

SPORT

'Warm-ups will be crucial'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's warm-up games against India and Pakistan before the start of the ICC Champions Trophy in England will be quite crucial for the Tigers, team manager and board director Khaled Mahmud said yesterday.

"The venue where we are playing [Kennington Oval] is generally flat. I know how the wickets there generally are. That's why the wickets in the Dhaka Premier League are quite flat this time. It will help the batsmen's confidence and it will compel bowlers to cope with the wicket with yorkers and other deliveries," Mahmud told reporters in Mirpur.

"That's also why the warm-up games against India and Pakistan will be very important. If we play well against them on those wickets, the players will get plenty of confidence. Besides, Tamim [Iqbal], Mahmudullah [Riyad] and Mushfiqur [Rahim] are doing well in the league as it is, I think they are already confident," he added.

Bangladesh have been placed in Group A in the Champions Trophy alongside England, Australia and New Zealand.

While they will be facing England and Australia at the Kennington Oval, they will face New Zealand at the Sophia Gardens in Cardiff, where Bangladesh beat Australia in 2005.

The Champions Trophy is scheduled to begin on June 1 and Bangladesh are expected to play their warm-up games on May 27 against Pakistan and May 30 against India.

Prior to that, the Tigers will be taking part in a tri-nation series in Ireland, including the hosts and New Zealand.

On another note, the Bangladesh Cricket Board is scheduled to have its board meeting tomorrow. One of the key agendas during the meeting will be the decision regarding the new contracts of the players. Although it is believed their salaries will be increased, reports suggest that the increment may not meet the desire of the national players.



Real Madrid forward Cristiano Ronaldo should have stolen the limelight on Tuesday with a fantastic hat-trick against Bayern Munich in their Champions League quarterfinal second leg at the Santiago Bernabeu, but his feats were overshadowed (Inset) by a raft of controversial decisions, including an unjust second yellow card for Bayern midfielder Arturo Vidal. PHOTOS: REUTERS

Serena hints at pregnancy?

REUTERS, New York

Tennis superstar Serena Williams on Wednesday appeared to reveal she is pregnant, posting a photo of herself in a bathing suit on Snapchat with the caption "20 weeks."

The 35-year-old, who will return to the No. 1 ranking in the world next week, later deleted the photo. Neither Williams nor her management team were immediately available for comment.

If Williams is indeed 20 weeks into her term, that would mean she was approximately two months pregnant when she captured her record 23rd Grand Slam tournament title at the Australian Open in January. Serena Williams has not played since, citing a knee injury.

Fans reacted with a mixture of awe and glee at the news.

"Serena Williams was pregnant when she won her 23rd grand slam tournament at the Australian Open. And did not drop ONE SET. Let that sink in," wrote Twitter user @noelleharmony on the social media site.

Williams, the highest-paid female athlete in the world, announced her engagement to Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian last December.

Bayern fuming after 'robbery'

AGENCIES, Madrid



Bayern Munich left the Santiago Bernabeu furious with referee Viktor Kassai and his team of assistants after being knocked out of the Champions League by Real Madrid on Tuesday.

Real Madrid won 4-2 after extra-time to advance with a 6-3 aggregate success but Cristiano Ronaldo was offside for two of his three goals and a harsh dismissal for Arturo Vidal left a fuming Bayern with 10 men.

Chile midfielder Vidal was shown a second yellow card by Kassai in the 84th minute for what was a clean challenge on Marco Asensio, tilting the game in Madrid's favour as they entered extra-time trailing 2-1.

Ronaldo scored the next goal in the 105th minute from a clear offside position, and then sent Madrid 3-2 up on the night, when he was again offside.

"When they rob a game from you like that, it's very tough. This error can't happen in the Champions League," said Vidal.

"When it was 2-1 they got scared and the referee started putting on his show. We played with one less man at home and here, too. The referee put us out of the Champions League."

There were other contentious decisions on the night, including Casemiro avoiding a red card for a late foul on Bayern's Arjen Robben when already booked and an offside against Robert Lewandowski in the second half when the Polish striker was well placed.

