

## Mohammedan break Mukti duck

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club rode on a late strike from Shahnur Rahman Ronny to beat Mukti Joddha Sangsad Kira Chakra by a solitary goal in the first big encounter of the Premier Bank Premier Division Football League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

But country's premier marksman Alfaz Ahmed was the real hero behind the 81st minute success of Ronny that separated the giants in an otherwise dull affair in front of an estimated 15,000 fans, so far the highest turnout in the competition. It was Mohammedan's first win against Mukti Joddha in five meetings since their National League encounter last year.

Alfaz started his spectacular angular run from the left almost from the mid pitch and dodged past Mukti Joddha's Rwandan recruit Harry, veteran defender Rajani and country's number one goalkeeper Aminul before leaving Ronny with the simplest of tap-ins.

The morale boosting victory not only gave the loyal Black and Whites supporters something to cheer about after a dismal run in two competitions leading up to the league but also ensured their hundred percent record after three matches. They now share the top slot with defending champions Brothers Union.

Both the teams fielded their latest foreign recruits in the match but Mukti Joddha's Nigerian striker Ernest Jeremiah and Mohammedan's Moroccan midfielder Moha-

ammed Regeragui failed to make any impression.

Mohammedan could not reproduce the form of their first two matches. Only defender Mahmudul Hasan was a stand-out player. The Bangladesh international did not allow Mukti Joddha's Nigerian duo Jeremiah and Paul any room and kept them under check.

Mukti Joddha dominated the first session and got the first opportunity but Mohammedan's young defender Kamal cleared a Paul header from an Arman corner from

the right in the 32nd minute.

Next, Mohammedan's veteran striker Nakib was presented with an open net but his feeble left-footer gave Aminul no trouble.

The match only came to life with twenty minutes to go. Mohammedan got their first real chance when substitute Zahid who replaced Regeragui, almost made an immediate impression. Zahid picked up Alfaz in the open with a beautiful cross but the ace forward's left footer went wide.

Yellow cards: Mintoo and Zahid

(Mohammedan), Biddyt and Jeremiah (Mukti Joddha).

TEAMS

MOHAMMEDAN: Biplob, Nazrul, Hasan, Kamal, Ronny, Mintoo, Arman Aziz, Regeragui (Zahid), Matur Munna (Khokon), Alfaz and Nakib (Asad).

MUKTIJODDHA: Aminul, Rajani, Hasan Al Mamun, Harry, Belal, Arman, Titoo (Saiful), Biddyt, Jeremiah, Kanchan and Paul.

Referee: Ramkrishna Gosh.



PHOTO: STAR

Mukti Joddha defender Harry (L) tackles Mohammedan's Moroccan recruit Regeragui during their Premier Division football league encounter on Friday.

## Aussies' Twenty20 warning

Cricket

AFP, Arundel

Australia captain Ricky Ponting guided his side to victory with a ball to spare as they got their tour of England off to a winning start by beating the Professional Cricketers Association (PCA) Masters XI by eight wickets here Thursday in a Twenty20 fixture.

Australia, chasing 168, were coasting as Adam Gilchrist (53) and fellow left-hander Matthew Hayden (79) put on a bludgeoning 131.

But after both openers went Ponting's 31 not out was decisive.

Hayden, whose fifty took just 32 balls, saw current England all-rounder Paul Collingwood hold on to a sharp caught and bowled chance off another hard-hit shot.

From then on with the light fading fast, the rate slowed and 27 runs were needed off the last three overs.

And with 10 needed off seven balls, Gilchrist holed out off England pace prospect Chris Tremlett -- who finished with an impressive one for 17 -- to the bowler's Hampshire colleague Shaun Udal at deep

square leg.

Darren Maddy, who had earlier top-scored with 70 not out in the PCA's 167 for six, bowled the last over. His first ball was struck for six by Ponting and eventually Australia required two off the last two balls.

Ponting made sure of victory by smashing the medium-pace's fifth ball for four through cover as Australia finished on 170 for two against an attack featuring 42-year-old former England quick Devon Malcolm.

