

De Kruif due today

SPORTS REPORTER
Bangladesh coach Lodewijk de Kruif is scheduled to arrive here today to take charge of the national team ahead of the World Cup and Asian Cup Qualifiers against Australia and Jordan, scheduled for September 3 and 8 respectively.
De Kruif was supposed to return from Netherlands in the first week of this month, but his arrival was delayed due to a surgery he underwent recently.
De Kruif is expected to announce the squad for the two qualifying matches and begin preparation camp right after the completion of the Manyavar Bangladesh Premier League on August 20.

Bangladesh team will leave for Australia on August 26 and, on their way, will play a friendly match against Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur on August 29. The Dutchman will not be allowed to stand in the dug-out during the match against Australia due to suspension.

Binny back for India

CRICINFO, Colombo
All-rounder Stuart Binny has been added to India's Test squad for the Sri Lanka series. He will join the team ahead of the second game, which begins on August 20 in Colombo. India's media manager confirmed to ESPNcricinfo that there was no injury concern for any of the other members of the squad, that Binny was just an "addition" to the 15-man unit.

Binny, a pace-bowler and lower middle-order batsman, has played three Tests, all on India's tour to England in mid 2014. While he did not pick up a wicket in any of those games, he scored a handy 78 in his debut Test, in Nottingham, to help India draw.

India lost the first Test of the series, in Galle, after being ahead for a large part of the match. There are two more matches to go, both in Colombo, one at the P Sara Oval and the other at the Sinhalese Sports Club.

Robi launches jersey design competition

SPORTS REPORTER
The official sponsors of the Bangladesh national cricket team, Robi Axiata Limited, unveiled a jersey designing competition yesterday entitled 'Odommo Jersey Design Contest'.
The contest was unveiled through a press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur and will conclude on August 31.

Those interested in sending their designs can email them to jersey@robi.com.bd or upload their designs on www.wearerobigers.com.bd to take part in the competition.
Thereafter, a panel of judges will select eleven designs. The public will have a chance to vote for the designs through the internet and through their mobile phones. The voting is scheduled to begin in mid-September.

The winner of the contest will be announced in October.
Mahtab Uddin Ahmed, chief operating officer of Robi, unveiled the contest yesterday. BCB director Kazi Inam Ahmed, CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury and managing director of Channel i Faridur Reza Sagar were present at the event.



Bangladesh players celebrate Saad Uddin's (2nd from L) winning goal against Afghanistan during their semifinal clash at the Sylhet District Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh in final; to meet India

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh booked their maiden final berth in the SAFF U-16 Championship overcoming Afghanistan by a solitary goal in a tense semifinal battle at the Sylhet District Stadium yesterday. Midfielder Saad Uddin, one of Sylhet's own, scored the all important goal in the 56th minute to send the boys in red to their first final, having exited the competition from this stage in the previous two editions.
The Bangladesh boys will meet India in Tuesday's final as the defending champions later handed a single-goal defeat to Nepal in the second semifinal.

Having outclassed Sri Lanka in their opening match, and overcome India in another difficult group stage encounter, Bangladesh were expected to put on a dominant display against a side they had beaten two years ago. But the

young brigade of the Lions of Khorasan proved to be more than just a physical side, causing a few problems to the Bangladesh defence with their incisive attacks, especially through the wings. The hosts did dominate possession, and tried to build up the game with short passes, but the heavy ground and a lack of synch among the players in the attacking third meant most of the forays failed to be penetrative.

However, somewhat against the run of play, the hosts gifted the opposition a spot kick in the 38th minute, with defender Jahangir Alam Sajib needlessly pushing Afghanistan striker Abdul Naser Amini inside the forbidden zone, despite already having cleared the ball. But to the relief of the Bangladesh team and that of the full-house crowd, Amini blasted the ball woefully over the crossbar.

The big break for Bangladesh came in the 56th minute when Sarwar Zaman Nipu's shot, at the end of a bursting run, was parried for a corner by the Afghan goalkeeper. Saad was at

hand to rifle the ball home when Khalil Bhuiyan's curler was headed to his path by skipper Shawon Hossain.

Chances came at both ends towards the end, with Bangladesh substitute Mohammad Rony rattling the crossbar with a glancing header in the 88th minute before Bangladesh goalkeeper Faisal Ahmed needed to produce a brilliant one-handed save in the stoppage time to deny the visitors a chance to crawl back.

Goalscorer Saad was delighted with being able to contribute to the victory. "This was my first goal in the tournament which makes me very proud. My family members and relatives were here, so it was pretty special to score in front of them," said Saad in his post-match reaction.

"My players were not physically as strong as the opposition. They were weary in the second half, which is why they could not create the pressure that was needed towards the end. Still they successfully held their own," opined Bangladesh coach Syed Golam Jillani.

Kiwis draw T20 series

REUTERS, Pretoria

A blazing half-century from opener Martin Guptill helped New Zealand beat South Africa by 32 runs in Centurion on Sunday to draw the two-match Twenty20 international series 1-1.
Guptill smashed three sixes and six fours as he bludgeoned 60 from 35 balls to lead the tourists to 177 for seven.

The Proteas were in trouble early in their chase and battled to keep up with the rate, managing 145 for eight in reply.
New Zealand won the toss and Guptill and captain Kane Williamson (25) added 52 for the first wicket.
Jimmy Neesham (28 from 19 balls) also played a fine cameo as the visitors finished their innings strongly after the platform laid by Guptill.

Young fast bowler Kagiso Rabada was the pick of the home bowlers with three for 30 in his four overs, including two wickets in as many balls for the second match running.

South Africa started slowly and when AB de Villiers (15) tried to up the rate he was caught by Neesham off spinner Nathan McCullum before they slipped to 47 for three in the seventh over.

