

Russel stay in hunt

SPORTS REPORTER



Alfaz Ahmed missed a penalty but scored from the other to keep Sheikh Russel's slim hopes alive to finish runners-up in the Citycell B. League with a 1-0 win over Rahmatganj yesterday in the last match of the penultimate round.

The missed penalty meant that the veteran striker wasted a chance to overtake Mohammedan's Nigerian striker Alamu Bukola in the race for the top scorer as both came level on 16 goals.

The victory, Russel's 11th in 19 games, ensured their third place but to bag the second spot, they must now keep their fingers crossed for Mohammedan to lose to Chittagong Abahani in the final round.

POINTS TABLE

Teams	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Abahani	19	15	2	2	39	8	47
Mohammedan	19	12	5	2	39	11	41
Russel	19	11	5	3	38	20	38
Brothers	19	9	7	3	30	21	34
Ctg MSC	19	8	6	5	21	14	30
Farashganj	19	7	5	7	23	20	26
Rahmatganj	19	6	3	10	20	24	21
Ctg Abahani	19	5	5	9	17	20	20
Arambagh	20	4	6	10	14	27	18
Muktijoddha	19	2	4	13	7	32	10
Khulna Abahani	19	1	2	16	9	57	5

If second-placed Mohammedan, who have a three-point advantage, lose in Chittagong and Russel, who are on 38 points, can win their final game against Farashganj, both teams will finish on equal points and a play-off will be needed to separate the two sides.

Rahmatganj, who held Russel 2-2 in the first leg, began brightly at the Bangabandhu National Stadium but paid for squandering opportunities.

Ugandan striker Idris Kasirye, Nigerian Nche Francis and Ripon all fluffed their scoring chances while Moroccan striker Samir Omari spoiled Russel's only real chance in the first half.

Russel, who had all three foreigners back in the side after missing Omari through suspension in their 2-1 loss to champions Abahani in the previous round, geared up after the break and finally went ahead in the 59th minute from a spotkick.

Impressive right-winger Mobarak was fouled by Kabir inside area and Alfaz sent Rahmatganj goalkeeper Mohammed Ali the wrong way to separate the two sides.

Four minutes later, the old-Dhaka outfit conceded the second penalty of the match when Ashrafal brought down Omari inside the box.

Alfaz hit the mark from the 12-yard spot but referee Tayeb Hasan ordered a re-kick as Rahmatganj players rushed into their area before the national striker had struck the ball. Alfaz, who was replaced in the 71st minute, failed in his second effort as Ali made a diving save on the penalty to keep Rahmatganj in the game.

The rest of the match was full of attacks and



Sri Lanka batsman Suwini de Alwis fails to make her ground as Bangladesh wicketkeeper Mina Khatun (R) acrobatically removes the stumps from a Panna Ghosh throw during their tri-nation match at the Bir Shreshtha Motiur Rahman Stadium in Khulna yesterday.

PHOTO: COURTESY



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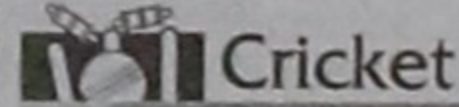
Valencia v Malaga
Live from 2:00am (Sunday)

TEN Sports

West Indies v England
Second Test, Day 2
Live from 8:00pm



Rain spoils NZ party



INTERNET, undated

Australia retained the Chappell-Hadlee trophy after rain ensured that the fifth and final one-day international at the Gabba finished with no result.

Trailing the five-match series 2-0 after the opening two fixtures, Ricky Ponting's men fought back superbly to restore parity and with no result possible in Brisbane the series ended all square at 2-2.

After being set 156 for victory off 20 overs, New Zealand were well on course for victory at 123-6 with opener Martin Guptill well set on 64 not out and debutant Brendon Diamanti unbeaten on 26.

However, with six overs remaining and the Black Caps needing just 33 more runs for victory, a torrential shower halted the tourists charge and ended the match as a result.

