

Sport

Barisal cricket

From Staff Correspondent
BARISAL, Apr 23: Four-H Club defeated Arunoday Superstars by 8 wickets while BCC Club beat Iqbal Smriti Cricket Club by 105 runs in the First Division Cricket League here at the Abdur Rab Seraniat Stadium today.
Four-H scored 79 runs losing 2 wickets in 17.1 overs.
In reply, Arunoday collected 76 runs losing all the wickets in 24.1 overs.
Rajib of Four-H was adjudged man-of-the-match.
BCC made 199 runs losing 8 wickets in 34.5 overs.
In reply, Iqbal Smriti managed 94 runs losing all the wickets in 27.3 overs.

Rajshahi boxing

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, Apr 23: The two-day long first club-level boxing tournament organised jointly by Bangladesh Amateur Boxing Federation and Rajshahi Modern Boxing Club concluded here today at Rajshahi District Gymnasium.
Rajshahi Modern Boxing Club emerged champions capturing 13 gold and one silver medals. Alif Lam-Min Saugha stood the runners-up with four silver and eight bronze medals.
The third place was grabbed by Morning Star Club with three silver and three bronze medals.
Among others, Diganta Proshery Sangha took three silver and two bronze medals and Mahubun Khan Sangha got two silver and two bronze medals. Willow Club had one silver and four bronze medals.

Akram leads

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Nasir was bowled for 39 by off-spinner Naimur Rahman.
Despite the loss of three wickets with 88 on the board in the 23rd over, Mohammedan still had a hope when Sri Lankan Hashan Tillekeratne joined Ijaz at the crease.
But when Ijaz, who took 11 balls to get off the mark, was caught by Mehrob Hossain at long-off after a painstaking 27, it signalled the end to the displeasure of the thousands of Mohammedan supporters present at the big bowl.
Mohammedan collected 89 runs in the remaining 14 runs before they finished 26 runs short of their target.
Tillekeratne, as usual, fought the last battle with 48 off 50 balls.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Janakanta Premier Division cricket super league match between Abahani Krira Chakra and Mohammedan Sporting Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday:

ABAHANI KC

Azam lbw b Rafique	36
Mehrab c Ijaz b Kalpage	48
Naimur lbw b Ijaz	20
Akram not out	74
Hussain c Ijaz b Kalpage	2
Asad lbw b Tillekeratne	0
Rehman c & b Tillekeratne	2
Anis c Rafique b Kalpage	20
Hasibul not out	0
Extras: (b-1, lb-3, nb-4, w-3)	11
Total: (For 7 wickets in 40 overs)	213

Did not bat: Iqbal Hossain and Mizanur Rahman.
Fall of wickets: 1/66; 2/98; 3/121; 4/127; 5/128; 6/134; 7/194

Bowler

	O	M	R	W
Monjurul	7	1	42	0
Shahidul	1	0	10	0
Kalpage	8	1	27	3
Rafique	8	0	38	1
Athar	2	0	16	0
Tillekeratne	8	1	34	2
Ijaz	6	0	42	1

MOHAMMEDAN SC

	O	M	R	W
Athar run out	22			
Imran c Akram b Iqbal	0			
Nasirul b Naimur	39			
Ijaz c Mehrob b Hussain	27			
Tillekeratne c Akram b Naimur	48			
Neyamur c Anis b Naimur	2			
Rafique run out	22			
Kalpage st Mizan b Rehman	1			
Mortuza b Naimur	5			
Shahidul not out	3			
Monjurul not out	3			
Extras: (b-4, lb-6, nb-1, w-5)	16			
Total: (For 9 wickets in 40 overs)	187			

Fall of wickets: 1/5; 2/40; 3/88; 4/98; 5/106; 6/108; 7/174; 8/175; 9/178

Bowler

	O	M	R	W
Hasibul	8	0	50	0
Iqbal	8	1	20	1
Rehman	8	0	35	1
Hussain	8	0	42	0
Naimur	8	1	30	4

Result: Abahani Krira Chakra won by 26 runs.

