

City end Victoria's run

DOHS on top, Rashed hammers first ton



SPORTS REPORTER

Tushar Imran led from the front as City Club brought high-flying Victoria Sporting Club down to earth with a massive 87-run victory in the fifth round match of the Premier Division Cricket League at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Captain Tushar cracked 58 and then captured three wickets to snap Victoria's all-win record.

After five rounds, holders Old DOHS took solo lead in the 12-team fray as they continued their winning run with a six-wicket victory over Indira Road KC at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra.

Pakistan all-rounder Rashed Hanif, however, was the hero of the round as the left-hander struck the first century of the league to lead Brothers record a huge 136-run victory over lowly Agrani Bank at BKSP.

Mohammedan experienced

another low-scoring affair at BKSP to ensure a seven-wicket cruise against Orient Sporting Club and climb to second place jointly with Victoria after four victories from five matches.

Away at Fatullah Cricket Stadium, opener Jahirul Islam fell three runs short of a hundred but his efforts helped Abahani to manage an exciting eight-run win against Kalabagan.

The other match between Biman and Sonargaon at the Comilla Stadium was abandoned due to unplayable condition following overnight rain. The match will be held at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium today.

CITY-VICTORIA

With an ordinary line-up, two-time champions Victoria were going great guns but last year's runners-up City Club, smarting under a six-wicket loss to Abahani, killed their hope to continue the fairy-tale run.

City thrived on half centuries by Tushar and Alok Kapali to set a challenging total of 253-8. Out-of-favour fiasco hammered a 61-ball 54.

Mehrab Hossain, the under-19 batter who played his first game, chipped in with valuable 43 off 50 balls while Rajin Saleh added a cautious 66-ball 31.

Victoria were never in contention and they were bundled out for 166 with Pakistani recruit Jafar Quraishi making team highest 41 after his success with the ball (4-36).

DOHS-INDIRA

After Khaled Mahmud's brilliance with the ball, Kenyan Steve Tikolo and captain Akram Khan smashed unbeaten fifties to enable Old DOHS record a comfortable victory against Indira Road.

Tikolo maintained his rich vein of form when he hit an unbeaten 67 off 76 balls to score his fourth half-century while captain Akram Khan was not out with a 62-ball 60 as the holders posted 199-4 in reply to Indira's 196.

Medium paceman Mahmud claimed four wickets for 28 to wrap up the opposition for a paltry total.

BROTHERS-AGRANI

Title contenders Brothers returned to

winning track in style when they rode on Rashed Hanif's 107 to amass 271-8.

The Pakistani clobbered 11 fours and two sixes while captain Ehsanul Haque contributed 47. Rashed then also picked up two wickets for 11 to win the man of the match award.

In reply, the bankers were dismissed for 135 with Pakistani recruit Rizwan Quraishi making 45.

Test left-arm spinner Enamul Haque, Sohrawardi Shuvo and Arafat Sunny took two wickets each.

MOHAMMEDAN-ORIENT

After experiencing a low-scoring match against Sonargaon in the previous round, Mohammedan chased down another paltry total to register their fourth victory.

In reply to Orient's 127, the title aspirants lost their first wicket on nought but Indian batsman

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India to tour Bangladesh in 2007

BDNEWS, New Delhi

India are expected to tour Bangladesh in 2007 after the Cricket World Cup in the West Indies, Indian cricket chief Sharad Pawar told journalists on Friday night in Mumbai after a formal dinner at the Cricket Club of India.

The BCCI chief, who had a meeting earlier on the day with Bangladesh Cricket Board president Ali Asghar, said that the two boards have decided about the tour of Indian team in Bangladesh.

"We have been invited to play two Tests and three one-day internationals in Bangladesh and the tour would take place after the World Cup," Pawar said.

Booters in Karachi

SPORTS REPORTER

A 21-member Bangladesh football team reached Karachi on Saturday to play the second-leg match of the Asian Cup pre-qualifier against Pakistan.

The match will be held at the

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India recall Ganguly



AFP, Mumbai

India's national selectors Saturday recalled former skipper Sourav Ganguly and paceman Zaheer Khan to their Test team for an upcoming tour of Pakistan.

The selectors decided to plump for experience in the 16-member squad to take on their archrivals in a three-Test series beginning on January 14 in Lahore with Faisalabad and Karachi as the other venues.

Wicketkeeper Parthiv Patel too returned to the Rahul Dravid-led side as a back-up for Mahendra Dhoni while left-arm spinner Murali Kartik and middle-order batsman Mohammad Kaif were axed.

Ganguly, who was dropped for the final Test against Sri Lanka in Ahmedabad last week despite scores of 40 and 39 in the previous match at New Delhi, piped Kaif for a place in the side.

