

Ctg Mohammedan too good for Khulna Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER

Chittagong Mohammedan crushed visiting Khulna Abahani 3-0 in yesterday's B. League at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong.

The port city side, who registered their seventh win in 18 games, took absolute control after Asif Yusuf opened the scoring after four minutes with his fourth league goal while foreign recruit Anthony Doe doubled the lead ten minutes later.

Rashed Ahmed Dipu sealed the victory for the hosts in the 68th minute to maintain their hundred per cent record over Khulna Abahani, who had lost 1-0 at home in the first leg. It was the striker's fourth goal in the competition.

The Khulna outfit remained at the base of the table with 12 points after 18 rounds while Chittagong Mohammedan topped Brothers, Arambagh and Farashganj to climb to fifth place with 25 points.

Twenty-eight report to hockey camp

UNB, Dhaka

Some 28 players reported yesterday to coach Mahub Harun and assistant coach Abdullah Piru for the second phase of the national hockey camp that began at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium.

All the players practiced ahead of the 7th Asia Cup hockey tournament that starts on September 1 in Chennai, India.

Earlier on Wednesday, Bangladesh Hockey Federation picked 28 players out of the initially selected 51.

"Our target in the tournament is to hold the sixth position as we finished eight in the last meet," said assistant coach Abdullah while talking to UNB at the practice venue.

He said that the final squad will be announced after the six-team preparatory tournament to be held in the first week of August.

The teams are BKSP, Navy, Air Force, Army and the 28 players split into two sides.

A total of nine teams -- defending champions Hong Kong, Japan, Thailand, Korea, China, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and hosts India -- have so far confirmed their participation in the tournament.



Did U Know?

The first professional football team to sport an insignia on their helmets was the Los Angeles Rams in 1950 who hand painted yellow horns on their blue leather helmets.



Sachin Tendulkar

(India's cricket superstar)

"I am absolutely enjoying it. That is the reason for me to walk on the cricket field. The most important thing is my love for the game. If I feel I am not enjoying it as much there is no reason for me to be out there in the middle."



BTV & TEN Sports

Bangladesh v Sri Lanka
First One-day International

Live at 10:30 am
ESPN

Sportscenter India
Sports News

Live at 8:30 pm



PHOTO: AFP

Bangladesh spinner Abdur Razzak bowls in the nets during a practice session at the P Sara Stadium in Colombo yesterday. The Tigers face Sri Lanka in the first of three one-day internationals here today.

Ashraful targets win



BISHWAJIT ROY from Colombo

Bangladesh proved earlier that they have the ability to turn the table on them in the one-day game if they gain momentum from the very beginning of a match. But it is no easy task to have the upper-hand against World Cup finalists Sri Lanka when the Tigers meet them in the first encounter of the three-match series at the P Sara Stadium today.

"You have to win every ball against Sri Lanka," declared Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful yesterday.

According to the new captain, the big difference between the other top-ranked sides and the islanders is that the Lankans always love to put pressure on their opponents from the very first ball.

"Sri Lanka attack from the very first ball and what I have realised is that they read our gameplan quickly and that has put us under a lot of pressure," he added.

"It will be difficult to stop us if we take control in the early stages but we should also know how to give our best in very difficult situation," the 23-year-old right-hander warned.

Ashraful felt that his boys should play with courage against the formidable opponents if they want to bury their dismal show in the three-match Test series.

"We should play with guts and I believe that this young side are courageous enough to enhance our reputation in the one-day game. I would prefer everybody, including Tamim Iqbal, to play their natural game but we should also be aware of the responsibility.

"The main objective is to win and I believe we have the ability to be successful against any team in one-dayers if we play to our potential. We have proved it time and again but the real problem is that we are not consistent. I don't want to say that we will 'just play good cricket'.

Fully aware of the vulnerable top-order, Ashraful said: "Our top-order should play their best. We

have a very long batting order as there are a number of all-rounders and I am more hopeful because Murali and Vaas are not around."

Bangladesh coach Shaun Williams also echoed with his captain's sentiment.

"We are confident of putting up a better performance. To do that, our batting must click. I was disappointed with our top-order in the practice match with the exception of Tamim (Iqbal) when we lost half the side below hundred. But we showed that we had the batting depth and we didn't panic with Aftab leading the way, batting at six," he said.

The Australian also valued his team's three-wicket victory in the practice game on Wednesday.

"We have quite a few new players who have come into the one-day team and one of them is Aftab. In played a fabulous knock to steer us to victory in the practice game. I must say it was a good win for us ahead of the series," Shaun observed.

