. Slow-left armer Abdur Razzak replaced him in the next two ODIs.

Getting dropped after all the hype he generated following the India series in June was a move that immensely saddened the player; an anti-climax to the evident excitement that he reflected before leaving for the West Indies. "I am going to bowl full-paced bouncers at them, no matter who is batting," he had said.

"To tell you the truth, I am really upset with my performance. It was nowhere near my expectations. Yes, I did bowl fast, but what I have realised from this tour is that mere speed is not enough," Taskin told The Daily Star.

"I bowled wide and the batsmen took advantage of that. I could not stick to my line and length. In this small time that I have spent in international cricket, I think the biggest thing that I have learnt is that it's not enough if you give 90 per cent of your effort. To be successful, you always need to give your 100 per cent," he further explained.

Gaining accuracy and the usage of variations are the two aspects that the fast bowler has been focusing on in training ever since he returned from the West Indies.

"I won't compromise on my speed. I am a fast bowler and that's how it's going to be. But great fast bowlers around the world, the likes of Brett Lee and Shoaib Akhter, have



TASKIN AHMED

been accurate and fast. Accuracy is something that I can gain only with time,

"Apart from that I don't think I was able to use my variations properly. The wicket was flat and slow and that made it worse," said Taskin.

"So, on the whole, it was not a great experience, but it was a tour that I learnt a lot from. Senior players in the side have asked me to gain from this experience and that's exactly what I want to do," the determined bowler added.

Upon returning home from the West Indies the pacer avoided the media for a while. It was a change compared to the period before the series which saw the teenager feature in a string of interviews, especially after his flamboyant debut against India.

The difference in approach, according to the player, is just to give him some space to re-focus on his bowling.

"I clearly did not play well. I am not satisfied. So I really did not know what to say to the media. My performance shows that there are aspects in my training that I need to work harder on and I am just focused on that. I want to work hard and comeback well in the Zimbabwe series," said Taskin.

## Tigers arrive today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh national cricket team will return home following their tour of the West Indies at 8:30am today. The result of the recently concluded tour has been the worst series for the Tigers in the Caribbean islands.

Bangladesh lost the ODI series 3-0, while they suffered big defeats in both the Tests.

Back in 2009, the Tigers whitewashed a depleted West Indian outfit in both the ODI and the Test series. In 2004, a Habibul Bashar-led Bangladesh managed to draw one of the two Tests.

There will however, be no respite for the national players as they have to join training for the Asian Games T20 competition in Incheon, Korea. Captain Mushfiqur Rahim, spinner Shohag Gazi and pacer Al-Amin Hossain are the only front-line players who will not be participating in the Games. Mushfiqur has been exempted for his wedding preparations while Shohag and Al-Amin have been left out as the ICC have reported their bowling actions. Shohag completed his bowling test - in order to determine the legality of his action-- yesterday in Cardiff and is expected to receive his results next month.

Led by Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, the national team will leave for Incheon on September 25.

## Hockey campaign starts today

Naveed eyes good start against Japan

ANISUR RAHMAN from Incheon



The Bangladesh national hockey team start their Asian Games campaign in Incheon today when they take on 13th ranked Japan in the opening match of Pool A at the Seonhak Hockey Stadium at 10:00am Bangladesh time.

Bangladesh have prepared for the last three months for the seventh edition of the Asian Games under Pakistani coach Naveed Alam and played five competitive matches (three-match series against India's second-string side and two in the World Hockey League Round-1 -- against Sri Lanka and Hong Kong) earlier this month in an effort to improve their position from the eighth they managed in the last Asian Games.

However, finishing fifth or sixth, as targeted by Naveed will be a tough

challenge for his charges, who could hardly impress in the five matches played at home. Though Naveed believes Bangladesh will play well and achieve some target.

"This young side will be trying to play good hockey in the Asian Games. Japan is our first target, Malaysia second and Singapore the third. We will take one match at a time and fight against all the teams.

"If our players turn into fighters, they can achieve their target. If they give up, it will be a problem. But they are in good shape physically and mentally and I hope they will start the first game with confidence," said Naveed.

The Pakistani seemed very confident about a win against Japan, who beat Bangladesh 3-1 in Guangzhou Asian Games four years ago and never faced since.

"We will try 200 per cent to win the first game. If we win that match, the total scenario will change. So the first game is very important for us. I think

the players will play high-class hockey from the first to the last minute," said Naveed. "But I am bit concerned about their confidence. If they can score one or two early goals, then they have the ability to beat anyone."

