

14-player U-19 team named

SPORTS REPORTER

Mehidy Hassan Miraz will lead the Bangladesh Under-19 cricket team in their tour of Sri Lanka.

A 14-member team was announced yesterday where Najmul Hossain Shanto was named deputy of Miraz.

The team will leave Dhaka tomorrow for Sri Lanka to play five youth ODIs and two three-day matches against their Sri Lankan counterparts.

SQUAD

Mehidy Hassan Miraz (captain), Najmul Hossain Shanto (vice-captain), Joyraj Sheik Imon, Munim Shahriar, Mohammed Saif Hassan, Zakir Hasan, Shaif Uddin, Shahanur Rahman, Mehede Hasan, Nahid Hasan, Mohammad Abdul Halim, Saleh Ahmed Shawon Gazi, Sanjit Saha, Prosenjit Das.

Zia bounces back

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman returned to winning ways in the 13th Parsvnath Delhi International Open Grandmasters Chess Tournament beating India's R Ashwath in the eighth round yesterday.

Having lost in the seventh round after two consecutive draws, Zia now has five points from his eight games.



West Ham United goalkeeper Adrian is ecstatic after scoring the winning penalty in the sudden death shoot-out during the FA Cup third round replay against Everton at Upton Park on Tuesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Adrian steals the show

REUTERS, London



CUP

against Everton.

The Spanish keeper had the fate of the third round replay in his hands before scoring against compatriot Joel Robles to give West Ham a 9-8 penalty shootout victory after a superb end-to-end thriller

ended 2-2 after extra time on Tuesday.

Robles had failed to beat Adrian when he struck the bar with the preceding penalty, leaving the scores level at 8-8 before the West Ham keeper slotted home the 20th penalty of the night.

The Spaniard was so confident he was going to score, he took his gloves off as he prepared for his kick.

"I didn't have any nerves," he told reporters. "I thought 'I'll take off my gloves, this game is over' and I struck the ball."

"It was an unbelievable game and I feel really happy. Joel made some unbelievable saves for Everton but we played well and deserved it in the end.

"I took my gloves off so quickly as I

worried that the referee might blow his whistle and book me for time-wasting.

"I have celebrated my saves before, but never scoring a goal. It was my first goal in my career and it's an amazing day."

West Ham next play at League One (third tier) Bristol City in the fourth round after coming through what could be one of the last FA Cup matches played at the Boleyn Ground ahead of their move to the Olympic Stadium at the end of next season.

In an exhilarating match worthy of any swan song, West Ham went ahead when Enner Valencia beat Robles with an angled shot after 51 minutes.

Everton then had Aiden McGeady sent off for a second yellow card four minutes

later but the 10 men equalised when Kevin Mirallas struck with a stunning free-kick after 82 minutes.

Romelu Lukaku put Everton 2-1 ahead in the seventh minute of extra time, before substitute Carlton Cole equalised with his first touch in the 113th minute.

The momentum then swung in West Ham's favour in the shoot-out when Steven Naismith missed Everton's second penalty but with the scores at 4-4, Robles saved Stewart Downing's potential match-winning spot kick.

The next four penalties were converted before Robles cracked his effort against the bar, allowing Adrian to throw down his gauntlets and win it for West Ham.

'We are different'

GOAL.COM

Cristiano Ronaldo has described himself and Barcelona rival Lionel Messi as footballing anomalies for the way they have kept themselves at the top of world football for an unprecedented amount of time.

The Real Madrid forward, 29, picked up the third Ballon d'Or trophy of his career on Monday, defeating four-time winner Messi and World Cup-winning Bayern Munich goalkeeper Manuel Neuer.

Ronaldo acknowledged that he and Messi are two of the only players to have maintained their aura of invincibility for so long, and the Portugal international puts the fulfilling achievements down to hard work.

"To be honest, no, I didn't think I'd be at the top of world football for so many years," he told Fifa.com. "It all happened so fast. In my opinion, the hardest thing is maintaining that level."

"I'm proud to have been in the World XI for eight consecutive years and always vying to be among the best three, as it's something very few people manage to do. I think just Messi and I have done it, not many more anyway."

