

England’s clinical closer from a cricketing dynasty

AFP, Melbourne

In player of the tournament Sam Curran, and his bowling at the ‘death’, England found the final piece of the jigsaw to turn Jos Buttler’s side into Twenty20 world champions. The quietly spoken Curran bookended England’s triumphant tournament in Australia with two of the finest spells seen in a T20 World Cup. He took 5-10 in 3.4 overs to bowl out Afghanistan for 112 in the opening Super 12 match and then 3-12 from four overs in the final at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, including the key wickets of Mohammad Rizwan and Shan Masood, to keep Pakistan down to 137-8. The latter saw him awarded player of the match in the final, a year after he had been a spectator as England’s Adil Rashid, Chris Jordan and Chris Woakes were smashed for 57 runs in the last three overs of a T20 World Cup semi-final to hand New Zealand victory. And in 2016, he had been a teenager watching on TV when Ben Stokes failed to shackle Carlos Brathwaite, who bludgeoned four successive sixes in the final over in Kolkata to give West Indies their second T20 World Cup triumph. Now his laser-accurate left-arm swing, together with a deceptively quick shorter ball, cutters and clever changes of pace, has been the answer to England’s bowling prayers. “To be honest, I am a little bit lost for words, it has been a great tournament,” Curran said as he picked up his awards after taking 13 wickets overall. “First time for me in a World Cup and we have won it. I



wanted to be adaptable coming into the tournament. “I haven’t bowled much at the death before and that is one area I want to keep improving.” Curran comes from a family of cricketers. His late father Kevin was a Zimbabwean international allrounder in the 1980s who played for Northampton and Gloucestershire in English county cricket. He went on to coach Zimbabwe. His grandfather Kevin P. Curran played for Rhodesia, as Zimbabwe was formerly known, seven times in the 1940s and 1950s. Older brothers Tom, 27, and Ben, 26, are also talented cricketers, with Tom having represented England also in all three formats and Ben making his first-class debut for Northamptonshire in 2018. Sadly, father Kevin never lived to see his sons follow in his international footsteps as he collapsed and died while exercising in 2012. He was aged just 53. Now Sam, who is also a powerful lower-order batter with a Test highest score of 78 and an ODI best of 95 not out, wants to emulate his father by becoming a genuine allrounder, like his teammate and hero Stokes. “I want to improve my batting though it is tough to get to bat in this line-up,” Curran smiled. “I don’t think I should be getting this (player of the match award). I think the way Ben Stokes played there, to get a fifty in a final – and he does it so many times for us – he should get this. “He is someone I look up to and always turns up when the team needs him, people question him but there’s no questioning him, he’s the man.”



After having been ignored for the T20 World Cup, both Mahmudullah and Mohammad Saifuddin will try to prove their worth in the upcoming home series against India, which includes three ODIs and two Tests. The two players were the first to train in Mirpur on Monday as they would look to make their case for inclusion in the ODI squad.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Bangladeshi sprinters ‘learn’ from Japanese Olympian

Shota Lizuka, a Rio Olympic silver medallist from Japan’s 4X100 relay team, yesterday spent an hour with some 30 primary students of Sunnydale Junior School in the capital on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relationship between Japan and Bangladesh. The 31-year-old athlete ran with the kids at the Sultana Kamal Women’s Sports Complex ground after showing them some basic drills of running.



Injured Azmoun in Iran squad

AFP, Doha

Iran named Sardar Azmoun, their star player who has expressed support on several occasions for the demonstrations in Iran, in their final 25-man World Cup squad on Monday. Azmoun, who plays for German club Bayer Leverkusen, tore a calf muscle in early October and faces a fight to be fit for Iran’s first match of the tournament against England in Qatar on November 21. The 27-year-old forward has posted several messages of support on social media for the protests in Iran that were sparked by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini. Hundreds have died in the unrest. Azmoun’s Instagram account, which has five million followers, was at one point blocked for several days before coming back online. Activists have called on fans attending Iran’s matches at the World Cup to chant Amini’s name. Iran also face Wales on November 25 and the United States on November 29 in the group phase of the World Cup.

