

Local minnows share points

SPORTS REPORTER

The Citycell B. League saw its second consecutive goalless draw in as many days when Dhaka outfits Farashganj and Arambagh, both struggling in the lower half of the table, shared points yesterday.

On Wednesday, local rivals Abahani and Mohammedan also drew 0-0 in the Chittagong derby.

Farashganj looked the better side of the two in the dull match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium but Khokon Das was largely responsible for the old Dhaka outfit's return without a win.

The midfielder came close in the fifth minute when he dashed down the left but his rising shot kissed the outside of the sidebar to run out harmlessly.

Arambagh threatened to score five minutes later but Tabith Awal, taking a pass from Anwar, shot straight to the rival goalkeeper.

Farashganj, who moved to nine points from seven outings, got two more chances early into the second half but Khokon failed to beat Piru after the Arambagh keeper had palmed away a cross by Anwar in front of his goal.

Khokon wasted another opportunity when he drove wide from close range as Arambagh secured their sixth point also after seven matches.

There will be no matches today.



Did U Know?

Star batsman Vangipurappu Venkata Sa Laxman has scored six of his 13 hundreds against Australia, including two double-centuries, and is only the second Indian after Sachin Tendulkar to have made more than 2,000 runs against them.



Talk Turkey



Murali Kartik

(Indian bowler)

"The Holdings and the Athertons say I am one of the top three left-arm spinners in the world... People say I am the best left-arm spinner in India, but I am not playing for India."

Ruing that he doesn't seem to be in the frame despite the retirement of Anil Kumble.



What to Watch

Neo Cricket

India v Australia
Fourth Test, Day Two
Live from 10:00am

BTv

Bangladesh v South Africa
First ODI
Live from 6:15pm

TEN Sports & ZEE Sports

ICL Twenty20
Dhaka v Lahore
Live from 8:00pm

ESPN

Sportscenter India
Sports News
Live from 8:30pm



IN A LEAGUE OF HIS OWN: Sachin Tendulkar sees his well-timed square cut go towards point on the first day of the fourth Test between India and Australia on Thursday. The legendary batsman smashed his 40th Test hundred on a day of fluctuating fortunes for both sides.

Tendulkar hits 40th ton

Cricket

AFP, Nagpur

Indian superstar Sachin Tendulkar smashed his 40th century to put India in a healthy position in the fourth and final Test against Australia here on Thursday.

The hosts reached 311-5 at stumps on the opening day with Tendulkar (109) putting on 146 for the fourth wicket with Venkatsai Laxman, who made a solid 64 in his 100th Test.

Sourav Ganguly, playing his final Test, was unbeaten on 27 with new captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni on four not out.

India looked in trouble when they slipped from 98 without loss to 116-3 in the morning session, with debutant off-spinner Jason Krejza (3-138) grabbing two wickets and seamer Shane Watson one.

But Tendulkar, 35, and Laxman ensured their team did not lose the advantage of winning the toss on good batting pitch. Both scored freely against pace and spin.

India lead 1-0 in the series following their 320-run victory in the second Test in Mohali. The matches in Bangalore and New Delhi were drawn.

Australia, needing a win here to retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, failed to maintain pressure on the

batsmen. Pacemen Brett Lee (0-46) and Mitchell Johnson (1-54) bowled well only in patches, while leg-spinner Cameron White failed to test the batsmen on a first-day wicket. Krejza's three wickets proved expensive.

Australia also failed to make the most of the opportunities that came their way, with Johnson dropping Tendulkar on 85 off Krejza at deep mid-off when the batsman stepped down the track to attempt a big shot.

The Indian batsman offered another chance on 96. Lee ran back from mid-off to hold a skier but failed to judge it properly with Krejza again the unlucky bowler.

Barring these lapses, Tendulkar looked in command and executed handsome shots on both sides of the wicket. He hit 12 fours in his 188-ball knock before being trapped leg-before by Johnson, bowling with the second new ball.

India were off to a brisk start, with Virender Sehwag (66) dominating a 98-run stand for the opening wicket with Murali Vijay who made an impressive 33 on his debut.

Australia's first success came when Watson had Vijay caught behind off a lifting delivery. Krejza then took two wickets in three overs, dismissing Sehwag and

Rahul Dravid for a duck.

The spinner, hit for a four and a six by Sehwag in his opening over, extended Dravid's poor run with the bat when he had the Indian caught by Simon Katich at short-leg with a delivery that turned and bounced.

Dravid has scored just one half-century in the series.

