



Victoria's wicketkeeper-batsman Arman Hossain raises his bat after scoring his maiden century in the Premier Division Cricket League against Mohammedan Sporting Club at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Arman ton stuns Mohammedan

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

A scintillating unbeaten hundred by Arman Hossain helped Victoria pull off the first win in the Premier Division Cricket League with an emphatic eight-wicket victory over Mohammedan at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The mediocre Victoria registered their first win in three matches in style as they outshone their celebrated opponents by taking over a challenging total of 242 quite convincingly. On the other hand it was second setback for the popular black and whites after their tied first game against Young Pegasus.

At the Fatullah Cricket Stadium, pace spearhead Mashrafe Bin Mortaza led from the front as defending champions Abahani bounced back from their second round defeat against Gazi Tank to secure a 69-run victory over Young Pegasus in the low-scoring match.

After Mahbulul Alam's four-wicket burst, in-form Shakib Al Hasan fired on as Biman maintained their winning run with a comfortable seven-wicket victory over Partex Sporting Club at BKSP.

VICTORIA-MOHAMMEDAN

Put into bat first Mohammedan made a poor start by losing three wickets for 33 runs but a 105-run fourth wicket partnership between

Nasiruddin Faruque and Pankaj Joshi gave the giants a solid foundation to put up a fighting total on the board.

But there were surprises in store for them. It was amazing the way the Victoria's top order chased down the total as they were totally disciplined in their batting and rotated the strike to take off the pressure.

Victoria made a perfect start before Amit Majumder fell victim of run out to break the 61-run stand but his partner Arman was brilliant to frustrate the Mohammedan bowling attack and got good support from Ashrafal Aziz and Akil Arshad to reach the target with 244 for 2 in 43.2 overs.

Arman, a wicketkeeper batsman from Mymensingh who played for Sonargaon Cricketers in the last season, was careful to complete the fifty in 60 balls with three boundaries but later came up strong to smash the second hundred in the league after Abahani's Rony Talukdar.

The right-hander smote three more fours and two sixes to complete his ton in 99 balls. Captain Sohravordi Shuvo was the only successful bowler when the left-arm spinner trapped Ashrafal lbw. Ashrafal made 50 off 73 balls that featured five fours and a six while Akil remained not out on 46 off 57 balls that contained six fours.

Earlier Nasiruddin hit 61 off 96 balls with four boundaries and Pankaj scored highest 82 off 120 balls that included eight fours and a six

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Did U Know?

Susan Polgar of Hungary was the first woman in chess history to qualify for the men's World Championship in 1986 and went on to receive the Grand Master title in 1991.



John Buchanan
(Former Australia coach)
"It is extremely unlikely for me to accept a full-time coaching role with the English cricket team for a number of reasons. I finished the coaching role with Cricket Australia because I believe in a shelf life for coaches, and in my opinion, I had reached mine by the completion of the World Cup in 2007."



STAR Cricket
Australia v New Zealand
Only T20 International
Live from 2:35pm

STAR Sports
Primera Liga
Atletico Madrid v Getafe
Live from 2:00am (Monday)

TEN Sports
West Indies v England
Third Test, Day 1
Live from 8:00pm



Premier Div Cricket League
BKSP v Old DOHS
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, Mirpur
Gazi Tank v Cricket Coaching School
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium
Surjo Torun v City Club
Venue: BKSP

Yousuf won't quit ICL

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Batting star Mohammad Yousuf said Saturday he would not end his contract with an unofficial Indian league, insisting that if Pakistan needs him it must solve the matter with cricket's governing body.

Yousuf was among 11 players whose ban on playing domestic cricket was lifted by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Wednesday after a high court ruled the ban was unjustified.

Two years ago 19 Pakistani players who signed up for the Indian Cricket League (ICL), which is not recognised by the Board of Control for Cricket in India or the International Cricket Council (ICC), were banned from playing in Pakistan.

However, the PCB said the reprieved players could play international cricket for Pakistan only if they broke off ties with the ICL, which it regards as a rebel league.

Yousuf, 34, said PCB's stance was strange. "How can I break my contract with the ICL, which is for a period of three years," Yousuf told reporters. "If the PCB wants me to play for Pakistan they should resolve the matter with the ICC."

Yousuf said he still hoped to play for his country.

"I am a cricketer and playing cricket is my profession. I never wanted to be embroiled in court cases but the previous PCB set-up got me entangled in court cases, and now I am unable to represent my country.

"I am still world's number two player in Test rankings and number nine in one-day rankings and have a lot to offer to my country. It is up to the PCB to realise how important I am for the team."

Yousuf denied PCB legal adviser Shan Gul's claims that "he took ten million rupees (125,000 dollars) from the board for not playing in the ICL, and shamelessly went there to play."

"He (Gul) doesn't know the facts," Yousuf said. "I was given six million rupees for signing

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Four semis in Super Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is planning to bring in some changes to the traditional format to make the Super Cup more attractive.

The game's governing body has decided to arrange four semifinals instead of the traditional two so that the semifinalists can play each other twice like the UEFA Champions League.

Eight teams will be split into two groups but the BFF is yet to decide about the seeding of the teams.

Top two teams from each group will play in the Cup while the remaining four will participate in the plate competition of the Tk two-core event, which will kick off on March 3.