PHOTO: ICC

Ronaldo drops bombshell before World Cup

AFP, Manchester

Cristiano Ronaldo said he felt “betrayed” by Manchester United as he claimed manager Erik ten Hag and other senior executives are trying to force him out of the club in an explosive interview on Sunday. The five-time Ballon d’Or winner has been a peripheral figure on the field for United since Ten Hag took charge in May. Ronaldo was disciplined after refusing to come on as a substitute in a 2-0 win over Tottenham last month, but had returned to the side in recent weeks and even captained the Red Devils in a 3-1 loss at Aston Villa last weekend. However, the 37-year-old was absent from the squad in Sunday’s 2-1 victory over Fulham in United’s last match before a six-week break for the World Cup. “I don’t have respect for him because he doesn’t show respect for me,” Ronaldo said of Ten Hag in an interview with the Piers Morgan Uncensored TV show. “Not only the coach, but another two or three guys around the club. I felt betrayed.” When quizzed again if senior club executives were trying to oust him, Ronaldo replied: “Yes, I felt betrayed and I felt like some people don’t want me here, not only this year but last year too.” Ronaldo returned to Old



Trafford in August 2021 from Juventus. His first spell at United had been a glorious one under the tutelage of Alex Ferguson, winning three Premier League titles, the Champions League and the first of his Ballon d’Or crowns as the best player in the world. Despite his 24 goals in all competitions last season, United endured a terrible campaign as they finished sixth in the Premier League and failed to qualify for the Champions League. Ronaldo then reportedly tried to engineer an exit before the start of this season, but no agreement could be found with another club. “Since Sir Alex left, I saw no evolution in the club. Nothing had changed,” said Ronaldo on what he found on his return to United. “I want the best for the club. This is why I come to Manchester United. “But you have some things inside that don’t help (us) reach the top level as (Manchester) City, Liverpool and even now Arsenal...a club with this dimension should be top of the tree in my opinion and they are not unfortunately.” United are fifth in the Premier League, 11 points behind leaders Arsenal.

Ruman Sana banned for two years

SPORTS REPORTER

Star archer Ruman Sana has been suspended from all international and domestic competitions for two years on disciplinary grounds, confirmed a Bangladesh Archery Federation official yesterday. “On November 4, the executive committee decided to suspend Ruman Sana from all international and domestic competitions for breach of discipline. We informed his organisation (Bangladesh Ansar) about our decision today,” BAFGS Kazi Razibuddin Ahmed Chapal told The Daily Star. It was learnt that the archer physically assaulted one of his female teammates on a few occasions. “I committed an abominable crime and admitted my mistake in reply to show-cause notice. I accepted the punishment and I have nothing more to say,” Ruman said.

Kings begin season with record win

SPORTS REPORTER

A double hat-trick from Brazilian Dorielton Gomes saw Bashundhara Kings begin the new season in style as they rolled over Fakirerpool Youngmen’s Club in a record 14-0 win in the Independence Cup at the Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium in Cumilla on Monday. Apart from six strikes from former Abahani forward, Brazilian forward Robson Da Silva also scored a hat-trick and a goal apiece from Brazilian Miguel Miguel Ferreira, Biplu Ahmed, Raihan Tareq Kazi, Masuk Mia Jonny, and Yeasin Arafat helped the Kings to the biggest-margin win in the domestic top-tier competition, breaking a 10-year old record held by Muktiyoddha Sangsad for their 10-0 win over Cox’s City FC in the Federation Cup. The former Independence Cup champions toyed with Fakirerpool Youngmen’s Club, an outfit that play in the second tier Bangladesh Championship League and do not boast any foreign players. The Kings looked stronger than ever with the inclusion of a prolific goal scorer Dorielton, who joined the club this season. Dorielton paired with Robson to tear apart the Fakirerpool backline time and again as the Kings took a 6-0 lead in the first half. The Kings added nine more goals in the second half to complete the rout, sending a message that they are eyeing to rack up as much silverware as possible this season. Meanwhile, at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Flight Lt Matiur Rahman Stadium, Chittagong Abahani edged past newcomers Uttara Azampur FC 2-1. Yacouba Bamba of Ivory Coast gave Abahani a 16-minute lead before Naim Uddin levelled the margin in the 73rd minute. However, Nigerian forward Ifegwu Ojukwu David restored the lead in the 76th minute to seal the victory and help the port city outfit to a winning start.

U-19s clinch series against Pakistan

SPORTS REPORTER

Fifties from opener Ashiq Rehman, skipper Ahrar Amin and Parvez Rehman helped Bangladesh Under-19 bounce back from their thumping loss in the second one-dayer and seal the three-match series 2-1 with a four-wicket win in the final game against Pakistan at the Multan Cricket Stadium on Monday. Electing to bowl, a concerted effort from the bowlers saw Bangladesh restrict Pakistan to 220 for nine in 42 overs in a curtailed contest. For the young Tigers, pacers Rohanat Doullah and Rafi Uzzaman took three wickets each while off-spinner Parvez Rehman scalped two. Chasing the competitive total, Bangladesh romped to victory with four wickets and an over to spare. Bangladesh lost opener Chowdhury Rizwan early and also had suffered a middle-order collapse that saw them at a precarious 113 for five at one stage. However, Ashiq’s 56-ball 72, a 52-run knock from skipper Ahrar and an unbeaten 57 from Parvez helped Bangladesh wrap up their tour on a positive note.

