

# Samarasekara savages MSC

Sports Reporter

Athula Samarasekara, the Sri Lankan Test discard, conjured up the demonic absorption of Ravana to crack 167 off 113 balls to destroy Muhammedan Sporting Club as the reigning champions suffered an ignominious eight-wicket defeat to arch-rivals Abahani Kriya Chakra in the finale of the first phase of the Navana Premier Division cricket league at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

Yesterday's holiday entertainment watched by the biggest crowd of the season assumed almost comic proportions as Abahani aided by Samarasekara's assault crossed Muhammedan's imposing total of 254 for six in 33.2 with almost 12 overs to spare.

Set to score 255 for victory at an asking rate of almost six per over Abahani were given a rollicking start by a hand-capped Samarasekara who developed some trouble in his leg and had to have Khaled Mahmud Sujan as a runner. At the end of the day, after the dust had settled, this turned out to be a luxury, the tall Sri Lankan could have afforded without Sujan's help.

Hundred of his 167 runs came from 'strokes', including 13 fours and eight massive sixes. For a curious follower of the game it looked like an act of vengeance that Samarasekara chose to repay a particular Mohammedan bowler so cruelly. Rafiq, who won a leg before decision against Samarasekara in the semifinal of the Damal Summer tournament earlier this season, much to the dismay of the batsman, really went through the hoop yesterday. Six of the eight sixes were plundered off the former Abahani skipper's straightish leg-spin.

Samarasekara rode his luck to post 146 for the first wicket in 20.1 overs in tandem with Jahangir Alam with the latter scoring only 31. The wicket-keeper-batsman had to leave the wicket when a fine return by a substitute Mohammedan fielder from short fine-leg left him stranded with the bowler effecting a simple run out.

Samarasekara, who was dropped by Piyal off Nannu on 45 — a hot chance in the covers — finally departed with Abahani happily placed on 244 in 31.5 overs with Wahidul Ghani signalling an end of uninterrupted session of toying with the bowling.

Earlier, Abahani skipper Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu won the toss and asked Mohammedans to bat first on a marvel of a wicket. Mohammedans did not have to curse themselves as the opening pair of Azhar Hossain Shantu and Harunur Rashid Liton put on 57 runs for the first wicket.

# N'ganj, Comilla in zonal finals

Sports Reporter

Narayanganj, Comilla, Bak-erganj, Dinajpur and Sherpur moved into their respective zonal finals of the qualifying round for the Beximco 13th national youth under-19 cricket championship which began last Thursday at five venues across the country.

At the Comilla Stadium, Narayanganj made the Group A semifinals registering a massive 152-run victory against Chandpur.

Electing to bat Narayanganj amassed 230 for the loss of seven wickets in the stipulated 45 overs with Pappu top scoring with 42 and Munna and Mona making 35 and 34 respectively.

Biddyt chipped in with 26 while Sejal, Rubel and Topu got 17, 16 and 15 respectively. Elias took three wickets conceding 48 runs for Chandpur.

Chandpur were shot out for a paltry 78 in 23.1 overs with Pital and Sanjay scoring 20 and 10 respectively.

Raj claimed three wickets for 15 while Topu, Mona and Jahangir evenly shared six wickets between them.

Narayanganj will play the victors of tomorrow's quarter-final: between Chittagong and Manikganj on March 1.

Comilla moved into the



PQ4 ... Neeraj Mishra of India opens against Pakistani International Master Mahmud Ahmed Khan Lodhi in their sixth round tie of the first Grandmasters' championship at the Jalsagar of Purbani Hotel yesterday. Lodhi overcame the disadvantage of playing with the black pieces to win in 40 moves. — Star photo



Athula Samarasekara was in marauding mood yesterday in the crucial Navana Premier Division tie between arch-rivals Abahani and Mohammedans at the Dhaka Stadium. Samarasekara hooked, pulled, cut and drove savagely to power Abahani to an astonishingly easy eight-wicket victory. — Star photo

one off Sujan over square-leg and another off Effece over the straight country.

Mohammedans rattled up 254 for six with Sri Lankan Gamage remaining unbeaten on 14 at the end of their quota of 45 overs.

Babu took two wickets for 32. However, Samarasekara was the pick of the Abahani bowlers giving away only 39 runs in his nine overs on a batsman's paradise. Ashoka, Lipu, Effece and Anis took one wicket apiece.

Mohammedans are now upstides with Gulshan Youth in joint second position in the points table, with Abahani atop with 18 points from ten matches. Mohammedans have 16 points from ten matches.

Once again, the player-umpires — Nadir Shah and Munir Ali Khan — did a marvellous job yesterday with no incident of resentment or dissent shown by any player of any of the two Titans of local cricket. Well done!

Milon and Morin took a wicket each.

Bakerganj will now play Jhenidah in the group semifinals tomorrow.

At the Thakurgaon Stadium, Dinajpur received a walk-over against Lalmonirhat in the Group E quarterfinals.

Dinajpur will take on Gafbandha tomorrow.

At the Tangail Stadium, Sherpur were declared winners against Netrokona when the latter failed to produce the necessary papers to prove the ages of their players.

