

## INDEPENDENCE CUP Arambagh KS want to play

SPORTS REPORTER

Arambagh Kira Shangha staged a protest at the Bangladesh Football Federation headquarters on Thursday night, demanding inclusion of the club in the KFC Independence Cup, the draw for which was held earlier in the day.

The draw had left out Arambagh KS as well as Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, with the game's governing body saying that the two clubs had not made entries for the season's curtain-raising tournament, which is scheduled to get underway from March 30 with 10 teams.

Mominul Haque Sayeed, president of Arambagh KS, turned up at the BFF headquarters with approximately hundred supporters and asked the BFF officials why the club was not included in the draw.

"We informed the Arambagh KS president that club was not included in draw as it did not confirm its entry for the tournament. As regards to another issue, we informed him that the BFF board meeting did not approve the proposed new name of the club [Sheikh Moni Arambagh Club] for not getting proper documents such as approval of the Bangabandhu Trustee Board and consent of the family members of Sheikh Moni," BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag said.

The BFF spokesman also informed that the professional football league committee will sit on Sunday to take a decision whether to include Arambagh KS in the Independence Cup.

## Int'l rating chess starts today

SPORTS REPORTER

An international rating chess tournament, sponsored jointly by Amin Mohammad Group, AST Beverage Ltd and Bengal Group, gets underway today at the NSC Tower auditorium to mark the Independence Day.

Local grand masters, international masters, international women masters, FIDE masters and six rated players from India will take part in the nine-round Swiss League tournament where Tk one lakh will be distributed among the winners, said press release yesterday.

Inspector General of Police AKM Shahidul Haque will inaugurate the tournament as the chief guest.



**STAR ECONOMICAL BOWLER:** Pacer James Faulkner (L) was vital in Australia's win over Pakistan yesterday. The left-arm bowler took a five-wicket haul while giving away just 27 runs to knock Pakistan out of the World Twenty20 in Mohali. PHOTO: AFP

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## JORDAN DEBACLE Coach's wisdom in question

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh national football team went agonisingly close to equaling their 34-year-old record of biggest defeat when they suffered an 8-0 thrashing at the hands of Jordan in their final World Cup qualifier in Amman on Thursday.

Bangladesh's biggest defeat to date is of 9-0 margin, recorded twice - first against South Korea in 1979 and then against Iran in 1982.

However, the 8-0 defeat on Thursday was their biggest defeat in the current qualifiers' campaign. In the wake of this debacle, questions are already being raised about the game's governing body's wisdom of giving the

charge to Ganzalo Sanchez Moreno, someone with negligible coaching experience at top level.

Seeking anonymity, a member of the Bangladesh team questioned the depth of coaching knowledge of the Spaniard, who adopted attacking strategy rather than strengthening the defence with a relatively inexperienced side.

Manager Satyajit Das Rupu, however, felt defensive fumbles and individual mistakes led to the heavy defeat. "Jordan succeeded whenever they came to attack as there were individual mistakes and errors in our backline. However things changed a bit in the second half as the coach strengthened the four-man backline with an additional defender," said Rupu over phone while waiting for the return flight yesterday.

"The coach wants us to play like

Barcelona players who can go in attack and come down to defend simultaneously for 90 minutes. But we are certainly not of that quality. Besides I don't know why the comparatively inexperienced players were picked instead of players with experience at international level," said a player seeking anonymity.

Having finished bottom of the five-team group, Bangladesh will now have to play the play-off round to ensure the third round berth in the Asian Cup Qualifiers.

"I think we should think deeply about the appointment of a new coach for the team ahead of the play-off round if we want to see the team in the Asian Cup Qualifiers. Otherwise we will have to sit idle for the next two years from AFC and FIFA engagement," said a team official, who preferred not to be named.



Argentina players celebrate the winning goal by Gabriel Mercado (Centre) during their World Cup qualifier against Chile in Santiago on Thursday. PHOTO: AFP

## Aus KO Pak; WI through

AFP, Mohali



James Faulkner took a record five-wicket haul after Steve Smith hit an unbeaten half century to help Australia post a 21-run win and knock Pakistan out of the World Twenty20 Friday.

The victory means Australia remain in the hunt for a place in next week's semifinals with two wins from three matches and sets up an effective knock-out tie against India on Sunday.

The stage for a comfortable Australian win was set by an unbeaten 61-run knock from skipper Smith who shared key stands with Shane Watson and Glenn Maxwell to rescue his side from a shaky 57-3.

