

SPORT

U-16 girls upbeat

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh national U-16 women's team are confident about fighting till the end in the AFC U-16 Women's Championship Qualifiers, which get underway from Wednesday at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Bangladesh have been drawn in Group B along with Jordan, Iran, India and United Arab Emirates from where top two teams will progress to the final round to be held in China in 2015.

The U-16 girls, nine of whom have experience of playing international matches at the U-14 level, have been training for the last 50 days under coach Golam Rabbani Choton. The girls have played six practice matches against Narayanganj district women's team and the national women's team, winning four of those – two each against Narayanganj and the national team.

"We used to have a tendency to

concede defeat before even taking to the field. This time, though, we will go there for win and fight till the last minute. We have an initial target of winning against UAE and give our best against the three other opponents in a bid to secure a final round berth," said Choton at an official press conference at the BFF House yesterday.

Choton believes attack and midfield are the strongest areas of the team while the backline is a cause for concern, which he believes will improve gradually.

"We will play with our hearts and give our hundred per cent to win the matches. We will definitely not go there to concede goals," said captain Monika Chakma.

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) is providing 90,000 dollars while KFC and Amber Group have joined in as co-sponsors.

Channel 9 will telecast all 10 matches live from the venue, informed deputy chairman of BFF women's committee Mahfuza Akter Kiron.



Bangladesh national team cricketers enjoy a light-hearted game of football on the first day of their training camp after Eid at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Indira lift Div I title

SPORTS REPORTER

A blistering innings from Rubel Alam, who hammered a half-century off just 16 deliveries, led Indira Road Krira Chakra to a 19-run win over Rapid Foundation in the final of the First Division T20 tournament at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Despite Alam's knock, which saw him hammer three fours and six sixes, Indira Road finished on a below-par 131 for 7 at the end of their 20 overs. The rest of the batsmen failed to build on the impetus provided by Alam.

Their bowlers however, did not disappoint as they restricted Rapid Foundation to 112 for 9 to win the trophy.

Indira Road's Salauddin Sakil, Sazzad Ul Haq, Mehedi Mohin took two wickets apiece and pegged Rapid Foundation back.

Having put up a good bowling display towards the end, the momentum was with Rapid. And they scored 40 runs in the first seven overs before losing three wickets suddenly. By the end of the 10th over, they were down to 51 for 4. However, a 51-run stand between Proshanto Das and Mostafa Al Maruf, brought them back into the game. The tail however faltered once the pair was sent back to the pavilion and they ended up 19 runs short.

SCORES IN BRIEF
INDIRA ROAD KRIRA CHAKRA: 131 for 7 (Rubel 53, Sazzad 32; Nirjan 2-23)
RAPID FOUNDATION: 112 for 9 (Proshanto 28, Tarik 22; Salauddin 2-12, Mehedi 2-13)

Result: Indira Road Krira Chakra won by 19 runs.

Ind-WI third ODI called off

CRICINFO, Visakhapatnam

The third ODI between India and West Indies on October 14 in Visakhapatnam has already been abandoned because of a cyclone on the country's east coast. The game will not be rescheduled and the series is now a four-match contest.

The Indian Meteorological Department had issued warnings about Cyclone Hudhud at least three days in advance, but the BCCI decided against moving the game out of Visakhapatnam, a port city where the cyclone made landfall on Sunday. A BCCI source said it would have been logistically difficult to move the match to another venue in two days time.

Australia take series 3-0

Win third and final ODI in dramatic fashion

AFP, Abu Dhabi



Glenn Maxwell bowled a maiden final over and got two wickets to seal a thrilling one-run win for Australia in the third and final one-day international against Pakistan in Abu Dhabi on Sunday.

Chasing a modest 232-run target, Pakistan needed just two runs in the final over but Maxwell (2-41) kept his cool dismissing Sohail Tanvir (10) with the second ball of the 50th over and Mohammad Irfan (nought) with the final ball to complete Australia's 3-0 series whitewash.

It was Australia's third clean sweep against Pakistan after a 3-0 win in Pakistan in 1998 and a 5-0 triumph on home ground four years ago.

Pakistan once again lived up to their reputation of throwing away a winning position as they needed just 28 runs to win with four wickets in hand at one stage.

Tanvir and Zulfiqar Babar (14 not out) took them to within two runs of the win but Australia staged a strong comeback.

