



PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

CAN'T AFFORD ANY SLIP: All nine Mohammedan fielders (L) are placed in the slip cordon during the final session of their GrameenPhone Premier Division Super League encounter against Victoria at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Mohammedan made a desperate attempt in the session to at least get Mushfiqur Rahman (M), seen here driving, out to break his stubborn partnership with Anisur Rahman. However, all their efforts went in vain as the Victorians (R), seen celebrating, enforced a draw which ensured them the championship.

Mushfiq takes them home

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

All-rounder Mushfiqur Rahman played a typically gutsy innings which eventually handed Victoria Sporting club their second consecutive Premier Division cricket title at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

On the fourth and final day of the Super League clash, Mushfiq, the Rajshahi all-rounder, who missed the early part of the league due to serious ankle injury, held Mohammedan at bay for two sessions (252 minutes) to ensure a draw which was enough for the Centenary side to record their third ever League honour with a match in hand.

With a target to either win the match by scoring 270 or bat out the 80 overs remaining in the game, Victoria were shaken by a desperate Mohammedan. Needing a victory at any cost, Mohammedan had the perfect start when they sent back Victoria's prolific Pakistani opener Waseem Nayeem in the third over of their second innings. Nayeem was caught by Aftab off pacesman Monir at square leg. Mohammedan hopes were further lifted when they reduced Victoria to 35 for three just after lunch.

But Mushfiq led the consolidation charge. Playing like a wall, he defied all that the Mohammedan bowlers could throw at him. He received good support from captain Azam Iqbal (28) and middle-order Anisur Rahman (33 not out) along the way.

Mushfiq and Anis put on a decisive 62-run partnership for the unbeaten seventh wicket as Victoria reached 174 for six before

Mohammedan captain Minhazul Abedin decided to throw in the towel with six balls remaining.

Mushfiq, who has been rewarded with an opportunity to meet new national coach Dav Whatmore on May 14 as one of the 21 leading cricketers of the country, smote ten boundaries in his 193-ball innings.

Mohammedan tried their best to force the title issue into the final

day of the league and with their opponents reeling at 112 for six, they couldn't be blamed for fancying a win. But with Mushfiq offering stubborn resistance the tail never got exposed. They didn't help their cause either when the skipper himself dropped a sharp chance at leg slip to catch Mushfiq when he was on 26. In a last ditch attempt, Minhazul even put nine men in the slips for the last few overs of the day but it was just not

going to be Mohammedan's day.

Earlier, Mohammedan, resuming the final day morning on 201 for 5 in 71 overs, batted for another eight overs in the first session before they declared their second innings on 238 for 8. The extra overs consumed proved significant for the outcome of the match and even Minhazul admitted later that that precious half-an-hour's batting minimised their chances of bowling Victoria out.

With the draw, Victoria raised their tally to 74 points from 16 matches. Mohammedan on the other hand finished their season with 72 points from 17 matches.

Victoria will now face City Club in their last match that will start at the Bangabandhu National Stadium from Wednesday.

SCOREBOARD

Scorecard on the final day of the GrameenPhone Premier Cricket Super League clash between Mohammedan SC and Victoria SC at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday:

MOHAMMEDAN SC: First innings 289 all out in 96 overs (Rajat 129, Javed 67, Anwar 39; Razzak 4-108, Mushfiq 3-52, Wasim 2-25)

VICTORIA SC: First innings (overnight 223 for 7 in 83 overs)

W Nayeem c Javed b Naimur	51
Parvez b Enamul	7
Rafiqul lbw b Rajat	31
Azam c Anwar b Arif	24
Mushfiq c Anwar b Naimur	13
Salim c Aftab b Enamul	41
Anisur b Arif	11
Nuruzzaman lbw b Rajat	10
Sabbir not out	39
Mukul c & b Hasibul	3
Razzak c Arif b Enamul	11

SEE PAGE 14 COL 4

Viva Victoria

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Victoria Sporting Club established their reputation as a force in Dhaka cricket by lifting the Premier League title for a second successive year at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The back-to-back triumph for the centenary club also broke the stranglehold of the Mohammedan-Abahani monopoly.

