

Ashraful leads from the front

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammad Ashraful smashed 88 not out in a captain's knock to lead Team A to a facile five-wicket win over Team B in a practice match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The national captain hit seven fours and one six in a breezy 103-ball knock as Team B reached 200 for five with two overs remaining in reply to the Mashrafe Bin Moratza-led side's moderate 199-9 in the stipulated 45 overs.

Rokibul Hasan made 36 during an 87-run stand for the fourth wicket with Ashraful after Team A lost both their openers on 28.

Earlier, young opener Imrul Kayes made 41 and Nazim Uddin a quickfire 52 off 45 deliveries but Team B spoiled the good start to lose their last six wickets in the space of 15 runs.

Left-arm seamer Sajedul Islam was the peak of the attack taking 3-46 for the winners.

National team physio Daryl Lifson informed yesterday that injured seamer Syed Rasel will be given five overs to bowl in today's match. The South African added that opening batsmen Tamim Iqbal and paceman Tapash Baisya have also made good recovery from injury.

Bangladesh U-19s stay alive

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Under-19 team kept their hopes alive for a series win when they levelled the four-match one-day series against the West Indies 1-1 with a four-wicket victory against the visiting U-19s yesterday.

After the first match was washed out, the hosts crashed to a 73-run defeat to West Indies, who skittled out for 154 in the third match at the Fatullah Stadium.

In reply, Nadimuddin Mintu hammered half a dozen boundaries in a match winning 53 not out as the home side reached 155-6 in 38.2 overs.

Nasir Hossain, who made second highest 33, captured three wickets for 30 from ten overs but it was skipper Sohrab Shuvra whose tight spell of 8-5-4-3 had reduced the Caribbean to a meagre total.

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What to WATCH

STAR Sports

India v Sri Lanka
 CB Series, 2nd ODI
 Live from 9:15am

ESPN

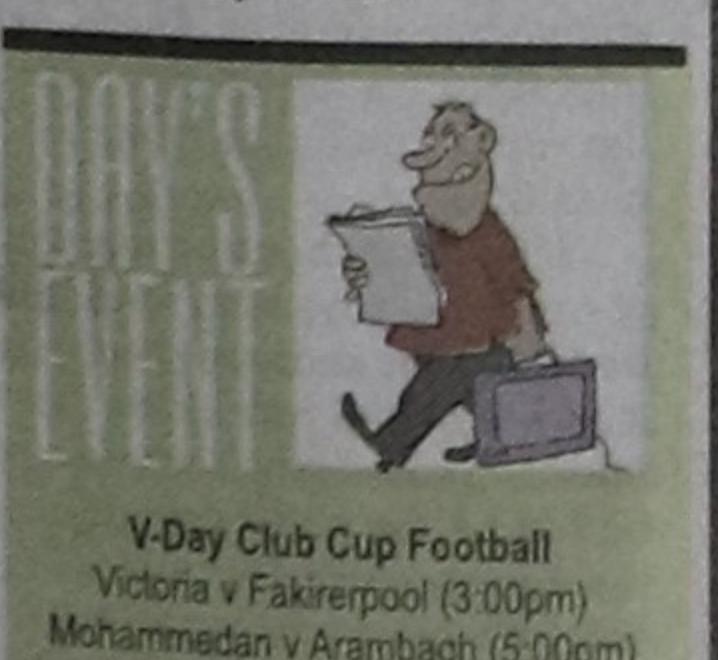
Sportscentre India
 Sports News
 Live from 8:30pm

TALK TURKEY



Brett Lee

(Australia fast bowler)
 "The way he's played over the past couple of seasons, he's a great find for Australian cricket, not only with the ball, but also with the bat. He's a fantastic all-rounder and can do some great things for Australia." About Ashley Noffke.



V-Day Club Cup Football
 Victoria v Fakirpool (3:00pm)
 Mohammad A. Arambagh (5:00pm)
 Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

Day Two Abahani's

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champion Abahani's appearance was the highlight of the second day of the three-day inter-club players' transfer for the Premier and First Division Cricket Leagues at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The excitement however was not as much as it was in the eventful first day although a small group of supporters of the Dhanmondi-based club enthused as much as they could by chanting slogans.

Victoria Sporting Club pulled off the biggest surprise by roping in two national players at the last moment after BKSP became the day's first entrants confirming two players of national colours.

However, it was Abahani who hogged the spotlight despite losing their biggest star and chief architect of last season's success in Mashrafe Bin Mortaza.

National all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan along with wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim signed for BKSP while paceman Shahadat Hossain and left-arm spinner Enamul Haque made late appearances in the day to sign for Victoria.