The series therefore finished at 2-2, meaning Australia retaining the Chappell-Hadlee series following their 2-0 win in 2007.

Play was delayed by almost five hours due to rain in Queensland, and the day-night encounter was revised into a 22-over-a-side contest.

Australia were indebted to makeshift opener Haddin who continued his fine form with an

unbeaten 88 off 65 deliveries to guide the hosts to 168-4.

Haddin appeared in total control throughout his innings, striking five boundaries and three sixes, but it was perhaps his patience under pressure in the middle of the innings that was most impressive.

He didn't do it all on his own, however, with Ferguson continuing his dream start to his international career with a brilliant 55 not out off 35 balls in just his fourth ODI.

Having joined Haddin at the crease at 70-4, the pair put together an unbeaten 98-run stand to steal the upper hand at the midway point.

James Hopes (5) got the Australian innings going with a boundary in the second over but his aggression soon cost him his wicket when he skied a wild pull-shot to Daniel Vettori who made no mistake.

Kyle Mills (2-22) kept the pressure on the home side when he removed Australia captain Ricky Ponting (2) caught behind with a well directed out-swing.

David Hussey, who made a match-winning 79 in the previous match, found the going much tougher this time around and was bowled by Iain O'Brien for six.

Haddin continued to plunder the Black Caps attack, however Vettori (1-24) halted Australia's momentum when Mike Hussey hit a

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Vettori 'happy'

CRICINFO, undated

Daniel Vettori had no complaints over New Zealand's near miss for a first one-day series win in Australia, but he was disappointed the rain did not stay away for a couple more overs. Martin Guptill's breath-taking 64, which came from only 34 balls, pushed the tourists to 33 short of their target of 156 with six overs remaining when the weather closed in again.

Guptill and the debutant Brendon Diamanti, who was 26 not out, still had the batting Powerplay in hand before the rain. The untimely cloud burst forced the match to be abandoned and allowed Australia to keep the Chappell-Hadlee Trophy after the 2-2 series result.

"It's an odd feeling," Vettori said. "You wanted to see the

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Dubai tri-series cancelled

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan cricket received a further blow Friday with the cancellation of a tri-series in Dubai scheduled for late March due to the unavailability of the Sri Lankan team, a top official said.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief operating officer Salim Altaf told AFP that the event would be scrapped.

"We have been told by organisers that the tri-series has been cancelled because, I believe, the Sri Lankan team is unavailable," said Altaf. The third team was to be Bangladesh.

Altaf said he did not know why Sri Lanka could not participate.

The event was part of a nine-million dollar deal with

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Bangladesh's maiden win

Keep final hopes alive

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh handed Sri Lanka a stunning six-wicket defeat in the GrameenPhone Tri-Nation Women's Cricket Tournament yesterday at the Shaheed Flight Lieutenant Motiur Rahman Stadium in Khulna.

This victory gave thousands a chance to smile after an otherwise unsuccessful tri-series so far and sets up a virtual semifinal clash against Pakistan on Saturday. Sri Lanka, who have led the way in the tournament with a perfect record so far, lost the toss and were put into bat first.

It proved to be a disaster for the islanders

POINTS TABLE

Team	Mat	Won	Lost	Pts	NetRR
Sri Lanka	4	3	1	15	+1.160
Bangladesh	3	1	2	5	-0.507
Pakistan	3	1	2	5	-1.079

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and they were shot out for only 67, a target which the winners chased down with six wickets in hand and 111 balls to spare.

Bangladesh's success was based on a four-pronged bowling attack, with everyone picking up wickets. Panna Ghosh struck the first blow after she trapped Chamari Polgampola lbw in the fifth over, and Shamima Akhter bowled Hiruka Fernando to reduce Sri Lanka to 25 for 2.

