

## 3RD JFA CUP Hattricks for Rajus

SPORTS REPORTER

The 3rd JFA Cup Under-15 football championship is getting better by the day after a timid start as the third day of the qualifying round saw a flurry of hattricks and goal feast at four venues.

Mohammed Raju slammed four goals in Dhaka's 6-0 thrashing of Munshiganj in the second round match at Shariatpur while the Dhaka midfielder's namesake, Parag Moni Raju, also slotted four to inspire Bagerhat mau Patuakhali by an identical margin at Khulna also in the second round.

The other treble came in Sirajganj where three-goal Arif spearheaded the hosts into the second round with a 6-0 win over Jaipurhat with Hafizul netting twice.

A second-half strike by Mamunur Rashid took BKSP into the zonal semifinals with a solitary goal win over Faridpur at Manikganj while Chuadanga and Jamalpur also advanced to the last four in their respective zones winning in tie-breakers.

At Mymensingh, ten-man Jamalpur blanked Brahmanbaria 4-0 in the penalty shootout after a goalless draw in regulation time while Chuadanga edged Jhenaidah 5-4 after a 1-1 draw at Narail.

In first round games, a brace by Sohel Rana helped hosts Natore see off Thakurgaon with a 3-0 win while a goal in each half by Mostafiz and Murad gave Chittagong a 2-0 victory against Rangamati at Comilla.



Sri Lankan players, led by captain Mahela Jayawardane (second from left), jog during a practice session at the Madhavrao Scindia Stadium in Rajkot on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Rain ruins third ODI

AFP, Port Elizabeth

Mohammad Yousuf scored a stylish 79 and Pakistan's tail gave their team a late boost before rain washed out the third one-day international against South Africa at St George's Park Friday.

Pakistan made 245 for eight in a rain-interrupted innings which finished with one ball remaining.

South Africa were unable to start their reply because of rain.

The teams will go to the fourth match in Cape Town Sunday with the five-match series tied at one match each.

The tourists were 217 for eight when rain stopped play after 47 overs. Azhar Mahmood and Navedul Hasan added another 28 when play resumed.

The innings ended bizarrely. With rain falling, the umpires kept the players on the field with Charl Langeveldt bowling what should have been the last delivery of the innings.

It slipped from his hand, Naved swung at it and it sliced over the slips for six as no-ball was signalled because the ball was too high.

With the rain having become heavy and ground staff running on with covers, the umpires took the players off.

## M'ganj hockey begins

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Five teams won on the opening day of the Munshiganj six-a-side hockey league which began yesterday.

Green Welfare, Shamabesh Club, Bandhan Community Club, Friends Club and Paisa High School won their respective matches.

Zila Sports Officer Hamidul Islam inaugurated the tournament with Bangladesh Hockey Federation treasurer Abdur Rashid Shikder who was also present.

## Rifles, Police start fine

SPORTS REPORTER

Rifles and Police got off to bright beginnings in the Premier Division Kabaddi league which got underway at the Kabaddi court yesterday.

Police trounced Jurain Janata Club 53-25 with three Ionas while Rifles crushed Air Force 66-25 with six Ionas.

Earlier, eminent sports journalist Mohammad Kamruzzaman and tournament committee chairman Abdul Haq inaugurated the league in front of a large crowd.

## EUGS sports held

SPORTS REPORTER

Rokeya House were crowned champions of the annual sports competition of the Engineers University Girls School (EUGS) at the BUET ground on February 8.

The winners claimed 26 points while Rabeya and Teresa House were declared joint runners-up with 19 points each.

Vice-Chancellor of BUET Dr. AMM Shafiqullah and dean of civil engineering Dr. Mohammad Hossain Ali were present in the prize giving ceremony.

# Dravid douses the fire

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

If Rahul Dravid's unusually belligerent statement at a press conference in Kolkata kept the issue of the leaked report from Chetan Desai, the manager of the Indian team for the Test tour of South Africa, in the public eye, then his decidedly composed response to questions on the subject has put it on the backburner in Rajkot. When asked if he was going to speak to the Board of Control for Cricket in India about the matter, he simply said, "If they ask me, I will tell them."

When pressed further, and asked if the latest controversy came at the worst possible time for Indian cricket with preparations for the forthcoming World Cup happening in right earnest, Dravid said, "It's just a part and parcel of being a cricketer in India. In the last three or four years, there has never been a time when there have been no controversies. To be honest with you, it's just part and parcel," he said, refusing to be drawn into further controversy.

