

Hosts take 'em all



SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi completed a clean sweep for the home sides in the first round of the National Cricket League when the cricketers of the northern headquarters of the country handed Barisal an eight-wicket defeat at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium yesterday.

The easy sail for Khaled Masud's men on the fourth day of their opening first-class fixture meant Rajshahi joined defending champions Dhaka and Chittagong, who also scored outright victories both in the shorter and longer version games on home ground.

Rajshahi dismissed any hopes of the visitors to save the match on the final morning by claiming the lower Barisal half with the addition of 30 runs to their overnight total of 204-5.

Set to score 151 runs for victory, Rajshahi raced home with their opening pair Moniruzzaman and Farhad Hossain putting on 122 runs

before both were removed by pacer Arafat Salahuddin. Moniruzzaman smashed 80 from 89 balls that included 10 fours and a six while his partner Farhad scored a patient 51 off 124 deliveries with six hits to the fence.

Earlier, Barisal's hopes of a turn round dashed quickly after their overnight batsman Humayun Kabir was run out for six. Rajshahi's most successful bowler Alamgir Kabir then led a quick Barisal demise by picking up his fifth and day's first wicket. Alamgir finished with a match haul of eight wickets. The out-of-favour right-arm paceman was adjudged man-of-the-match.

One-down Nasiruddin Faruque, starting the day on 43, made the second highest score for Barisal with 61 runs after captain Shahriar Nafees' 83.

Rajshahi along with Dhaka and Chittagong will enjoy the home advantage again when the second round begin from November 26. In the second round, Dhaka will host Barisal, Chittagong will take on

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YOU ARE DOWN BUT NOT OUT: Bangladesh's Argentine football coach Diego Cruciani passes on some tips to his charges during the lemon break of their friendly match against Abahani at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

NFL FINALS IN KHULNA BU take on Town Club today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Defending champions Brothers Union will take on Khulna Town Club in the opening match of the Nitol-Tata Fifth National Football League finals here today.

The match will kick off at the local stadium at 3 pm despite countrywide daylong hartal called by the combined opposition party (COP).

Khulna Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman will inaugurate the Khulna-leg of the finals. Kacharipara SC of Jamalpur will play Bangladesh Army tomorrow, followed by the match between Dhaka giants Mukti Joddha Sangsad and Mohammedan Sporting Club on November 26. Abahani face Feni Soccer Club on November 27 in the last match to be played here.

Khulna District Sports Association general secretary Moniruzzaman Moni told yesterday that the Khulna Stadium is all set to host the four matches.

The venue, which earned the 'best venue of the tournament' award last year, has been decorated for this occasion. A colourful rally was brought out from the stadium at 3 pm yesterday. It was participated by large number of sports fans, journalists and organisers.

Flintoff revives England



APP, Faisalabad

Andrew Flintoff bowled his heart out on a placid pitch on Wednesday, to sustain England's hopes of forcing a win in the second Test against Pakistan.

He dismissed Mohammad Yousuf and Shahid Afridi off successive deliveries and Pakistan were wavering at 183-6 -- 199 ahead -- in their second innings at stumps on the penultimate day.

England trailing 1-0 in the three-match series, must dismiss in-form Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul-Haq early on the fifth and final day, if they are to boost their chances of squaring the series. Inzamam, who scored a century in the first innings, was on a solid 41 when bad light stopped play with 16 overs remaining.

Flintoff breathed fresh life into the match in his fourth over after the tea-break, just when it seemed Inzamam and Yousuf would ensure a comfortable draw for Pakistan on an easy-paced track. He first dismissed Yousuf, who scored 20 in a 56-run stand for the fourth wicket with his captain.

With the next ball Flintoff uprooted hard-hitting Shahid Afridi's off-stump to leave the crowd stunned. Afridi had smashed a rapid-fire 92 in the first innings.

The pressure mounted on

Pakistan when fast bowler Steve Harmison had Kamran Akmal caught behind on nine.

Flintoff finished with 3-46.

The hosts owed their early advantage to Salman Butt who added 54 for the opening wicket with Shoaib Malik and 50 for the second with Younis Khan.