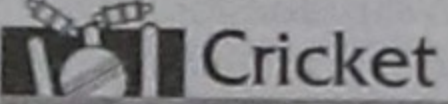
The Lankans also proceeded to self-capitulate as two middle-order batsmen, including captain Sashikala Siriwardene, fell victim to run-outs through sharp fielding by the Bangladesh team. The tail then put only meek resistance in the face of disciplined bowling as four of the last five batsmen fell without troubling the scorers.

Bangladesh too began their chase badly when Shathira Jakir was lbw to Polgampola for a 13-ball duck but steady contributions from Ayesha Akhter, who top scored with 24, Ghosh and captain Salma Khatun secured the joyous and at the same time a much-needed victory.

Sri Lanka have already qualified for the final of the tournament and will be joined by the

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Sand blow on Day One



AFP, Antigua

An unsuitable outfield forced the abandonment of play on the opening day of the second Test between West Indies England after 45 minutes yesterday at the Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Ground.

Play was called off following talks between players, umpires and Alan Hurst, the match referee, with England at 7-0.

West Indies bowlers were finding it difficult to keep their footing on an outfield covered in sand after rain.

Discussions are taking place to determine whether the problem ground can be repaired or whether the Test will have to be relocated to another venue.

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) chairman Giles Clarke commented on the issue "The

ECB is committed to playing this Test match in Antigua once the ground is safe."

"The bowlers are having trouble getting their footing - they were digging down in the sand and the turf was giving way, the umpires decided it was very dangerous and after talking to the captains decided it was unfit for play today. So we are going to look at the options available to us," Match Referee Alan Hurst told BBC Test Match Special.

Hurst rejected suggestions that with the outfield in its current state for several days leading up to the match, this scenario could have been avoided by switching the venue in advance.

Former England opener Geoffrey Boycott said "They have to try and get a Test match played in Antigua, the match referee, captains and West Indies Cricket Board should see if it's possible to get a pitch prepared."

"This should be a huge embarrassment to

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LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

The Grameenphone Bhatiary Golf Cup tee-off yesterday at the Bhatiary Golf and Country Club (BGCC) in Chittagong.

Local and expatriate members of the club and other golfers are taking part in this prestigious event.

Vice-president (administration and finance) of Bhatiary Golf and Country Club Wazed Thakur inaugurated the tournament.

Later in the evening, Mohammad Shamim Chowdhury, senior vice-president of BGCC, distributed prizes among the winners. Grameenphone has been sponsoring the tournament since 2007.

SHATKHIRA CRICKET

Our Correspondent: Ganamukhi Juba Sangha emerged champions after

defeating Munshipara Juba Sangha by two wickets in the Puratan Shatkhira Cricket tournament at Satkhira Government College ground.

Batting first after winning the toss, Munshipara scored 267 for seven in 40 overs. Sanjoy Kumar smashed 102 off 90 balls for Munshipara while Pakistani cricketer Jafar Qureshi and Nayan took two wickets each for Ganamukhi.

In reply, Ganamukhi scored 269 for eight in 39.2 overs with Qureshi scoring 87. Munshipara's Mustakim took three wickets. Qureshi was adjudged man of the match.

A large number of cricket lovers watched the match as both national and a Pakistani and an Australian cricketer. Broady, played in the final. Satkhira Police Super Abu Sufiyan distributed trophies

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Shirin, Masuda share lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Sharmin Sulatana Shirin joined Masuda Begum on top of the 30th National Women's Chess Championship qualifying table after six rounds yesterday.

Masuda, who had solo lead, drew with Nazrana Khan Eva at the federation hall-room in the penultimate round while Shirin defeated Rokhsana Titi. The leaders had five points each, followed closely by Eva and Farjana Hossain Anne on 4.5 points.

In other 6th round games, Anne drew with Zakia, Pratikha beat Nupur, Ahely beat Mithila, Runu drew with Amena and Tani beat Reshma. The qualifiers end today.

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