The youth cricket championship is restricted to players under 19 years of age.

Sherpur will face Kushtia in the semifinals tomorrow.

Thirty five teams in five groups are taking part in the qualifying meet.

The final round comprising the five group champions and the title-holders Jessore and runners-up Rajshahi and the Bangladesh Kriya Shiksha Protisthan will be held in Dhaka from March 10 to 15.

## TODAY'S MATCHES

Comilla: Tangail vs Sylhet

Tangail: Dhaka vs Chuadanga

Jhenidah: Nawabganj vs Sirajganj

Satkhira: Patuakhali vs Bhoila

Thakurgaon: Faridpur vs Joypurhat

Norwood beat Bangladeshi IM Zillur Rahman Champak yesterday. Playing with black

Norwood adopted Modern Defence and subdued his opponent in 29 moves.

GM Daniel King, another Briton beat Indian IM Arun Vaidya in 34 moves. King has three points while Vaidya languishes at one.

The match between Bangladeshi FM Ziaur Rahman and Indian V Koshi was in progress when reports last came in.

# Pak-Windies final today

Johannesburg, Feb 26:

World champions Pakistan face the West Indies in the final of the triangular series also involving South Africa at the Wanderers ground here tomorrow, reports Reuters.

Pakistan, who lost all three of their league matches to the West Indies — the last by seven wickets at Cape Town Thursday in the low-scoring encounter — reached the final of the three-team tournament by beating hosts South Africa in all three of their league matches. South Africa suffered their fourth loss in six games to the West Indies whom they had beaten twice.

# Another hattrick in Pioneer soccer

Sports Reporter

Md Alauddin of Painadi Agrani Juba Sangsad became the third footballer to score a hattrick in the Janata Bank Pioneer football league.

Painadi Sangsad, by virtue of Alauddin's hattrick, eliminated Khilgaon Juba Sangha by five goals to one yesterday at the Khilgaon High School ground.

National Football Training Centre outplayed Khelaghar Samaj Kalyan Samity by four goals to nil at the Mahakhali T&T ground.

Rising Star Club shared points with Badda Jagaroni Sangsad (Jrs) in a one-all draw in the other match at the same venue.

At the Bashabo ground, Mugga Samaj Kalyan Sangsad defeated Matuati Udayan Sangsad by three goals to nil.

Badda Sangsad drew goalless with Kendrio Kishore Kafela in the other match at the venue.

Kalabagan Kriya Chakra edged past Kasattuli Samaj Kalyan Parishad by a solitary goal at the Lalmitia Housing Society ground.

Rainbow Athletic Club of Narayanganj beat Azimpur Kishore Sangha by a solitary goal at the Outer Stadium.

Asim was the scorer. The other match of the day at the venue between Lalbagh Tarun Sangha and Arambagh Kriya Chakra (Jrs) ended in a fiasco when the officials and supporters of Arambagh KC allegedly manhandled the referees.

Eskaton Sabuj Sangha (Jrs) drew goalless with Jatrabari Kriya Chakra in the other match of the day at the Banani ground.

# Kasparov wins

Linares, Spain, Feb 26:

World champion Garry Kasparov showed good form at the Linares Grandmaster chess tournament on Thursday, defeating Yugoslav Ljubomir Ljubovic in 29 moves, reports Reuters.

# Lodhi still ahead

Sports Reporter

National champion FIDE Master (FM) Reefat Bin-Sattar muffed up an excellent opportunity of beating compatriot Grandmaster Niaz Murshed as Pakistani International Master (IM) Mahmud Ahmed Khan Lodhi upstayed his lead in the first Grandmaster's chess tournament at the end of the sixth round at Purbani hotel yesterday.

Reefat, ruffled by time pressure, accepted Niaz's offer for a draw when the young player was a move away from a certain upset victory. Playing with black Reefat adopted King's Indian defence as Niaz, the lone GM of the country began with d4. Reefat the genial student with d4. Reefat the genial student with d4.

Niaz now has three and a half points from five matches while Reefat has the same number of points from six encounters.

Mahmud Lodhi, who led the points table at the end of the fifth round on Wednesday, with four points accrued another point to his collection when he beat Indian IM Neeraj Mishra in a game of Reti variation in 40 moves. Lodhi, who upstays his lead with five points, played with black pieces.

Indian GM Dibyendu Barua suffered his fifth defeat as British GM Julian Hodgson beat him in 58 moves. Hodgson, who won his adjourned match against compatriot GM David Norwood on the rest day, Thursday, played with white pieces in a match played in Queens Gambit accepted variation. Hodgson, the highest rated player, has three and a half points.

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# Border eclipses Gavaskar's record as Aussies get the whiphand

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand, Feb 26:

Australia were in command of New Zealand at the end of the second day of the first cricket Test today — a day when Allan Border rewrote the records as Test Cricket's most prolific scorer, reports Reuters.

Australia amassed 485 in an innings where five batsmen scored half centuries and then fiery fast bowler Craig McDermott had New Zealand reeling at 30 for two.

Martin Crowe was not out on seven and opener John Wright was on four after 85 minutes.