Victoria, a cricket club rich in heritage and better known for its finery, was however not as successful as it should have been in the 70s.

Their first taste of success came in 1975. Since then they have been labeled as an average side until last year. Victoria celebrated their centenary in grand style by lifting the coveted title after an emotional journey.

The general feeling was that Victoria's success could be seen as a one-off achievement. But they proved everybody wrong under the dynamic leadership of Shafiqur Rahman Munna.

During his two-year presidency he kept up his hundred per cent

record. Incidentally, Munna was cricket secretary when they first won the title.

"Our success was built on a collective effort. I was always ready to hear the players when they needed me. And whenever I got the chance I emphasised on two things. We must work collectively till the very end and believe that we are a good team. Besides, nobody ever influenced my decisions," said Munna while talking to The Daily Star Sport yesterday.

The unique feature of Victoria's glorious season this year was entering the Super League with a healthy 10-point lead. It was not that they possessed plenty of star names. Rather it was a combination of youthful and experienced players who believed that success would come if they worked as a unit and not as individuals.

What makes Victoria's success more the sweeter was the fact they spent far less than what Mohammedan did. Their wise investment paid off with some outstanding performances from a number of players.

They included Pakistani recruit Wasim Nayeem, young all-rounder Manjarul Islam and left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak, who undoubtedly is a player for the future provided he makes minor adjustments

his bowling action.

Then there was the remarkable return from injury for Mushfiqur Rahman. The experienced right-arm pacesman and handy middle-order batsman showed his true grit batting out the last two remaining testing sessions on the final day.

After the match Victoria captain Azam Iqbal hailed all his teammates for the achievement. "We are an unheralded team. But through our bond of friendship we have done it."

The right-handed former Chittagong also praised the team management for their excellent support.

"For five years I played for Abahani but I never got the same kind of the satisfaction I got at here."

Azam also gave his unreserved admiration to young coach Mohammed Salahuddin, who had to take over midway last year following the death of Daulatuzzaman.

"Salahuddin is really a good coach. He knew better than anybody how to get the best from us," he said.

Salahuddin, who received a first-class coaching diploma from

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

Election BCB gets four more months

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday got four more months from the High Court to complete their election formalities.

Justice MA Aziz and Justice Syed Refat Ahmed of the High Court Division yesterday sanctioned the four months time that will come into effect from May 14, 2003.

The previous High Court order had set May 14 as the election deadline.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

Whatmore due today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's new cricket coach Dav Whatmore arrives in Dhaka today afternoon on a brief visit before taking on full responsibility next month.

The Australian coach, who guided Sri Lanka to their maiden World Cup triumph in 1996, will sit with the cricket committee and the advisors of Bangladesh Cricket Board later today for an initial discussion.

SEE PAGE 14 COL 8



Did U Know?

Barry Jarman, of Australia, was in the news on August 4, 1964 when the tourists met Glamorgan in a tour match. The umpire at the bowler's end gave him out caught, and the other umpire gave him out stumped. He appears in the scorebooks as caught by the wicketkeeper EW Jones.



Michael Vaughan

(England ODI captain)
"Nasser is an inspirational leader and he will be a tough tact to follow as one-day captain. But I'll do it my way."

Aussie openers in charge

Cricket

AFP, St. John's

Australia were on course for a record Caribbean series clean sweep over the West Indies after Justin Langer and Matthew Hayden's ninth century opening partnership at the Recreation Ground here on Saturday.

Australia wrested control of the fourth and final Test after both teams were level on the first innings when the West Indies were dis-

Australia 267/1

STAR SPORT MONITOR

Australia were 267 for one shortly before lunch on the third day of the fourth and final Test against West Indies in Antigua yesterday.

Openers Justin Langer and Matthew Hayden put on 242 runs before the former offered a thick edge to Brian Lara at first slip off Chris Gayle after making 111.

Hayden was batting on 135 while Adam Gilchrist was on the other end. He was on 6.

missed for 240 at tea on the second day.