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Div-I Cricket Khelaghar sail, Agrani crawl

SPORTS REPORTER

Agrani Bank and Khelaghar won their respective matches yesterday in the Dhaka First Division Cricket League.

Khelaghar thrashed Azad SC by six wickets at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium for their second successive win.

Azad were bowled out for 142 in the 44th over mainly due to some purposeful bowling from Zakir who picked up four wickets for 21 runs.

In reply, Khelaghar made it look easy when they reached

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BD's hopes dashed

SPORTS REPORTER

Visiting Pakistan have confirmed their berth in the final of the Grameenphone Women's Tri-Nation Cricket Series with Sri Lanka after a resounding nine-wicket victory over hosts Bangladesh in the last league match at the Shahid Flight Lieutenant Motiur Rahman Stadium in Khulna yesterday.

The final will be held on February 17 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

On Friday, Bangladesh opened a window of opportunity to play in the final after a stunning six-wicket defeat on favourites Sri Lanka, but their dreams were shattered by yesterday's loss in what was a dreary batting performance.

Earlier, in the tournament's opening match Pakistan also registered a seven-wicket win over Bangladesh in Bogra.

The tourists sent Bangladesh into bat first, where the hosts

suffered a serious batting jolt in the beginning and were bundled out for 94 runs in 34.4 overs.

Only two Bangladeshi batters - opener Ayesha Akhter (21) and captain Salma Khatun (18) reached double figures while the highest contribution came from 23

extras.

Leg-spinner Naila Nazeer caused the major damage in Bangladesh batting grabbing three wickets for 23 runs while pace woman Sana Mir captured two wickets for 12 runs.

In reply, Pakistan reached

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PHOTO COURTESY

Pakistan pace bowler Sana Mir (L) celebrates the wicket of Bangladesh opener Ayesha Akhter during their Grameenphone tri-nation Women's Cricket Tournament second-leg match at the Shaheed Flight Lt. Motiur Rahman Stadium in Khulna yesterday.

New venue, new game

Third WI-Eng Test begins today

Cricket

AFP, St John's

West Indies and England will hope the conditions are far more favourable, and seek to make the aborted second Test

a bad memory, when they begin the third Test on Sunday at the Antigua Recreation Ground.

After unsuccessful attempts to salvage the second Test at the Vivian Richards Cricket Ground, a new Test was hurriedly arranged for the ARG in a last-ditch bid to save the West Indies Cricket Board and the two-island state of Antigua & Barbuda from complete embarrassment.

But there is still a danger that the new Test could be undermined by the conditions and the state of the facilities at the ramshackle, quaint, little ground nestled in the heart of the Antigua & Barbuda capital.

Local authorities have been given a little more than 36 hours to get a decent pitch rolled out, a suitable outfield mown and levelled, as well as player and spectator amenities condemned by FIFA, football's World governing body, up to speed.

The ARG hosted the last of its 21 Tests three years ago when West Indies drew a thrilling match with India before the VRCG replaced it as the island's main venue ahead of the World Cup in the Caribbean a year later.

Cricketer's 52nd Test venue was inaugurated in 1981 and Sir Viv himself celebrated with the fastest hundred in a Test against the old foe, England.

The pitch was a notorious featherbed on which Brian Lara twice broke the World record for the highest individual innings in Tests.

The West Indies also successfully chased 418 in the fourth innings of a Test and won by three wickets against Australia three years ago.

West Indies have only lost three times at the ground -- by 157 runs against Australia in 1991, by 176 runs against the same opponents eight years later, and by 82 runs against South Africa two years later.

The home team has won here seven times -- including three matches against England in 1986 by 240 runs, 1990 by an innings and 32 runs, and 1998 by an innings and 52 runs -- but the other 11 matches have all been drawn.

It's the ARG -- and in particular the West Indies Oil Company Stand, also known as the Double Decker Stand to locals -- that gave birth to the phenomenon of the loud, pounding music and Carnival atmosphere that has become a feature at most cricket grounds in the Caribbean.

For obvious reasons, both teams are eager to play the Test, and more than likely would have to wing it through the malaise.

West Indies lead the series 1-0, after their thrilling innings and 23-run victory at Kingston, and will be looking to make things safe with another victory.

England would be hoping to pick themselves up from the ruins of Sabina Park and draw level in the series.

But it will be difficult for both sides to make the mental

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PHOTO: AFP

SETTLING THE DUST: A firefighter waters the outfield of Antigua Recreation Ground (ARG) to prepare it for the third Test between England and West Indies after the second Test at the Sir Vivian Richards Cricket Ground in St John's was abandoned after just 10 balls on Friday because of a dangerous outfield.

'83 triumph inspired Sachin

PTI, Mumbai

Had India not won the 1983 cricket World Cup, the game may have missed Sachin Tendulkar, the batting maestro has revealed.

Tendulkar said that he was inspired by the feat of Kapil Dev and his team and decided to take up the game seriously.

"I was inspired to take up playing the game with the season (hard) ball after the 1983 World Cup victory. Had it not happened things could have been different for me," said the champion batsman last evening at the MIG Cricket Clubs felicitation function for five members of the 1983 World Cup-winning side.

"I have fond memories of that victory. I was just 10 years old when they won the World Cup and I did not even know at that time there were 11 players in the team. It was truly an incredible experience. I also celebrated the victory till late

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