Damien Martyn was one not out. Earlier, left-arm spinner Michael Clarke claimed a hat-trick after fast bowler Brett Lee took a wicket with the first ball of the tour.

Australia face England in a Twenty20 international at Hampshire's Rose Bowl ground on Monday.

Clarke, primarily a batsman who has played county cricket in England for Hampshire, took three for 36 -- including Test candidate Kevin Pietersen.

Before Ponting won the toss an 8,000 crowd were treated to a pre-match fly-past by a British World War II Spitfire plane.

Whether that inspired Australia

or not they enjoyed an ideal start when Lee had Masters and New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming edging to Ponting at second slip for a golden duck.

Maddy and Collingwood then put on 68 before Clarke struck.

First he had Collingwood, on 38, caught at long-off by Michael Kasprovicz -- whose four overs cost 41 runs -- with the last ball of his first over.

And with the first ball of his next England one-day international Pietersen, who scored three hundreds during the one-day series in his native South Africa earlier in the year, fell for just six.

Australia play Leicestershire on Saturday before their Rose Bowl clash against England.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PCA MASTERS: 167-6 in 20 overs (D. Maddy 70 n.o., M. Ealham 39, P. Collingwood 38; M. Clarke 3-36)

AUSTRALIA: 170-2 in 19.5 overs (M. Hayden 79, A. Gilchrist 53, R. Ponting 31 n.o.)

Result: Australia won by eight wickets



## Did U Know?

Bangladesh's 104 in the first innings of the second Test is the second lowest score at Chester-le-Street, next only to Zimbabwe's 94 against England in June 2003.



## Zaheer Abbas

(Former Pakistan cricket captain) "The West Indies team is now a shadow of the team which ruled the world. Their fast bowlers are not as venomous as they were when we toured there in 1976, so for me it's a chance of lifetime lost."



Bangladesh captain Habibur Bashar (L) and his Derbyshire counterpart Luke Sutton exchange team lists at the toss before their one-day match at Derby on Friday.

## Bangladesh 189 all out

BBC ONLINE, Derby

Bangladesh produced another below-par batting performance as they were bowled out for 189 by Derbyshire in their first NatWest Series warm-up game here on Friday.

Opener Nafees Iqbal was run out without facing a single delivery and they slumped to 19-3 before captain Habibur Bashar and Tushar Imran shared a stand of 80.

Tushar was run out for 40 and Bashar fell one short of his fifty, one of three victims for Nick Walker.

Mohammad Rafique made 36 but they were finally dismissed in the 47th over.

Bangladesh are hoping for better luck in the one-day game having lost both Tests against England in three days and the toss of the coin went their way as Bashar opted to bat first.

He soon had cause to regret that decision as Nafees' early exit was followed by the loss of Javed Omar and Rajin Saleh.

The most damaging spell, however, came from Walker who claimed 3-15 in four overs as he removed Bashar, Khaled Mashud (one) and Aftab Ahmed (26).

Spinner Andy Gray weighed in with the wickets of Khaled Mahmud and Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza, but Rafique hit four boundaries to boost

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## Rahmatganj blank BRTC

SPORTS REPORTER

Rahmatganj Muslim Friends Society maintained their all-win record in the First Division Football League when they blanked BRTC Sporting Club 2-0 at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

The winners led the first half through a 33rd minute strike from Rezaul Karim while Masud Alam added another after the breather in the 85th minute.

With the outcome, Rahmatganj secured maximum 18 points and BRTC were remained on two points from six matches.

## Abahani's complaint against Arambagh goalie

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani have demanded full points from their drawn match against Arambagh Kira Sangha in the Premier Division Football League on Thursday as they alleged their opponents had fielded an ineligible player.

The popular club in a press release yesterday said that Arambagh custodian Shakil actually took money from Dhaka Wanderers Club and that was why it was illegal for him to play for another club.

The Metropolitan Football League Committee in a letter on May 2 asked the player to clear his position within five days in response to Wanderers' complaint.

Shakil, however, failed to respond and the league committee has apparently forgotten the issue.

