

## FIREBRAND CABRERA wants more victories

SPORTS REPORTER

What a difference a victory can make! Those who were shouting slogans against the Bangladesh team on Wednesday night following the team's 1-0 defeat against the Maldives, were chanting for the victorious hosts after a comeback 2-1 win against the same opposition last night.

The Bangladesh Football Ultras cheered on the team right through the match and serenaded them on their way out of the Bashundhara Kings Stadium, where Javier Cabrera's charges had just snatched a deserved victory in stoppage time, thanks to a late goal from substitute midfielder Papon Singh.

The Abahani midfielder had replaced captain Sohail Rana in the 89th minute and was at the right place at the right time, five minutes later, to stab home substitute Shahrear Emon's low cross into the net.

The goal lifted the morale of the team which had lost the first match against the same opposition 1-0 and were looking at a bleak end to the calendar year with six defeats in seven matches prior to this game.

The win also changed the mood of the coach considerably. Cabrera, who had appeared resigned after the defeat on Wednesday, was all gung-ho in the post-match press conference, taking on journalists who had criticised his team



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

after Wednesday's defeat.

"We played better football in the first match. We played with the same approach, the same energy and the same attitude in the first game. We created more chances that game," Cabrera said. "The problem is

that you just live to criticise this team."

While it is true that Bangladesh had mounted more attacks in the first game, there could be debate as to how effective those were as the two forwards, Rakib Hossain and Faysal Ahmed Fahim, failed to

make those attacks count.

Instead it was the midfielders – Mojibur Rahman Johny and Papon that made the difference yesterday.

Johny, who had scored his first international goal a year and a half ago in a FIFA friendly against Cambodia, brought the home side back into the game with a brilliant equaliser in the 43rd minute.

The Bashundhara Kings midfielder received the ball from Sheikh Morsalin in front of the box, switched to right foot and unleashed a curling effort through a host of Maldives players and into the far corner of the net.

The goal came as a shot in the arm for Cabrera's men who had conceded the opening goal in the 23rd minute, when veteran defender Topu Barman's miscued pass was slotted in clinically by Ali Fasil, the Maldives forward who had scored the only goal of the previous game.

"I believe we deserved to win the first game also," Cabrera opined, who felt they should have won two more matches this year.

The Spaniard, whose contract as Bangladesh coach runs out in December, said he is looking to discuss the matter with the Bangladesh Football Federation, but is happy with the pool of players at his disposal, and is excited over the impending addition of Hamza Choudhury for March's Asian Cup Qualifiers.

### SHORT CORNER

#### Ministry to reclaim lost playgrounds in Dhaka: Asif

Sports and youth Adviser Asif Mahmud said that the ministry will work to reclaim the illegally occupied playgrounds in Dhaka and also shared plans of building a sports village. The Adviser shared these plans to the media after inaugurating the Shahid Farhan Faiyaz, a martyr in July uprising, Playground in the capital yesterday.



#### Tyson beaten by Youtuber Paul in heavyweight return

Mike Tyson's controversial return to boxing ended in a one-sided defeat on Friday, with Youtuber-turned-prizefighter Jake Paul

cruising to victory by unanimous decision against the heavyweight icon in Texas.

#### Rangpur Riders proud to wave the Bangladesh flag in GSL

Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) side Rangpur Riders are set to become the first Bangladeshi franchise to feature in an overseas league in the inaugural edition of the Global Super League in Guyana, starting on November 27. The five-team competition will also feature Caribbean Premier League team Guyana Amazon Warriors, Pakistan Super League's Lahore Qalanders, England's Hampshire and New Zealand's Victoria.

\*Read full stories on The Daily Star's website

## BOA to take initiatives to build Olympic Village soon: Army Chief

SPORTS DESK

Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) president and Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz Zaman said the association will soon take initiatives to build an Olympic Village for high value athletes during his first executive committee meeting as the BOA chief yesterday, reports BSS.

The meeting was held at the BOA boardroom in which the Army Chief vowed to take the country's sports to the peak of prosperity, said a release from Inter-Services of Public Relations (ISPR) yesterday.

In other major developments from the meeting, it was decided that the 10th edition of the Bangladesh Games scheduled for 2024 will be held at a convenient time next year and the 3rd edition of the previously scheduled Bangladesh Youth Games will be held in 2026.

The BOA also decided to reward Tk 50 lakh to the Bangladesh women's team for winning the SAFF Women's Championship title for the second consecutive time. It was also decided that the reward would be handed over in a programme in Cox's Bazar where the Bangladesh Army would also handover Tk 50 lakh to the champion team.

## RONALDO CONTINUES TO AMAZE

Portugal sealed a Nations League quarterfinal berth after a Cristiano Ronaldo double with a 'Panenka' spot-kick and an overhead stunning bicycle kick helped them hammer visiting Poland 5-1 in Group A1 on Friday.