WI level

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8-203

	O	M	R	W
Akram	10	2	34	3
Waqar	8	1	26	0
Mushtaq	10	0	34	0
Razaq	10	0	42	2
Arshad	7	0	31	0
Afridi	5	0	35	1

PAKISTAN

	O	M	R	W
Nazir lbw b McLean	22			
Afridi c Jacobs b McLean	21			
Younis lbw b Gayle	31			
Inzamam lbw b King	4			
Yousaf lbw b King	4			
Razaq b Adams	6			
Moin c Hinds b Adams	11			
Akram st Jacobs b Gayle	4			
Waqar run out (Hinds)	23			
Mushtaq b Adams	3			
Arshad not out	5			
Extras: (b-1, lb-3; w-8; nb-6)	18			
Total: (All out in 45 overs)	148			

Fall of wickets: 1-34; 2-72; 3-79; 4-79; 5-98; 6-98; 7-108; 8-124; 9-138

Bowler

	O	M	R	W
Ambrose	7	0	23	0
King	6	0	33	2
McLean	6	1	17	0
Rose	6	1	17	0
Adams	10	0	21	3
Gayle	10	0	28	2

Result: West Indies beat Pakistan to level best-of-three finals 1-1.

Man-of-the-match: Sherwin Campbell.
Third final: Port-of-Spain, April 23.



FC Gueugnon players have a party with the French League Cup trophy after defeating Paris St. Germain in the final on April 22. Gueugnon won 2-0. —AFP photo

French League Cup

Gueugnon stun PSG



Germain here on Saturday and a place in Europe to boot, reports AFP.

PARIS, Apr 23: Second Division Gueugnon earned a sensational 2-0 French League Cup final victory over Paris Saint Germain here on Saturday and a place in Europe to boot, reports AFP.
Paris Saint Germain, third in the French League table and who have won many trophies in their history, lost to little Gueugnon, just eighth in the Second Division and without one major title to their name.
A packed Stade de France stadium just to the north of Paris witnessed second half goals by Marcello Trapasso and substitute Sylvain Flauto which means they fly the flag for France in next season's UEFA Cup.
Gueugnon coach Alex Dupont said afterwards: "We said in July we would win the League Cup and we were considered plain mad. The team has a great deal of heart and also of talent and we wanted to grab the initiative in this big final."
"We were ready mentally tonight and we were able to keep up a good performance right to the end. We were not thinking of playing in the UEFA Cup next season and we weren't thinking of playing in Europe - we just wanted to perform at this highest stage."

PSG coach Philippe Bergeret said: "Gueugnon deserved to win and we did not show much aggression. We were late in the tackle and we simply messed up the final."

Trapasso fired home the rebound in the 65th minute after a shot by Nicolas Escheth-Nzi had hit the post to make for a nerve-jangling final session for the Gueugnon players and fans.

Minutes later, PSG's Laurent Robert twice had point-blank shots sensationally saved by Gueugnon keeper Richard Trivino, and then Laurent Leroy himself had another close shot saved before he fired his parried effort over the bar.

Then Flauto, outpacing the PSG defence, let fly with his left boot from the left hand edge of the box and it careered just inside the right hand post in the final minute to spark off celebrations in the Burgundy town, which has less than 10,000 inhabitants.

In the first half, Gueugnon, nicknamed the "Forgerons" or steelworkers because of the town's former major industry, tried a whole host of efforts from long range.

PSG had more individual efforts, mainly from Ali Benarbia, Brazilian Christian et Nigerian Jay-Jay Okocha but time after time they came up against the wall of a Gueugnon defence comprising Yohan Bouzin, Sylvain Distin, Eric Boniface and Xavier Fanzel.

Distin was also impressive by his ball-winning during the first half.

In goal, keeper Trivino kept cool in the final minutes but Gueugnon striker Stephane Roda was the best player of the first half.

It was Roda who set up teammate Amara Traore when his Senegalese strike partner had a great chance late on in the first period.