For Pakistan, Asad Shafiq hit a solid 50

while Sohaib Maqsood made 34.

Pakistan were without captain Misbah-ul-Haq who surprisingly dropped himself after a poor run of scores, handing the captaincy to Shahid Afridi.

With the series already in the bag, Australia rested paceman Mitchell Johnson and off-spinner Nathan Lyon who shared nine wickets in the first two matches.

That significantly weakened the bowling attack as Pakistan raced to a solid 56-run start with Ahmed Shahzad (26) and Sarfraz Ahmed (32) batting with confidence.

But left-arm spinner Xavier Doherty provided Australia with a breakthrough when he bowled Shahzad with his first delivery.

Both teams now play a two-match Test series with the first starting in Dubai from October 22.

SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA: 231 for 9 in 50 overs (Finch 18, Warner 56, Smith 77, Maxwell 20, Faulkner 33; Tanvir 3-40, Afridi 2-44)

PAKISTAN: 230 all out in 50 overs (Shafiq 50, Maqsood 34; Maxwell 2-41, Richardson 2-36)

Result: Australia won by one run.

Player-of-the-match: Maxwell

ICC rejects BCB claims

SPORTS REPORTER

The International Cricket Council yesterday rejected claims that the ICC's report on off-spinner Shohag Gazi's bowling action, sent to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), contained incorrect images.

In a press release the ICC stated, "The International Cricket Council (ICC) today rejected claims in a section of the media that the report on the bowling action of Bangladesh's Shohag Gazi contained an image of another Bangladesh player."

"The ICC clarified that the report of Shohag's bowling action, which was sent to the Bangladesh Cricket Board earlier this week, contains only photographs of Shohag," it added.

On Saturday, a number of BCB officials told The Daily Star that the ICC report contained a photograph of Mahmudullah Riyad's bowling action. The officials however were satisfied with the ICC's findings and described the inclusion of Riyad's photo as minor mistake.

The officials, upon being contacted again yesterday, stood by their claims. They however are awaiting the return of BCB CEO -- who is in Dubai -- before making any official statement.

12TH SA GAMES TRAINING

Tk 14-crore budget estimated

SPORTS REPORT

The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) has estimated a budget of Tk 14 crore for training purpose ahead of next year South Asian (SA) Games. The budget will be submitted to the National Sports Council (NSC) for the fiscal of 2014-15.

The 12nd SA Games is supposed to take place in India in the latter part of 2015, after a gap of four years as the last edition was held in Dhaka.

"We have made a draft estimation of Tk 14 crore, which might increase or decrease finally, depending on the number of athletes from 28 disciplines selected for training," said training and development committee's member secretary wing commander Rafiqul Islam after a meeting yesterday.

Bangladesh participated in 23

disciplines in the 11th edition of SA Games but in recent past, the BOA has excluded a number of disciplines including athletics and swimming from the Asian Games contingent following poor performance of athletes in the Commonwealth Games. However, the BOA has assured that they would accommodate as many disciplines as possible in the regional extravaganza.

Rafiqul hinted that the number of athletes might be around 550 and they intended to increase facilities for athletes as well as team officials during the long-term training. He also added that they would start training in the early part of December, subject to the availability of NSC's training fund.

"Though we have included 28 disciplines for training, it might be reduced after next's month meeting," said Rafiqul.

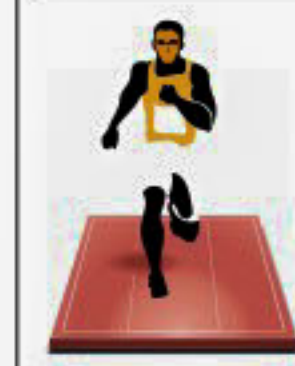


Indira Road Krira Chakra celebrate after winning the First Division T20 Tournament at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday. They beat Rapid Foundation by 19 runs.

PHOTO: STAR

Oscar knows fate today

REUTERS, Pretoria



Disgraced South African track star Oscar Pistorius returns to court on Monday to find out whether he will serve a long stretch behind bars for the negligent killing of his model girlfriend, or walk out a free man.

After a six-month, on-off trial that captivated South Africa, and millions more around the world who admired Pistorius as a symbol of triumph over physical adversity, opinion is starkly divided on the eventual outcome.

