



Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene (L) and his Bangladesh counterpart Mohammad Ashraful yesterday pose with the Challenge Trophy that would be at stake in the three-match Test series with the first five-day game starting at the Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on June 25.

Vintage Alfaz act



SPORTS REPORTER

Alfaz Ahmed was inspirational in Mukti Joddha's 3-1 win over Rahmatganj with a goal of his own and assists for Saifur Rahman Moni and substitute Saiful Islam yesterday as the Reds took pole position in the B. League table.

Former national striker Alfaz, who opened the account with his sixth league goal after a scoreless first half, shaped Mukti Joddha's seventh win in 13 games to take their tally to 25 points, two ahead of joint-second Mohammedan, Sheikh Russel and Abahani.

For a revamped Rahmatganj, who reduced the arrears through Nigerian striker Nche Francis, it was the first defeat after two consecutive wins in the second leg. After 13 outings, they still remained at the base of the table with eight points.

However, the old-Dhaka outfit – featuring four Nigerian recruits, fought neck and neck against Abu Yusuf's side who threatened to score after 13 minutes at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Alfaz, who scored the league's first hat-trick, against the same opponents in a 4-1 first-leg victory, met a cross by Matiur Munna after 13 minutes but the veteran's shot near from the six-yard box was brilliantly parried by goalkeeper Anwar.

On loan from Mohammedan, Francis sliced the rival defence with a chipped pass over Mukti Joddha centre-backs Rajani and Ghansah six minutes later but Nigerian forward Ikogho, unchallenged near the penalty spot, saw his volley rebound off the underside of the crossbar.

Moni should have separated the two sides midway through the first half but the Mukti Joddha striker nodded the ball wide from a hand-shaking distance after Munna's left side centre found him in front of the open net.

Rahmatganj suffered a blow as their inform goalkeeper Anwar limped off the ground on the half hour to make way for Amjad, who was responsible for the side's collapse in the second half.

Francis kept the opposition backline under constant pressure but his hard work went in vain as midfielder Adeyinka and Ikogho fluffed easy chances inside two minutes.

Adeyinka was dispossessed inside the area after delaying a shot while Ikogho blasted his opportunity

wide as the match went to the break.

Mukti Joddha switched to a flat four-back format at the break as fullback Titu came in for Moroccan midfielder Brahim and the gate opened seven minutes after resumption.

Rahmatganj captain Sony and his Nigerian central defence partner Felix hesitated to chase Moni's through pass and Alfaz had a free run down the middle to shoot past a wrong-footed Amjad.

Still smarting from the first goal, the Rahmatganj backs and Amjad were caught napping two minutes later when Alfaz dashed down the right to cross for Moni who nodded the ball into the near post to make it 2-0.

Francis then threw a lifeline to Rahmatganj with his second goal in three matches when the Nigerian chested down the ball and hammered a right footer into Titumir's left hand post after leftback Jahangir's centre from the left was flicked by Ikogho's header.

Alfaz forced a fine save by an otherwise sloppy Amjad before Saiful, who replaced Arman, neatly placed the ball home after a long pass by Alfaz four minutes from time.

Yellow cards: Maruf (Mukti Joddha) and Sony, Jahangir, Apu (Rahmatganj)

TEAMS

MUKTI JODDHA: Titumir, Hassan Al Mamun, Ghansah, Rajani, Brahim (Titu), Arman Aziz, Maruf, Arman (Saiful), Munna, Alfaz (Biddut) and Moni.

RAHMATGANJ: Anwar (Amjad), SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

POINTS TABLE

Teams	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Mukti Joddha	13	7	4	2	22	10	25
Mohammedan	13	6	5	2	23	8	23
Russel	13	6	5	2	16	8	23
Abahani	12	6	5	1	12	4	23
Brothers	12	5	4	3	21	11	19
Ctg MSC	12	5	2	5	10	17	17
Farashganj	13	4	5	4	12	14	17
Arambagh	13	5	1	7	13	13	16
Khulna Abahani	13	3	2	8	13	27	11
Ctg Abahani	13	3	1	9	11	27	10
Rahmatganj	13	2	2	9	9	30	8

WC 2011 will be friendly

Cricket

AFP, Burhan

The South Asian nations hosting the 2011 Cricket World Cup promised on Monday to hold a spectator-friendly tournament with affordable ticket prices.

The pledge by India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh comes after the 2007 edition held in the Caribbean was widely criticised for failing to draw crowds and for being too long.

"We promise a spectator- and media-friendly World Cup in four years time," said Sharad Pawar, chairman of the 2011 World Cup Organising Committee, after its meeting in this northern Pakistani hill resort on Monday.

"We will make unrelenting efforts

to make the event a spectacular one so that more and more people come and watch the best cricket," said Pawar, also the president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India.

High-priced tickets ranging from 25 to 75 dollars hit attendance levels in the 2007 World Cup. Spectators were also barred from bringing in musical instruments until protests forced the organisers to relent.

The tournament was also hit by the death of Pakistani coach Bob Woolmer and initial police suspicions of murder. Jamaican authorities said last week he died of natural causes.

Pawar said he did not want to comment on whether there were lessons to be learnt from the Caribbean event, "but surely it's a pertinent issue and will be discussed at the ICC (International Cricket Council) meeting later this

month."

"We assure that prices of the tickets will be affordable to the local paying capacity," said Pawar.

He said the committee was looking at common visas for India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, following a pattern established by Caribbean nations for this year's competition.

"The possibility of a common visa will also be explored through talks with governments," said Pawar.