Portugal's victory allowed Ronaldo to break a new international record. He now holds the record for the most international wins with 132, surpassing his former teammate Sergio Ramos (131).

At the age of 39 years and 284 days, Ronaldo made history by becoming the oldest player to score a brace in a single international match.

The veteran forward's impressive form continued in the Nations League, with five goals in five games. Since turning 39, he has scored seven goals for Portugal.



## Bangladesh's lone warm-up game begins today

SPORTS REPORTER

Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Co will begin their Caribbean mission today with the lone two-day warm-up match against CWI Select XI at the Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua.

The match will begin at 8:00 PM Bangladesh time and is an opportunity for the Tigers to gear up before their final assignment of the ongoing ICC Test Championship 2023-25 cycle – a two-Test series against the West Indies – begins at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua on November 22.

Out of Bangladesh's last three Test series against Pakistan, India and South Africa respectively, the Tigers got to play warm-up fixtures only before the Pakistan series, with the A team, which included many Test team players, taking on Pakistan Shaheens.

The practice gained from playing two unofficial Tests against the Shaheens seemingly helped the Tigers in the Test series as they went onto pull off a historic 2-0 clean-sweep over the hosts.

However, Bangladesh did not play any warm-up game before the series against India and South Africa and

suffered crushing defeats in both series.

The warm-up match will also give them a chance to decide on the team combination in the absence of regular skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto, who is out of the series owing



match squad.

After the warm-up game and the first Test, Bangladesh will travel to Jamaica for the second Test, scheduled to be held between November 30 and December 4 at the Sabina Park.

#### WEST INDIES TEST SQUAD:

Kraigg Brathwaite (Captain), Joshua Da Silva (Vice-Captain), Alick Athanaze, Keacy Carty, Justin Greaves, Kavem Hodge, Tevin Imlach, Alzarri Joseph, Shamar Joseph, Mikyle Louis, Anderson Phillip, Kemar Roach, Jayden Seales, Kevin Sinclair, Jomel Warrican.

ing to groin strain. Miraz will lead the team in Shanto's absence.

Meanwhile, West Indies are also taking the warm-up match seriously, picking three Test squad members – skipper Kraigg Brathwaite, all-rounder Justin Greaves and uncapped top-order batter Tevin Imlach – in their 13-member warm-up

Bangladesh will also play three ODIs in St Kitts and Nevis on December 8, 10 and 12 respectively as well as three T20Is in St Vincent and the Grenadines on December 16, 18 and 20 respectively in their month-long tour in the Caribbean. Both teams are yet to announce squads for the two white-ball series.



Speedster Spencer Johnson took 5-26 to propel Australia to a tense 13-run victory over Pakistan in Sydney on Saturday and seal their three-match T20 series with a game to go. Set just 148 to win after Haris Rauf claimed 4-22 to keep the hosts in check, Pakistan were all out for 134 in the final over despite a lively 52 from Usman Khan. Johnson set a new record for the best bowling performance by an Australian pacer in T20Is, surpassing James Faulkner's previous best of 5-27 against the same opponents in 2016.

PHOTO: CRICKET AUSTRALIA

## Bowlers dominate opening day of NCL 5th round

SPORTS REPORTER

Bowlers dominated in all four games on the opening day of the fifth round of the 26th National Cricket League (NCL) with a total of 50 wickets falling at four different venues yesterday.

At the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur, Dhaka Division pacer Sumon Khan ripped through Khulna Division, claiming a career-best 6-50, to bowl them out for 172.

Skipper Mohammad Mithun (69) was the only exception in a faltering batting performance from Khulna after they had opted to bat first. Dhaka finished the day on 58-3.

Khulna's Imrul Kayes, who will retire from red-ball cricket after the ongoing contest, made 16.

During the lunch break, the southpaw was presented a crest by his teammates in a short felicitation programme where Tamim Iqbal and Mohammad Ashraful were also present.

In Khulna, league leaders Sylhet Division took a seven-run lead over Dhaka Metro after reaching 137-2 at stumps.

Nasum Ahmed claimed 4-19 while pacers Khaled Ahmed and Rejaur Rahman Raja took three wickets each to bundle out Metro for 130.

At the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, Chattogram Division pacer Fahad Hossain claimed 5-31 to dismiss Rajshahi Division for just 112.

Opens Sadikur Rahman (54) and Parvez Hossain Emon (41) formed a 96-run stand before a batting collapse saw Chattogram finish on 173-8 with a lead of 61.

In Rajshahi, fifties from Iftikhar Hossain (70), Salman Hossain (67) and Tasamul Haque (51) guided Barisal Division to 266-7 at stumps against Rangpur Division.