Faulkner took four wickets from his last six balls and also accounted for the dangerous Sharjeel Khan to finish with 5-27, the best figures by an Australian in a T20 international.

Pakistan could only manage 172-8 in reply to Australia's strong 193-4.

Rookie leg-spinner Adam Zampa chipped in with two wickets in a commendable all-round show by the reigning 50-over world champions.

The defeat saw Pakistan, the 2009 winners, make a humiliating early exit from the marquee T20 tournament.

Pakistan lost wickets at regular intervals and were never really in the hunt despite a valiant counter-attack by Khalid Latif.

After losing opener Ahmed Shehzad cheaply in the third over, Sharjeel tried to speed things up before chopping on to his stumps off Faulkner. Umar Akmal lost his wicket to Zampa and 'Boom Boom' Shahid Afridi was stumped after he danced down the track to attempt an ambitious shot to the same bowler.

In the day's second game, the West Indies clinched a spot in the World Twenty20 semi-finals with a thrilling three-wicket win over South Africa at the Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium in Nagpur on Friday.

Darren Sammy's side successfully chased down a target of 123 with just two balls to spare for a third consecutive Group One victory, becoming the sec-

ond team to qualify after New Zealand.

It was South Africa's second defeat of the tournament and means England can secure a berth in the semis at their expense with a win against Sri Lanka on Saturday.

The Windies rode on a gritty 44 from Marlon Samuels to prevail in a tense finish. They had earlier restricted South Africa to 122 for eight after Sammy opted to field first.

It looked like the Windies would canter home but Imran Tahir grabbed two wickets in the 17th over and the Caribbean side ended up going into the final over requiring nine to win.

Carlos Brathwaite hit a massive six before precocious fast bowler Kagiso Rabada bowled a wide. Brathwaite then grabbed a quick run before Denesh Ramdin carried the Windies over the line with a single.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**SOUTH AFRICA:** 122 for 8 in 20 overs (De Kock 47, Wiese 28; Gayle 2-17)  
**WEST INDIES:** 123 for 7 in 19.4 overs (Samuels 44, Charles 32; Tahir 2-13)  
**Result:** West Indies won by 2 wickets  
**Player-of-the-match:** Marlon Samuels

## Argentina exact revenge

AFP, Montevideo

Argentina avenged their Copa America final defeat to Chile with a 2-1 victory on Thursday as Ecuador scrambled a late draw with Paraguay to preserve their unbeaten start to South America's 2018 World Cup qualifying competition.

Goals from Angel Di Maria and defender Gabriel Mercado secured a vital three points for Argentina in Santiago after Chile had taken an 11th-minute lead through Felipe Gutierrez at the National Stadium.

Victory was sweet for Argentina, who were beaten on penalties by Chile at the same venue in the final of last year's Copa America, extending the two-time world champions title drought.

More importantly, the win got Argentina's 2018 qualification bid firmly back on the road after a shaky start last year which saw them win only one of their opening four games.

Elsewhere on Thursday, Ecuador scrambled a 2-2 draw with Paraguay in Quito thanks to a controversial injury-time equaliser from Angel Mena. Mena latched onto a through ball from what looked like an offside position, Ecuador grabbed a share of the spoils.

An injury-time goal also proved decisive in La Paz, where Colombia snaffled a 3-2 win over Bolivia thanks to Edwin Cardona's strike in the second minute of stoppage time.



## Tributes pour in

AFP, Amsterdam

Fans and football stars paid an emotional homage to Johan Cruyff who was to get an unprecedented mid-match tribute in a Netherlands international on Friday.

A Dutch newspaper for whom Cruyff wrote a column said the funeral of the 68-year-old Cruyff was to be held Friday and the family said they had been "deeply" touched by the accolades paid.

Pictures of Cruyff playing in his familiar number 14 shirt covered front pages around the world. Fans flocked to the Cruyff statue in his home city of Amsterdam to leave flowers, portraits and footballs honouring the Total Football innovator.

And leading football figures again highlighted the importance of Cruyff's impact on football.

"I knew nothing about football before knowing Cruyff," said Pep Guardiola, the Bayern Munich coach who played under Cruyff at Barcelona told Catalan radio Raci1.

The Dutch nation, in particular, mourned their icon. "Dutch Master" said the Dutch tabloid Algemeen Dagblad with a picture of a young Cruyff in full flight in the Ajax Amsterdam colours.

"Immortal" said De Telegraaf daily which carried a picture of Cruyff, taken from behind featuring his famous Number 14 jersey.

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