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MSC's shameful act

Biman's jumbo take-off

Cricket
SPORTS REPORTER

There was no short of excitement on the first day of the three-day inter-club players' transfer for the Premier and First Division Cricket Leagues yesterday, but one incident marred the spirit of the game.

The arrival of the national stars including captain Mohammad Ashraf and his deputy Mashrafe Bin Mortaza sparked Bangabandhu National Stadium to life in the opening day but a shameful act of a Mohammedan Sporting Club (MSC) official spoiled the whole party and the gentleman's game took a backseat for a while.

It could have been a completely wonderful day for Mohammedan as they not only signed ace batsman Ashraf but also won a last minute battle against their traditional rivals Abahani over the inclusion of national left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak. However, in the end, the popular club's reputation was heavily damaged by a disgraceful act.

It was nothing new in the players' bourse for the clubs officials hurling filthy words and getting involved in heated exchange but this was for the first time in the history of Bangladesh cricket that a player was physically assaulted.

Promising left-arm spinner Mosharraf Hossain, who is knocking on the national team's door, was a victim of the shameful incident as he was slapped by a Mohammedan official in the stadium's ground floor corridor when he was coming along with other colleagues to sign for Biman.

"I have no words to express what happened today because it's beyond my imagination," said the soft-spoken Mosharraf, also a Dhaka University student, with tears in his eyes.

Everyone was taken aback by the episode and hottest property of the bourse Mashrafe, who made the last appearance before close of shop, was no exception.

"It's really hard to believe that a player was physically assaulted. It's a shame for everybody," said Mashrafe, who is believed to be the highest paid cricketer for the second successive season.

Biman officials however could not identify the man behind the odious act.

"A Mohammedan official stopped (left-arm spinner) Nabil (Samad) in the corridor and immediately started to harass him physically and Rubel (Mosharraf), trying to protect his colleague was assaulted," Ahmed Fayed Shaheen, a Biman official, said while describing the incident.

"Mohammedan told me yesterday to join them but what I told them was that it would be only possible to join them was for Biman to give me the green signal when I already made commitment to them," said young spinner Nabil while explaining his side of the story.

Biman officials however said that they would launch an official complaint against Mohammedan's scandalous act, which was also condemned by Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB).

Beside this sad incident, Biman hogged the spotlight in terms of trading quality players.

The national flag carrier, in their attempt to regain the title, not only fulfilled the pool quota by including Mashrafe, Javed Omar and young sensation Tamim Iqbal but also traded some quality players like Alok Kapali, Nafis Iqbal and Mosharraf.

"Money played the vital role



A smiling Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraf (L) signs for Mohammedan Sporting Club on the opening day of the inter-club cricketers' transfers at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Things however were not so funny for Mosharraf Hossain Rubel (R, sitting) who was needlessly assaulted by a group of Mohammedan followers after he arrived at the venue to sign for Bangladesh Biman.

TALK TURKEY

Arsene Wenger
(Arsenal manager)

"Someone asked me what is the difference between Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi? It is the goals. Messi is more of a dribbler in a very short space, but Ronaldo is god in the air, good on free-kicks right foot, left foot. He has developed very well."

Victoria win hearts

Football
SPORTS REPORTER

Victoria Sporting Club produced a heart winning performance in yesterday's Protiti Pharma Victory Day Club Cup match but that was not enough for Abu Yusuf's inexperienced boys to collect full points against Mohammedan Sporting Club.

Tournament hosts and title contenders Mohammedan not only looked out of touch but also so pathetic at times during the goalless draw that even the scanty crowd at the Bangabandhu National Stadium boomed their favourite team.

Mohammedan, however, remained atop Group A with one win and a draw with Arambagh, who edged Youngmen's Club Fakirpore 1-0 in the day's earlier match, following closely.

Both sides have four points but when they meet in tomorrow's group finale, Mohammedan will have the edge over their B. League neighbours by virtue of a better goal difference.

Victoria, after two draws in as many matches, have a good chance to reach the last four if they can beat fellow Senior Division side Youngmen's tomorrow.

Iddi Badambuze scored the all important goal for Arambagh after seven minutes when the Ugandan striker received a cross from guest midfielder Liton just inside the area and beat the opposition goalkeeper with an angular drive.

Iddi earned a penalty in the 73rd minute when he was tripped by Youngmen's defender Akramuzzaman Liton inside the penalty box but Liton's shot from the spot was saved by Mamun Khan to deny Arambagh a bigger win.

The day's second match began after a one-minute silence was observed to pay tribute to Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, a politician and sports organiser who died yesterday.

