

Top teams in topsy-turvy

SPORTS REPORTER



Mohammedan Sporting Club stumbled to a five-wicket defeat against Kalabagan Krira Chakra despite a brilliant century from their Pakis-tani opener Taufeeq Omar at the Bangabandhu national Stadium yesterday.

On a day of upsets, traditional giants Brothers Union also suffered a 37-run defeat at the hands of promotees Young Pegasus.

Taufeeq made his Dhaka cricket debut with a superb 134 to give Mohammedan what appeared to be a fighting 255. But a collective effort saw Kalabagan overhaul the target for the loss of five wickets and with six balls to spare.

It was the first big win for the new leviathans in the GrameenPhone

Premier League that raised their hopes for a place in the Super Six.

On the other hand, it was a big blow for Mohammedan in their defence to the coveted title. Their second defeat from eight games also opened up the prospect of losing the top spot to Victoria Sporting Club and Bangladesh Biman after leading the table half-way through the first round.

Victoria and Biman shared the lead with Mohammedan, with all the three teams playing seven games each.

Kalabagan, known as Mohammedan's nemesis, discovered a match-winner in opener Rafiqul Islam this time.

Rafiqul scored an authoritative 88 off 95 balls to lay the foundation of Kalabagan's third victory.

Rafiqul, who opened the Rajshahi innings in the National

League, shared two vital stands before being run out in the 37th over, leaving Kalabagan comfortably placed at 170 for four.

The right-hander put on 104 runs for the third wicket with Pakistani Ziaur Rahman, who scored exactly 50 off 85 balls.

Rafiqul then added 42 runs for the fourth wicket with skipper Mushfiqur Rahman. He struck half a dozen four in his polished knock.

Mushfiq also delivered the goods in the nick of time. The national all-rounder struck a vital 41 off 46 balls to literally take the match away from the grip of Mohammedan.

Kalabagan extracted 60 runs from the last nine overs. And this was where Mohammedan faltered after Taufeeq gave the holders a flying start.

The Pakistan left-hander, who scored a century on his debut against Bangladesh in the Asian Test Championship in Multan last year, hammered seven fours and four sixes in his entertaining 148-ball knock.

But Mohammedan could score only 46 runs in the last ten overs losing six wickets. Mohammedan certainly lacked the firepower and understanding in pressure situation. Five of their batsmen ran themselves out in terrible mix-ups.

Ehsanul with 39 was the other notable-run getter for Mohammedan.

At the Fatullah Stadium, Young Pegasus successfully defended a moderate 227 against Brothers Union for their fourth win from eight matches.

Brothers opener Sajjadul with 71 was the lone outstanding performer with the bat. But rest of the pack failed to give him any support from the other end.

Sohel Rana captured four wickets to dismiss Brothers for 190 in 48 overs. Pegasus' wicketkeeper Bidyut also had a happy day out in the middle as he initiated five dismissals including four smart stumpings.

SCOREBOARDS
Scoreboards of the two GrameenPhone Premier League matches held at different venues on Saturday.

Kalabagan KC vs Mohammedan SC	
Venue: BNS	
MOHAMMEDAN SC	
Taufeeq c Ziaur B Rana	134
Ehsanul c & b Rana	36
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Mohammedan's Pakistani recruit Taufeeq Omar square-cuts one against Kalabagan Krira Chakra during their GrameenPhone Premier Cricket League fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Saturday.

Hooper doubles up

Windies in catbird seat

Cricket

AFP, Georgetown

West Indies skipper Carl Hooper and Shivnarine Chanderpaul hammered their career-best scores in a record stand to play the Indian attack in the first Test here on Friday.

Hooper smashed a sparkling 233 for his maiden Test double-century, while Chanderpaul scored 140 as the West Indies battled aggressively to reach 494-7 when bad light stopped play with 21.3 overs to go on the second day.

The West Indies captain and Chanderpaul reminded the tourists that all was not well with their bowling with a 293-run stand, the West Indies' highest for the fifth wicket in 71 Tests against India.

The previous best was of 219 between Everton Weekes and Bruce Pairaudeau at Port-of-Spain in 1952-53.

It was also the biggest fifth-wicket partnership against India in Tests after 254 between Englishmen Keith Fletcher and Tony Greig at Bombay in 1972-73.

It was an ordeal in the field for the Indians as neither seamers nor spinners could put pressure on free-stroking Hooper and Chanderpaul.

Hooper cracked three sixes and 29 fours in his 413-ball knock to surpass his previous best of 178 not out against Pakistan at Antigua in 1992-93.

He reached his double-century with a flicked four off spinner



HOOPER ... 233

Sarandeep Singh just before tea. He was the last man out, swinging leg-spinner Anil Kumble to deep square-leg where Sarandeep brought off a diving catch.