Escheth-Nzi showed great skill and energy with his dribbling which was a constant danger to their Parisian opponents.

The 22-year-old midfielder fired the 30th shot onto the left post of PSG keeper Dominique Casagrande from which Argentine's scored from the rebound.

Flauto, who came on in place of Escheth-Nzi, then sealed the result with a superb piece of skill with his left boot.

Serie A

Del Piero strikes for Juve



they beat Fiorentina 1-0 to stay five points clear at the top, reports AFP.

Sole rivals Lazio were 2-0 winners at Piacenza but with only three matches left of the Serie A season, Juventus look even more certain to pick up the 26th league title of the club's illustrious history.

Del Piero scored in first-half stoppage time after a foul on winger Gianluca Zambrotta. It was Del Piero's eighth spot-kick of the season - and all of them have been converted.

Juventus coach Carlo Ancelotti admitted: "It wasn't a brilliant Juventus performance."

Veteran defender Ciro Ferrara insisted there would be no easing up in their final matches, highlighting the seven-point lead which Lazio squandered in the closing weeks of 1998-99.

Lazio had to wait until the 59th minute for their first goal on Saturday - midfield substitute Diego Simeone heading home Sinisa Mihajlovic's corner just two minutes after replacing fellow Argentinian Matias Almeyda.

Another of their Argentinian imports, midfielder Juan Sebastian Veron, cracked in Lazio's second with a booming free-kick placed between post and crossbar in the 68th minute.

Four other teams are chasing two places in the Champions League preliminary rounds - and it looks certain to go down to the wire.

Parma drew 0-0 with rivals AS Roma, while there were victories for both the Milan teams, AC and Inter.

AC Milan made a flying start away to Reggina, leading 2-0 in the opening quarter of an hour.

Reggina's luckless Chilean defender Jorge Vargas scored an own goal when the ball rebounded in off his leg after a goalmouth melee.

Ukrainian Andriy Shevchenko tapped in the second from one metre after Reggina goalkeeper Massimo Taibi, on loan from Manchester United, parried a shot from Milan's Spanish striker Jose Mari.

Shevchenko, the league's top scorer, notched the 22nd goal of his debut season after joining from Dynamo Kiev.

Andrea Pirlo, a gifted 20-year-old playmaker, pulled one back for the hosts with a sweetly-struck free-kick in the 25th minute but it finished 2-1.



DEL PIERO

Inter Milan took their revenge on league club Bari, who had won all five of their previous meetings, beating the southerners 3-0 here at San Siro.

Benoit Caulet 'scored' for Inter after 24 minutes. The French midfielder happened to be standing in the way of Argentinian skipper Javier Zanetti's

shot and the ball ricocheted off his shin, wrongfooting the Bari keeper.

Compatriot Laurent Blanc added the second 11 minutes later, rising on the edge of the six-metre box to head in a free-kick from Uruguayan Alvaro Recoba.

Roberto Baggio added the third, pouncing on a defensive blunder to rifle home a low 20-metre shot in the 50th minute, securing Inter's first win since the derby on March 5.

Galliani's mini championship sees Milan ahead of Parma on goal difference with 54 points, twice, trailed by Inter (52) and Roma (51).

Udinese drew 0-0 with Torino, while Bologna eased their fears of relegation by beating Perugia 2-1.

Swedish giant Kennet Andersson was Bologna's hero, supplying the pass for veteran striker Giuseppe Signori to score in the 14th minute and then scoring their second a minute later.

Perugia's Nicola Amoroso made it 2-1 in the 20th minute.

Claudio Bonomi scored a goal in each half as Lecce beat Cagliari 2-1. Substitute Daniele Conti, the son of 1982 World Cup winner Bruno, volleyed in Cagliari's consolation goal in the 89th minute.

Relegation strugglers Venezia were 2-0 up over Verona with 10 minutes left but still had to settle for a point.

Venezia's Croatian striker Igor Budan scored for the second weekend running as they took the lead and Maurizio Ganz, on loan from AC Milan, added the second in the 78th minute.

