

Corporate cricket Battle for Cup from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The second GrameenPhone Corporate Cricket League resumes today at three venues with all 12 teams competing on the opening day of the second phase.

The six top teams of the first phase, which ended on Monday, play in the Cup competition while the bottom half vie for the consolation Plate group.

Each venue will host two matches, at 10 am and 1 pm.

GROUPING

CUP: Robintex, AKTEL, CityCell, Araf, Biman and GrameenPhone

PLATE: Partex, Acme, Epylion, BEXIMCO, Gazi Tank and Ispahani.

TODAY'S MATCHES

Robintex v CityCell and Araf Apparels v GrameenPhone (Bangabandhu National Stadium); Partex v Epylion and Biman v AKTEL (BKSP); BEXIMCO v Ispahani and Gazi Tank v Acme (Dharmondi Cricket Stadium).

Chess Olympiad Mixed day for Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh men's team returned to winning ways after two rounds beating Mongolia 3-1 in the 36th Chess Olympiad at Calvia, Spain, on Tuesday.

After 11 rounds, Bangladesh pushed their tally to 23.5 points, thanks to International Master Reeft bin Sattar who inspired the side defeating Mongolian Grand Master Dashzevez Sharavdorj.

IM Enamul Hossain Rajib beat Fide Master Erhembayar Duurenbayar while Sheikh Nasir Ahmed beat FM Zulzaga Byamba but IM Abdullah Al Rakib lost to GM Bazar Hatanbaatar.

The women's team, however, lost to Denmark 2-1. Shabana Parveen Nipa beat WIM Oksana Vokt but Bangladesh WIM Rani Hamid lost her board to WIM Evgenia Hansen. Denmark secured the victory when Miriam F Olsen beat Nazrana Khan Eva.

'Tomorrow is vital'

RABEED IMAM from Chittagong



Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore was regretting the loss of Rajin

The two boys (Nafees Iqbal and Aftab Ahmed) who got out before that were very young so in some ways they can be excused but that last wicket was very costly I think," the coach added.

Whatmore said that the unusually aggressive batting by opener Javed Omar, who cracked five fours in his 45 not out, was not part of the team plan but thought it was a positive move.

"The plan was to get a start and bat a long time. Javed was very confident today but the way he played was his personal strategy."

The Australian also justified the decision to send two 19-year-olds Nafees and Aftab to bat in the first three considering their potential.

"That's okay. We feel they have got potential. I understand that there would be some frustration with

inexperience but they are worthy of going through that frustration because they are going to be good players."

Whatmore thought that debutant Aftab was one for the future.

"Some of the shots he played showed that he has got some class. He certainly got what it takes. He just needs to get it right in his head a bit more."

Stand-in skipper Khaled Mashud stressed on the need to remain aggressive without getting reckless.

"I would prefer the batsmen to be positive in their approach like Javed was today because going into a shell I believe will not be an ideal strategy for us. Javed has to carry on and he will need to find another reliable partner. Tomorrow is a vital day and we have to bat it out if we want to go for a draw."



PHOTO: STAR

PARTING SHOT: Akram Khan (L), who played for popular side Abahani for the last 14 years, signs for Old DOHS on the third and last day of the inter-club cricketers' transfer at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Akram, Abahani part ways

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Too much pressure on his ageing shoulders has forced Akram Khan to leave Abahani after 14 years.

Akram, who joined the sky blues in the late 80s and only switched to Brothers Union for one season in the 1990-91 season before returning to the Dharmondi outfit again, finally signed for Old DOHS yesterday.

The former national captain's joining the Premier League newcomers along with a score of big names was the highlight of the third and final day of the inter-club players' transfer at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

"Abahani have had not built strong teams in recent years.

I hope this will do good to Abahani in the future," added the dashing batsman from Chittagong who looked inseparable from the club despite getting lucrative offers from other local rivals in the past.

He also rejected speculations that he was leaving because of conflicts with club officials. "I have no complaints. If there is anything that hurts me, I want to keep those inside me."