McDermott had Mark Greatbatch taken by wicket-keeper Ian Healy for four from a short lifter in his first over and then snared Andrew Jones lbw for eight playing across the line.

Playing with only five specialist batsmen, New Zealand need another 255 to avoid the follow-on.

But it was Border's day. Needing 50 to surpass the 10,122 runs scored by India's Sunil Gavaskar, Border reached the milestone by pulling off-spinner Dipak Patel to the boundary.

The 37-year-old left-hander doffed his helmet and raised his arms to acknowledge the standing ovation from the small crowd.

Border had to come to the crease in the first over of the day when Justin Langer was removed lbw by Danny Morrison on his overnight score of 63.

He started nervously, nearly running himself out early on, but after lunch it was Border at his confident best, with cuts, pulls and drives of the highest order.

Border eventually scored 88 as Australia piled up the runs — five players scored half centuries — on the second day of

the Test match. Australia reached 485 all out.

Passing Gavaskar's record had, according to Border, become more of a milestone than

a milestone. He arrived at the milestone in the first over with Australia's score on 217 for four. He batted nervously, falling over when hit on the toe by a Danny Morrison yorker and escaping a certain run out only because a New Zealand fielder missed the stumps from five metres.

After scoring just 28 in the two hours before lunch, Border relaxed in the afternoon session.

The 50 that marked the world record was Border's 59th Test half century. He has scored 25 Test centuries.

Only two other players in the all-time batting top 10 are currently playing Test cricket — third-placed Javed Miandad of Pakistan, with 8,569 runs, and England captain Graham Gooch, who is ninth with 7,620 runs.

Under Border, Australia won the World Cup on the Indian subcontinent in 1987, while their 4-0 triumph in the 1989 Ashes Tests in England was another high point of his captaincy. He was named "Australian-of-the-year" in 1990.

Ngugi suspended

LONDON, Feb 26: Track's governing body has suspended Kenya's five-time world cross country champion John Ngugi pending a hearing into his refusal to submit to a drug test.

If Ngugi declines a hearing or the Kenyan federation finds him in the wrong, he faces an automatic four-year ban by the IAAF.

# Border—an apotheosis of application

CHRISTCHURCH, Feb 26:

When Ken Barrington walked out to bat for England it was said you could visualise the national flag trailing from his shoulders, such was his devotion to the country's cricket, reports Reuters.

Australia's answer to Barrington must surely be Allan Border, an equally doughty fighter whose courage, application and durability have been the hallmark of his career that reached a peak today.

Border became the highest run-scorer in Tests when he broke now retired Sunil Gavaskar of India's world record aggregate of 10,122 during the first Test against New Zealand.

Australian captain Border, 37, a man of few words but with an iron will, has become the cornerstone of his team as much for his leadership as his batting.

He is happier leading by example than by haranguing or cajoling his men into producing their best form, and he once said of a Test player going through a bad patch: "I can't make his runs for him or help him take wickets."

It is a hard-nosed attitude that has worked effectively for

the most part since he was made captain during the 1984-85 home series against West Indies when Kim Hughes tearfully quit after Australia lost the first two Tests.

Border, reluctant to take over, offered to quit after trying unsuccessfully to perk some life into a lacklustre side but the offer was declined.

Faith in Border was ultimately justified. Australia won the World Cup on the Indian sub-continent in 1987, while their 4-0 triumph in the 1989 Ashes Tests in England was another high point of his captaincy, and he was named "Australian-of-the-year" in 1990.

Part of Border's formula for success is a natural pessimism. "I have the outlook that the worst will probably happen", he said recently.

So he prepares for the worst. "When I'm in it's difficult to get me out."

After one Test, he wondered off alone to a downtown burger bar and chatted to the patrons. "I'm only an ordinary bloke not a god," he said.

A stocky left-hander, Border made his Test debut in the 1978-79 season and soon established himself as Australia's number three. Like many batsmen of his build, he cuts and pulls particularly well but

can also drive with authority.

Tenacity and bravery are key elements of his batting, and there was no better example of that than during the fifth Test against England at Old

Trafford in 1981 when he scored an unbeaten 123 with a broken finger.

Border believes his greatest innings were 98 not out and 100 not out in the second Test against West Indies at Port of Spain in March 1984.

He said of his 98: "I played against a rampaging West Indies on a difficult wicket, and technically it was the best I've ever played."

Border's form in recent

times has been patchy. His first Test century for four years and 35 Tests was an innings of 106 in the third Test against Sri Lanka in Colombo last September, but he followed with 110 in the second Test against the West Indies in Melbourne last December.

Bradman pays tribute

ADELAIDE, Feb 26: Cricket legend Sir Donald Bradman paid tribute to Allan Border's tough character and fitness today after the Australian captain became the highest scorer of Test runs in the games history, reports Reuters.

"Not only does this recognise his skill as a batsman, it is also a tribute to his physical fitness and tough character, because it has taken many years of toil to reach such a milestone."

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"Australians look upon Border as a typical Aussie battler who has served his country well," he said.

In 52 Tests for Australia between 1928 and 1948 the man many acknowledge as the game's greatest batsman amassed 6,996 runs at an average of 99.94 with 29 centuries.

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