Brazilian Adailton scored for Verona two minutes later with a majestic 25-metre free-kick and Emiliano Salvetti notched the 85th minute equaliser.

The second half was marred though by racist insults by Verona fans who targeted Venezia's black French defender Bruno N'Gotty.

Hail the mighty Reds

LONDON, Apr 23: Former Manchester United captain Steve Bruce paid tribute to Sir Alex Ferguson on Sunday after the reigning champions secured their sixth Premiership title on Saturday, reports AFP.

Bruce, who played under Ferguson at Old Trafford and was an integral part of the side which won back-to-back championships in 1993 and 1994, said: "This is the toughest, hungriest, meanest and most cussed competitor I've ever met in the whole of my football life. To be any use to him, you have to win."

"Every sacrifice is worth it for the benefit of the club. For him there is no other agenda," added Bruce, who is now manager of First Division Huddersfield Town.

Another former United star Bryan Robson added: "I'd love to have been five years younger and able to play alongside the tremendous young talent that has been the mainstay of United's Premiership dominance over the past eight years."

"United are still young enough to go on dominating and the rest of us have to face up to the task of trying to overtake them," said Robson, current boss of Premiership outfit Middlesbrough.

"This will surely not be Sir Alex's last triumph. I believe there is every likelihood of him going out in a blaze of glory and winning the Premiership in both of his remaining years at the club."

Meanwhile, Leicester manager Martin O'Neill, fancied by many to replace Ferguson when he retires, was full of praise for United's latest achievement. "I've got total admiration for United and Sir Alex Ferguson. They are way above everyone else in England."

"The problem now is what do the other clubs do to catch up with them? They have the financial power and player strength to get bigger and bigger."

Aston Villa boss John Gregory added: "They are simply in a league of their own and the rest of us must do something to close the gap quickly."

Glenn Hoddle, former England coach and who is now in charge at The Dell added: "Congratulations to Manchester United. They are well ahead of anyone else in the Premiership and I still think they are the best team in Europe."

"If anyone analyses their game from Wednesday night they will realise how close they were to winning it. They couldn't have played much better going forward with the ball."

"I just hope we don't end up with a Glasgow Rangers scenario where they are winning it year after year. That would be sad for English football but it's not United's fault."

"They have five or six youngsters who are not going to hit their peak until they're 28 or 29 and if they're still at United they will go from strength to strength."

Mixed luck for African babes

JOHANNESBURG, Apr 23: One African football lightweight survived and another crumbled in World Cup preliminary-round, second-leg games at the weekend, reports AFP.

Unseeded Madagascar reached the mini-league second phase of the qualifying competition with a 2-1 aggregate victory over Gabon despite losing 1-0 in Libreville.

But the twin-island state of Sao Tome e Principe, who took a two-goal lead to Sierra Leone, could not repeat their first-leg performance and crashed 4-0 in Freetown.

Morocco striker Abdelkhalil al-Khattari scored twice during the first half to give his country a 2-0 victory over Gambia in Casablanca. The Atlas Lions advanced 3-0 on aggregate.

Mighty Nigeria thrashed little Eritrea 4-0 in Lagos on Saturday to put behind them the embarrassment of being held to a 0-0 draw by the Eritreans a fortnight ago.

The Super Eagles complete with their top European stars attacked from the blast of Cape Verdean referee Monteiro Dueatre's whistle. Jonathan Akpobor, Benedict Akwuegbu, Sunday Olshe and Tijjani Bangida all came close to scoring within the first ten minutes.

Tunisia outclassed Mauritania 3-0 in Tunis with an own goal by Bilal Sidibi preceding strikes from Zied Jaziri and Taoufik Mhadhibi. The result was a foregone conclusion after Mauritania had lost 2-1 at home.

A superb first-half header by Daniel Lescault from French lower-league club Niort brought Gabon a hollow victory before a 5,000 crowd in the Central African nation.