"Taking the decision to join a

newcomer was not easy but I think it would be a great challenge for me. I am just not physically or mentally fit enough to sustain this kind of pressure," said Akram who was in an emotional state of mind.

Replies to a question, Akram said that he had yet to decide about retirement from domestic cricket.

Akram, who led Bangladesh to win the ICC Trophy in 1997, retired from international cricket last year.

Old DOHS spent enough money to create sensation in their first year in the top flight of local cricket, signing 15 cricketers including national pool's Hannan Sarkar, Faisal Hossain and pacer Nazmul Hossain and ex-internationals Al Shahriar, Enamul Haque, Hasibul Hossain and Sabbir Khan.

They have also roped in a bunch of promising cricketers, who are

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Admitting his ignorance on non-Asian teams, the BKF general secretary said, "Every country needs time to improve their standard in any sport. As they traditionally don't play kabaddi, we can hope the title will remain in Asia."

Constable Badiul never minds being posted on duty by the Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) at the MA Aziz Stadium. He is rather thankful to the CMP because, for a change, it gives Badiul an opportunity to enjoy a cricket match and a chance to have a glimpse of some of the game's big stars from close range.

Club Cup hockey

Abahani derail Railway

SPORTS REPORTER

Indian recruits Prakash Calke and Ronald Kiran shared six goals to help title contenders Abahani Krira Chakra brush aside Bangladesh Railway 7-0 in the Club Cup hockey tournament at the Maulana Bhashani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Abahani, who won their previous two matches comprehensively, fielded all three foreign signings from Bangalore and took a 3-0 lead in the first half.

Defender Ronald, who scored twice, opened the account from a penalty corner after seven minutes while forward Calke doubled the lead three minutes later with the first strike of a four-goal campaign on his Dhaka debut.

The only local player to score for the Sky Blues was national playmaker Musa Mia who made it 3-0 in the 18th minute.

In the embarrassingly one-sided Group B affair, Calke scored three and Ronald one inside last 17 minutes to seal the victory for the title contenders.

Abahani's group rivals Mariner Youngs Club also recorded their third consecutive victory blanking Ajax Sporting Club 3-0.

Issa Mia put Mariners ahead from a penalty corner in the fifth minute while striker Rafiqul Islam Kamal added another one minute later. Two minutes from time, Yusuf Ali increased the margin for the Arambagh outfit.



PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

TYPICAL OF OMAR: Opener Javed Omar, who was not out on 45 last night, flicks one off his pads for four during Bangladesh's first innings on the second day of the second and final Test against New Zealand at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

SERIES SALAD

SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Chittagong

Constable Badiul never minds being posted on duty by the Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) at the MA Aziz Stadium. He is rather thankful to the CMP because, for a change, it gives Badiul an opportunity to enjoy a cricket match and a chance to have a glimpse of some of the game's big stars from close range.

Badiul was on duty during the home series against South Africa, England and West Indies at the 82nd Test venue. But, each time his enthusiasm takes a hit with seeing the local boys perform poorly.

"I love Bangladesh and always wish the national cricket team performs well. But having seen quite a few games here my observation is that most of the players are not committed enough. They take their position in the team for granted and that's why I think they always underperform much to the disappointment of the nation," said the policeman, who however hoped that the Tigers would do something special against New Zealand in this match.

BORED OF BATTING

Two students of City College student Imran and Irfan can be

described as patriots in every sense.

They came to the stadium yesterday morning expecting that Bangladesh would be invited by New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming to bat after lunch. Then they could watch local boy Nafees Iqbal open the innings. But after waiting till 1.30 pm the expected declaration never came and that was enough for the pair, who left the venue in sheer disgust. As they departed they expressed their frustration at the monotonous batting by the tourists.

"The Kiwis really tested our patience by unnecessarily batting beyond the lunch session. Hopefully, we will be back here tomorrow to watch our boys fight back," said Imran before heading home.

