

Drama at BayArena

REUTERS, Berlin

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scored a second-half winner as Borussia Dortmund secured a 1-0 victory at Bayer Leverkusen on Sunday to stay on the heels of Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich.

Dortmund are on 51 points but they are still eight behind the Bavarians.

Aubameyang struck in the 64th minute, tapping in from a fine Erik Durm cutback.

However, the goal prompted an angry reaction from Leverkusen coach Roger Schmidt, who was sent to the stands by the referee, but refused to leave his technical area, causing the game to be briefly interrupted.

Referee Felix Zwayer stopped play and left the pitch until Schmidt followed his orders.

After a short halt the game resumed and Leverkusen's Javier Hernandez should have grabbed an equaliser for the hosts in the 90th minute but the Mexican forward shot wide from close range.

Guus hints at retirement

AGENCIES, London

Chelsea's interim manager Guus Hiddink has hinted at plans to retire at the end of the season despite admitting he is happy at Chelsea.

"I feel fresh and every morning I leave with a smile," he said. "Although we have a difficult time when there's a loss, I love to go to training."

"On the other hand, young people must take over and I must retreat a bit. I will visit Chelsea often next season but I'm not thinking of working elsewhere."

Challenge lies between Games



PHOTO: STAR FILE

Bangladeshi athletes falling behind their South Asian counterparts at a worrying pace.

ANISUR RAHMAN



The reply will probably be in the negative if the casual Bangladesh sports fan is asked whether he or she is satisfied with the efforts of the 521-member contingent in the just-concluded 12th South Asian Games in India. Dig a little deeper however, and the story that emerges is one of meagre facilities that have shackled the individual athletes' admirable dedication and determination to make the country proud beyond the border.

Individual brilliance from weightlifter Mbia Akter Simanta, swimmer Mahfuza Khatun Shila and shooter Shakil Ahmed during the 12th edition of the regional sports carnival saved Bangladesh from a campaign devoid of gold, but it also provided the officials of different national sports federations as well as the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) an excuse to beat the proverbial drum about their contributions and efforts in winning four gold, 15 silver and 56 bronze medals.

The officials will also certainly prepare an assessment report on the athletes' performance with some bold recommendations saying what 'we will have to do to produce better results in the future', just like they have done after the completion of each edition of the South Asian Games, but to be frank nothing regarding their recommendations had appeared until the next Games were already knocking at the door.

The mediocre results cannot be blamed on the athletes. It is often said that athletes of a calibre that can genuinely challenge their South Asian rivals are not coming through. The fact remains however that some athletes in the current batch beat their previous best in the Games but had to return empty-handed, because of the improvement of foreign athletes, who are virtually going beyond reach with their modern training facilities as well as getting the 'financial security' that encourages them to continue in their disciplines. It is believed that our athletes are capable of matching that pace of improve-

ment only if the facilities they get match those of their more successful foreign opponents.

There was a time when Bangladesh produced the fastest man more than once in track and field. The country produced six gold medals from the swimming pool in a single edition in 1985 in Dhaka; it had even bagged seven gold medals from the shooting range in the 1993 Dhaka SA Games. Such highs now are distant dreams, thanks to a lack of proper planning and execution to defend those gold medals.

Bangladesh produced some exciting results in the 2010 Dhaka SA Games to win 18 gold medals. It is expected that such success will be followed by a greater tally of medals in the following edition, but the reality is that the athletes were not able to defend a single gold in the 12th SA Games (only 11 were up for defence as seven of the gold medal-earning events were not held in the latter edition), thanks again to the limited training facilities for athletes and the failure to hold regular national meets of different disciplines.

The South Asian Games is considered a lowly event in the Olympic movement, conducted by the South Asian Olympic Committee. From the Bangladeshi perspective it is the highest stage where the athletes can realistically compete against some world-class athletes, especially from India, in disciplines such as shooting, archery,

BANGLADESH IN 2016 SA GAMES

Discipline	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Archery	0	3	3	6
Athletics	0	0	2	2
Boxing	0	0	3	3
Badminton	0	0	2	2
Football	0	0	2	2
Handball	0	1	1	2
Hockey	0	0	1	1
Judo	0	0	2	2
Kabaddi	0	1	1	2
Khokho	0	2	1	3
Shooting	1	3	3	7
Squash	0	0	1	1
Swimming	2	0	15	17
Table Tennis	0	0	1	1
Taekwondo	0	0	3	3
Weightlifting	1	2	3	6
Wrestling	0	3	7	10
Wushu	0	0	5	5
Cycling	0	0	0	0
Tennis	0	0	0	0

weightlifting, wrestling, boxing, etc. and gain some valuable experience to progress further.

