



The red brigade of Kyrgyzstan enjoy their first training session at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday, ahead of the AFC Under-16 Women's Championship's Group C Qualifiers that start at the premier venue from Saturday. Six teams -- Iran, Chinese Taipei, UAE, Singapore and hosts Bangladesh -- are competing in the meet from where the winners will make it to the championship proper.

A serious Mirpur warm-up match

SPORTS REPORTER



Mashrafe Bin Mortaza continued his good run as captain as he led his side to a three-wicket win at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. There is no need to go scrambling to find the scorecard online as it was not in fact a competitive match but a practice game in which his Red Team defeated Nasir Hossain's Green Team despite Mashrafe's fine knock of 90 in the 50-over affair.

The word 'practice' may conjure thoughts of a game between members of a preliminary squad not taken too seriously, but Mashrafe told all players before the match to treat it like they play a proper one-day match.

Take it from Mahmudullah Riyad, who continued his good form with an unbeaten 62 to help Mashrafe's side win the match. "It's a good start. Everybody was focussed even though it's a practice game. Mashrafe bhai told us to play the match with the mentality of playing the proper game. We were waiting for this match because we would play a match after a long gap. We have two more matches and I hope everybody will perform much better there."

It was a low-scoring game as the Green Team scored 194 which the Reds overcame in 44.4 overs.

"The wicket was bit difficult in the morning. In the second innings the ball swung well. I hope everybody will try their best in the next matches to do much better than we did in today's game," Riyad explained the reason behind the low-scoring game.

While the discussion everywhere yesterday involved the decision the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) was going to take about their team's tour to Bangladesh in October, Riyad said that they were only focussing on their preparation for the home series against England.

"We are only thinking on our preparation. We are hopeful that they (England) will come and we are taking preparation to play the series. We are looking to play competitive cricket both in the ODI and Test series. We are only thinking about how we can make our best preparation and we don't think outside that," said a confident Riyad.

"I think that the issue that everybody has been discussing is a global crisis. We can say that we are hopeful about their arrival. And we are looking for a good series," he continued.

Riyad also said that everyone in the camp were only thinking of how they could improve their performance.

"We have got a chance [Bangladesh] to play a match. We have the BCL Cricket League next, so everybody is planning with their own performance. How we can improve is



Mashrafe Rahim plays an exquisite lofted extra-cover drive during a practice game at Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Legacy's tale set to unfold

SPORTS REPORTER

Rawnak Chowdhury, following in the footsteps of his illustrious father and mother, is set to start his sporting career by taking part in the 28th National Shooting Championships, which was officially inaugurated at the National Shooting Range in Gulshan yesterday.

12-year-old Rawnak is completely unknown to

the sports fraternity, but his father -- shooter Saiful Alam Chowdhury Rinki -- and mother -- shooter Sabrina Sultana -- are two of the most famous faces in Bangladesh, bringing the nation many laurels at the international level. Between them, the pair had won gold in the Commonwealth Games, Commonwealth Shooting Championships and South Asian Games.

Like his parents, Rawnak also grabbed the butt of the firearm at a young age and the elder son of the international gold medallists is already famil-

iar with the national shooting range in Gulshan as he had accompanied his parents there many times while his mother took part in the national shooting championships.

Rinki and Sabrina won gold medals in the Air Rifle event in Commonwealth Games, Commonwealth Shooting Championship and South Asian Games but their son has chosen to explore the pistol event.

"He has just completed 11 years on June 13 and started shooting from June 16. He had been in the junior camp arranged by the Bangladesh Shooting Sports Federation for the past two months. He will be competing in the 10m pistol event of this year's national shooting championships," said Rinki during the inauguration ceremony of the 28th edition of the shooting championship, which will get underway from Saturday.

"He is interested in the pistol events. Although we tried him in the rifle event, he feels more comfortable in the pistol event and we want to support what he wishes," said Rinki, who has turned to coaching after ending his career. "As a beginner, he is doing well and the foreign coaches are also optimistic about him."

