

## History their nightmare

SPORTS REPORTER



Muktijodha Sangsad and Brothers Union defied history to oust two traditional powerhouses of the country yesterday and set up a final clash against each other in the Fourth Nitol-Tata National Football League.

After defending champions Muktijodha's comprehensive 2-0 defeat of Mohammedan Sporting Club in the first semifinal, Brothers Union came back from a goal down to snatch a 2-1 win over Abahani in the second fixture of the day at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

This will be the first time in the history of local football that a major tournament final will be contested without the presence of either Abahani or Mohammedan. Instead, the two archrivals will feature in the third place decider today at the same venue at 7 pm. The final is slated for a 4:10 start on Thursday.

The Sky Blues looked the brighter of the two sides in the first half and in front of a 15,000-strong crowd, took the game to Brothers whose opening lineup boasted as many as nine Bangladesh internationals.

But Abahani had to wait until nine minutes into the second half before finally taking a deserving lead

through Khokon. The joy did not last long as two stalwarts of the country Arman and Alfaz slotted two goals inside eight minutes to keep the Premier League champions on course for their second title of the season.

It was Brothers' first win over Abahani in the season but the Oranges were sweating when their rivals from Dhanmondi earned three corners within the first five minutes.

Abahani's midfielders were in total control and striker Ujjal threatened the Brothers goal on a number of occasions. He was denied a shot on goal by stopper Nazrul inside the penalty area in the 12th minute and fired off target two minutes later. Halfway through the first half, Ujjal weaved his way past three defenders but Brothers goalkeeper Biplab made a brilliant save on the youngster's low drive from ten yards.

The experienced Brothers lineup got their only real chance of the first half to test opposition goalkeeper Nizam in the 36th minute but Topu's header on a cross by fullback Titu went wide.

Ujjal, who appeared unstoppable on the right flank, cut back another dangerous cross but Khokon failed to connect the ball which harmlessly ran across the goal just before the break.

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NON-STOP ACTION: (L) Muktijodha striker Moni galloping past Mohammedan defender Jahirul during the first semifinal. (R) Brothers Union centre-back Nazrul (R) tries to block an attempted cross by Abahani forward Ujjal.



PHOTOS: STAR

## Big win for Tigers

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh cricket team bounced back from an upset against lowly Scotland to defeat another ICC associate member nation USA by 70 runs in their first official warm-up leading up to the Champions Trophy at Imber Court in London on Monday.

They now play Warwickshire Eleven tomorrow at Edgbaston in their second and final official practice game, a day before the Trophy gets underway.

The Tigers went into the game still smarting from a four-wicket defeat against Scotland in their previous practice fixture. This time Dav Whatmore's charges were out to ensure no repetition of such embarrassment and the rattled up 285-5 in the allotted 50 overs after winning the toss. They then restricted the Americans to 215 for eight.

Captain Rajin Saleh put in an inspirational all-round performance to set up with the victory. He hit a quickfire 73 in this tour and later returned to grab two wickets. Besides, left-arm spinner Manjarul Islam Rana picked up two wickets while right-arm pacers Tapash Baisya and Nazmul Hossain took one each.

Bangladesh's impressive total was also built around contributions from Javed Omar (73 not out) and in-form Nafees Iqbal's 57.

Bangladesh open their Champions Trophy campaign against South Africa on September 12 and they meet West Indies on September 15.



### Did U Know?

Tracy Austin at 16 years 271 days became the youngest US Open singles in 1979.



- ESPN**  
Sportscentre  
Live at 8.30 pm  
Goals  
Taped at 9 pm
- STAR Sports**  
Sportsline  
Live at 8 pm  
US Open tennis  
Live 9 pm  
US Open tennis  
Live 5 am (Thursday)



Sourav Ganguly (India cricket captain)

"We are a better batting unit than this and we all need to fire if we hope to do well in the Champions Trophy."

### Woolmer copies Woodward

BBC ONLINE, undated

Bob Woolmer says he will try to take a leaf out of Sir Clive Woodward's book as he tries to forge Pakistan into the leading cricketing nation.

Woolmer is the new coach of the side who are joint second-favorites to win the ICC Championship Trophy.

He said: "If you read what Clive Woodward has to say it was about developing structures and conditions to make the players better."

"There are things we have to do with Pakistan before we innovate too much."

Woolmer added: "It's the same with every team -- you have to be aware of the technical limitations and build those up."

### AFC U-17 C'ship 2nd half typhoon blows BD away

SPORTS REPORTER

After a creditable draw against Uzbekistan in the first match, Bangladesh were handed a 6-1 thrashing by Qatar in their second Group D fixture in the AFC U-17 Championship at Fukushima, Japan yesterday.

Rajan gave Shahidur Rahman Shantoo's team the perfect start with a goal after just 10 minutes and it stayed that way for the rest of the first half.

But any thoughts of the teenagers pulling off yet another shock following their 1-1 draw against the fancied Uzbeks on Sunday, were firmly put to rest in the second 45 minutes as the speedy Qataris bombarded the Bangladesh half.

Bangladesh play Iraq tomorrow in their final group game.