But the spotlight was on

Shahriar Nafees as the left-handed national opener became the sole star traded by Abahani, as their only other notable contribution was confirming the services of successful domestic campaigner Tushar Imran for another season.

Abahani's third national pool quota has been hanging on balance and they were looking forward to filling it by including ace left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique -- apparently the only player from the 21-member pool list who has yet to confirm any team.

After losing the battle against their archrivals Mohammedan over the inclusion of inform left-arm spinner Abdur Razzaq, Abahani officials however seemed confident of ensuring the services of Rafique as they believe that there is hardly any scope left for the veteran rather than accepting their offer.

Besides Nafees, Abahani signed in eight other players on the day including national paceman Nazmul Hossain, Nadif Chowdhury along with wicketkeeper Sahagir Hossain and left-arm spinner Sunny Sunny, both of whom played for Mohammedan last season.

"Right at the moment my main objective is to overcome the hurdle of HSC examination which is why I have decided to sign in for my institution (BKSP). It was really

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expressing his optimism about his side's chances of retaining the title.

For the first time in his career Nafees, who had stint with the City Club for the last couple of years, is going to play the most coveted domestic competition with a popular club but the youngster was not worried about the pressure.

"I think the pressure is much higher in national team rather than any competitions. So I don't think it would be an extra pressure for me. I have decided to change the tent not only because of money but because I want to play with a good team," he said.

"I want to take the opportunity with both hands to get back my rhythm in my batting like what I had in the first year with the national side," he added.

National all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan could be one of the hottest properties in this season for his consistent performance with the national team but the young man has preferred to concentrate on his education rather than play domestic cricket.

"Right at the moment my main objective is to overcome the hurdle of HSC examination which is why I have decided to sign in for my institution (BKSP). It was really

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PHOTO: STAR

Zahed Parvez (R) silences the Muktijoddha tent after scoring Abahani's opening goal in yesterday's Victory Day Club Cup football tournament at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

CCDM condemns Mosharraf assault

SPORTS REPORTER

The Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) condemned the assault on Mosharraf Hossain by a group of unruly persons at the Bangabandhu National Stadium during the opening day of the three-day inter-club players' transfer for Dhaka Premier and First Division clubs on Sunday.

"The CCDM considers such action deplorable and totally unwarranted in cricket," stated a press release.

CCDM chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu said that they could do hardly anything other than condemning the act as it was out of their jurisdiction.

"What we can do is to ask the law enforcement agencies to increase the security measures for players and officials and be committed to ensuring a proper atmosphere for a programme like this."

And accordingly the law-enforcing agencies have also been informed of the incident. We can't do more than that because it is not in our jurisdiction," said Lipu.

"Biman verbally complained to us and what we believe that they can take the help of the necessary agencies if they want," he added.

Rakib, Rajib win again

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi Grandmaster Abdullah Al Rakib and International Master Enamul Hossain Rajib maintained their winning run in the International Chess Festival of Moscow Open to share the lead with 134 players after two rounds.

Rakib defeated Bayarsaian Gundavaa of Mongolia while Rajib defeated IM Mikhail Krylov of Russia in Sunday's second round in the Russian capital to collect two points each.

The other Bangladeshi player, FIDE Master Sheikh Nasir Ahmed lost to Russian Vasili Zhadanov in the second round.

Seeds crash in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Only two seeded players survived a day of carnage with six players going up to the main draw from the boys' singles qualifying round in the Grameenphone International Junior (U-16) Tennis Tournament at the Rajshahi Zafar Imam Tennis Complex yesterday.

The third seeded Russian Kovalev Egor got into the main draw beating ninth-seed Korean Yong-Jae Kwon 1-6, 6-2, 7-6 while eighth-seed Indian Shahabuddin defeated fifth-seed Korean Ki-Hoon Kim 7-5, 7-5.

Taipei's Chih-Jen Ho ousted top-seed Georgian Sigharulidze Sergi 7-5, 4-6, 7-5 while Chinese Yi-Chen Li defeated Uzbekistan's sixth seed Botir Sapayev 6-3, 6-4 and Thailand's 11th-seed Wasin Wijaya.

Korean Yong-Jun Lee beat Taipei's Chen-Lin Chan 6-2, 6-1 and Portugal's Manuel Marcelo beat Korean Dong-Hun Oh 6-2, 6-2.

The six winners will join 34 other players in the main draw today.

Meanwhile, the tournament was formally inaugurated yesterday following a ceremony and cultural function.