"It's very harsh. They are two offside goals, the bad red card, Casemiro should have been sent-off before me and it makes a big difference," Vidal added. "The dressing room is very sad because we really wanted to go through but we have to keep improving and hope these things will not happen again."

"We're very angry, a game with that much

Ronaldo makes it 101

AFP, Madrid

Cristiano Ronaldo defied boos from Real Madrid's infamously demanding fans to "demolish" Bayern Munich and set another personal milestone with 101 Champions League goals.

On a night of high drama and controversy at the Santiago Bernabeu the Portuguese striker once again dominated the headlines with a hat-trick to send the holders into the semifinals for a record seventh straight year.

But they needed extra time -- and some questionable officiating -- to beat 10-man Bayern 4-2 on Tuesday to seal a 6-3 aggregate win.

Ronaldo's second on Tuesday to bring up a century in the competition -- including qualifiers -- and third to round off his hat-trick were allowed to stand despite the Portuguese clearly being offside.

Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane understandably wanted the attention focused on his four-time World Player of the Year rather than Hungarian referee Viktor Kassai.

"When you see what Cristiano is doing, it is really impressive," said Zidane. "He always knows when there's an important moment he's

intensity can't be decided by the referee."

Bayern coach Carlo Ancelotti agreed with Vidal and said in his media conference that the referees needed video help.

"Arturo's card was not a card and then two goals for Cristiano were offside," said the

going to be there.

"He's out of this world. There are few players who will manage to do what Ronaldo has done."

Ronaldo now has a remarkable 85 Champions League goals in as many games since joining Madrid in 2009.

However, he had been on his longest European goal drought for Los Blancos having failed to score in six Champions League games before the first leg last week.

Real fans were quick to make their feelings known as the 32-year-old produced an error-strewn first-half display.

It is not the first time the Bernabeu natives have booed Ronaldo and he grew increasingly desperate to find the net with a series of wild efforts, including at one point ignoring strike partner Karim Benzema to go for goal himself, infuriating the home crowd.

"The only thing I ask is that they don't boo me because I give my best in every game," Ronaldo said afterwards.

He had already made his point with a hush gesture by pointing his finger to his lips after heading home his opening goal.

"Maybe they will not whistle him anymore," Zidane said hopefully.

Italian. "We are not happy about this. In a quarter-final you have to have a referee with more quality, I think. It's time to introduce videos for the referees."

His Real Madrid counterpart Zinedine Zidane did not want to discuss the refereeing

but he claimed Bayern's second goal could have also been ruled offside.

"They have told me their second goal was also offside. It goes both ways, that is football," said Zidane. "More than the second yellow [for Vidal] or the offside goals, the six goals we scored over the two games mean we deserved to go through in the tie."

According to reports in Spain, police were forced to remove three Bayern Munich players from the referee's dressing room following their tempestuous exit.

TV station El Chiringuito claims that the incensed Chilean, Robert Lewandowski and Thiago Alcantara marched into referee Victor Kassai's dressing room after the match to confront him.

The trio are said to have launched stinging insults at the Hungarian official and laid the blame for the result squarely at his feet.

The trio refused to leave and only eventually exited the room once the Spanish police came in, reports claim.

WHAT THEY SAID

For the first time, I've got some sort of mad rage inside me, because we had a shafting. We have been shafted in the truest sense of the word. The team was in ruins in the dressing room. It was an unfortunate, undeserved and bitter defeat."

-- Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge

"A year of hard work down the drain. Thanks, ref -- bravo0000"

--Franck Ribery

In extra time, we played with 10 men against 14 [including the referee and his two assistants].

--Jerome Boateng

After we went 2-1 up and with 11 players, we were in great mental shape and then we had the wind taken out of our sails. You can't just go home after that and say, 'things like that happen in a game'.

--Thomas Mueller

U-18 NAT'L FOOTBALL Final on May 4

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi, BKSP, Rangpur and Dhaka were pitted in Group A while Chittagong, Barisal, Satkhira and Sylhet were drawn in Group B when the draw for the final round of the Walton Under-18 National Football Championship was held at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) House yesterday.