THE BELLES ARE MISSING

In the past, a large number of female fans used to seen at MA Aziz Stadium. They added a lot of colour and spice during a cricket match. But surprisingly, it is not happening this time against New Zealand.

A game either against India or Pakistan brought ladies of all ages into the ground. Even when West

Indies and England toured here, the presence of female supporters was very strong.

"Perhaps unlike India or Pakistan, New Zealand don't have any individual cricketers, who can woo the crowd," said Tania, who was one of the few female supporters in the pavilion.

Tania also said that she had no such prejudice and always loved to come to stadium whenever an international match was being played.

JFA Cup football Barguna, Rajshahi advance

SPORTS REPORTER

Barguna and Rajshahi moved into the semifinals of the JFA Cup under-16 football tournament from Group A yesterday.

Barguna emerged group champions with a 3-0 win over Jamalpur at the Birsreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Jamalpur. Sagir scored twice and Rezaul one for Barguna, who finished on seven points. They will face Group B runners-up Narshingdi in the first semifinal on October 29.

Group A winners Feni will take on Rajshahi in the second semifinal on October 30.

Rajshahi drew 1-1 with Narayanganj in yesterday's first match. Palash shot the north-Bengal side ahead in the 70th minute but Sohel equalised two minutes later. Rajshahi, also undefeated in the tournament, ended on five points.

The final will be played on November 1.

BANGLADESH-NZ SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close of play on the second day of the second and final Test between Bangladesh and New Zealand at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong on Wednesday:

NEW ZEALAND: First innings (overnight 338-3)

Richardson c Mushfiq b Enamul 28

Sinclair c b Rafique 23

Fleming c b Rafique 202

Styris c b Rafique 89

Astle b b Rafique 39

Marshall c b Rafique 69

Oram not out 38

McCullum not out 17

Extras: (b-9, lb-11, w-2, nb-18) 40

Total: (For 6 wkts dec'd in 152 overs) 545

Fall of wickets: 1-49, 2-61, 3-265, 4-

364, 5-447, 6-517

Did not bat: Vettori, Franklin, Wiseman

Bowler O M R W

Baisya 17 0 68 0

Mushfiq 15 1 68 0

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Aussies strangle India after Sachin's failure

AFP, Nagpur



The lanky paceman put on a brilliant exhibition of swing bowling as India, replying to Australia's first innings score of 398, stumbled to 146-5 by close of the second day's play in the third Test here.

McGrath, who conceded just 18 runs in 20 overs, removed the dangerous Virender Sehwag and stand-in captain Rahul Dravid to leave India trailing by 252 runs with five wickets in hand.

The hosts, 103-5 at one stage, were revived partially by an unbroken stand of 43 for the sixth wicket between Mohammad Kaif (47) and Parthiv Patel (16).

Australia, who lead 1-0 in the four-match series, have three days

to conjure a victory here and seal their first series success in India since Bill Lawry's tourists won 3-1 way back in 1969.

India floundered after star batsman Sachin Tendulkar was dismissed for eight on his return to international cricket and the rest of the batting caved in tamely on a firm wicket which aided bounce and turn. Tendulkar, who was sidelined since August 1 with a tennis elbow injury, lasted just 36 deliveries in which he took six singles and a two before being trapped plumb in front of the wicket by Jason Gillespie.

Earlier, Australia added 36 runs to their overnight score of 362-7 before they were all out 50 minutes after the start.

Clarke, resuming at 73, failed by nine runs to score his second century in the series when he was last man out for 91.

Clarke, who made a century on debut in the first Test at Bangalore,

was caught behind by wicketkeeper Patel off left-arm seamer Zaheer Khan.

Zaheer picked up two of the last three wickets to finish with four for 95.

Murali Kartik, who replaced the unwell Harbhajan Singh, took 3-57 and Anil Kumble chipped in with 2-99.

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MEAN McGrath: Australia fast bowler Glenn McGrath, who is playing in his 100th Test, follows through on a delivery on the second day of the third Test against India at Nagpur yesterday. McGrath already took 2 wickets for 18 runs.