A non-custodial sentence would likely spark public anger, fuelling a perception among black South Africans that, 20 years after the end of apartheid, wealthy whites can still secure preferential justice.

The Paralympic and Olympic athlete, whose lower legs were amputated as a baby, was convicted of culpable homicide last month for the Valentine's Day shooting of 29-year-old law graduate Reeva Steenkamp.

Judge Thokozile Masipa cleared the 27-year-old of the more serious charge of murder, saying prosecutors had failed to prove Pistorius' intent to kill when he fired four 9mm rounds through the door of a toilet cubicle, in what he said was the mistaken belief an intruder was lurking behind it.

A murder conviction would have almost certainly carried a jail sentence. Culpable homicide, South Africa's equivalent of manslaughter, can be punished by anything from 15 years in jail to a suspended sentence or community service.

In a front page headline on Friday, South Africa's Times newspaper cited experts saying: "Oscar won't go to jail". Conversely, Johannesburg's Star said he was likely to get as many as 10 years behind bars, with a portion suspended.

At the sentencing hearing, Masipa is likely to hear arguments from prosecution and defence, possibly for as long as a day each, and psychological and probation experts before making her ruling.

The decision by 66-year-old Masipa, only the second black woman to rise to South Africa's bench, to absolve Pistorius of murder drew criticism from legal experts and the public in a country infamous for violence, particularly against women.

Halsall named fielding coach

SPORTS REPORTER

Former England fielding coach Richard Halsall has signed a two-year contract with the Bangladesh Cricket Board. The Zimbabwe-born coach, who worked both as an assistant and fielding coach for England in the past, reached Dhaka yesterday.

He was earlier assigned as Bangladesh's fielding coach for the West Indies series only.

"We had signed him for that series under a special contract. After that we decided to sign him for a longer period."

"We believe that he has got a very good profile and has plenty of experience. He was with the English side that performed extremely well under Andy Flower. And we believe he can do a great job for us as well," said BCB director Jalal Yunus.

His first assignment will be the Zimbabwe series which begins later this month.

Russian GP Hamilton's

AFP, Sochi

Briton Lewis Hamilton won the inaugural Russian Grand Prix on Sunday, with his Mercedes team claiming the constructors' championship with three races of the season to go.

Hamilton, 29, started from pole and dominated the field to speed to a 31st GP victory, consolidating his lead atop the drivers' standings from Mercedes teammate Nico Rosberg, who finished second ahead of Finland's Valtteri Bottas, in a Williams.

Federer Shanghai Master

AFP, Shanghai



Roger Federer edged a resilient Gilles Simon of France 7-6 (8/6), 7-6 (7/2) to win the Shanghai Masters and claim the 81st title of his career on Sunday.

The 17-time Grand Slam winner had blown away world number one Novak Djokovic in the semifinals but he found a stubborn opponent in Simon at Shanghai's Qizhong Tennis Center.

And the 33-year-old needed two tie-breaks before dousing Simon to making it back-to-back Masters victories following his win in Cincinnati in August.

The Swiss veteran started poorly against 29th-ranked Simon's confrontational baseline play and he lost his serve in the very first game.

Federer changed tactics midway through the first set, tentatively approaching the net in a bid to regain the initiative.

But Simon was unfazed, slamming his shots

with power when Federer was in a forward position and forcing him to reconsider the tactic.

Shouts of "Come on Roger!" were being drowned out by "Allez Gilles!" as the crowd sensed an upset could be on the cards.

But as Simon served for the set at 5-4, Federer broke back and he was in the ascendancy as he earned two break points in Simon's next service game.

However, he lost the first by dragging his shot too far to his opponent's right, and the second when Simon bravely met him at the net.

The pair were evenly matched during a tight tie-break, but Simon finally lost the set as he attempted a serve-volley, allowing Federer pick out a gap to his right.

First time in Stosur's career

AFP, Osaka

Big-serving Australian Samantha Stosur retained a title for the first time in her career Sunday with a resounding 7-6, 6-3 victory over Zarina Diyas in the Japan Women's Open final.

Top seed Stosur, who has struggled to hit the heights since winning the US Open and reaching a career-high fourth in the world in 2011, was pushed hard in the first set by the fifth-seeded Kazakh, taking it on a tiebreak 9-7.

But Stosur, currently ranked 18th in the world, found her range in the second set to capture her third Japan crown and a sixth singles title on the WTA Tour without dropping a set all week.