Butt perished one ball after he had completed a single, but was sent back to the striker's end by Australian umpire Darrell Hair after being warned for running on to the pitch. The umpire signalled it a 'dead' ball. The left-handed opener was trapped leg-before off a Shaun Udal delivery which kept a little low.

Flintoff was the first to strike when he had Malik caught by Ian Bell in the covers off an uppish drive. Paceman Matthew Hoggard then trapped Younis leg-before.

Earlier in the day the Pakistani bowlers found the going tough as they struggled for nearly an hour to capture the last three England wickets. England, resuming on 391-7, were finally bowled out for 446 in reply to Pakistan's 462.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the fourth day of the second Test between Pakistan and England at the Iqbal Stadium on Wednesday:

PAKISTAN: First innings 462 (Inzamam 109, Afridi 92, Yousuf 78;

Harmison 3-85, Giles 2-85, Hoggard 2-115)

ENGLAND: First innings (over night 391-7)

| | |
|--|-----|
| Trescothick c Akmal b Sami | 48 |
| Strauss b Naved | 12 |
| Vaughan b Naved | 2 |
| Bell c Akmal b Afridi | 115 |
| Pietersen c Yousuf b Akhtar | 100 |
| Flintoff b Akhtar | 1 |
| Jones lbw b Afridi | 55 |
| Giles b Afridi | 26 |
| Udal not out | 33 |
| Hoggard b Afridi | 2 |
| Harmison run out | 16 |
| Extras: (b-1, lb-12, nb-22, w-1) | 36 |
| Total: (All out in 132.3 overs) | 446 |
| Fall of wkts: 1-33, 2-39, 3-107, 4-261, 5-272, 6-327, 7-378, 8-395, 9-399. | |

| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
|---------|------|---|-----|---|
| Akhtar | 27 | 4 | 93 | 2 |
| Naved | 20 | 2 | 63 | 2 |
| Sami | 19 | 4 | 51 | 1 |
| Afridi | 30.3 | 3 | 95 | 4 |
| Kaneria | 32 | 3 | 102 | 0 |
| Malik | 4 | 0 | 29 | 0 |

| PAKISTAN: Second innings | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Malik c Bell b Flintoff | 26 |
| Butt lbw b Udal | 50 |
| Younis Khan lbw b Hoggard | 27 |

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Did U Know?

West Indies have lost five Tests in a row - to Pakistan at Kingston in June 2005 followed by 2 each to Sri Lanka and Australia. Brian Lara took his career aggregate to 10,961 runs (ave.53.20) in 120 Tests, surpassing Australia's Steve Waugh's aggregate of 10,927 (ave.51.06) in 168 matches. He has now moved into the second place after Australia's Allan Border, who holds the world record for aggregating 11,174 (ave.50.56) in 156 Tests.



Kapil Dev

(Former India cricket captain) "I like Sourav's arrogance. I don't like him begging for a place. He should stand tall and perform consistently to get back into the team. That is the Sourav Ganguly I know."



TEN Sports
Pakistan Vs England
Second Test, Day Five
Live at 10:20 am

ESPN
Football Crazy
Live at 5:00 pm
Sportscentre
Live at 8:30 pm

STAR Sports
Australia vs West Indies
Third Test, Day One
Live at 6:30 am (Friday)

Div Two hockey from tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

Barnak Samaj will meet Rayer Bazar AC in the opening match of the Green Delta Second Division Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium tomorrow.

Twelve teams will split into

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Bangladesh chase down Pakistan



SPORTS REPORTER

Tamim Iqbal and Suhrawardi Shuvo led Bangladesh in an exciting run-chase to pull off a one-wicket victory over Pakistan in the Afro-Asian Under-19 Cricket Tournament at Visakhapatnam yesterday.

Shuvo was the star performer to give Bangladesh a second consecutive win in four matches as he smashed an unbeaten 62-ball 67, after claiming four wickets for 52 in his 10-over spell. Bangladesh put an end to their two-match losing streak after outplaying Zimbabwe by nine wickets on Tuesday.

Opener Tamim Iqbal, the younger brother of national opener Nafees Iqbal, laid the foundation with his back-to-back half-century as Bangladesh coasted to 255-9 in 47.4

overs, in reply to Pakistan's 252 all out in 49.1 overs.

The left-handed batsman smote 11 fours and a six in his 63-ball innings while Mehdi Hasan contributed 36 runs.

