



PHOTO: STAR
Mohammedan's Nigerian captain Paul (C) slices through Rahmatganj defenders Shipon (L) and Sony to score one of his six goals during their B. League encounter at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Ricky dislikes WC length

AFP, Bridgetown

Australia captain Ricky Ponting has added his voice to those demanding that the World Cup be shortened from its current 47-day marathon.

"I am sure that some positive things have been said about this event this time around," said Ponting.

"In the future it can be compressed a little bit and make a better World Cup next time."

Ponting's call comes just two days after teammate Mathew Hayden also called for the World Cup to be trimmed and on the same day that Chris Dehring, the chief executive of the World Cup in the Caribbean, recognised that the event was too drawn out.

Ponting admitted, however, that finding a solution to the problem would not be easy.

"Trying to programme the World Cup and make it as short as possible must be a logistical nightmare, especially in a place like the West Indies where we are travelling all around nine different countries," said the Australian skipper.

"So if you look at it from that point of view, I wouldn't like to be in the shoes of the people who are trying to organise this type of event."

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has been criticised for the duration of the event. The current World Cup, which started on March 13 and ends with the final on April 28, covers 47 days and

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Paul slams double hattrick

Mohammedan win Chittagong derby



SPORTS REPORTER

Record-breaking Mwach Ukwu Paul slammed a double hattrick as Mohammedan Sporting Club returned to winning ways in the B. League with a 7-1 thrashing of Rahmatganj on the eve of the Bengali New Year.

Having slumped to ninth place with two losses and two draws after opening the campaign with a slim win, Mohammedan came alive after a two-week welcome break with their Nigerian captain slotting six goals including the fastest goal of the league, Kamal Hossain completed the biggest victory of the professional league so far on the stroke of the final whistle.

Rahmatganj pulled one back through Ashraful Awan APU.

Paul, the first foreigner to wear the black and white armband, hit the record book to inspire their first win in five games, which came after a span of five weeks.

He also became the first man to score a double hattrick in 31 years after Brothers Union's Mohsin had scored seven against East End in

the then first division league in 1976. Earlier, Abahani striker Kazi Salahuddin and Mohammedan's Hafizuddin were the only two to strike six goals in a match in the post-Liberation era.

Mohammedan, who ignored competition rules by wearing an all-black outfit with strips of white and green, went ahead just 55 seconds after start when Paul blasted a right-footer into the far post after meeting a left-side corner by Biplab for the fastest B. League goal.

Rahmatganj escaped narrowly in the 11th minute when their defender Mauhuddin nodded the ball onto their own post while Paul shot wide a minute later.

Mohammedan's early domination fizzled out as the five-man Rahmatganj midfield took control and earned a deserved equaliser in the 34th minute. Getting the ball from Hanif from right flank, veteran striker Milon cut the ball back for Apu inside the box and the midfielder raced past Mohammedan defender Arif to place the ball with his left foot past debutant Liberian goalkeeper James Paul.

Apu, however, committed a clumsy challenge on medio Zahid to hand their opponents a penalty that brought Mohammedan back into the game five minutes from break as Paul converted the spotkick effortlessly.

In a one-man show in the sec-

ond half, the robust Paul -- who transferred from Muktiyoddha this season -- found the net in the 55, 72, 76 and 80 minutes virtually on his own.

Rahmatganj keeper Apel, who replaced Amjad at the break, helplessly watched Paul make most of his non-moving feet with a headed goal, one that went into the top right corner and two low drives from outside the box.

Apel however, saved a penalty by Farhad in the 88th minute but Mohammedan fullback Kamal sealed the victory in the injury time with a 20-yard drive into the roof of the net.

With two wins, Mohammedan moved to sixth place with eight points but still remained behind their Chittagong wing.

Chittagong Mohammedan, who edged archrivals Chittagong Abahani 1-0 in the port city derby also yesterday, climbed to fourth place with 11 points after six games.

Rashed Ahmed Dipu slotted the match winner in the 33rd minute to separate the two sides at the MA Aziz Stadium.

Second from bottom Chittagong Abahani remained on three points, followed by Rahmatganj on one.

Yellow cards: Mithu, Paul, Sharif (Mohammedan) and Apu, Sony (Rahmatganj).

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PHOTO: AFP
Sevilla striker Freddie Kanoute (R) surges past Tottenham defender Teemu Tainio during their UEFA Cup quarterfinal second-leg tie at White Hart Lane on Thursday.

Vaas treble sinks NZ

AFP, St George's



Chaminda Vaas ensured Sri Lanka didn't miss Lasith Malinga by removing New Zealand's top three in a six-wicket World Cup Super Eights win at Grenada's National Stadium.

Sri Lanka, set 220 to win, finished on 222 for four to move level on eight points with New Zealand and champions Australia, who have played four games to their title-rivals' five.