Crack Malagasy striker Harry Randrianavasy was fouled several times by the brilliance of goalkeeper Germain Mendome and had the ball in the net during the second half only for the Cameroonian referee to rule offside.

Sierra Leoneans had a rare chance to celebrate as the country struggles to recover from civil war. Chornor Mansaray, who plays for a club in the United Arab Emirates, broke the deadlock after 32 minutes.

He struck again 60 seconds into the second half to level the tie on aggregate. Croatia-based Abu Kanu scored the third and amateur Siddique Mansaray completed the rout of Sao Tome with 12 minutes left.

Rangers can move some 20 points clear at the top with a win on Sunday and whoever succeeds Barnes this summer must recognise the damage sustained this term cannot surely be repaired overnight.

Sir Alex aiming even higher



LONDON, Apr 23 (AFP): Sir Alex Ferguson said on Sunday his desire to make Premiership champions Manchester United even better will never die.

The United boss, who has equalled Bob Paisley's record of six league titles, insists his hunger is still strong and that he has no intention of stepping aside in the midst of United's supreme domination of English football.

Sir Alex said: "A lot of people said at the start of the season I should resign after winning the Treble because there was no hunger there now, but the hunger comes from the players themselves."

"At 58, a manager could easily go about things in a more sedate manner and be less aggressive. In many ways I am a more mellow person but, if the players have the drive, I can enjoy that drive."

"Rather than sit back on last year, they've gone on to prove themselves. That's why I think they're the best Manchester United side ever."

Sir Alex is a great admirer of United legends like George Best, Sir Bobby Charlton and Denis Law, but he believes he has assembled Old Trafford's finest-ever team.

The Busby Babes side, cruelly destroyed in the Munich air crash of 1958, had fantastic potential, but were never able to peak together as Fergie's crop have.

"Nobody knows how good that side would have become and that's the tragedy of life," said the United boss, before vowing to take his players to even greater heights.

Ferguson is eager to conquer Europe again after United surrendered their Champions League crown with a defeat by Real Madrid.

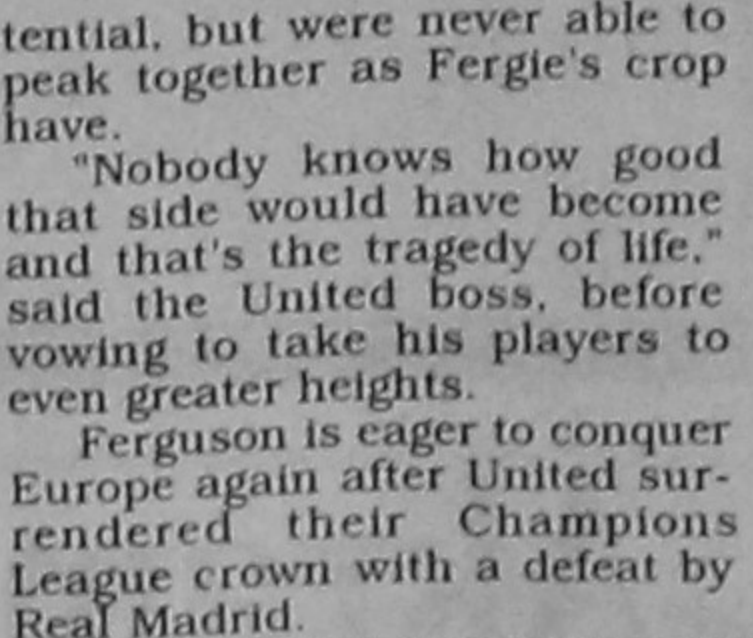
The camaraderie and spirit in the Old Trafford dressing room have strengthened the belief and determination that the manager has instilled in the club since arriving in November 1986.

"We played Liverpool one day and Bruce had pulled a hamstring on the previous Saturday. I was thinking about who to play when he came limping down the hill at the Cliff and told me not to pick the team because he would be okay."

"Since then, there's been Keane, Neville, Stam, Beckham. They've all got great drive in them."

