

BANGABANDHU KABADDI

Hosts make it three in three

SPORTS REPORTER

Hosts Bangladesh made it three wins in three matches in the Bangabandhu Cup International Kabaddi Tournament following a comfortable 59-19 points victory against Indonesia in their Group A match at the Shaheed Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Bangladesh, who led the first half 36-2, dominated throughout the game. The Men in Red and Green have two matches left in the group stage against Poland and Nepal on Thursday and Friday respectively.

Raider Mizanur Rahman was named the man of the match for the second game in a row after securing 18 points from raids.

"All of our teammates gave their best today for winning the match because we are determined to keep the trophy at home. It was also the outcome of team effort and we are looking forward to winning the trophy without losing any matches," said Mizanur.



School cricket final brought a different charm to 'home of cricket' in Mirpur yesterday as Kadamtala Purbo Basabo School and College from Dhaka clinched the Prime Bank National School Cricket Championship, defeating Government KG Union High School from Pirojpur by 187 runs. Kadamtala's Sifat Shahriar was the difference-maker coming in at number eight, pulling his side out of trouble from 42 for 6 to 288 with a remarkable 148 off 115 deliveries. While Shahriar had to leave the field due to injury, his teammate Mohammad Hossain notched a hat-trick to bundle Kadamtala out for 99.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Nat'l hockey players to train in Europe

SPORTS REPORTER

A bunch of national players will get the opportunity to play in different European hockey leagues as Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) is all set to appoint German coach Peter Gerhard Rach as the technical director of the local game's governing body from June 1.

Gerhard previously worked with Bangladesh national hockey team in 2009-10 before working with Mohammedan Sporting Club in 2012 and Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club in 2016. While presenting Gerhard at a media briefing at the BHF Conference room yesterday, BHF general secretary AKM Mominul Haque Sayeed said, "In terms of where we want to see Bangladesh after four to five years, and in which way we can reach the top places in Asia, Gerhard presented his plan which matched ours."

"Some 40 to 50 players of the national team will be in action in Europe for five months as they will play in different leagues in German, Poland, and Netherlands, as well as continue their training for the national team,"

Gerhard said, "There Bangladesh players - Mahabub, Roman and Sabuj - played very well in Germany and a lot of clubs are asking for them. They are good ambassadors of Bangladesh hockey."

Tigers rely on veterans' experience in 'difficult times'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto said the mix of youth and experience was important to the team and, in particular, he hoped Mahmudullah Riyad and Shakib Al Hasan's experience would guide them during the difficult stages of the upcoming T20 World Cup.

The buildup to the main event has not exactly gone according to the Tigers' wishes, especially after back-to-back defeats to USA saw them lose the T20I series in Houston. The World Cup warm-up fixture against USA on Tuesday was cancelled due to weather conditions, leaving Bangladesh with only a warm-up game against India to get ready for the event proper.

Shanto had been appointed captain across all three formats in February this year and his only experience of leading the side in a World Cup game had come in the ODI World Cup last year, when he took the reins against Sri Lanka in Shakib Al Hasan's absence.

Shanto's captaincy, too, will be in focus this World Cup and he hoped that Shakib and Mahmudullah will guide the side with their experience.

"Having such experienced cricketers on the team is a big plus point, especially for those playing in their first World Cup," Shanto was quoted in a Bangladesh Cricket Board interview published on Tuesday.

"There's a lot to learn from them. They also have leadership experience, and they will help me during difficult times. Whenever I need something, they come forward. Hopefully, the World Cup will not be an exception," he added.



The Tigers have quite a number of stars who may not be considered veterans but have nonetheless been in the national fold for a long time. Players such as Soumya Sarkar, Liton Das, Mustafizur Rahman and Taskin Ahmed have become senior stars themselves, and Towhid Hridoy and skipper Shanto are not far off, while the likes of opener Tanzid Tamim, keeper-batter Jaker Ali Anik, and spinners Rishad Hossain and Tamvir Islam are yet to play in a global event.

In terms of performances, Shanto wanted the players to contribute. His special wish was for Shakib to share his experience.

"If you are talking of something different altogether [in terms of expecting something from a squad member] I would like Shakib bhai to share his experience with everyone. The experiences he gathered over the last few years is something that can help the younger

players and it is something that he has been doing as well," he said.

Shakib, who has led the side in the last two World Cups and is the only player other than India's Rohit Sharma to have featured in all editions of the T20 World Cups, will have a role to play to guide Bangladesh's newest World Cup captain, who said that big dreams, even if they do not divulge them, have to be there.

"When we go to play in a big tournament, we must go with big dreams."

"Our bonding is very good and we understand each other very well. That's very important and the mix of senior and junior players is very good," Shanto added.

Bangladesh's first World Cup game is a hugely crucial one to their chances of making the Super Eight of the tournament. In facing Sri Lanka, tempers will flare, and nerves will be tested, and the two veterans will have a part to play in helping the youngsters.