Ganguly, a stylish left-hander who is India's most successful Test captain with 21 wins, has scored 5,150 runs in 86 Tests.

"Sourav has a lot of runs behind him and since Pakistan is a tough

tour, we thought we could make the middle-order strong by bringing him back in the side," said chief selector Kiran More.

"He was always in the scheme of things and we had only been trying others against Sri Lanka, which is not



SOURAV GANGULY

a very strong Test team," More said.

"Kaif has done well but his experience does not match with that of Sourav," said More, a former India wicketkeeper.

Ganguly said he was hoping the team would do well in Pakistan.

"I am very happy to be back in the team like any other player would be in a similar situation. I am only hoping that we perform well in Pakistan," said Ganguly.

More praised left-arm Zaheer, who was ignored for the Sri Lanka series and played his last Test in Zimbabwe in September.

"He has done very well in domestic cricket and his experience will be crucial in Pakistan," More said about Zaheer, who has bagged 111 wickets in 40 Test appearances.

Zaheer is one of three left-armers in the squad along with Irfan Pathan and uncapped Rudra Pratap Singh with Ajit Agarkar completing the pace quartet.

The selectors decided to pick only two spinners in the experienced duo of Anil Kumble and Harbhajan Singh and decided instead to bring back gloveman Patel, who played the last of his 19 Tests against Australia last year.

"We decided that a second

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Ranatunga resigns

AFP, Colombo

Former skipper Arjuna Ranatunga Saturday resigned from the Sri Lankan board's high-profile Cricket Committee following his country's recent dismal performance in India.

Ranatunga's decision came three days after Sri Lanka's tour of India where they lost a three-Test series 2-0. They had also crashed to a 6-1 defeat to India in a preceding seven-match one-day series.

Ranatunga was heading a committee, which involves all past captains.

"As a person who loves cricket in Sri Lanka I worked hard to execute my responsibility as the chairman of the committee. It is regretful that the expected outcome was not there.

"Under these circumstances I am left with no alternative but to resign," Ranatunga wrote in a letter to Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC).

"There were a few things that I wasn't at all happy with during my association with SLC and I just waited till the team returned from India to hand over my resignation," Ranatunga told AFP.



PHOTO: STAR

Amin Rana (2nd from right) of Muktiyoddha heads the ball into the Rangamati Mohammedan goal during their National Football League clash at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Saturday.

Samabesh in Super Six

Odaka slams hattrick for Muktiyoddha

SPORTS REPORTER



Samabesh Club of Munshiganj were the last team to reach the Super Six of the Fifth Nitol-Tata National Football League when they edged fellow debutants Kacharipara

Sporting Club of Jamalpur 1-0 in the last group league match of the final phase yesterday.

Monir Hossain slammed the all-important goal eight minutes from time at the Bangabandhu National Stadium as the Munshiganj outfit emerged as Group-A runners-up with seven points. Group champions Brothers Union and third-placed Bangladesh Army are the other qualifiers for this group.

Abahani, Muktiyoddha Sangsad and Mohammedan Sporting Club made it into the Super Six from the other group.

The exciting Super Six will start tomorrow with a big match between holders Brothers and Dhaka

POINTS TABL

Group A							
Teams	M	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brothers	4	2	2	0	6	0	8
Samabesh	4	2	1	1	5	4	7
Army	4	2	1	1	3	5	7
Kacharipara	4	1	1	2	1	2	4
Town Club	4	0	1	3	2	6	1
Group B							
Abahani	4	3	1	0	11	1	10
Muktiyoddha	4	2	2	0	7	0	8
Mohammedan	4	2	1	1	6	3	7
Soccer Club	4	1	0	3	6	12	3
Rangamati MSC	4	0	0	4	2	16	0
SUPER SIX							
Brothers	2	1	1	0	4	0	4
Abahani	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Army	2	1	0	1	2	5	3
Muktiyoddha	2	0	2	0	0	0	2
Samabesh	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Mohammedan	2	0	1	1	0	1	1

Mohammedan.

All teams carry points won against fellow Super Six qualifiers and only play teams from opposite group in the final phase. Brothers and Abahani will launch their Super Six campaign with four points each, followed by Army (3 points), Muktiyoddha (2), Samabesh Club (1) and Mohammedan (1).

Earlier in the day's first match, Nigerian midfielder Odaka Oklo slammed the second hattrick of the league as Muktiyoddha Sangsad dromed Rangamati Mohammedan Sporting Club 4-0 with a second-half rally.

Muktiyoddha dominated the whole show but the last year's runners-up failed to break the deadlock in the first 45 minutes. Jeremiah came close but his 40th minute effort was denied by the woodwork.