The group phase of the final round will be held from April 23 to April 28 while the two semifinals will be played on April 30 and the final will be held on May 4. All the matches will take place at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, disclosed speakers at the press conference after the draw ceremony.

The draw ceremony was attended, among others, by BFF's vice-president Mohiuddin Ahmed Mohi, general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag, technical and strategic director Paul Smalley and Walton's senior additional director FM Iqbal Bin Anwar.

Hyderabad pip Delhi

STAR SPORT DESK

Sunrisers Hyderabad moved to the third position of the Indian Premier League table after a 15-run victory over Delhi Daredevils at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad last night.

The defending champions posted a massive score of 191 for four, after having elected to bat first at their home venue, thanks to a blitzkrieg 89 off 51 balls from New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson. Shikhar Dhawan added 70, but Chris Morris's four-wicket haul meant the hosts didn't reach 200.

Despite some aggressive batting from the visitors, including an unbeaten 50 from Sreyash Iyer, 42 from Sanju Samson and 33 from Karun Nayar, Delhi failed to keep up with the asking rate before eventually falling 15 runs short.

SCORES IN BRIEF
SUNRISERS HYDERABAD: 191 for 4 in 20 overs (Williamson 89, Dhawan 70; Morris 4-26)
DELHI DAREDEVILS: 176 for 5 in 20 overs (Iyer 50 not out, Samson 42; Siraj 2-39)
Result: Sunrisers Hyderabad won by 15 runs.
Player-of-the-match: Kane Williamson



The Bangladesh under-16 women's team pose for a photo ahead of their departure to China. The team will play five practice matches as part of their preparations for the AFC U-16 Championship in September. PHOTO: COLLECTED

U-16 women booters leave for China

SPORTS REPORTER

A 30-member contingent of the Bangladesh under-16 women's football team left for China in the early hours of Thursday. The contingent, which includes 24 players and six coaches and officials, will fly

to the Northwest city of Xi'an where the team is supposed to play five practice matches.

They will play three matches against China's under-14 women's team and two matches against Shaanxi regional team, all between April 22 and 26. The matches are supposed to be 90-minute affairs.

This tour is part of the team's

preparation for September's final round of the AFC U-16 Championship to be held in Thailand. It is worth mentioning that the team recently played few practice matches in Japan and Singapore, also part of preparation for the same event.

The team is scheduled to return on April 27.

Maharaj gets call-up

AFP, Johannesburg

Left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj was on Wednesday included in South Africa's squad for the ICC Champions Trophy in England in June.

Maharaj, who made a successful debut for South Africa during the recent Test season, is the only player in the 15-man squad who has not played in a one-day international.

The same squad will represent South Africa in three one-day internationals against England, starting in Leeds on May 24, ahead of the Champions Trophy. South Africa's first match in the ICC event is against Sri Lanka at The Oval on June 3.

Fast bowler Morne Morkel returns to the one-day side after an injury-enforced break and will be part of a strong fast bowling attack which also includes Kagiso Rabada, Wayne Parnell and Chris Morris.

Dale Steyn was not considered because he is still recovering from a shoulder injury. But Steyn was included in a South Africa A

squad which will play two four-day county matches and a four-day match against England Lions in June.

With South Africa playing an away Test series against England in July and August, the A tour will give Steyn a chance to make a claim to regain his place in the Test squad.

The South Africa A squad will be captained by former South Africa Under-19 captain Aiden Markram, who will be a candidate for an opening batsman berth in the Test series.

Selection convener Linda Zondi said he believed South Africa had picked a squad for all conditions during the Champions Trophy.

He said of Maharaj: "Keshav has had an exceptional debut season for the Test side and his inclusion

gives us a spinner with different skills and extra batting depth."

SQUAD: AB de Villiers (capt), Hashim Amla, Farhaan Behardien, Quinton de Kock (wkt), JP Duminy, Faf du Plessis, Imran Tahir, Keshav Maharaj, David Miller, Morne Morkel, Chris Morris, Wayne Parnell, Andile Phehlukwayo, Dwaine Pretorius, Kagiso Rabada.