Describing her son's prospects, Sabrina said, "I think he will do better in the future as his accuracy is good at this age and he shoots perfectly at the target."

Rawnak was also ecstatic after writing his name in the national shooting championship for the first time.

"I feel really happy to start [my career] as a shooter and I think I can do better in the pistol event because I had scored 519 in practice. Now my target is to produce good results in the national championship," said the grade six student, who also enjoys basketball.

Helal also informed that SAFF wants the Club Cup

to get underway from this year and the marketing agent has been given two weeks to assess the possibility of hosting the Club Cup in Bangladesh.

SAFF C'ship from Dec 25

SPORTS REPORTER

The 12th SAFF Championship will be held in Dhaka in December, South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) general secretary Anwarul Haque Helal confirmed yesterday.

"It had earlier been decided that Bangladesh would host the next SAFF Championship and today [Thursday] we decided that the South Asian football carnival will be held from December 25 to January 5, 2017 in Dhaka," said Helal over phone.

Though Afghanistan, which is now in the central zone of the Asian Football Confederation, took part in the last edition their participation in Dhaka is yet to be decided.

SAFF also decided that they would finalise some venues for SAFF Women's Championship, SAFF U-16 and SAFF U-19 championship at their next meeting to be held in Goa, India.

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to get underway from this year and the marketing agent has been given two weeks to assess the possibility of hosting the Club Cup in Bangladesh.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

A FAMILY AFFAIR: Commonwealth gold shooting couple Saiful Alam Rinki (L) and Sabrina Sultana (R) impart their wealth of experience to their son Rawnak Chowdhury, who is making his first appearance in the National Shooting Championship that got underway at the National Shooting Complex yesterday. Rawnak is competing in the junior's 10m pistol event.

Gazi hunt for talent

SPORTS REPORTER

In their largest joint venture to date with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Pratishthan (BKSP), Gazi Group have launched the Gazi Tyres Cricketers Hunt, a televised event which takes aim at finding fresh talent as well as inspiring the next generation of cricketers.

In a press conference held yesterday at a hotel in Dhaka, BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury, Gazi Group CEO M. Salahuddin Chowdhury and Gazi Group Director of coaching Mohammad Salahuddin outlined their plans for the initiative. The objective of the hunt, which is to be carried out across eight different districts from September 1 to October 10, is to locate talented individuals in any aspect of cricket such as bowling, batting, fielding and so on.

"A group of coaches and officials of the initiative will travel across eight districts -- Chittagong, Sylhet, Mymensingh, Barisal, Khulna, Rajshahi, Rangpur and Dhaka -- in an effort to locate players of value and eventually bring a selected group back to Dhaka for training," said Salahuddin, who also added that there are no promises being made for assured results and that it is rather an attempt at making 'dreams come true'.

Salahuddin will be among the coaches present in the country-wide search that plans to select a preliminary group of qualifiers of approximately 80 which will then be cut down to a group of 20 to 25.

These 20-25 contestants will then be contracted for four years of grooming and training at the BKSP; aside from this they will also be awarded the Golam Dastagir Gazi Cricket scholarship and a cricket kit.

Dizzy Roy leads England

AFP, Southampton

Jason Roy overcame a dizzy spell to lead England's charge to a 44-run win under the Duckworth/Lewis method in a rain-marred first one-day international against Pakistan on Wednesday.

Roy's quickfire 65 fired England after Pakistan had made 260 for six.

But following a third and final rain interruption, the umpires called the game off with England 194 for three.

Roy sparked England's chase, but there was a worrying moment when Roy, on 20, needed several minutes' treatment for a dizzy spell.

"It was a case of not having enough sugar on me apparently," Roy told reporters. "I had a headache, felt dizzy, they got the physio and the doctor on, and told me to get some sugar."