Langer and Hayden got the Australians away to a flying start in their second innings in the final session with their ninth century stand in their 36th bat together with the West Indies having to bat last on the wearing pitch.

Bowlers had dominated the match up to the second innings with 20 wickets tumbling for 480 runs off

137.4 overs, but Langer and Hayden changed all that with their free-scoring partnership to set a solid platform for an unreachable second innings score.

At the close of the second day, Australia were 171 without loss with Langer not out 80 and Hayden on 79.

Langer and Hayden, who came together at The Oval in London in August 2001, have developed into the finest opening pair in Test cricket and are averaging 69.22 runs batting as a pair.

To compound the West Indies' misery Lara dropped Hayden on 47 in an ankle-high chance at slip off spinner Omari Banks late in the day.

The Australians lead the series after heavy wins in the three previous Tests and should they win in Antigua they will sweep a Test series for the first time in 73 years of cricket in Caribbean.

Up until Langer-Hayden dominance, the West Indies had enjoyed their best period in the lopsided

SEE PAGE 14 COL 2



PHOTO: INTERNET

COOL DOWN: Umpire David Shepherd (C) stands in between Australia captain Steve Waugh (L) and West Indies skipper Brian Lara as they are engaged in a heated exchange on the second day of the fourth and final Test at Antigua on May 10.

Captains lose their temper

AFP, St. John's

Rival captains Brian Lara and Steve Waugh exchanged heated words as tensions bubbled over in an engrossing battle of wills on the second morning of the fourth and final cricket Test at the Recreation Ground here on Saturday.

Lara again stood defiant in another brilliant innings to have the West Indies 100 runs behind Australia's first innings total of 240.

Lara was unconquered on 40 at lunch with Ridley Jacobs yet to score and the West Indies 140 for six after losing four wickets in the opening session for 93 runs off 25 overs.

But there was a curt exchange between Lara and Waugh just before first-hour drinks when the Australians voiciferously appealed what they thought was a catch behind off Jason Gillespie's bowling.

Lara, on 15 at the time, played at Gillespie and there was a distinct

SEE PAGE 14 COL 5

Serie A Juve jive to title

Football

AFP, Rome

Juventus won the Italian league title on Saturday despite being held to a 2-2 draw by Perugia at the Delle Alpi stadium.

It was the Turin club's 27th championship success in their 105-year history.

Second-placed Inter Milan's 1-1 draw at home to Parma meant Juve have an eight-point lead over their closest challengers with two games of the season left.

Frenchman David Trezeguet's penalty gave Juventus the lead, only for Fabrizio Miccoli to equalise before half-time.

Marco Di Vaio restored Juve's advantage a minute after the break with a splendid individual effort, but Fabio Grosso's 90th-minute

volley restored parity for the visitors.

Juventus' party celebrations were fairly subdued as they face Real Madrid in the second leg of their Champions League semi-final on Wednesday. Real won the first leg 2-1 at the Bernabeu.

Second-half substitute Pavel Nedved said the champagne was definitely on ice until the showdown with the European champions.

"Two Scudettos in two years. It's a fantastic achievement but there will be no party. It's the Champions League and we have the chance to achieve something special," said the Czech Republic international.

French defender Lilian Thuram said he too was going to bed early.

"It's a wonderful achievement, considering how far behind Milan we were earlier in the season, but that just shows you the character of this squad," he said.

"Now we must rest and focus on Real. Hopefully on Tuesday there will be a double celebration."

Marcello Lippi refuted suggestions that the title was second on his list of priorities back in September.

"It's not true I was thinking more about the Champions League at the start of the season, the title has always been our first objective," he said.

Juventus began nervously and were left off the hook in the 10th minute.

Giovanni Tedesco appeared to time his run perfectly before heading in Jose Ze Maria's right-wing cross in the 10th minute, but referee Paolo Bertini ruled that the Perugia midfielder had strayed into an offside position.

After soaking up early pressure from the visitors, Trezeguet, scorer

SEE PAGE 14 COL 6



PHOTO: STAR

Players and officials of victorious Victoria Sporting Club.