The left-handed Chanderpaul also matched his skipper as he bettered his previous highest of 137 not out against Sachin Tendulkar's Indians at Bridgetown in 1996-97.

He also completed 3,000 runs during his attractive third Test century, smashing 23 fours in his 292-ball knock before being trapped leg-before by left-arm seamer Zaheer Khan in the post-lunch session.

Hooper also prospered on the Indian attack to lead a remarkable West Indian fightback after three wickets had fallen for 44 on Thursday. A capacity crowd at Bourda enjoyed the run-feast on a batting wicket as Hooper and Chanderpaul reduced the Indian bowlers and fielders to a state of helplessness with a wide range of attacking shots.

The hosts scored 91 in the morning session after having resumed at 270-4 and 93 in the afternoon.

India failed to make the most of the two chances that came their way to break the fifth-wicket stand.

The first came in the morning session when Chanderpaul edged Kumble on 94, but lone-slip Venkatsai Laxman reacted late as the ball went past his outstretched

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West Indies' Shivnarine Chanderpaul sets off for a single, with his eyes on the ball, on way to scoring 140 against India on the second day of the first Test in Guyana on Friday.

BLAST FROM THE PAST



PHOTO: STAR FILE

NAZI DAYS: Before the 1934 World Cup final between Italy and Czechoslovakia, the referee and his two assistants giving a Nazi style salute to Italian leader Benito Mussolini, who was in the VIP stands of Rome's PNF Stadium.

Duscher says sorry

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP KOREA JAPAN

REUTERS/AFP, undated

Pedro Duscher, the Argentinean player whose tackle broke a bone in David Beckham's foot, personally apologised to the England captain in a telephone call on Friday.

Manchester United midfielder Beckham's participation in the World Cup finals is in doubt after breaking the second metatarsal bone in his left foot when Deportivo la Coruna player Duscher lunged at him with a two-footed tackle in the Champions League quarterfinal match on Wednesday.

Duscher said Beckham had accepted his apology and told him that injuries were part and parcel of football.

"I spoke to him on the telephone today. I called because I wanted to put my mind at rest," Duscher told Argentine national radio on Friday.

"I apologised to him and told him that I didn't intend to injure him, that I just wanted to win the ball."

"He understood perfectly and said it was just part of the game and nothing more," he added.

Spanish sports daily Marca

reported, it witnessed a brief telephone conversation that took place between the two players with the help of a translator on Friday afternoon.

According to the transcript

OK and I still hope to make the World Cup.

"Keep calm," Beckham was then quoted as saying.

"The important thing is that there are now no problems between our two countries. Thanks for making contact."

Some English newspapers suggested Duscher's challenge was deliberate as England must play face Argentina in a first-phase World Cup match on June 7.

Duscher said he had been horrified at the number of English journalists who had followed his every step since he had returned to Spain following the incident at Old Trafford.

"Suddenly a whole load of English journalists appeared at my door, shouting at me."

"They are treating me like an assassin, but I didn't kill anyone," he said.

Duscher said in their telephone conversation, Beckham had "shown he was a great person, because he understood without any problems what had happened and that it was all part of the game."

"Now I just hope that he makes it to the World Cup and that all this finishes soon," he added.



PEDRO DUSCHER

published in Saturday's Marca the 23-year-old Argentine player apologised to Beckham and reiterated his recent statement saying that he had no intention of injuring the Manchester United midfielder when he went in for the tackle.

Beckham was reported as replying: "Don't worry. I knew that there were no ill intentions. Everything is

Prayerful England

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP KOREA JAPAN

AFP, London

England was called to prayer Friday as fears over David Beckham's left foot led the escalating Middle East crisis off the front pages, cementing the Manchester United international's iconic status.

From the tabloid newspapers to the Financial Times, pundits worried about the possible implications of his foot injury for England's prospects in the World Cup finals.

A series of doctors have been wheeled out to give their prognosis and even Prime Minister Tony Blair has voiced his concern.

After the Queen Mother's lavish funeral earlier this week drew more than a million people, Britain suddenly has a new cause around which to unite.

Because as well as being a national sporting hero, Beckham is also an icon off the pitch with celebrity status, a profile praised by the government as a role model and

endorsement contracts worth millions of dollars.

The fear is that England's inspirational captain may not be fit in time for the finals in South Korea and Japan in June.



DAVID BECKHAM

The tabloid Sun printed a picture of his foot on its front page and called the nation to join in collective prayer.

"Lay your hands on David's foot at noon and make it better," it urged.

"A nation holds its breath -- will his left foot mend in time?" worried the Guardian. The Mirror said it was "the most important foot in British sporting history."

Last week the Queen Mother's death at 101 had the nation on a rollercoaster of emotion, commented Deborah Orr in the Independent.

"Then, just as we were wondering what could possibly fill the abyss, along comes international football. Hurray!"