Sanath Jayasuriya, who made 64, and Kumar Sangakkara, unbeaten on 69, shared a second wicket stand of exactly 100 in 21 overs that all but sealed victory for Sri Lanka after left-arm quick Vaas took three for 33.

Thursday's defeat, with 39 balls to spare, left New Zealand still needing one more win from their final two Super Eights games, both in Grenada, against South Africa on Saturday and Australia a week Friday, to be certain of a semifinal spot.

And the loss also saw them fall one short of equaling their 2004 record of 10 straight one-day international wins after they'd played one of the leading contenders in this World Cup for the first time.

Sri Lanka return here Monday to face Australia.

Vaas, 33, dismissed both New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming and Ross Taylor for nought before all-rounder Scott Styris, in at four for two, scored more than half his side's runs with a composed 111 not out.

Scoreboard of the World Cup Super Eights match between New Zealand and Sri Lanka at the National Stadium in Grenada Thursday:

	R	M	B	4s	6s
Fulton c Silva b Vaas	28	92	54	4	0
Fleming lbw b Vaas	0	3	4	0	0
Taylor c Sangakkara b Vaas	0	7	2	0	0
Styris not out	111	198	157	8	0
McMillan c Silva b Muralidaran	1	11	7	0	0
Oram c Silva b Muralidaran	31	52	45	0	0
Vettori c Silva b Muralidaran	1	4	2	0	0
Franklin not out	5	8	7	0	0
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-4, 3-71, 4-77, 5-141, 6-145, 7-155.	25	37	27	0	1
Extras: (b-2, lb-2, w-8, nb-5)	17				
Total: (For 7 wickets in 50 overs)	219				
Did not bat: Shane Bond, Mark Gillespie.					
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-4, 3-71, 4-77, 5-141, 6-145, 7-155.					
Bowler	O	M	R	W	NB/W
Vaas	9	2	33	3	w-1
Fernando	7	2	31	0	nb-3, w-1
Maharoof	6	0	31	0	nb-1
Muralidaran	10	0	32	3	nb-1, w-2
Jayasuriya	10	0	44	0	-
Dilshan	8	1	44	1	-

his first two balls for six and four in the bowler's comeback match following a right shoulder injury.

Sri Lanka posted a run-a-ball fifty before Fleming dropped Jayasuriya, on 30, at short mid-wicket off Gillespie.

Jayasuriya completed a 65-ball fifty with one six and three fours.

However, his cut off Jacob Oram

was held by Brendon McCullum, the wicket-keeper standing up, Sri Lanka 130 for two.

Left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori then became only the third New Zealander after Chris Harris (203) and Chris Cairns (200) to take 200 one-day international wickets when he had Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene caught at mid-wicket by substitute fielder Hamish Marshall for 15.

Such was Sri Lanka's dominance; Sangakkara eased his way to 86 ball fifty with one four.

Earlier off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran, like Vaas and Jayasuriya a member of Sri Lanka's 1996 World Cup-winning side, took three for 32 after the quick's early strikes.

Murali joined Malinga -- ruled out with left ankle ligament damage -- and Australia's Glenn McGrath as the tournament's leading wicket-taker with 15.

Vaas needed just five balls to have opener Fleming lbw for nothing.

Taylor, in for Marshall after a hamstring injury sidelined him for four games, then edged Vaas and keeper Sangakkara held a diving, one-handed catch.

Styris -- who took 20 balls to get off the mark -- counter-attacked and was severe on Farveez Maharoof, Malinga's replacement and the only change to the side that beat England by two runs in Antigua.

New Zealand went 19 overs without a boundary until Oram struck spinner Tillakaratne Dilshan

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ZEALAND V SRI LANKA SCOREBOARD

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Tale of the Malinga cut

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lankan stylist took two days to create Sri Lankan bowler Lasith Malinga's bleached-blond unkempt hair that is attracting attention at the Cricket World Cup.

Hair-dresser Nishantha Jayasekera said Malinga wanted a new style each time he went on tour. So the locks were spruced up for the World Cup in the Caribbean.

"Malinga has his own hair ideas and he is not afraid to try out anything new," said Jayasekera who runs the Le Paris salon in Panadura, 25 kilometres (15.6 miles) south of Colombo.

The barber told the latest edition of the Riviera weekly newspaper he has so far tried out five different hair styles on the 23-year old paceman, but never expected his "light blond" creation to become an instant hit.

"It took me two days to get the look," Jayasekera said.

Malinga, who also sports a silver eyebrow ring, had flirted with the idea of a "Mohawk" that would have shaved the sides leaving a thin strip of hair in the middle.

Besides Malinga, Jayasekera also grooms spin bowler Tillakaratne Dilshan, Chamara Silva, Malinga Bandara and Hashan Tillakaratne.

"Malinga likes to stand out, so he goes for unusual styles unlike the other well-known cricketers," Jay