The Muktis wasted a series of chances before taking the lead in the

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Kolkata rejoices Ganguly return

REUTERS, Kolkata

News of Sourav Ganguly's inclusion in the Test team for the tour of Pakistan on Saturday triggered celebrations in the former captain's hometown of Kolkata.

A crowd gathered outside the left-hander's residence in a Southwest suburb, chanting "long live cricket, long live Sourav", and distributing sweets in celebration.

Ganguly even came out to greet his fans.

"I'm very happy to be back in the team," Ganguly told reporters later.

"I'll give my best. It is going to be a good series. Both are strong teams," the 33-year-old said.

Asked if this would be his last chance, the former captain said, "I don't know, I can't answer that." Ganguly was axed 10 days ago after scoring 40 and 39 in the second Test against Sri Lanka, which the hosts won by 188 runs, missing the series clinching third Test which ended on Thursday.

The decision sparked a national outcry over the treatment meted out to India's most successful captain, who was sacked as skipper in October due to a prolonged batting slump and a row with coach Greg Chappell.

Public demonstrations were held in Kolkata and the issue even figured in the parliament.

DIV I CRICKET Mizan, Monwar guide Boys

SPORTS REPORTER

Half-centuries by Mizan and Monwar spearheaded Bangladesh Boys Club to a three-wicket win over Uttara Sporting Club in Saturday's lone First Division

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Germany's Oliver Kahn became the first goalkeeper to win the Most Valuable Player of the World Cup in 2002.

STAR Sports
Australia vs South Africa
Second Test, Day One
Live at 5:30 am (Monday)

Talk Turkey



Ronaldo

(Real Madrid's Brazilian super star) "We want to get out of this situation as quickly as possible. There are many worrying things happening at the moment and if we look at Barcelona, a lot more."
After losing to Racing Santander in the Primera Liga.

Fitness first for Vaughan



AFP, London

England captain Michael Vaughan has insisted that only by getting all their first-choice players fit can his side be competitive when they tour India in the New Year.

After winning the Ashes on home soil, England recently lost both their Test and one-day series in Pakistan.

That tour saw England dogged by a succession of injuries with Vaughan returning home with a knee problem and spinner Ashley Giles forced out because of a damaged hip.

Batsman Kevin Pietersen (rib) and all-rounder Andrew Flintoff

(ankle) added to England's list of injury woes.

Looking ahead to the India tour, Vaughan told Friday's edition of the Sun newspaper: "We have to make sure we get everyone back as quickly as possible and hit India with a fully-fit squad."

"In the last couple of years we've been very successful because we've had a settled team. We used only 12 players in five matches during the Ashes."

"As soon as you start losing one or two components in the side, it's bound to unsettle you."

However, Vaughan praised Pakistan's performance. "Losing in Pakistan was a blow but you must give them a lot of credit. They bowled fantastically well - Shoaib

Akhtar proved a lot of people wrong - and Inzamam batted brilliantly."

"They put us under a lot of pressure and we just weren't at our best," the Yorkshire batsman added.

"The most important thing is we learn from our failures by the time we get to India."

England are due to arrive in Mumbai on February 13 and are set to play two warm-up matches before the first Test of a three-match series starts at Nagpur on March 1.

After the Test series, England and India are also due to play seven one-day internationals with the first match in Delhi on March 28.

Six in JFA Cup zonal final

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Jhenidah, Gazipur and Thakurgaon moved into zonal final of the JFA Cup Under-16 football tournament on yesterday.

Biplab notched a hattrick to take Dhaka into the final after a 4-0 victory against Shariatpur at Manikganj Stadium.

At Rangamati Stadium, Chittagong managed a solitary goal victory over Comilla while Khulna registered a 2-1 win against Jhalakathi at Bagherhat Stadium.

In other matches, Jhenidah overwhelmed Chuadanga 5-2 at Satkhira Stadium, Gazipur blanked Mymensingh 3-0 at Tangail Stadium, Thakurgaon edged past Joypurhat 3-2 in the tiebreaker at Gaibandha Stadium.

Kurigram thrashed Pabna 5-2 at Kurigram Stadium to reach the zonal semifinal.

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Yorkshire gets its soul back

AFP, Leeds

Headingley, the home of Yorkshire cricket, will continue to stage Test matches after Leeds City Council agreed Friday to help the county buy the ground.

The club have secured a nine million pounds loan from the council, which will now allow them to complete their agreed 12m pound purchase of the ground from the Leeds Cricket, Football and Athletic Company.

Yorkshire had been granted a 15-year international staging agreement by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) on the condition they owned their own ground by the end of 2005.

The council met this morning to give the go-ahead to the loan, which must be repaid over 15 years.

It means that, for the first time, in

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