Muktijoddha crash out

Badda, Abahani in semis

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Zahed Parvez fired Abahani into the semifinals of the Protiti Pharma Victory Day Club Cup football tournament with one spectacular goal and an assist for Zahid Hassan Emily as the sky-blues knocked Muktijoddha Sangsad out of the competition with a 2-0 win yesterday.

League champions Abahani finished Group B runners-up to Senior Division side Badda Jagarani, who crushed Dhaka Wanderers 4-1 in the day's earlier match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium to win the group by virtue of a better goal difference.

Both teams ended level on six points while ousted professional league giants Muktijoddha were left in the cold with four points following their first defeat in the event.

In the day's first match, surprise pack of the tournament Badda

displayed a lively brand of football to outplay fellow Senior Division side Wanderers.

Striker Rana, who set skipper Mintu to head home the opening goal after 26 minutes, doubled the lead in the 50th minute with a plating shot from close.

Wanderers reduced the arrears in the 70th minute when substitute Ashraful nodded in a pinpoint cross by leftback and captain Jahangir but two late goals gave Badda the biggest victory of the tournament as well as the group championship.

Nasir picked up a weak clearance by rival goalie Niloy just outside the area and made it 3-1 with a clinical finish five minutes from time while Komol coolly placed the ball into the far corner after taking a square pass from main-of-the-match Rana in injurytime.

Abahani, who suffered a shock 1-0 loss to Badda in the tournament opener, were under pressure to win the group finale but Muktijoddha, who needed just one point to join Badda in the last four,

went for a draw from the start.

Maybe, this negative attitude resulted in too many fouls early into the crucial game with three Reds players being booked inside the first half hour compared to one from Abahani.

Kanchan was perhaps the luckiest player to play the full 90 minutes as he escaped with a yellow card following an off-the-ball infringement on Abahani midfielder Abdul in the first half while his intentional handball after the break was surprisingly ignored by referee Ramkrishna Ghosh.

Muktijoddha, however, got the first real chance when Arman's superb overhead through picked up Alfaiz unmarked at the left flank but the veteran striker's first-time volley hit the crossbar much to the relief of a 3,000-strong Abahani fans.

Abahani got the breakthrough one minute before halftime when Ujjal's solo move down the left unsettled the three-man Muktijoddha central defence.

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Polly goes out a hero

Cricket

AFP, Johannesburg

Shaun Pollock closed his international career on Sunday by hitting the winning runs as South Africa completed 5-0 one-sweep of the West Indies and admitted he'd love to have his career all over again.

The 34-year-old Pollock, a former skipper of the national team, collected 421 Test wickets and 393 limited-overs victims as well as 3,781 Test runs and 3,519 one-day runs in his 12-year career.

FACTFILE

Factfile on Shaun Pollock after his last international on Sunday:

Full name: Shaun Maclean Pollock

Born: July 16, 1973, Port Elizabeth, Cape Province

Current age: 34 years 203 days

Major teams: South Africa, Africa XI, Dolphins, ICC World XI, KwaZulu-Natal, Natal, Warwickshire

Batting style: Right-hand bat

Bowling style: Right-arm fast-medium

Relations: Grandfather -- AM Pollock, Great-uncle -- R Howden, Father -- PM Pollock, Uncle -- RG Pollock, Cousin -- AG Pollock, Cousin -- GA Pollock



South African all-rounder Shaun Pollock waves a final goodbye to fans after the end of the fifth and final one-day international against West Indies in Johannesburg on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

1st Kiwi-Eng T20 today

Cricket

AFP, Auckland

With New Zealand cricket facing further upheaval England have completed a smooth build up to an international series which starts here Tuesday with the first of two Twenty20 fixtures.

England were too strong for limited-over strugglers Canterbury in two 50-over matches -- in Auckland on Tuesday and Christchurch on Thursday -- before starting a series of five limited over games in Wellington on Saturday with three full Tests next month.

England's lead up to the series has been far less settled. Star bowler Shane Bond was dumped last week after signing with the rebel Indian Cricket League, then captain Daniel Vettori on Sunday pulled out of the Twenty20 matches because of

injury and Scott Styris retired from Test play.

Vettori is also in doubt for the first one-day international.

For England captain Paul Collingwood the news was positive, especially with the form of his players in the warm up matches.

"It's a good start to the tour," he said.

I think we've got the players here to do well at Twenty20 cricket and it's vital we do so for the one-dayers -- you can do a lot of (psychological) damage."

England and New Zealand play two Twenty20 matches -- in Auckland on Tuesday and Christchurch on Thursday -- before starting a