Victoria started brightly, stringing neat short passes together to unsettle the rival backline which looked too slow for the speedy youngsters of the only unbeaten side in the ongoing Senior Division League.

After failing to make most of two early freekicks, Turjo got behind the Mohammedan line in the 28th minute but the 17-year-old Victoria striker's low shot was saved by custodian Zia, who neutralised an effort by Arafat a minute later.

The lacklustre black and whites really threatened to score in the 39th minute but Charles Figo, who raced in with a through from Farhad, failed to utilise the rare chance as the Nigerian's low left-footer was palmed out by Mostafa at the Victoria goal.

Mostafa's spectacular save two minutes after the break kept Mohammedan at the bay for the rest of the game when the diving goalkeeper's reflex denied Faisal Mahmud's scorching shot from pointblank range.



Mohammedan's Nigerian striker Charles Figo (second from R) heads the ball during a corner in their Victory Day Club Cup match against Victoria Sporting Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

DAY'S EVENT

V-Day Club Cup Football
Badde Jagarani v Dhaka Wanderers (3:00pm)
Abahani v Muktioddha (5:00pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

Jatrabari stay atop

SPORTS REPORTER

Newcomers Jatrabari Krira Chakra recorded their sixth consecutive win yesterday to stay atop the Senior Division Football League table.

After starting the 13-team fray with a defeat, Jatrabari ensured 18 points with a 1-0 win over Mohakhali XI in their seventh outing at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.

Although Jatrabari looked set for their first draw, Sohel struck the match winner four minutes from time to hand lowly Mohakhali their fourth loss.

Agrani Bank play Purbachal while Arambagh face Dipali in today's matches.

Hafiz, Jalal BCB's choice

Cricket
UNB, Dhaka

BCB cricket operations committee member Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury and tournament committee member secretary Hafizur Rahman Joarder will act as convenor and member secretary respectively of the organising committee for the 2nd Indo-Bangladesh Games Twenty20 cricket tournament.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Board's Cricket Operations Committee on January 30.

Jalal and Hafiz will represent the BCB in Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) meetings on the Indo-Bangladesh Games 2008.

Smith spurs Windies

Cricket
AFP, Johannesburg

But the left-hander from Grenada, who played because Sewnarine Chattergoon was injured, took advantage of excellent batting conditions. He struck

Devon Smith put a frustrating tour behind him as he hammered 91 off 76 balls in the fifth and final one-day international against South Africa at the Wanderers Stadium Sunday.

The West Indies made 295 for seven after being sent in to bat.

Opening batsman Smith had played a minimal role on tour, appearing in two warm-up matches, two Twenty20 internationals and the first one-day international, making just 50 runs in six innings with a highest score of 12.

Langeveldt.

Smith and fellow left-hander Shivnarine Chanderpaul (51) put on 137 off 134 balls for the second wicket to set the West Indies up for a potentially huge total.

South African captain Graeme Smith was forced to delay the third powerplay after 98 runs were scored off the first 15 overs. When he did call for the powerplay, in the 27th over, Langeveldt dismissed Smith and followed up with the wicket of Chanderpaul in the next over.

Despite an attacking 40 off 34 balls by captain Dwayne Bravo, the West Indian innings lost momentum before Patrick Browne (49 not out) and Rawl Lewis (28 not out) were also dismissed 'hit wicket' once each.

LATEST

Rain stopped play for a second time in the fifth and final one-day international between South Africa and the West Indies at the Wanderers Stadium Sunday.

South Africa were on 30 for one in eight overs in reply to the West Indies total of 295 for seven.

10 fours and three sixes before being caught behind off Charl

Rafique's 4 can't save C

Cricket
SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammad Rafique took four wickets but could not prevent Team C from losing to Team B by 83 runs in the third practice match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Team C, led by Shakib Al Hasan, crashed to 112 runs in 43.1 overs, chasing 186 set by Team A.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Nazmul Hossain and Abdur Razzak all took a pair of wickets while Mohammad Shahjada, Alok Kapali and Mahmudullah Riyad took one each. Enamul Haque, coming in at number nine, top-scored with 43 off 60 balls hitting three boundaries.

Aftab Ahmed (13), skipper Shakib (10) and Khaled Mashud (12) disappointed with the bat.

Earlier, Rafique picked up two early wickets of Jahurul Islam (21) and Nazimuddin (3) and then came back to remove Alok Kapali (13) and Mashrafe (2).

It was an interesting day for Rafique as there were strong rumours that he had decided to retire at the end of the South Africa

Sachin's trip only the 3rd

Cricket
PTI, Brisbane

Sachin Tendulkar on Sunday became the third Indian batsman to be out 'hit-wicket' in one-day cricket.