The match went down to the wire when Dollar Mahmud returned to the pavilion as a ninth batsman, with seven runs still needed for Bangladesh to snatch a victory. Nabil Samad had successfully negotiated the final scene with Shuvo, to stun their Pakistani counterparts.

Earlier Pakistan rode on a 75-run knock by Ali Khan to set a challenging total of 252, after being put into bat first by Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim.

Occasional left-arm spinner Mehrab Hossain was the other successful Bangladesh bowler taking three wickets for 27 runs in 2.4 overs.

Chief selector Faruque Ahmed, SEE PAGE 13 COL 5

National booters survive a scare



SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national team went out of the coaches' manual to salvage some pride yesterday when they came from a two-goal deficit to beat Abahani 3-2 in a preparation match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

High crosses are not in Argentine coach Diego Cruciani's books because he does not have a tall striker. But three lobbs won the match for him with two headed goals by Alfaz and another by Sujon in the second half.

There was also an indication about Cruciani's eleven that will feature when Bangladesh start defence of their SAFF Football Championship title in Pakistan early December.

With Aminul under the bar, Hassan Al Mamun and Titu played fullbacks beside Sujon and Rajani.

Arman, Joy and Matiu Munna started in the middle with Alfaz playing the role of the 'free midfielder'. Ujjal was pushed ahead with Farhad being the main striker. Farhad was not impressive as well as the two centre-backs, who were responsible for leaving wide gaps for the opposition forwards.

The first session belonged to Abahani, who looked well warmed-up for the National Football League finals which starts today in Khulna, with three foreigners pushing hard. And striker Bulbul put the sky-blues ahead against all odds with a clinical finish in the 11th minute when he sliced through central defenders Rajani and Sujon with a through-pass from Moroccan midfielder Egr Mohammed.

Although Cruciani's boys SEE PAGE 13 COL 6



GOTCHA! England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff (R) is ecstatic after having Pakistan's Shahid Afridi clean bowled (C) on the fourth day of the second Test at Faisalabad on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

MU in uncharted territory Other big three reach knockout round



APP, Paris

Previous winners Juventus, Bayern Munich and Ajax all ensured their places in the knockout stages of the Champions League on Tuesday but another, Manchester United, must wait till the last group match to see if their topsy-turvy season gets any worse.

Indeed United -- who drew 0-0 at home to Villarreal -- will need to summon up the spirit of the 1968 European Cup winners as they play away at the side who were trounced 4-1 by that United outfit -- Benfica.

United, who this year have had a controversial takeover of the team by the Glazer family and seen their talismanic midfielder Roy Keane leave under a cloud last Friday, are third in their group and must cast an envious look at their other fellow former winners.

Juventus edged Bruges 1-0 thanks to Alessandro del Piero while Bayern Munich thrashed Rapid Vienna 4-0 and led the Italians on goal difference.

Ajax beat Czech outfit Sparta Prague 2-1 at home to make the last 16 but one of their former managers Ronald Koeman must also wait to see if he will join them as Benfica were held 0-0 by French side Lille.

There was another sparkling performance by Barcelona, who beat Werder Bremen 3-1 with Ronaldinho once again pulling the strings as he created two and scored one himself.

Not only do Werder risk losing out on the second knockout spot from the group, as Udinese came from behind to stun Panathinaikos 2-1 to take a three point advantage on the Germans, but the Bundesliga side look like missing star striker Miroslav Klose for up to three weeks as he fractured a cheekbone.

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Tapash back home

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh paceman Tapash Baisya returned home on Tuesday from England after a review about his ankle injury with an expert orthopaedic specialist.

During his nine-day stay in UK, he received some treatment and the specialist was convinced about recovery.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh national team's physio Paul Close has informed that Tapash will resume training from November 28 for two to three weeks. However, he will need to pass a fitness test to prove match fit and participate in domestic competitions.

A failure in the test could lead to operation, the Australian physio informed.

Brazilian TT coach comes

SPORTS REPORTER

Brazilian table tennis coach Marles Sergio Martins arrived in Dhaka on Tuesday to help the Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation under a programme of the ITTF (International Table Tennis Federation).

The 32-year-old chose table tennis over football simply because 'millions in Brazil are interested in football'.