Except one victory in 19 previous matches, Bangladesh have

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Dastagir quits cricket board

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) vice-president Gazi Golam Dastagir yesterday tendered his resignation to the board president.

Dastagir's resignation from the executive committee just a couple of days ahead of its meeting added more fuel to the rumour that all board members would step down following Saturday's meeting.

Dastagir, in his letter to the BCB chief, criticised the most affluent sport body of the country for failing to live up to the expectation.

In the letter, the vice-president reminded that he had constantly protested different decisions, shady deals, anomalies and politicisation of the executive committee while holding office.

The sports organiser, who demanded judicial investigation into the board's corruption, added that corruption and irregularities in the board forced him take this decision.

Dastagir was made the chairman of Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis after new BCB president MA Aziz took over from Ali Asghar Lobi.

Booter Nasir passes away

SPORTS REPORTER

Capt (ret'd) Nasiruddin Ahmed Chowdhury, a star Wari Club footballer, died of heart attack yesterday at his residence in Pallabi. He was 56.

He left behind his wife, two daughters and three sons and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

As a defender, Nasir was an important player in the famous Wari line-up in the 70s. He was also a national referee.

Condoling the death, Bangladesh Football Federation prayed for the salvation of the departed soul and expressed deep sympathy for the bereaved family.

Dhaka win tight opener

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka edged Madaripur 7-6 in a keenly contested opening match of the BASIC Bank 18th National Women's Handball Championship yesterday at the Dhanmondi Women's Complex.

Panchagarh recorded the biggest win of the day when they humiliated Gopalganj 59-0. In other matches, Joypurhat beat Naogaon 13-3, Magura thrashed Narail 32-3 and Dinajpur defeated Faridpur 19-16.

Bangladesh Handball Federation president Nurul Amin inaugurated the 16-team meet in the morning.



PHOTO: STAR

WELCOME HOME: Bangladesh women's cricket team, who won the Asian Cricket Council Trophy, were greeted with bouquets upon their arrival at the Zia International Airport yesterday.

Sanath boost for Mahela



SPORTS REPORTER from Colombo

"Mahela (Jayawardene), is your team under pressure in this series?" a surprised question was thrown to the Sri Lankan skipper when he was talking to the press after a practice session at the indoors of the Premadasa Stadium here yesterday.

Do not think that the member of the press was actually worried about the home team's victory in the ensuing one-day series. He was rather concerned about whether the Lankans would be able to win all the matches by big margins to continue their exploits of Bangladesh.

Anything other than a white-

wash of the visitors would be highly surprising for anybody here because Sri Lanka are not only in top form in Test cricket but also in the one-dayers.

"To me, margin is not the concern. The outcome is important. Our main objective is to win the series and it doesn't matter how you win it. You can't take the eyes off the ball when you play them. We just have to make sure we play the best cricket possible and be consistent about our all-round performance," said Jayawardene about his target.

The Sri Lankan skipper, however, recognised Bangladesh's improvement in one-day cricket but warned that his boys were determined to play their best.

"We always respected Bangladesh whenever we played

them in Tests or ODIs, especially in ODIs where they can be a handful. They've shown that when we played them in Bangladesh. They beat us once and most importantly their World Cup performance was encouraging, so there is no scope to take them lightly," he added.

Not bothered by the absence of Chaminda Vaas and Muttiah Muralidaran, Jayawardene was excited with the return of veteran Sanath Jayasuriya, the most capped one-day cricketer who has 12,006 runs from with 395 ODIs and is just five wickets shy from the 300-mark.

"It's a good opportunity for the others without Vaas and Murali. Their absence is not going to put too much pressure on the rest. Sanath is fresh and wants to play

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PHOTO: AFP

Ex-India skipper Sourav Ganguly (C) celebrates taking the wicket of England opener Alastair Cook on the first morning of the first Test at Lord's in London yesterday.

Strauss nears landmark



AFP, London

Andrew Strauss was in sight of his 11th Test hundred and fourth at Lord's on the first day of the first Test against India here Thursday.

At tea, England were 197 for one after batting through the second session without losing a wicket.

Strauss was 84 not out, after being dropped before lunch on 43, and England captain Michael Vaughan, who'd won the toss, 57 not out.

The duo's second-wicket partnership was now worth 121.

England resumed after lunch on 115 for one with Strauss on 43 and Vaughan 23 not out.

Left-arm quick Rudra Pratap Singh struggled for control and bowled two huge wides. And when he did get one straight, Vaughan pulled him for four.