At the Games, the athletes also learn to cope with the challenges of winning international medals, and if they fail they return with the determination to fulfil that dream in the following edition. That verve and momentum is often lost when they return home.

The National Sports Council of Bangladesh spends hundreds of crores of taka every fiscal year; most of that is spent behind the construction, renovation and maintenance works of buildings and remuneration of the gigantic NSC staff, but there is hardly any allocation for training of athletes who hoist the red and green and create occasions for the national anthem to be played in foreign stadiums.

The real challenge begins now; it is not just about winning medals, but more importantly about how the different sports federations and the BOA capitalise on the momentum the athletes have painstakingly created and to draw up a proper plan for the 2018 edition.



Moments like these were few and far between. PHOTO: STAR FILE

Bleeding Mo wins race

REUTERS, London

Mo Farah suffered a cut that left blood streaming down his leg but the mid-race spiking could not stop the world's leading distance runner from recording his first track victory of Olympic year in Glasgow on Saturday.

After a six-week training spell in Ethiopia, the 32-year-old was presented with a straightforward task as he brushed aside the injury caused by a stray opposition spike to win in a modest seven minutes 39.55 seconds.

"I have a few cuts," Farah told reporters at the Glasgow Indoor Grand Prix. "I was pushed around but that is racing. It happens."

"The most important thing is to win in front of the home crowd. Now I'll concentrate on the World Half Marathon Championships [in Cardiff next month] and it would be nice to get another title if I can."

Nadal out of Rio

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

Rafael Nadal has vowed he will put in more hard work in a bid to get his game back to the level where he can win more tournaments.

The 29-year-old Spaniard endured another frustrating defeat late Saturday when he lost a marathon semi-final in the ATP Rio de Janeiro Open to 45th-ranked Pablo Cuevas 6-7 (6/8), 7-6 (7/3), 6-4.

"I lost an opportunity, that's it," said Nadal of his loss to Uruguayan Cuevas.

"I fought until the end. I have to accept it and keep working to try to change the dynamic. That's what's happening today and I have to work hard to change it."

Blues put 5 past City

Rovers Hammered, Spurs KO'd

AFP, London



CUP

Chelsea punished Manuel Pellegrini's controversial decision to field a remarkably inexperienced team as Eden Hazard inspired a 5-1 demolition of Manchester City in the FA Cup fifth round on Sunday.

Pellegrini fielded an unrecognisable starting line-up featuring six teenagers, five of whom were making their full debuts.

In contrast, Guus Hiddink named his strongest available side and it was men against boys as they swept into the quarter-finals thanks to a pair of assists and a goal from Hazard.

Diego Costa put Chelsea ahead and, although David Faupala equalised for the visitors, second half goals from Willian, Gary Cahill, Hazard and Bertrand Traore handed City a third successive defeat.

Matuidi wants Aurier's return

AFP, Paris

Paris Saint-Germain midfielder Blaise Matuidi on Saturday offered his support to team-mate Serge Aurier, insisting that the Ligue 1 leaders "need him, whether it be on the field or off it."

"Serge is my friend and is the friend of everyone in the dressing room. He is well-liked by everyone," said Matuidi after PSG beat Reims 4-1 at the Parc des Princes.

"We know he made a mistake but, as they say, people make mistakes. He has apologised. He will have a discussion with the coach and we hope it will be positive."

Aurier was suspended by the club last Sunday after insulting his team and coach.

Proteas seal T20 series

AFP, Johannesburg



Twenty20 international at the Wanderers Stadium on Sunday.

De Villiers and Amla made England's total of 171 look puny as they thrashed 125 runs in a 55-ball opening stand.

De Villiers, on the ground on which he hit the world's fastest one-day international century against the West Indies last season, thrashed 79 off 29 balls with six fours and six sixes.

On the way he reached his fifty off 21 balls, the fastest for South Africa.

Amla was slightly more restrained but played some powerful strokes in making 69 not out off 38 balls with eight fours and three sixes.

The ease of South Africa's win, which completed a 2-0 series victory, did not look a possibility while England captain Eoin Morgan and Jos Buttler were pounding sixes in a fourth

wicket stand of 96 off 55 balls.

England had reached 157 for three and seemed set for a total well in excess of 200.

But Buttler (54) and Morgan were out off successive balls and England lost their last seven wickets for 14 runs after they had looked set to post a total in excess of 200.