"I don't think anyone else has done it eight years in a row, which is why it's immensely satisfying. Year after year I keep

working hard with my club and national team so that I continue to stand out. This recognition is an indication that things are going well and that I'm enjoying an exceptional career."

Ronaldo also expressed he is well aware he will be considered a legend once he hangs up his boots, though he remains uncertain if his mind and body have another decade of footballing action in them.

"In truth, I don't think about my legacy," he added. "I know I'll have a place in the history of the game because of what I'm doing and winning, whether at an individual or team level."

"I know I'll have a nice page devoted to me between some of the all-time greats, and that makes me happy. I'm 29 now but I feel great, like I'm still 25! I think I can play on for another five, six or seven years at a high level. Beyond that, we'll have to see."

"It's conceivable I play until I'm 40 years old but, as I said before, it's a case of seeing how I feel year after year, how motivated I am and if I'm still useful to my team like in the past."

"As for going on until 40... If I want to play until then, I will, though I might be dragging myself around by then! But while I'm playing to an acceptable standard - acceptable to me, that is, and at a level my fans and club deserve - then I want to continue. Honestly, though, it's not something I'm thinking about yet."



Proteas prevent whitewash

STAR SPORTS DESK



Stand-in wicketkeeper Morne van Wyk hit a maiden international century before David Wiese took a five-for for the first time as South Africa beat West Indies by 69 runs in the third and final Twenty20 International at Kingsmead on Wednesday.

The West Indies had already clinched the series by winning the first two matches.

The 35-year-old Van Wyk, who was recalled to the South African team because of an injury to Quinton de Kock, scored 114 not out off 70 balls with seven sixes and nine fours as the Proteas posted 195 for three in their allotted 20 overs. Reeza Hendricks, opening with Van Wyk, smashed 42 off 32 deliveries while Wiese chipped in with 23 batting at number three position.

The West Indies reply never gathered steam, despite a 31-ball 49 from opener Lendl Simmons. Right-arm pacer Wiese accounted for five of the West Indies batsmen while Merchant de Lange and Wayne Parnell shared two wickets each as the visitors were bundled out for 126.

Both sides had made several changes for this match. Notable absentees were West Indian Chris Gayle, man of the match in the first two games, because of a back injury and South African captain Faf du Plessis, who was being rested ahead of the one-dayers.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SOUTH AFRICA: 195 for 3 in 20 overs (Van Wyk 114 not out, Hendricks 42, Wiese 21; Cottrell 1-33, Pollard 1-13, Bravo 1-38)

WEST INDIES: 126 all out in 19 overs (Simmons 49, Pollard 20 not out; Wiese 5-23, De Lange 2-26, Parnell 2-33)

Result: South Africa won by 69 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Morne van Wyk.

Series: West Indies won 2-1.

'No Messi exit plan'

AFP, Madrid



Barcelona coach Luis Enrique is insisting a future without star player Lionel Messi has never been considered as speculation over the Argentine's future continues to mount.

Tensions have been simmering at Barcelona with the coach insisting Messi play a wider role in the line-up.

Messi had appeared to rule out a move following a stunning individual performance in Sunday's 3-1 win over La Liga champions Atletico Madrid.

"I have never demanded anything to ensure that I stay because I have never had any intention of leaving," he told Barca TV.

However, the following day he fuelled the rumour mill once more by saying "I don't know where I'll be next year" during a press conference ahead of the Ballon d'Or gala in Zurich.

"I don't know what the future will bring," said Enrique when asked if he thought Messi would win a fifth Ballon d'Or whilst at Barcelona.

"We all think that Messi will be at Barcelona for the coming years, it is what all the fans want. We are not even planning a squad without Messi."

The speculation has arisen due to a reported breakdown in communications between Messi and Enrique.

Messi was left on the bench as Barca fell to a shock 1-0 defeat in their opening game of the year away to Real Sociedad and then missed training the next day, claiming to have suffered from a stomach bug.

Later that day he followed Chelsea and two of their players Thibaut Courtois and Filipe Luis on social media site Instagram and sources in the Catalan press then claimed Messi had met with Barca president Josep Maria Bartomeu to ask for the former Barca captain Enrique to be replaced as coach.