Krejza, 25, celebrated again when he removed Sehwag, bowled off an inside-edge while attempting to cut. Sehwag hit one six and nine fours in a 69-ball knock -- his 16th Test half-century.

His third wicket came in the last session when he had the well-set Laxman caught behind.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the opening day of the fourth and final Test between India and Australia in Nagpur on Thursday:

INDIA: First innings	66
Sehwag b Krejza	33
Vijay c Haddin b Watson	33
Dravid c Katich b Krejza	0
Tendulkar lbw b Johnson	109
Laxman c Haddin b Krejza	64
Ganguly not out	27
Dhoni not out	4
Extras: (b-4, lb-2, nb-1, w-1)	8
Total: (For 5 wks in 87 overs)	311
Fall of wickets: 1-98, 2-99, 3-116, 4-262, 5-303	
To bat: Harbhajan, Zaheer, Mishra, Sharma	

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Bangladeshi boys win friendly

SPORTS REPORTER

Sajid and Anik Barman each scored a brace as visiting Canary Wharf Youth Football Academy team from Bangladesh defeated Elite Youth Club 4-2 in a friendly match in London on Wednesday, according to a message received in Dhaka.

The youngsters have already visited Upton Park, home of London club West Ham, where they were scheduled to play against the West Ham U-15 yesterday. The boys are also invited to watch the West Ham-Everton Premiership match tomorrow.

Rajib going great guns

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi Grandmaster Enamul Hossain Rajib maintained his impressive run in the 12th Bavarian Open International Chess Championship in Bad Wiessee, Germany bagging 4.5 points after five rounds.

Rajib, still unbeaten, defeated German player Kick Joachim in the fifth round on Wednesday and was facing Polish GM Babras Piotr in

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Siddons thinking big

Cricket

BISHWAJIT ROY in Johannesburg

It may be easy for someone to say what would happen in the one-day series between Bangladesh and South Africa when the two sides get involved in the first match of the three-match series at Potchefstroom's Senwes Park today if one considers the past records.

Because it is all but one-sided affairs whenever the two sides met previously except the Tigers' glorious victory in the second round of last year's World Cup in West Indies.

Mohammad Ashraf's men could add another feather in their cap if they didn't let down the chances in the tour opening Twenty20 international at the New Wanderers here on Wednesday.

The spirited display however gave the Tigers courage to turn the table this time from the disappointing first trip in 2002 despite the fact that they have been caught in a vicious circle of lost opportunities in the last few months.

"We are looking for big things," said Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons yesterday prior to the first one-day international, adding that it was exciting the way his side pushed

the big teams in recent times.

The Australian was disappointed by his team's batting but very much satisfied with the way his side was competitive in the last two series, against Australia and New Zealand, and said that this young side is even capable of winning the series against South Africa. But the pre-condition is the top four batsmen need to do their jobs.

"Anything can happen in the series. Watching their (South African) batsmen against our spin bowlers I can say that we have the ability to worry them but again the batsmen have to do their job. There

are bowlers like Dale Steyn and Morne Morkel but we faced quality bowlers against New Zealand," he observed.

"Maybe we could not finish the game in our way but I am really happy because now we reach positions to win the matches. Bowlers are doing their job and some batsmen are working very hard. It's fantastic to see that we put pressure on our opponents," he added.

Siddons didn't hide his frustration on the way his skipper and Tamim Iqbal got out in the Twenty20 to let down a great

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Shocking!

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER in Johannesburg

'Any other top international team definitely would walk away from the series'. It was the way Bangladesh team operations manager Shafiqul Haq expressed his disappointment over the poor hospitality the Tigers so far have received from the Cricket South Africa (CSA) authorities.

It has started from the very beginning of the tour when the players and officials had to stay five hours in the team hotel lobby on November 2 before being checked-in after a fourteen hours journey. Things however got worse yesterday after the completion of the Twenty20 match at the Wanderers Stadium as Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraf and man-of-the-match Abdur Razzak had to sit on the dais for forty five minutes only to know that there was no post-match briefing.

The harsh treatment shocked everybody.

Though the players were not ready to focus too much on the negligence from CSA, Shafiqul already gave his report to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) by describing all the mismanagement here.

"I already gave my report and accordingly our board made a strong statement to Cricket South Africa. It's amazing the way an international team has been treated here," said Shafiqul.

"You know our players had to wait five hours at the hotel lobby. Can you imagine it for any other country? There is hardly any security for us," said an angry Shafiqul.

After all these happenings it may be better not to say anything about the facilities available in the press box of the picturesque stadium in Johannesburg.

One can't be sure when things will actually happen if someone says: "Wait, you will get it within ten minutes."