United could barely have stated their intentions better than by revealing the swoop for Europe's hottest property, Ruud van Nistelrooy, last week.

The PSV Eindhoven striker is set to move to Old Trafford for 19 million pounds in the summer.



SIR ALEX FERGUSON

He added: "I think we can still get better in terms of maturity. Not in terms of ability because the players are at their peak, but we have got to improve our tactical ability and maturity."

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Ricardo Al Hilal's hero



RIYADH, Apr 23: A hatrick from Brazilian striker Sergio Ricardo gave Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal a dramatic 3-2 sudden-death extra-time victory over Japan's Jubilo Iwata in the Asian Club Championship final here Saturday, reports AFP.

Sergio struck the winner 12 minutes into the first period of extra-time to send the crowd at the King Fahd International Stadium into raptures and deliver Al Hilal their second Asian Club Championship title.

Al Hilal coach Anghel Iordanescu reflected: "This is a big victory not just for Al Hilal but for the whole country."

"It was a fantastic match, attacks from both sides and everything about the game was at a European level. If I mention any words about the players I will not be able to say enough."

Sergio was his club's saviour, salvaging the game for Al Hilal with just over a minute to go as they trailed 2-1 to the defending champions.

A header from Ahmed Al Dukhi's right-wing cross hit the back of the net to take the game into extra-time after the Japanese club seemed to have the game under control.

Bubilo showed their immense strength of character by coming back from going an early goal behind.

In an explosive start Sergio gave Al Hilal the lead after just three minutes with a blistering

free-kick. The Saudis were awarded the kick after Nawaf Al Temyat was flattened on the edge of the area and Sergio, who signed for Al Hilal last summer, struck with power and precision, the ball clipping the underside of the crossbar to beat Yushi Ozaki in the Jubilo goal.

And the Saudis could have doubled their advantage nine minutes later when Mohammed Al Oromi failed to capitalise on a bad error by Hideto Suzuki.

It was a miss Al Hilal were to rue as Masashi Nakayama, the man who scored both of Jubilo's goals in last year's final win over Esteghal, was to swoop again. Naohiro Takahara slipped the ball through to Toshiya Fujita after a defence-evasive run who found Nakayama sliding in seven yards from goal to score the equaliser.

Less than 60 seconds later the champions were ahead. A cross from the left by Takahiro Yamanishi was hooked clear by Abdullah Shireda but only as far as Takahara who side-footed the ball home from the edge of the area.

From there the half descended into cynicism, mainly on the part of the disgruntled Saudis, whose rash challenges went unpunished too often by Malaysian referee S. Selecar.

It was only a matter of time before things got out of hand and Takashi Fukunishi was lucky to only receive a yellow card after a lunge on Khamis Owairan as the Japanese became frustrated at the referee's reluctance to punish the physical

hosts. The Al Hilal players were incensed, surrounding the referee and a bout of pushing and finger-pointing between captains Nakayama and Sami Al Jaber ensued.

As the Saudis went in search of the equaliser they left themselves vulnerable to Jubilo's counter-attacks. But neither Nakayama nor Takahara could find the back of the net.

With time running out it was Sergio again who was to prove Al Hilal's saviour, the Brazilian stooping to head home Ahmed Al Dukhi's cross from the right with just over a minute left on the clock to take the game into sudden-death extra-time.

Up stepped Sergio again, to write his name into the history books as a hero of the blue half of Riyadh's football. A strong run by Sami Al Jaber took the Saudi international past Hideto Suzuki and to the bye-line, from where he cut the ball back to the unmarked Brazilian in the six-yard box.

After taking a touch to steady himself, Sergio slipped the ball between the legs of Ozaki to give Al Hilal their first Asian title since 1991.

Gjokica Hadzjevski, losing coach, said: "Maybe we were a little bit unlucky but I said before the game that if we lost I would be less unhappy only because I was losing to my good friend Anghel Iordanescu."

"Maybe I made a mistake. If I had put on a defender for the last five minutes we might have had a