South African captain Faf du Plessis said he was pleased with the win but felt his team had only produced a "70 percent" performance with the ball.

"Unlike [the first game at] Newlands we started well with the ball," said Du Plessis.

"The first three overs were excellent but then it got away from us a bit. But we pulled it back and that's important."

Du Plessis said there was room for improvement but South Africa would be confident going into the World Twenty20.

De Villiers said he was happy to be opening the batting in 20 overs cricket.

"I'll have to keep performing but I'll open for as long as they want me to."

Morgan, who was unlucky to be run out for 38 when bowler Kyle Abbott deflected a powerful drive from Ben Stokes into the stumps, said the collapse was "disappointing".

"We started terribly with the ball,"

he said. "We missed our lengths and allowed them to play their natural game. When batsmen like that are in they will punish you."

Morgan said, though, that he felt England could do well at the World Twenty20 in India next month.

"We are lacking experience but we have talent and I honestly think we are on the right track to win an ICC event."

England's collapse started when Buttler hit the third ball of the 17th over from Abbott into the covers where Du Plessis held a low catch, which had to be confirmed by the television umpire.

Buttler made 54 off 28 balls with four fours and four sixes.

It was the last match of a tour during which England won a four-match Test series 2-1 and South Africa won a five-match one-day international series 3-2.

SCORES IN BRIEF
ENGLAND: 171 all out in 19.4 overs (Root 38, Morgan 34, Buttler 54; Abbot 3-26)
SOUTH AFRICA: 172 for 1 in 14.4 overs (de Villiers 71, Amla 69 not out, du Plessis 22 not out; Rashid 1-30)
Result: South Africa won by 9 wks.
Player-of-the-match: AB de Villiers

Boy wants guidelines

REUTERS, Mexico City

Cruz Azul coach Tomas Boy wants guidelines issued about celebrations after he was sent to the stands for his reaction to his team's late equaliser in a 3-3 draw with Mexican championship rivals America.

Boy danced and waved his arms around like a windmill, provoking an angry reaction from the America players, after Joao Rojas snatched a point in stoppage time in the 'Clasico Joven' on Saturday.

"There ought to be a directive from the Referees Commission listing the permitted celebrations," Boy was quoted in Record as telling reporters as he walked off the Azteca pitch in Mexico City.

Boy had exchanged angry words with America's Argentine striker Dario Benedetto. The home side's bench confronted the Cruz Azul coach before the referee intervened and showed Boy a red card.

Malaga hold Real

AFP, Madrid



LFP

Ronaldo's opener 24 minutes from time.

However, Zinedine Zidane's men were left to rue Ronaldo's miss from the spot to make it 2-0 before the break when Carlos Kameni dived to his left to parry the three-time World Player of the Year's effort.

A point moves Real level with Atletico Madrid in second ahead of the Madrid derby next weekend, but Atletico can move to within six points of Barca with victory over Villarreal later on Sunday.

Madrid were without the injured Karim Benzema and Gareth Bale, while James Rodriguez was left on the bench by Zidane.

Jese Rodriguez was handed a start after scoring Real's second in a 2-0 win at Roma in the Champions League in midweek and should have opened the scoring but he shot straight at Kameni on 17 minutes.

However, the visitors were fortunate not to

be behind moments later when Juanpi scuffed his shot with just Keylor Navas to beat and the Costa Rica international made an easy save.

Ricardo Horta then missed another glorious chance for Malaga when he fired into the side-netting unmarked at the back post.

When the opening goal did arrive it was in controversial circumstances as Ronaldo headed home Toni Kroos's free-kick despite clearly standing in an offside position.

There was no doubt about the penalty award two minutes later when Ronaldo was brought down by Weligton. Yet, the normally lethal Portuguese from the spot was denied by a fine low save by Kameni.

Malaga missed another great chance to level before the break as Navas parried Dujce Cop's shot into the air and Sergio Ramos got back to clear the looping ball off the line.

Navas then made an incredible stop just after the restart when Nacho turned Juanpi's cross towards his own goal.

Yet, the stopper was finally beaten when Malaga's two centre-backs combined for the equaliser as Weligton's low cross was coolly slotted home at the back post by Albentosa.

Malaga could even have snatched all three points as Navas was again forced into action by a looping Charles header.

However, for the second time this season Malaga did enough to take a point from Real.



South Africa batsman AB de Villiers dismantled the England bowlers with a 29-ball 71 during the second T20I in Johannesburg yesterday, smashing six fours and as many sixes as his side won by nine wickets. PHOTO: INTERNET