Both Messi and Bartomeu have since denied those claims, with the former particularly aggrieved that the reports surfaced in the Catalan press.

"It hurts me because it comes from here, from Barcelona, from people that love the club, or say they do. It doesn't come from Madrid like it has in the past," said Messi.

"It is not good that they look for rivalry between Luis Enrique and I because there isn't any."

And Enrique repeated his assertion that there is no division in the dressing room ahead of a demanding schedule in the coming weeks as Barca battle to advance in the Copa del Rey and the Champions League, as well as clawing back a one-point deficit on La Liga leaders Real Madrid.

"The dressing room is united. We avoid the controversy and look for the best atmosphere possible."



Saudi Arabia striker Mohammed Al Sahlawi (C) celebrates his goal with teammates during their Asian Cup clash against North Korea in Melbourne yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

China thru', North Korea out

AFP, Melbourne



Super-sub Sun Ke fired China into the Asian Cup quarterfinals on Wednesday as North Korea crashed out and Jordan fumed over a botched dope test that left a player ill.

Sun's superb solo effort after 68 minutes, moments after coming on, gave China a pulsating 2-1 victory over Uzbekistan and sent them into the knock-out stages for the first time since 2004.

There was bitter disappointment though for North Korea, who scored their first Asian Cup goal for 23 years but still lost 4-1 to Saudi Arabia and were eliminated.

Away from the pitch, Iran coach Carlos Queiroz, who launched a scathing attack on match officials after his side's 2-0 win over Bahrain, reacted sarcastically after being asked by the Asian Football Confederation not to comment on referees in his official

news conferences.

"I don't know if we're entitled to give opinions about refs," said the former Real Madrid manager, dubbed "Rottweiler" by former Manchester United boss Alex Ferguson during two spells as assistant at Old Trafford.

"After 32 years of my work in football I was never told I cannot give an opinion about the game."

It was a red letter day for the Chinese, runners-up in 1984 and again as hosts in 2004 and now suddenly dark horses for a first Asian Cup title.

China did it the hard way, going behind to Odil Ahmedov's deflected shot after 22 minutes.

They dragged themselves back into the match, however, Wu Xi equalising with a sharp finish 10 minutes into the second half before Sun's cracker triggered wild celebrations on the Chinese bench.

Saudis breathed new life into their campaign after being upset 1-0 by the Chinese.

North Korea took an early lead when Japan-based midfielder Ryang Yong-Gi slammed in the rebound after Pak Kwang-Ryong's fierce drive had been parried by goalkeeper Waleed Abdullah.

But Naif Hazazi equalised with a clinical finish against the run of play eight minutes before the interval. The Saudi forward's joy was unbridled, having fluffed a penalty against China at the weekend.

Mohammed Al Sahlawi poked the Gulf side in front seven minutes after the break, before profiting from some horror defending to roll in a third as North Korea began to unravel.

Nawaf Alabid added a fourth and Saudi Arabia, who won the last of their three Asian Cup titles in 1996, face 2011 semifinalists Uzbekistan for the right to join China in the knockout stages on Sunday.

Ronaldo's son a Messi fan!

REUTERS

Cristiano Ronaldo's son Cris junior is a Lionel Messi fan, the boy's father said after they met up with the Argentina captain at the Ballon D'Or ceremony in Zurich on Monday.

After Ronaldo was named 2014 Ballon D'Or winner, beating four-time winner Messi into second place, the two players had a friendly exchange in the lobby of Zurich's Kongresshaus when Cris pointed at Messi and then stood up to greet him.

Real Madrid's Portugal captain Ronaldo told his arch-rival Messi: "He watches a video on the internet of all of us and he talks about you," prompting a coy reaction from his son.

City confirm Bony signing

AFP, London

Manchester City on Wednesday confirmed the signing of Ivory Coast striker Wilfried Bony on a four-and-a-half-year contract from Swansea City.

"City have completed the signing of Wilfried Bony from Swansea City," the English champions announced on their website.

Swansea said the transfer fee was a "club record", but although City did not publicise the exact figure, British media reports claimed they had agreed to pay up to 28 million pounds for Bony.