Maradona may come!

SPORTS REPORTER

The football fans of the country might get a glimpse of legendary footballer and current Argentine coach Diego Maradona this month if the World Cup winner gives his consent to visit Bangladesh.

Maradona is expected to visit Kolkata early in December and the marketing agent organising the trip has approached Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin to know about Bangladesh's interest.

"An agent called me two days earlier and asked me whether we have any interest to bring Maradona or not. I told them that I am interested to be a partner of this tour," Salahuddin told The Daily Star last night.

"I have also told them that if we

can afford the cost we will go for it. They will seek Maradona's consent and let me know what the budget would be. That's all I can say about it now," the BFF chief said adding that if a player of Maradona's status visits the country, it would be a great boost for the game.

Maradona's expected two-day visit to the West Bengal capital is on a promotional tour. During the trip, organised by Celebrity Management Group, he is scheduled to visit the Missionaries of Charity Mother House and inaugurate the Indian Football School (IFS), a state-of-the-art sports facility at the Maheshtala township.

The IFS has also struck a deal with famous South American club River Plate to send a bunch of selected trainees to the club in the

coming time.

"Top coaches from River Plate's academy will also come down to Kolkata to monitor the two-month long clinic here," Member of Parliament Shamik Lahiri, who is one of the key people behind organising the visit, was quoted by an Indian newspaper.

As per plans, Maradona is expected to visit Kolkata accompanied by wife Claudia and daughter Dalma.

"Following email exchanges routed through Claudia, Maradona agreed to meet us at his residence," the MP said.

"We met him on November 1 at his residence, and he showed his keenness to visit the Mother House. He spent more than an hour with us and signed a deal to visit Kolkata."

Juve jive on Del Piero

AFP, Paris



Veteran striker Alessandro del Piero shot Juventus into the last 16 of the Champions League on

Wednesday after scoring both goals in their 2-0 victory over Real Madrid in Spain.

Juventus coach Claudio Ranieri had colourfully asked his players to play against the nine-times European champions as if it was a 'Play Station' game and they repaid him in full.

While the 'Old Lady' progressed, adding to Barcelona's and Sporting Lisbon's clinching berths in the last 16 on Tuesday, Real Madrid were left in limbo.

It was also a night of frustration for English Premier League giants Manchester United and Arsenal.

Having entered the evening looking to seal Champions League knockout places, they found themselves both held to draws in their respective group games.

Reigning champions United came from a goal behind to draw 1-1 with Scottish champions Celtic

and should still easily progress from Group E with a win in their next match.

Arsenal failed to repeat their 5-2 Group G win over Fenerbahce from the trip to Turkey two weeks ago as they were held 0-0 this time.

Like United, however, they still lead their group though, without a win in their last three matches, coach Arsene Wenger should be more concerned about their poor form than focusing on the bad behaviour of their opponents.

Wenger's French compatriots Lyon look to be on the verge of making the second round as well after a fine 2-0 win over Romanian side Steaua Bucharest with their ever-green Brazilian playmaker Juninho setting them on their way with a freekick late in the second-half.

Their progress to the next round was helped by ironically another Romanian Adrian Mutu, whose 11th minute goal saw Lyon's group opponents Fiorentina to a 1-1 draw at home to German giants Bayern Munich, who are now tied on eight points with the seven-time French champions at the top of Group F.

Ranieri, known as the 'Tinkerman' when he was at Chelsea for his habit of changing

the starting line-ups for each match, was thankful to striker del Piero who scored both their goals, but the Juve handler said he had never doubted the outcome once he had delivered his pre-match talk.

"Juventus deliver when it matters," said Ranieri. "I told my players to go and play as if they were using a 'Playstation', to go on to the pitch and run and win."

Manchester United coach Sir Alex Ferguson may have been frustrated in his attempts to get his side through already to the last 16 but despite the rather fortunate 1-1 draw with Celtic he had reassuring words for Celtic's coach and former United player Gordon Strachan.

He insisted he would be sending a strong side to Villarreal, who looked to be going through on Wednesday but were held to a 2-2 draw with Aalborg, in pursuit of the points they need to be sure of topping the group.

"We want to win the group, so Celtic don't need to worry about that," pledged the Scot, who admitted that he felt his side were headed for their second defeat here in the space of three years.

Strachan rejected the criticisms

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Juventus forward Alessandro Del Piero unleashes a free-kick to score his second goal during their Champions League match against old-rivals Real Madrid at the Santiago Bernabeu on Wednesday. The veteran striker has hit a purple patch and his sterling performance saw the Old Lady triumph in Madrid.

All about Cricket



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