The organisers said they would also think about changing the format of the competition, after the 2007 World Cup came under fire for being a marathon 47 days long.

"The format for the World Cup 2011 needs to be re-examined and will be discussed with the ICC," Pakistan Cricket Board chairman SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

BFF switches channel

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday signed a Memorandum of Understanding with satellite TV channel ATN Bangla in a bid to promote football.

ATN Bangla will BFF's partner in publicity and promotion of the game apart from telecasting live domestic and international matches.

The MoU also cancels BFF's deal with Channel i which was supposed to telecast at least 40 matches of the ongoing B. League live. Channel i, which beamed only six matches live, did not have a financial contract.

The MoU was signed by BFF general secretary Anwarul Hoque Helai and Nawajish Ali Khan, senior vice-president (programme) of Multi Media Production Company Ltd, on behalf of ATN Bangla at the BFF Bhaban.

An official contract is expected to be signed later.



Muktijoddha forward Saifur Rahman Moni (2nd from L) heads the ball wide off the mark during his side's B. League clash against Rahmatganj at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

By now Vaughan knows it

Cricket

AFP, Chester-Le-Street

Former Sri Lankan captain Marvan Atapattu could face disciplinary charges after refusing to play in next week's home Test series against Bangladesh, officials said on Monday.

Atapattu, 36, told Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) last week he would not take part in the series after being recalled to the Test side for the first time since December 2005.

SLC secretary Kangadaran Mathivanan said disciplinary action could be taken against Atapattu if it was found he had violated his annual contract with the maran.

"Marvan is contracted with the SLC and it is disappointing that he opted out of the series," Mathivanan told reporters here.

"We will study the contract to see if action can be taken against him."

Atapattu, who was replaced as captain by Mahela Jayawardene after being laid low by a recurring back injury, is currently in England playing for the celebrity Lashings World XI.

The top order batsman was included in the World Cup squad, but did not get to play a single match in the tournament where Sri Lanka reached the final.

Atapattu has scored 5,330 runs in 88 Tests with 16 hundreds. He was included for the Bangladesh series at the expense of another veteran Sanath Jayasuriya, who was rested.

The three-Test series against Bangladesh starts at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground here on June 25.

has been touted as England's new one-day captain with star batsman Kevin Pietersen also mentioned as a possible successor to Vaughan in the shorter form of the game.

Hussain added: "England need to move in a positive and energetic direction in one-day cricket and I think Paul (Collingwood) would be a good choice."

Vaughan had led England in 60 one-day internationals, winning 32 and losing 22, but has struggled to convince as a top-order batsman with a meagre average of 27.15. By



MICHAEL VAUGHAN

injured, was stripped of the vice-captaincy after a late night drinking session following England's opening match defeat against New Zealand in St Lucia culminated in the all-rounder being found in a pedalo in the early hours of the subsequent morning.

Vaughan returned to Test cricket after 18 months out injured, mainly as a result of a longstanding knee problem, with a hundred on his Headingly home ground during

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Russel keep winning

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Russel maintained their winning run in the AB Bank Senior Division Table Tennis League when the holders blanked Wari Club 3-0 yesterday.

Mahbub Billah gave Russel a good start at the Woodenfloor gymnasium when he beat Baban 11-7, 11-6 and 11-5 but Mahbub's elder brother Mostafa struggled to win a five-setter 11-7, 11-8, 4-11, 7-11, 11-5 against Wari's Shahed. Veteran Kachi sealed the victory when he came from behind to defeat Rokin 9-11, 11-6, 11-8, 6-11 and 11-9.

In other matches, Ajax blanked Marinets 3-0 and Armanitola handed an identical defeat to Engineers Club while Brothers beat Mohammadpur Boys 3-1.

C'wood gives Eng lead

Cricket

AFP, Chester-Le-Street

Paul Collingwood's unbeaten hundred on his Durham home ground steered England to a first innings lead in the fourth and final Test against the West Indies at Riverside here Monday.

At tea, on the fourth day, England were 341 for seven in reply to West Indies' 287, a lead of 54 runs.

All-rounder Collingwood was 115 not out, his second hundred of the series after his 111 in the drawn opener at Lord's and fifth in a 24-Test career.

Durham teammate Stephen Harmison was one not out.

Collingwood, together with Matthew Prior (62), added 169 for the seventh wicket after Ian Bell fell cheaply to leave England in trouble at 165 for six.

Fast bowler Fidel Edwards, who ended the partnership when Prior hooked to Devon Smith at deep square leg, had figures at tea of five for 88 in 20 overs - the fifth time he had taken five wickets in a Test innings.

At lunch, England were 202 for six, 85 behind, with Collingwood 35 not out and Prior unbeaten on 16.

Collingwood then went to fifty with a four through the slips off seamer Corey Collymore.

West Indies captain Daren Ganga turned to the off-spin of Marlon Samuels, primarily a batsman, as England moved closer to parity.

Collingwood, however, confidently swept Samuels for four before a similar shot from Prior off the same bowler went for six.

The century stand came up in 165 balls when Collingwood cut Samuels for four, the second fifty up in 70 balls as England, with the new ball looming, cashed in

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West Indies fast bowler Fidel Edwards wins a confident caught behind appeal against England opener Andrew Strauss on the fourth day of the fourth Test at the Riverside ground in Durham yesterday.

Tait to have elbow op

AFP, Sydney

Australian pace bowler Shaun Tait expects to be back in action by mid-August after he undergoes arthroscopic surgery on his right elbow on Tuesday.

Tait, a World Cup revelation with 23 wickets at an average of

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