Farhaan Behardien (36), David Miller (29) and Rilee Rossouw (26) tried to rebuild, but could not get South Africa close to their target.

The teams start a three-match one-day international series at the same venue on Wednesday.

SCORES IN BRIEF

NEW ZEALAND: 177 for 7 in 20 overs (Guptill 60, Williamson 25, Elliott 20, Neesham 28, Munro 18; Rabada 3-30)
SOUTH AFRICA: 145 for 8 in 20 overs (De Villiers 15, Rossouw 26, Behardien 36, Miller 29; McCullum 2-31, McClenaghan 2-28, Sodhi 2-27)
Result: New Zealand won by 32 runs and 2-match series drawn 1-1.

Player-of-the-match: Martin Guptill.

Player-of-the-series: Martin Guptill.



Bangladesh national cricket team sponsors Robi Axiata Limited unveiled a contest in Mirpur yesterday that will invite designs for the national team's jersey from all over the country over the next two weeks.

Bolt missing Japan camp

REUTERS, Kingston

Six times Olympic gold medallist Usain Bolt will miss Jamaica's training camp in Japan before the World Athletics Championships in Beijing later this month, the manager of the Caribbean island's delegation said.
"He [Bolt] is the only one who is not in camp, because you know he was undergoing some amount of examination while he was preparing at the same time," manager Ludlow Watts told Reuters by telephone from Japan.

"He was to come in [camp in Japan] but at the last moment it was decided that he should not come, considering that the team is just two days away from travelling to Beijing."
"It was considered necessary that he should perhaps go to the venue of the competition directly, rather than coming here."

Watts also said about 14 athletes, including reigning double sprint champion Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, who were having problems obtaining Chinese visas through Italy, should get them by Monday in Japan.
"It is being sorted, in other words by tomorrow it will be completely sorted because it is in the process and I expect it will be completed by Monday," Watts said.

Meanwhile, Commonwealth Games 100m gold medallist Kemar Bailey-Cole has been ruled out of Beijing after suffering a torn hamstring.

In a message on his Facebook page, the 23-year-old sprinter said he was ending his season.

"It is with bitter emotions that I am announcing that my season has come to an end. I will not be competing at the World Championships," read the post.



UNLEASH THE WARHORSE: As the Northern Speed Trials were held at the Elvinton Airfield in York on Saturday, hundreds of motorcycle enthusiasts gathered to break world records or set personal best speeds. One such rider, Kevin Scott, brought his unorthodox 'Warhorse' motorbike to set his personal fastest speed.

PHOTO: AFP

'Winning away top priority'

INTERNET, London

Steven Smith has made his intentions loud and clear that winning away from home will take top priority as he gets ready to take over the Australian captaincy from Michael Clarke after the final Ashes Test at The Oval.
Smith, who led Australia in Clarke's

absence during their home summer against India in December-January, will face his first subcontinent challenge when the team tours Bangladesh for two Tests in October.

"I guess the first aim for our team from this point, following on from the disappointment of this Ashes campaign, is to win more Test series away from home," he wrote in his column for Cricket.com.au. "That is something that's very high on my agenda, and something that we probably haven't done as well and as regularly as we would have liked over recent times."

"Given that the first Test tour after Michael's final match at The Oval next week will be to Bangladesh, we have a chance to show that we can change that pattern by making sure we adapt to the different conditions that we encounter around the world. And that we play



STEVEN SMITH

Cricketers busy behind scenes

SPORTS REPORTER

With the national team enjoying a well-deserved holiday, cricket, albeit for a brief period, might have taken a back seat in the last couple of weeks.

Bangladesh's teenage footballers and Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club's achievements at home and abroad have been dominating the headlines. However, while cricket might be going through a bit of a lull period within the nation, outside it, writers and players continue to marvel at what the Tigers have achieved so far this year.

An English Daily rated Mushfiqur Rahim as one of the top Test captains a few days back.

More recently, Sport 360, an online portal interviewed Tigers coach Chandika Hathurusingha and reflected on Bangladesh's success in the international circuit.

Describing Hathurusingha and ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza as the two architects behind Bangladesh's rise this year, the article touched on quite a few crucial junctures this year.

For instance, Hathurusingha explained how the call of a generally unheard strategy in the subcontinent gave Bangladesh a rollicking start against Pakistan.

"In the World Cup in Australia we concentrated mainly on the fast bowlers because of the conditions. They [Bangladesh players] got confident.

"When we came back because we practised so much on those hard, bouncy wickets going back to what they were used to was a struggle for them. So although we were playing Pakistan and their strength is fast bowlers we produced wickets that had a little bit of carry and bounce," Hathurusingha told Sport 360.

"I thought our players would do better on those pitches. It is all about breaking that previous notion that they had to win with spinners," he added.

There's still a week to go before Hathurusingha and company return to Mirpur to start preparing for the Australia series. But that doesn't mean that the SBNS has lost its shine; in fact it seems as busy as ever.

Members of the High Performance Unit, which includes a group that is being trained with an aim to provide the national team with immediate back-up, are sweating it out every day. Momtazul Haque, who cut-short his holidays, has already begun hitting the nets. Mashrafe is regularly spending time in the gym, while Salma Khatun and company are busy gearing up for their series against South Africa.

Even the BCB's medical team seems busy. At the moment it's in the process of sending Mushfiqur Rahim's scans, photographs to Australia for a more detailed check-up.

The Test captain, who told The Daily Star yesterday that the pain in his injured finger had reduced a lot more than before, isn't in any danger for the upcoming series. However, the medical staff isn't taking any chances.

With SBNS in full swing, it seems as though it has already warmed up for August 22, the day when the national cricketers will return and begin their camp.

PHOTO: AFP