"We are cricketers, we learn how to adjust and deal with it and move

on and focus on the cricket, our team and try and get the good performances in. There's a lot of interest regarding cricket, a lot of speculation, a lot of talk. So I guess that's the way it is going to be all the time, we can't change that can we?"

Dravid went on to add that neither he nor the team were worried about anything in the face of the latest controversy. "Nothing really worries me," he said. "I accept it's part and parcel of being a cricketer and if I am asked to give an explanation, then I will give one."

Meanwhile Niranjan Shah, the secretary of the Saurashtra Cricket Association, said that he was yet to get Dravid's views on the exact reason why he came out so strongly against Desai. "We will all be meeting together in Mumbai on Monday to select the team for the World Cup," said Shah. "We will discuss this issue at that time."

On a different note, Shah said there would be no conditioning camp for the Indian team ahead of the World Cup. "The boys finish this series on February 17. They will then go to their respective homes for a week or so and assemble in Mumbai on February 26, before leaving for the Caribbean on

February 28," he said. "In any case, once they go to the West Indies, they will have 15 days before their first World Cup fixture, and by that time, they would have played a couple of practice games as well."

Shah was also confident that the Board would be able to finalise the contracts for the players soon, and when asked about the delay in doing so, said, "It just goes to show the amicable relationship between the players and Board. We will sit with the senior players at the end of this series and prepare a draft of the contract. The process should be completed shortly."

Shah announced that two Saurashtra cricketers would be with the Indian team on Sunday, should the need for a filder arise, given the injury concerns. However, he could not, off the top of his head, name the two players who would get a chance to spend some time in the Indian dressing-room. "Our main side is away playing the West Zone Ranji one-day tournament, but two players who have played Ranji Trophy for us will help the Indian team," he said.

## Aniruddha, Champa clinch titles

SPORTS REPORTER

Aniruddha Mazumder became unbeaten champion in the 27th National Sub-Junior Chess Championship at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hallroom yesterday.

In the girls' event, Champa Akhtar was crowned the champion with five points while Suraiya Sultana was runner-up.

The boy from St Joseph School defeated Mosabbir Khan in the final round of matches, clinching the title with seven points. Saimon Siddiqui Rahman, who beat Walid Bin Manzil, came second while Abdullah Al Saif was third.

## ICC rejects Pak request

REUTERS, Karachi

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has rejected a request by the Pakistan Cricket Board to put back the deadline for naming their World Cup squad, a PCB official told Reuters on Saturday.

However, due to an increasing number of injury problems, the PCB has filed a second request to delay the naming of their final 15-member squad, which is due to be submitted on February 13 along with all other participating teams.

"Our first request was turned down and the ICC said if we had any injury problems, we could ask for replacements from the World Cup technical committee as per the rules," PCB director of cricket operations Saleem Altaf said.

Altaf said he had informed the ICC that it was difficult for Pakistan to name a final squad on time as the team returned from South Africa on February 16 and it would not be clear which players were fit.

Pakistan has fitness concerns over pace bowlers Shoaib Akhtar, Shabbir Ahmed, Umar Gul and Mohammad Sami.

## Rafiqul cracks

FROM PAGE 17 while Rashid's Fuad (27\*) hit the winning runs.

BCSIR High School trounced Happy Times International School by 66 runs at the Iqbal Road ground in Mohammadpur. Manoj hit 64 while Nawajesh of Happy Times took three wickets.

The English Medium school were bowled out for 186 runs in 43.5 overs. Zishan struck 71 but Mehdi (four wickets) and Rafiqul (three wickets) stopped Happy Times.

## Martins faces

FROM PAGE 20 Newcastle officials reportedly said Martins travelled to Nigeria to visit his sick mother.

Okosun added that the NFA would also probe what led to the heavy 4-1 loss to arch-rivals Ghana.

"We are all yet to fully recover from the shock of the scandalous loss to Ghana in London and so everything is now being done to get to the bottom of this national disgrace," Okosun said.

## Hanover held

FROM PAGE 20 coach Ottmar Hitzfeld hoping for a better result in his second match in charge since replacing Felix Magath.

After last week's 3-0 loss at Nuremberg, Bayern are languishing in fourth place, 11 points behind Schalke.

# Can England keep it up? Second CB Series final today

Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

Friday's upset win over Australia in the first Commonwealth Bank tri-series final has a resurgent England firmly believing they are poised to salvage something from the wreck of their Australian tour.

Against all odds, the English continued their remarkable late tour form reversal when they secured a 1-0 lead in the best-of-three finals on the back of Paul Collingwood's brilliant batting and fielding.

The second game is in Sydney on Sunday and an English victory at the Sydney Cricket Ground would be an upbeat end to a disastrous tour previously marked by poor form, injury woes and shattering defeats.