The master blaster, whose dismissals are often a subject of discussion, was at it once again while playing a Brett Lee delivery in the tri-series opener against Australia.

Just when he was looking good, Tendulkar played a defensive shot and while setting off for a run he ended up ticking the stumps with his foot.

The Mumbai batsman, dismissed in this manner for the first time in his ODI career, joined compatriots Nayan Mongia and Anil Kumble who also had this dubious distinction in this version of the game.

Mongia was out off Wasim Akram (Pakistan) at Sharjah on April 7, 1995, while Kumble fell to Andrew Adams (NZ) at Wellington on 8.1.2003.

Apart from Tendulkar, two other members of the 10,000 ODI run club -- Inzamamul Haq (Pakistan) and Brian Lara (West Indies) -- were also dismissed 'hit wicket' once each.

Rakib, Rajib off to a flyer

Cricket
SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Abdullah Al Rakib and International Master Enamul Hossain Rajib were off to winning starts while FIDE Master Sheikh Nasir Ahmed lost in the International Chess Festival of Moscow on Saturday.

In their respective first round matches on the opening day, Rakib beat Stanislav Gankin of Russia while Rajib beat International Master Alexey Alexeev of Ukraine.

Nasir lost to Russian Grand Master Vladimir Burmakin.

A total of 274 players, including 80 GMs, are taking part in the tournament.

Rain ruins tight clash

Cricket
AFP, Brisbane

Persistent rain ruined an intriguing first match in the triangular one-day cricket series when the game between Australia and India at the Gabba was abandoned here Sunday.

Australia were 51-3 after 7.2 overs, chasing 141 to win from 26 overs when a heavy shower forced players from the field for the third and final time.

India had earlier posted 194 from 45 overs after captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni won the toss and chose to bat.

When a further rain delay during Australia's innings reduced that target even further, the two archrivals were evenly matched, although Dhoni thought India had the upper hand.

"The momentum was with us," he said. "I think in the second session (after the rain break) the bowlers really bowled well -- they bowled in the right area and they were getting the ball to swing."

Australia had gotten away to a blistering start in their run chase, racing to 29 off the first three overs.

Irfan Pathan's second over went for 18 runs, with James Hopes smashing four boundaries as the left-arm seamer struggled to find a good length.

India struck in the fourth over when Shanthakumaran Sreesanth had Adam Gilchrist caught down the leg side for 14, the Australian wicketkeeper walking after gloving the ball to opposite number Dhoni.

With Gilchrist's wicket came heavy rain, and play was again suspended.

When the players returned the Australian target was lowered to 141 but the pitch also began to

Styris quits Tests

Cricket
CRICINFO, undated

New Zealand's fragile batting order was left with even less depth with Scott Styris announcing his retirement from Tests and first-class cricket. Styris was dropped from the Test side for last month's series against Bangladesh and he said he was resigned to remaining on the fringes for the upcoming England games.

Styris said he wanted to quit playing Tests in a bid to prolong his ODI and Twenty20 career. "The rigours of international cricket have become increasingly demanding and I would like to extend my career by focusing on shorter versions of the game," he said. "I am really enjoying both one-day and Twenty20 cricket and I'm looking forward to being heavily involved with the New Zealand national team on our journey to the World Cup in 2011."

Styris' retirement leaves New Zealand with several changes to their Test line-up compared to 13 months ago. Shane Bond has joined the Indian Cricket League (ICL) and Nathan Astle quit at the start of 2007, while Craig McMillan and Hamish Marshall, neither of whom were

certainities in the Test team, have also walked away.

Injuries, including back problems, have been a constant concern for Styris in recent years. "I have found the niggles and injuries associated with the longer form of the game were making it difficult for me to get on to the park."

"The decision has been coming for a few months and I have been in regular contact with the selectors in relation to this decision." In his 29 Tests Styris scored 1586 runs at 36.04, including five centuries.

New Zealand Cricket CEO Justin Vaughan said Styris had the full support of the New Zealand board in making his decision. "Scott has a lot to offer in the shorter versions of the game and I am certain that this decision will help Scott to be available for the national team for several years to come." Styris was New Zealand's leading run-scorer in ODIs in 2007, making 848 runs at 56.53.

SCOTT STYRIS

TEST CAREER						
Full name: Scott Bernard Styris						
Born: July 10, 1975, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia						
Teams: New Zealand, Auckland, Durham, Middlesex, Northern Districts						
Batting style: Right-hand bat						
Bowling style: Right-arm medium						
Batting and fielding averages						
M	I	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	100
29	48	4	1586	170	36.04	5
Bowling averages						
M	Wkts	BBI	Ave	SR	5w	

Fm 89.6

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