Strauss's extra-cover driven four off Shanthakumaran Sreesanth brought up a fifty stand with Vaughan and the left-hander subsequently completed his own half-century in 109 balls with nine fours.

It was his second fifty in as many Tests after he made 77 against West Indies at the Riverside last month.

And when left-arm quick Zaheer

Khan strayed, Strauss square-cut him for four -- a sure sign he was in form -- as England reached 150. Vaughan too was in good touch, leg-glancing experienced leg-spinner Anil Kumble for four.

Star batsman Sachin Tendulkar came on to bowl his occasional leg-spin in a bid to break the stand but met with little success.

Strauss, batting on his Middlesex home ground, was lucky to be at the crease after an upish square drive went straight to point where Dinesh Karthik, a wicket-keeper by trade but playing as a specialist batsman, somehow dropped what seemed like a routine chance after apparently failing to sight the ball.

Earlier, Strauss and fellow left-hander Alastair Cook made a brisk start with their fifty partnership up in 52 balls.

India's seamers generally struggled with their line although Strauss did unconvincingly edge through the slips on a couple of occasions early on.

But Cook was quickly into his stride, clipping his first ball, from Sreesanth, off his legs for four.

It was left to former captain Sourav Ganguly, the fourth bowler used, to break the stand.

Better known as a batsman, his good length medium-pace was well-suited to take advantage of the

swing on offer and with his fourth ball he had Cook lbw, for 36 off 39 balls with six fours, veteran umpire Steve Bucknor taking his time over the decision.

England were now 76 for one in the 15th over.

Vaughan though drove Ganguly through extra-cover, one of the Yorkshire batsman's signature shots.

England gave a Test debut to 6ft 7in Hampshire quick Chris Tremlett, included after Matthew Hoggard was ruled out with a back problem.

The hosts, who earlier this season beat the West Indies 3-0, were already without injured fast bowlers Stephen Harmison (hernia) and Andrew Flintoff (ankle), both of whom were set to miss the whole of this three-match series.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the first day of the first Test between England and India at Lord's in London on Thursday:

ENGLAND: First innings
Strauss not out 84
Cook lbw b Ganguly 36
Vaughan not out 57
Extras: (b-9, lb-4, w-5, nb-2) 20
Total: (For 1 wkt in 57 overs) 197
Fall of wicket: 1-76
To bat: Pietersen, Collingwood,

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Seniors refuse to play

BFF picks up 20 more



SPORTS REPORTER

If the first list of the national squad named by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) for the Nehru Cup in India had raised just a few eyebrows, the second set of players chosen for the Merdeka Cup would certainly hurt many.

The BFF yesterday named 20 players for the prestigious Malaysian tournament which will be held from August 19-29.

The latest squad included striker Alfaz, who had announced his retirement from international football in November 2006 after Bangladesh's last match in the Asian Cup qualifiers.

BFF deputy general secretary Manzoor Hossain Malu told yesterday that the federation has yet to receive anything from Alfaz in written about his retirement.

"It's not official. So we called him. The coach has also talked with

him," he informed.

Also surprising was the omission of fullback Ibnul Siraji, a regular face in the national side after Hassan Al Mamun was ruled out for long injury. Despite playing all the matches for ongoing B. League leaders Abahani, the rightback was ignored for his short stature.

It was learned that new coach Syed Nayeemuddin prefers taller players, especially in the backline.

The new list included veterans like Hassan Al Mamun, Hassan, Munna, Parvez Babu and Moni.

Matured players like Shuvra, Juku, Mithu and Kamal -- seemingly past their best -- also got their first national calls although Abahani's midfield duo Zahed Parvez and inform Abdullah Parvez have been mistreated.

The most surprising inclusion was Arambagh striker Ridon, who has been used only a few times as late substitute by his club and has not scored a single goal in the ongoing professional league.

Abahani's second choice goal-

keeper Tarek, billed as the successor to long-serving Aminul and Biplab, however, seemed to be lucky to be named after playing just a few minutes in one game. Tarek was in the national squad for the 10th SA Games last year and the Olympic qualifiers earlier this year.

There was still doubt whether most of the senior players, as they had earlier expressed their reluctances to wear the national colours any more, would join the camp or not.

On Wednesday before attending former India international Nayeemuddin's opening briefing, senior footballers Rajani Kanta Barman, Nazrul Islam and Feroz Mahmud Titu informed the BFF secretary that they were not interested to play for the national team.

Manzoor Hossain Malu, who is also the head of the National Team Management Committee (NTMC),

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