Having been pilloried for their performance for most of their time in Australia and told they might as well give up and go home a fortnight ago, England soared in confidence thanks to Friday's win, their second over the home side in a row.

The English were 14-1 outsiders at the start of the tri-series and probably drifted even further after scoring 120 and 110 in successive losses in Adelaide, but more than three months after arriving on Australian soil, they finally have the home side under pressure and a trophy within reach.

Flintoff, again leading the side because of injury to Michael

Vaughan, said it would be a sweet success after three months of torment.

"After the winter that we've had we want to take something home," he said here on Friday.

"We're in a position now in which we can do so long as keep doing the basics right and keep believing that we can do."

"And hopefully we can improve on tonight's performance."

England have won three games in a row for the first time since 2005, but Flintoff said his players could not afford to get carried away with their improved form.

"We've got to keep our feet on the ground," he said.

"We've won three games on the bounce but we've still got a big game on Sunday."

Collingwood said the English could almost taste a memorable success.

"We need two more good performances, or hopefully one more," he said.

"That would be a great way to end a disappointing tour."

The last time Australia didn't win the tri-series was in 2001-02, when they missed the finals.

It has been the other way all summer, but Australian captain Ricky Ponting conceded his side was now in the unfamiliar position of having to turn the momentum their way.

Ponting also admitted Australia's stuttering recent form was a concern.

"It's up to us to stop (England's) momentum now," he said.

# A wake-up call: McGrath

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Veteran Australian fast bowler Glenn McGrath said Australia's shock defeat in the first tri-series final against England was a timely wake-up call for the World Cup favourites.

McGrath, who endured one of his worst ever games on his 37th birthday, vowed the defeat would galvanise Australia as they seek an unprecedented third World Cup in the Caribbean.

While the champion paceman said the previous loss to England had stung, he conceded Friday's defeat was a real shock.

"The loss to England the other night in Sydney hurt, but it probably didn't hurt enough," he said in Sydney on Saturday. "Whereas last night really hurt."

"Sometimes you need that, especially leading into a big series like the World Cup."

"To have something like that makes us all refocus again and realise what's important and get out there and do the job properly."

"We let ourselves down last night but hopefully we can learn from it."

McGrath said the Australians simply blew their chances against England.

At one point, the home side were 170-1, while England were wobbling at 15-3, yet somehow England triumphed by four wickets.

"The way we played yesterday (on Friday) was pretty disappointing," he said.

"From the stage where we were one for 170 off 30 overs, we were expecting probably a score of 300-plus."

# DOHS owe Brothers one

FROM PAGE 17 with 15 fours and three sixes, shared two more half-century stands, 71 with Nazimuddin and a further 60 with Naeem Ahmed as Abahani raced to 266-2 with nearly six overs to spare. The winning runs, however, flowed from Naeem's bat when he pulled Mustafizur over midwicket for a six.

Earlier, City opted to bat and Mazharul Haque's 83 off 96 balls with good middle-order support threatened a bigger score before Abahani left-arm spinner Sohrwardi Shuvo's four-wicket haul restricted that possibility.

**BROTHERS-KALABAGAN** With many eyes at Fatullah Stadium, Brothers notched their only second victory in the league when they halted Kalabagan for 230-8 in 50 overs.

Chasing 247 to win, Uttam Sarker's 123 off 138 deliveries kept Kalabagan alive but the opener's departure in the 42nd over proved crucial as the tail crumbled under pressure of scoring 65 runs in the final eight overs.

Earlier, man-of-the-match Fahadullah hammered 105 off 95 balls with an early collapse. The Pakistani batsman, the last man out, fought a lone battle with Brothers reduced to 81-5 but their total got the respectability when number 10 Shaful Islam produced an explosive

"And then we had our opportunities when we bowled. We gave England a massive chance and they grabbed it."

McGrath was the biggest culprit in the field, dropping a simple chance off Ian Bell that would have had England in deep trouble at 33-4.

Instead, Bell and Paul Collingwood turned the game on its head with a century fourth-wicket partnership.

McGrath is determined to atone on Sunday at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

The second final, on his home ground, will be McGrath's last international appearance in Australia if England wins and secures the tri-series, with the veteran retiring after the World Cup.

He is determined there won't be any repeats of Friday's personal dramas, especially with some experts suggesting that his World Cup berth could even be in some doubt after a generally indifferent tri-series.

The infamous McGrath scowl was working overtime as he made a duck, dropped the Bell catch, failed to take a wicket, misfielded on at least one occasion and was hit twice in the head by the ball in the field.