"Football is too big and unless you are gifted, you hardly have a chance to survive in Brazilian football. I was a national junior table tennis player but to run the family, I had to quit at the age of 17," said Martins, who joined a sports school to study and continue his passion for one of the most loved indoor games.

He became the assistant national coach in 1993 and for the past seven years was the head national coach.

"There was some misunderstanding with the federation and I accepted ITTF's invitation to join

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The Prince returns



APP, Chennai

Deposed Indian captain Sourav Ganguly has been handed a lifeline to revive his faltering career after being picked for the Test squad in the home series against Sri Lanka.

Speaking at a press conference yesterday, chairman of selectors Kiran More said "We have included Sourav as a batting all-rounder," justifying the inclusion of eight specialist batsmen in the squad.

"He has the experience and will lend balance to the Test side. I think there is still a lot of cricket left in him."

Ganguly, who has scored 5,066 runs in 84 Tests with 12 centuries, has claimed 25 wickets at an embarrassing average of just 52.47. He had been dropped from the one-day side due to poor form, an elbow injury and a damaging public row with coach Greg Chappell.

More denied rumours that powerful cricket official Jagmohan Dalmiya, who hails from Ganguly's home city of Kolkata, had pressured the selectors to include the former captain in the squad.

"No one has spoken to us, that is not the way we work," he said. "The team has been picked with the best interests of Indian cricket in mind."

It will be a toss-up between four batsmen -- Ganguly, VVS Laxman, Yuvraj Singh and Mohammad Kaif -- for



SOURAV GANGULY

the number five and six slots behind Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir, captain Rahul Dravid and Sachin Tendulkar.

One-day batsman Mahendra Dhoni

will make his Test debut as wicket-keeper in place of Dinesh Karthik after a string of good scores in the shorter version of the game.

Left-arm Ruda Pratap Singh finds a place as the third seamer behind Irfan Pathan and Ajit Agarkar, but is unlikely to make the playing eleven for the first Test on the spin-friendly Chepauk wicket.

Veteran leg-spinner Anil Kumble who needs 35 scalps to touch the 500-wicket mark, returns to lead the slow bowling attack that includes off-spinner Harbhajan Singh and left-arm Murali Kartik.

The selectors also made no changes in the one-day squad for the last two matches against South Africa at Kolkata on Friday and in Mumbai next Monday. The series is tied 1-1.

Test squad: Rahul Dravid (capt), Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir, Sachin Tendulkar, Venkatesh Laxman, Sourav Ganguly, Yuvraj Singh, Mohammad Kaif, Mahendra Dhoni (wicket-keeper), Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh, Murali Kartik, Irfan Pathan, Ajit Agarkar, Rudra Pratap Singh.

Cairns recalled for Kiwi ODIs



REUTERS, Wellington

All rounder Chris Cairns has been recalled to the New Zealand one-day squad for the three-match series against Australia next month, New Zealand Cricket announced yesterday.

Cairns returns after fitness concerns kept him out of the side for their one-day series in South Africa which the Black Caps lost 4-0, although one match was abandoned without a ball being bowled.

Coach John Bracewell said "Chris Cairns has been selected for the series following his return to

fitness and form," Bracewell said.

"We sent Chris away to work on his cricket fitness and he has shown a great deal of discipline in his training and matches and we believe he is ready for a return to international cricket."

"He understands that it is a big step up to play Australia after taking part in pre-season domestic matches, but I am happy that if he continues the work ethic he has shown he will be up to the task."

Bracewell added that fourteen players have been named in the squad as Stephen Fleming may not be available for the first match following a personal medical matter, but hopes to be available for the remainder of the series.

Left arm spinner and vice captain Daniel Vettori is to lead the side in Fleming's absence.

Bracewell added that all rounder Jacob Oram had undergone fitness tests on his back and will be available for the matches.

The three one-day matches are in Auckland on December 3, Wellington on December 7 and Christchurch on December 10.

SQUAD

Stephen Fleming (captain), Daniel Vettori (vice captain), Nathan Astle, Shane Bond, Chris Cairns, James Franklin, Hamish Marshall, James Marshall, Brendon McCullum, Craig McMillan, Kyle Mills, Jacob Oram, Scott Styris, Lou Vincent.