However, captain Mamunur Rahman Chayan was not as confident as his coach.

"We have to accept the fact that Japan are ranked 13th in the world and we are 30th. So we will be trying to do the best we can," said Chayan.

Apart from the challenge of Japan, the team will also have to cope with the fatigue of travelling 25 hours to reach South Korea and having just one training session before the opening game.

Japan's South Korean coach did not talk to Bangladeshi journalists after their practice session but a Japanese journalist informed that Japan have set their sights on winning the gold and played a three-match series against South Korea as a part of their preparation.



Bangladesh hockey players stretch during their training session at the Seonhak Hockey Stadium in Incheon yesterday, ahead of their first match against Japan today.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Sk Russel take on Erchim FC

SPORTS REPORTER



Sheikh Russel KC begin their AFC President's Cup mission today when they take on Mongolian league champions Erchim FC at the Sugathadasa Stadium in Colombo.

The match will start at 1:30pm Bangladesh time.

The treble winners of 2012-2013 season, who emerged champions in the qualifying leg in May this year at the same venue in Sri Lanka, are eyeing a final berth from Group A, which also includes North Korean outfit Rimyonsu Club.

Sheikh Russel's veteran striker Zahid Hossain Emily, who

switched from Mohammedan SC recently, informed the high temperature and humidity in Colombo is a cause for concern.

"We have had one hour of practice today (Friday) amid very hot and humid conditions here," said Emily when contacted yesterday. "The match will begin at 1:00pm local time, so the temperature is a concern for us. Yet we are targeting a positive result in the opening match because we believe we can beat them. Once that target is achieved, we will think of our second match."

With the AFC president's Cup final round in sight, Sheikh Russel reinforced their squad by bringing in quite a few national players including striker Emily, goalkeeper Mamun Khan, defenders Wali Faisal, Nahidul Islam, Tapu

Barman, winger Zahid Hossain and Nigerian striker Nkowcha Kingsley. However, Zahid and Tapu will be unavailable as they are currently with national team for the Asian Games in Korea. Sheikh Russel have had had one month's training leading up to the tournament.

Emily also informed that the coach Zakaria Babu is likely to adapt a 4-2-3-1 formation against the Mongolian outfit for today's match.

Sheikh Russel will take on Rimyonsu Club in their last match of the group on September 24. The group champions will play against champions of Group A -- comprising Sri Lanka Air Force, FC HTTU of Turkmenistan and Manang Mashyangdi of Nepal -- in the final on September 26.

## ASIAN U-14 TENNIS Ila wins double crown

SPORTS REPORTER

Michael Francis Ila of Philippines claimed double crown in the Bengal Group Asian U-14 Tennis Series by winning both the boys' singles and doubles trophies yesterday.

Ila, the second seed beat top seed Ali Dawani of Bahrain in 6-3, 6-1 sets to win the singles title before pairing up with Dawani to beat Bangladeshi pair Hridoy Hasan and Shoikot Shahriar in 6-1, 6-4 sets to claim the doubles title.

The girls' singles final between Adithiya Karunaratne of Sri Lanka and Fabiha Lamisa Shuchona of Bangladesh will take place today.

## Li Na retires at 32

AFP, Wuhan



China's Li Na announced her retirement at the age of 32 over persistent knee injuries on Friday, prompting a wave of adulation for Asia's greatest and most influential tennis player.

Li, the first Asian national to win a Grand Slam singles title, said "my body is begging me to stop the pounding" as she ended a career that brought her nine titles and introduced tennis to the masses in China.

"As a professional tennis player, it is the best decision for me to leave the field," Li posted on her Sina Weibo microblog, adding that injuries have "for a long time prevented me playing as I had before".

"I've achieved far more than I'd dreamed for, and it's my biggest pride to have won glory for



the country," she wrote.

The announcement comes just seven months after Li lifted the Australian Open title, one of her career highlights following her historic French Open win of 2011.

That heady night in Melbourne proved the last time Li would win a trophy as she fell victim to her knee injuries and was sidelined since losing in Wimbledon's third

round in June. Li was also hit by a heavy blow when her inspirational coach Carlos Rodriguez, former mentor of Justine Henin, ended their partnership in July.

Li's success put her on the cover of Time magazine and saw her placed second, behind Russia's Maria Sharapova, on a Forbes list of the highest paid female athletes.

She was also positioned front and centre of a push by women's tennis into Asia, with several new tournaments including next week's WTA Wuhan Open in her home city.