### Schools b'ball

SPORTS REPORTER

The eves of Sunbeams crushed Dhanmondi Tutorial 78-4 in the inaugural match of the AKTEL School Basketball Tournament that began at the Dhanmondi basketball gymnasium yesterday.

Zinat led the way with 18 points while Rishad added 16 and Jariat 12 respectively.

Earlier, Information Minister M Shamsul Islam inaugurated the meet.



PHOTO: AP

England cricket star Andrew Flintoff and his fiancée Rachael Woods with their daughter Holly, who was born early Monday, at the Royal London Hospital yesterday.

### Sachin to have treatment in England

CRICINFO, undated

Ruled out of the Videocon Cup and the ICC Champions Trophy, Sachin Tendulkar will stay in England to put to rest his own doubts about the seriousness of his injury.

Andrew Leipus, the Indian team's physio, said that Tendulkar would consult Dr Chris Bradshaw for a new form of treatment.

"We don't suspect anything nasty, but Sachin himself wishes to rule out the possibility of something more than a tennis elbow," The Telegraph quoted Leipus as saying.

He also revealed that an MRI scan and the treatment were necessary because Tendulkar was eager to not miss the Australian series.

However, Leipus added that even though the date of Tendulkar's recovery was uncertain, he would be fit in time for the matches against Australia.

### Bangladesh may play fewer Tests

BBC ONLINE, undated

Zimbabwe and Bangladesh may be forced to play a shorter programme of Test cricket, if the International Cricket Council's decision-makers agree.

The executive board will meet in October to discuss modifications to the future Test programme.

ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed told a news conference in London: "It may be that there is an option for radical change to the structure."

"We set out to challenge the current thinking and assumptions," The ICC sought feedback from an exhaustive list of national board chief executives, current captains and former players, sponsors, broadcasters and members of associated members.

The current format has 10 Test nations playing each other home and away over a period of five years.

But that could be altered so that only the top eight nations would continue to play in the same way, with the two lowest-ranked sides -- currently Zimbabwe and Bangladesh -- involved in a "modified programme."

The matches could stay in a five-year cycle, or be crammed into four years. Most likely, they would be stretched into a six-year timeframe.

A possible opportunity to have four teams playing in a second tier of Test match cricket was eliminated since it was not felt there was enough interest in such a proposal.

The ICC also admitted certain stakeholders had queried the long-time future of Tests over the more commercially viable one-day internationals.

It quoted one broadcaster as saying: "Test cricket is unsustainable and it is only a matter of time before the market kills it."

In a move to reduce the heavy burden on players, the ICC has moved to give them an extra day between back-to-back Tests.

This would mean that rather than two Tests starting on consecutive Thursdays, the second one

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## Mukti mauil MSC

SPORTS REPORTER



The striking pair of Saifur Rahman Moni and Rokunuzzaman Kanchar struck once in each half as Muktijodha Sangsad Krira Chakra raced into the final of the Fourth Nitol-Tata National Football League with a 2-0 defeat of Mohammedan Sporting Club in the first semifinal at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The defending champions could not think of a better way to shrug off last year's bridesmaid and set up a classic September 9 final clash with Premier League champions Brothers Union.

Moni gave the Reds a 36th minute lead with a spectacular 20-yard right-footer before his partner Kanchar headed home a trademark Belal long throw 16 minutes after the break to send the Black and Whites packing.

Mohammedan coach Abul Hossain was excited when the semifinal line up fulfilled his desire of avoiding a premature meeting with bitter rivals Abahani or star-studded Brothers, but his Muktijodha counterpart Shafiqul Islam Manik took it in his stride to do even better than the earlier group encounter.

Muktijodha began the first semifinal in front of one of the biggest crowds at a blistering pace and it was not unexpected when Moni seized the first opportunity. The nimble attacker latched on to a midfield through before unleashing a powerful shot that crashed into the net giving Mohammedan's young custodian Tareq, who was all at sea throughout the nerve-shattering contest, no chance. It was Moni's seventh goal and he joined Sheikh Russel's Moroccan striker Youness at the top of the scoring chart.

Tareq's inability to cope with the big-match pressure was exposed again when he failed to act in a long

throw situation created by Belal. He froze as the ball travelled harmlessly over his head into the far corner, where an unchallenged Kanchar produced a powerful header.

Kanchar also scored in Muktijodha's 2-1 win when the two sides met at the same venue last week.

Although Mohammedan created a few chances in both halves, there were no signs of the same impressive display that they showed in their last three games.

Their faithful warrior Imtiaz Ahmed Nakib got the only chance before the break from a Farhad clever chip, but his header sailed over the crossbar. The same player wasted another opportunity after the restart much to the frustration of the loyal Black and Whites supporters, who jeered their heroes throughout the match.

Manju had a golden opportunity

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## Henin, Venus humbled

REUTERS, New York



Nadia Petrova provided further evidence of the growing Russian strength in women's tennis when she defeated world number one Justine Henin-Hardenne 6-3, 6-2 in the fourth round of the US Open on Monday.

While Andre Agassi, Tim Henman and Lindsay Davenport made it a good day for the veterans by reaching the quarterfinals, the real drama came under the night lights as 14th seed Petrova, yet to win a WTA Tour singles title,

knocked out the top seed.