Maria Manda to miss Chinese Taipei ties

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's campaign of two FIFA International friendly matches against Chinese Taipei begins on Friday at the Bashundhara Kings Arena in Dhaka, but the women in red and green will be without creative midfielder Maria Manda, who sustained an injury during a Women's Football League fixture on Tuesday.

The injury of Maria, who has been a consistent member of the team for a long time, has opened an opportunity for U-19 team's midfielder Munki Akhter.

Interim coach Peter James Bulter elevated three more U-19 players -- goalkeeper Yearzan Begum, attackers Mosammat Sagorika, and Sauravi Akanda Prity -- to the senior squad for the first time.

"One person is unfortunate but another person gains. It is a great opportunity for the young players to step in and claim their positions. I say placency is a disease and you need to resume the competitive environment within your group," Bulter said about the newcomers of the senior side during a press briefing at the BFF House yesterday.

Asked about the expectation in two matches, the experienced English coach said, "I watched a lot of videos of good players, very disciplined and organised. I want a creditable performance -- that is my first objective -- and bring some stability and consistency in the group, and the drive to get the results."

Captain Sabina Khatun said, "We previously played against strong teams like Malaysia, Singapore, Nepal and Asian Games matches against Vietnam and Japan, gaining a lot of experience. We are also expecting tough matches against Chinese Taipei."

"It is time to play against the strong opponents, without thinking much of the outcomes because the girls will be able to deliver a good performance and think of how to improve it."

SHORT CORNER

Bellingham voted LaLiga Player of the Season

Real Madrid midfielder Jude Bellingham has been voted LaLiga's Player of the Season after the 20-year-old played a pivotal role in leading the club to their 36th league title. Bellingham edged out team mate Vinicius Jr, Antoine Griezmann (Atletico Madrid), Artem Dovbyk (Girona) and Robert Lewandowski (Barcelona) in votes cast by fans, club captains and a panel of experts.

Laporta gambles on Flick to restore Barcelona's lustre

Barcelona have appointed former Germany and Bayern Munich manager Hansi Flick as head coach on a two-year contract, the LaLiga club said on Wednesday.

Biman and The GolfHouse join hands to promote golf

National flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with The GolfHouse to support the country's golf and golfers. The partnership includes a commitment to give special discounts and allowing golf bags for golfers and The GolfHouse employees. And top local professional golfers will get complimentary air tickets.

*Read full stories on The Daily Star website

Mohammedan finish second in three competitions

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club finished runners-up in the Bangladesh Premier League with a 2-1 win against Abahani as the domestic football season came to an end yesterday.

It was the third second-place finish for the Black and Whites in three competitions this season, with Bashundhara Kings winning all those three - Independence Cup, Federation Cup and Bangladesh Premier League.

This was also the first time since the 2009-10 season that the Motijheel outfit finished second in the league, having previously done so in the first three editions of the professional league.

Mohammedan, who were held to a 2-2 draw by the Sky blues in their first meeting in the league, conceded the lead when Bruno Rocha opened the scoring in the 13th minute of the game at the Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni Stadium in Gopalganj.

However, midfielder Arif Hossain scored an equaliser 16 minutes later and the same player scored the winning goal in the 90th minute to take Mohammedan to 35 points from 18 matches.

Abahani, the six-time champions, had to settle for a third place with 32 points. However, the Dhanmondi giants can find solace from their fact that their Grenadian striker Cornelius Stewart finished as the top scorer of the league with 19 goals, followed by Mohammedan captain Soleymane Diabate on 17 and Kings striker Dorielton Gomes on 14. Rakib Hossain of Bashundhara Kings finished as the top-scorer among the locals and fourth overall with nine goals.

Champions Kings, meanwhile, finished with 45 points after coming back from a goal down to beat Sheikh Russel KC 3-1 at the Bashundhara Kings Arena.

Vojislav Balabanovic gave Sheikh Russel a 13th minute lead but Kings, who had rested a couple of key players, equalised two minutes after the break through Miguel Ferreira. Local stars Rakib and Sheikh Morsalin then scored two goals as the champions wrapped up the campaign with their 14th win in 18 matches.



Sheikh Russel, on the other hand, finished sixth with 19 points.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Police finished fourth with a 2-0 win against already-relegated Brothers Union while Fortis FC secured sixth position with a 3-1 win over Chittagong Abahani, who finished seventh.

The eighth position was taken by three-time champions Sheikh Jamal DC, who were beaten 2-0 by Rahmatganj, who finished ninth.



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz pumps his fists after winning a point against the Jesper De Jong of The Netherlands during their second round match of the French Open on Court Philippe-Chatrier at the Roland Garros on Wednesday. The two-time Grand Slam winner won the match 6-3, 6-4, 2-6, 6-2.

PHOTO: AFP