A disappointed McGrath couldn't explain his poor form, but said a similar effort on Sunday was unacceptable.

"It definitely wasn't one of our better games," McGrath said. "Hopefully we can turn that around come on Sunday and really put a good performance on the board."

"Hopefully it won't be the last game in Australia for me."

"To walk out on the SCG there on Sunday, my home ground, my

"The worrying thing for me is lately in games is we haven't put 100 overs together."

"If we've batted well we haven't bowled well and if we've bowled well we haven't batted well."

Both sides are likely to name unchanged sides for Sunday's second final, although Australia will mull over some selection issues.

While Australian spinner Brad Hogg didn't claim a wicket on Friday, he troubled the England batsmen and is likely to be retained.

If Hogg holds his spot that should ensure that pace bowling allrounder Shane Watson retains his berth in the side ahead of spinning allrounder Cameron White, despite the former generally struggling in his first game of the series on Friday.

Pace bowler Mitchell Johnson will be considered for a recall.

England's only decision will be whether to return Andrew Strauss to the top of the order at the expense of the struggling Mal Loye and promote allrounder Ravi Bopara into their XI.

**TEAMS** AUSTRALIA (likely): Ricky Ponting (captain), Adam Gilchrist, Mike Hussey, Matthew Hayden, Brad Hodge, Michael Clarke, Brad Hogg, Shane Watson, Brett Lee, Glenn McGrath, Nathan Bracken. ENGLAND (likely): Andre Flintoff (captain), Andrew Strauss, Mal Loye, Ed Joyce, Paul Collingwood, Ian Bell, Paul Nixon, Sajid Mahmood, Liam Plunkett, Monty Panesar, Jamie Dalrymple.

favourite ground in the world, I want to finish on a very special note."

## No extra pressure

**FROM PAGE 17** (Saturday) but it's a question of how they pull up on Sunday," he said. "There are still concerns, especially with Irfan (Pathan) and Yuvraj (Singh). Ajit (Agarkar) still has to recover from the flu. We will see and assess it in the morning and make a call in the morning."

When pressed once more about the fact that Sri Lanka were playing these games without Muttiah Muralidaran or Chaminda Vaas, Dravid explained how the absence of the two experienced campaigners may not necessarily hit Sri Lanka hard. "It's always hard to replace players of that quality but one-day cricket is not just about the stars or the big names but more about collective team performances," he said. "We have shown in the past that you can do well even if one or two of the big names are injured. In one-day cricket, you can sometimes make up the loss of the experienced players by mixing and matching your team."

At the same time Dravid also looked beyond the issue of team selection and reiterated that India were keen to win against Sri Lanka, and hoped his bowlers would lift their performances and force a positive result. "The wicket looks good, like Rajkot usually does. I hope there is a good atmosphere on Sunday," he said. "It looks a good batting wicket, hopefully our bowlers can bowl well. If we can bowl well here, I am hopeful that we can win."

**BROTHERS:** 246 all out in 49.4 overs (Labur 21, Hannan 18, Imran 13, Bashar 9, Fahadullah 105, Anisur 6, Kalim 9, Tapash 3, Saiju 5, Shafuul 46, Rasel 0, extras 11, Shahin 1-40, Salahuddin 1-36, Mahbulul 3-31, Rashedul 3-27, Nahidul 2-47).

**KALABAGAN:** 230-8 in 50 overs (Uttam 123, Kamrul 0, Mahbulul 14, Nahidul 7, Shahbaj 3, Salahuddin 36, Rashedul 23, Monirul 6, Rezaul 8 n.o., Shahin 1 n.o., extras 9, Shafuul 1-64, Rasel 1-47, Saiju 1-44, Bashar 3-36, Tapash 2-34).

**Result: Brothers won by 16 runs.**

**BIMAN:** 122 all out in 39.5 overs (Javed 9, Raqibul 43, Mosharraf 9, Zahoor 35, Sanwar 0, Mushfiq 14, Farhad 0, Sajjad 0 n.o., Murad 0, Syed Rasel 2, Shafaq 0, extras 10, Sabuj 2-31, Younus 2-16, Tariq 4-6, Maola 1-8).

**INDIRA ROAD:** 106 all out in 43.4 overs (Mehdi 7, Ashiqur 6, Rasel 9, Himel 0, Younus 12, Sumon 19, Maola 0, Tariq 2, Sabuj 4, Mokhtar 12 n.o., Sumon 6, extras 29, Syed Rasel 2-18, Mosharraf 2-22, Murad 1-12, Shafaq 1-5, Zahoor 2-10, Farhad 1-17).

**Result: Biman won by 16 runs.**