"Of course it's my best win, in a grand slam, beating the defending champion," Petrova told reporters.

"I was a little bit doubtful that I could still pull this match out because, knowing her experience, I was thinking she would change something in the game and be more consistent, be in charge of the game. But I stayed strong until the end."

The 22-year-old Petrova now plays fellow countrywoman Svetlana Kuznetsova, the ninth seed. Russia has three players in the last eight, with Elena Dementieva their other quarterfinalist.

Anastasia Myskina became the first Russian woman to lift a Grand Slam singles title when she won the French Open in June. Maria Sharapova then made it back-to-back Russian victories when she triumphed at Wimbledon in July.

Fifth seed Davenport, 28, with four WTA Tour titles under her belt since her semifinal defeat by Sharapova at Wimbledon, edged out Venus Williams 7-5, 6-4 in a repeat of the 2000 US Open final won by Venus.

Venus, seeded 11th, made 42 unforced errors before Davenport clinched victory on her first match point to reach the quarterfinals for the eighth year in succession.

Davenport will now play Japan's Shinobu Asagoe, the last unseeded player, who reached her first Grand Slam quarterfinal with a 7-6, 4-6, 6-3 win over Greece's Eleni Daniilidou.

Kuznetsova reached the last eight for the first time when she ended the run of twice former Grand Slam champion Mary Pierce, 7-6, 6-2.

Earlier on Monday, 34-year-old Agassi set up a mouthwatering clash with men's world number one Roger Federer by trouncing Armenian Sargis Sargsian 6-3, 6-2, 6-2.

"I'm looking forward to it," Agassi said.

"There's nothing more you can ask than to play a big event against the best player. It's time to bring the best tennis."

"His (Federer's) forehead is just a nasty shot. He does a lot of things well and a few things really great, so it's going to be a tough match."

Australian Open and Wimbledon champion Federer, looking to become the first man since Sweden's Mats Wilander in 1988 to win three grand slams in the same year, received an unexpected day off when 16th seed Andrei Pavel pulled out with a herniated disc in his lower back.

When fifth seed Tim Henman woke up with a stiff back 10 days ago, the Briton did not think he would be able to play his first-round tie.

PHOTO: AFP

DON'T WORRY SIS, I'M STILL IN: American Serena Williams watches her sister Venus going down to compatriot Lindsay Davenport in the US Open on Monday.

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## Ponting eyes double



AFP, London

Australian captain Ricky Ponting is hoping to land the first leg of a historic double when the ICC Champions Trophy starts here in England on Friday.

Australia have never won the tournament, which has been played three times since 1998, something Ponting aims to put right over the next two-and-a-half weeks.

Then he takes his men to India, where Australia have not won since 1969-70, for an eagerly-awaited, four-match Test series which Ponting says "could go down as one of the biggest ever played."

Steve Waugh was the last Australian captain to try and conquer what he called 'the last frontier' when he led his team to the sub-continent in 2000-01 only to lose a pulsating series 2-1.

Ponting said: "It is going to be a huge series. The last series in India was the best one I've played in and we should have won. The last Test went to late on the last day and we lost."

"But we have got the side and the players to do well. We have played very well on the subcontinent in the last couple of years we have come a long way and are a better team now playing in those conditions."

"Our result in Sri Lanka, where we won 3-0, was outstanding. I think

that was the first time that had been achieved by a touring side and that gives us a lot of confidence."

Before that potentially historic series Ponting is determined to land the one major honour to elude the Australians.

"We are pretty disappointed with the way we have played in the Champions Trophy," he said. "In the first two years we lost in the first round to India and we made the semifinal last time but got beaten by Sri Lanka."

The world champions are expected to beat the Americans

"This is the second biggest one-day tournament and whilst we have managed to win the last couple of World Cups it would be nice to win the Champions Trophy as well and if we perform our skills well we should be in the mix."

First up for Australia are the United States in Southampton on Monday followed by arch-rivals New Zealand at the Oval next Thursday.

The world champions are expected to beat the Americans

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## 'Time key for India'



AFP, London

India batsman Venkatsai Laxman insisted the team could put their 2-1 one-day series defeat by England behind them and be a force to be reckoned with in the ICC Champions Trophy.

"The mini World Cup' gets underway in England on Friday with India, the co-holders after the 2002 final against Sri Lanka in Colombo was washed out, playing their first match of the competition against Kenya -- a repeat of last year's World Cup semifinal -- at the Hampshire Rose Bowl on Saturday.

But despite Sunday's morale-boosting 23-run win against England at Lord's, India were still bowled out for 204, the latest instance of their powerful batting line-up failing to fire en masse.

"It's just a matter of spending more time in the middle and converting those 30s into big ones," Laxman told reporters at the squad's hotel here Monday.

"We are not clicking as a unit. Even as a team, the batting has let us down. People are not able to convert those starts into big ones."

India will be without Sachin Tendulkar for the whole of the Champions Trophy after the master batsman withdrew because of an elbow injury.

Laxman, famed for his ability to whip even balls pitched outside off-stump through mid-wicket, opened

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