The league committee will finally meet within a week to settle the issue. But a league official believed that there was hardly any point to declare him illegal as

Shakil didn't take part in the inter-club players' transfer and he joined Arambagh after a mutual understanding between Arambagh and his former club Mohakhali XI.

## An autograph hunter supreme

Cricket

AL-AMIN from Derby

For some passionate fans cricket is a way of life. Tony Saunders is one of those few followers of the game who never misses an opportunity to keep track of travelling cricketers.

Taking autographs of cricketers is a hobby for the 68-year-old Tony and he has been doing it religiously since his first dramatic venture to win the signature of famous English cricketer Alec Bedser during a county cricket match between Essex and Surrey at the Ilford ground in 1952.

"It was thrilling. I ran into the ground with a piece of paper and pen and everybody shouting behind me since I was running into a

restricted area. But Bedser was kind enough to give his autograph and that's the way it all started," said Tony who was waiting at the premises of the Derbyshire County Cricket Club ground for the Bangladesh team to arrive.

He has travelled all the way from Gloucestershire to collect autographs of some of the national cricketers whom he missed when they were around in England last year. And it was because of misinformation on the Internet about the start of the game (it said the game will start in the morning) he had to start at five in the morning from Gloucester.

Asked what drives him to carry on for nearly 50 years, Tony, who was born in Australia, married a Sri Lankan and happens to be a West Ham United supporter like Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore,

said that he is one of those who believes in continuity.

He has got autographs of almost all the present England cricketers and nearly 150 of Australians, West Indian, South Africa cricketers in his vast collection.

"I have got the autograph of Sachin Tendulkar when he came to play at the age of 17."

He also has got the signatures of the Bangladesh A team when they came here early this year.

A teacher by profession, Tony said that Dennis Compton was the best batsman he has ever seen and West Indian Brian Lara is the batsman he always loves to see in action.

He also likes Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul-Haq and admired the right-hander's ability to defy the so-called 'fitness'.

## The countdown begins



FIFA.COM

On Thursday 9 June at 5:58pm (9:58pm Bangladesh Standard Time), exactly one year before the football World Cup in Germany, FIFA president Sepp Blatter officially launched the final countdown to the tournament with a symbolic kick-off from the centre-spot at the World Cup Stadium in Munich, venue for the opening match featuring the host nation on 9 June 2006.

Some 400 VIP guests and a 100-strong press corps witnessed the countdown ceremony, as a high-ranking "team" gathered on the pitch at the €340 million Allianz

Arena stadium. Blatter and local organising committee president Franz Beckenbauer exchanged pennants, before the former Germany coach accepted Blatter's pass from the kick-off and played the ball to the other leading figures gathered at the centre of the field.

"I'm delighted to be here for this historic moment at this historic location. It's a big kick-off, both literally and metaphorically," declared Blatter, praising the tournament organisation to date: "There's nothing more efficient than the German OC and the German Football Association."

Beckenbauer expressed deep satisfaction with the new temple of football in the Munich district of Frotmaning. "Creating this stadium in the face of stiff opposition is a unique achievement. It is a worthy venue for the opening match," he

remarked.

Preparations for the 18th FIFA World Cup finals were "right on schedule, and that's the way it will stay," Beckenbauer continued: "There's not a single area you could call a problem."

The celebrity "team" lined up at Beckenbauer's side included federal interior minister Otto Schily, DFB president Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder, Bavarian first minister Edmund Stoiber, Bayern Munich chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, TSV 1860 Munich president Karl Auer, Germany team manager Oliver Bierhoff, Germany's all-time leading scorer Gerd Müller, organising committee senior vice-president Horst R. Schmidt, Munich mayor Christian Ude, and André Heller, the inspiration behind the accompanying arts and culture

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LET'S GET GOING: FIFA president Sepp Blatter (front L) and president of the organising committee of the 2006 FIFA World Cup Franz Beckenbauer (R) and Goleo, mascot of the World Cup 2006 at the symbolic kick-off that started the 365-day countdown to the finals at Allianz Arena Stadium in Munich on Thursday. The World Cup will begin in Germany from 9 June, 2006.

PHOTO: AFP