The consensus is that Beckham's injury in Wednesday's Champions League win over Spain's Deportivo la Coruna will keep him out of action for six to eight weeks.

England's first World Cup tie is against Sweden on June 2, seven-and-a-half weeks away.

Spoon-bending psychic Yuri Geller tried his best Friday, telling viewers on GMTV television to touch the screen and pass on healing powers. Afterwards he said he could feel a tremendous surge of energy.

"Why do we worship at the feet of

Imperial finale to World Cup

AFP, Tokyo

Japanese Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko will attend the final match and closing ceremony of football's World Cup in Yokohama, southwest of Tokyo, news reports said Saturday.

As well as the imperial couple, South Korean President Kim Dae-jung and will also be present at the International Stadium Yokohama on June 30, Kyodo News agency said, quoting government sources.

The emperor and empress have already cancelled their attendance at the tournament's opening ceremony in Seoul on May 31 following a heightening of anti-Japanese sentiment in South Korea last year.

Instead, Prince Takamado, the emperor's cousin, and his wife Princess Hisako will attend the opening ceremony, together with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.

Ties between the two countries soured last year after the Japanese government approved use of history textbooks that critics say gloss over Japan's wartime atrocities involving its Asian neighbours.

Koizumi's visit to Tokyo's controversial Yasukuni Shrine, dedicated to war victims, including war criminals, led to a further deterioration in relations between the two neighbours.

The emperor and empress will also attend Japan's friendly match against Sweden at Tokyo's National Stadium on May 25, the Sankei Shimbun said.

Crown Prince Naruhito and Crown Princess Masako will also watch Japan's first World Cup match with Belgium on June 4 in Saitama, north of Tokyo, it added.

Metro hockey Mariner survive Sonali scare

SPORTS REPORTER

A 42nd minute strike by Kutubuddin gave Mariner Youngs a lone goal victory over Sonali Bank in a Metro Premier Hockey League match at the Maulana Bhasani Stadium yesterday.

The nimble attacker saved the day for the title contenders when he pushed the ball home into seven minutes after the short whistle.

It was Mariner's second successive victory.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Wanderers recorded a 3-1 win against Barnak Samaj in the lone First Division League match at the same venue.

Asif, Rony and Asad struck for the winners who led the first half 2-0. Imran pulled one back for Barnak in the 44th minute.

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4 7

days to go



Did U Know?

The final of the World Cup in 1934 between the host country Italy and Czechoslovakia was also a meeting between two of the best goalkeepers of all time, Gianpiero Combi and Frantisek Planicka. Both conceded a goal in regular playing time, and in extra time Italy get another to win 2-1. Upon the final whistle, Combi stuck to the plan he made the day before the final and carried out his intention to retire immediately from football.



What to WATCH

BTV
New Zealand vs Sri Lanka
Sharjah Cup Tri Series (D/N)
Live at 5:00 pm

ESPN
English Premier Football League
Aston Villa vs Leeds United
Repeat at 9:00 am

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Claudio Caniggia

(Argentine striker)
"It is very bad luck this has happened to David Beckham, especially so close to the World Cup finals. It is not nice for any player and I hope he is 100 per cent fit soon."

While sympathising with the

Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 169

Tick the correct answers, post to The Daily Star Win attractive prizes

Competition closes at 8 pm April 26, 2002 and draw shortly afterwards

- Who clinched the Indian Wells Masters Series tennis title?
Hewitt Henman Agassi
- Who won the Bangladesh Games hockey title?
Dhaka BDR BJMC
- How many balls did Nathan Astle face to score Test cricket's fastest double century?
1532 0 212
- Who lifted the Bangladesh 'Games football' title?
Chittagong Dhaka Army
- How many gold medals did Doly Akhter win in Bangladesh Games?
Nine Seven Ten

Name:
Class: Roll No.
School Address:
Phone: (If any)

United Insurance Roktim in front

SPORTS REPORTER

Roktim Bandyopadhyay of India took the solo lead in the 6th United Insurance International Masters Chess Tournament after the third round at the Bangladesh Chess Federation auditorium yesterday.

Roktim won the wit battle against his compatriot Deep Sengupta for his third straight victory.

Following hard on the heels of Roktim are Enamul Hossain Razib, IM Neelotpal Das and PDS Girinath of India with each having collected 2.5 points.

IM Abdullah Al Rakib, IM Reefat Bin Sattar, SK Nasir Ahmed, Fide Master Abu Sufian Shakil, Khandaker Aminul Islam, Syed Mahfuzur Rahman, Indian IM Neeraj Kumar Mishra, International Women's Master Nisha Mohota and Deep Sengupta are sharing the crowded third position with 2 points each.



IM Leif Erlend Johannessen of Norway (L) ponders his next move against Aminul Islam during their Sixth United Insurance International Masters' Chess Tournament engagement at the NSC on Saturday.

PHOTO: STAR

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