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: 260 for 6 in 50 overs (Azhar 82, Sarfraz 55; Rashid 2-51, Root 1-26)

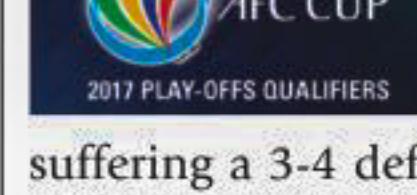
ENGLAND: 194 for 3 (Roy 65, Root 61; Nawaz 1-31)

Result: England won by 44 runs (D/L method)

Player-of-the-match: JJ Roy.

Sk Russel go down fighting

SPORTS REPORTER



2017 PLAY-OFFS QUALIFIERS

Sheikh Russel KC's miserable domestic run extended to the international level as they were eliminated from the AFC Cup Play-off Qualifiers after suffering a 3-4 defeat to Bhutanese side FC Tertons at the Changlimithang Stadium in Thimphu yesterday.

Sheikh Russel, who went to take part in the qualifiers after suffering five defeats from six league matches in the domestic circuit, could not change their fortunes at the international level despite strengthening their lineup with the inclusion of four guest players.

Even with the country's two best centre-backs, Nasir Chowdhury and Yesin Khan, the backline was painfully at fault for three of the four goals that Russel conceded.

Their defenders were unable to restrict Bhutan's national team forward Chencho Gyeltshen, who scored a brace in between the second and third strikes from Tenzin Dorji and Tshering Wangdi respectively.

After conceding, Sheikh Russel immediately staged a strong comeback with Jean Jules Ikanga heading home a Jamal Bhuiyan free-kick home to level the margin in 20th minute. However, they went on the backfoot again, conceding three more goals before the break.

After resumption, substitute Shakhawat Hossain Rony and Ikanga struck two goals in the 66th and 70th minutes respectively but they ultimately could finally not avoid defeat.

The result saw Sheikh Russel finishing at the bottom of the three-team table with one point, three points behind leaders Tertons FC while Tutang FC finished in second place with two draws.

Dilshan retiring

ESPN CRICINFO



Veteran Sri Lanka batsman Tillakaratne Dilshan yesterday confirmed he will play his final ODI in Dambulla on Sunday, the third of the series against Australia, and his last T20 international in Colombo on September 9.

His retirement comes in the wake of significant pressure from Sri Lanka's selectors. Dilshan's own performance has been outstanding over the past few years -- he averages 49.18 in ODIs since the start of 2013, and had his most successful ODI year in 2015, when he scored 1207 runs at an average of 52.47. But with Angelo Mathews and the selectors now seeking to build a team for the 2019 World Cup, Dilshan was persuaded to retire. He had also been Sri Lanka's top scorer in this year's World T20 campaign, and remains, at 39, one of the team's best fielders.

Dilshan was a late bloomer at the top level. Having batted largely in the lower middle order for almost a decade since his debut in 1999, he blossomed as a limited-overs batsman when he became a consistent opener in 2009. Dilshan scored 1000 or more ODI runs in a calendar year four times since being sent permanently up the order, and never failed to amass fewer than 800 runs between 2009 and 2015. He was the

fourth Sri Lanka batsman, after Jayasuriya, Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene, to cross 10,000 ODI runs.

He has also been one of the premier T20 players over the past six years. Dilshan top-scored in the 2009 World T20, where Sri Lanka made the final, before going on to become the second-highest run-scorer overall in T20 internationals -- playing in two more World T20 finals, one of which his team won. He is one of a handful of batsmen to have hit centuries in all three formats.

Dilshan was also an innovator of the lap scoop, and began to regularly slog-sweep medium-pace bowlers. He alone plays the shot colloquially known as the 'Dilscoop', in which a length ball is uniquely deflected over the keeper, rather than over short fine leg.

Dilshan captained Sri Lanka across formats between May 2010 and January 2012, and though their first Test win under him came against South Africa at the tail end of that period, the team had endured a lull during his leadership. He has, however, been an effective bowler in the limited-overs format. His offspin has brought him 106 ODI wickets at an average of 44.84.

He is understood to have expressed a reluctance to retire, but having scored 22 and 10 in the first two matches, has since changed his mind.

