

Div 1 cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Shafiqul claimed four wickets for 35 runs as Eskaton Sabuj Sangha secured an emphatic 100-run victory over Brother Union in the First Division Cricket League at the City Club ground yesterday.

Eskaton rode on three half centuries from Sohail (65), Abashanul (60 not out) and Rezaul (57) to pile up 285-8 in 50 overs.

In reply, Brothers Union were bundled out for 185 runs in 46.1 overs.

At the Jagannath Hall ground, Dhanmondi Club outplayed Dhaka Wanderers by 104 runs.

Akhter made 66 as Dhanmondi amassed 276 for nine in 50 overs.

Wanderers were all out for 172 runs in 43.1 overs.

In the day's other matches, Baridhara Dezlers (219-10) beat Indira Road (203-10) by seven runs at the Dhaka University ground while Lalmatia Club (173-10) defeated Badda Ekota Sangha (152-10) by 21 runs at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

NZ remain the same

AFP, Wellington

New Zealand has stuck with the players who suffered a 10-wicket loss against India for the second Test starting Thursday.

The only change in the squad named Monday was the dropping of pace bowler Brent Arnel, who did not play in the first Test but suffered a side strain in domestic cricket last week.

India beat New Zealand in four days in the first Test in Hamilton as the home side batsmen failed to fire and India's star-studded lineup hit 520 in their first innings.

Allrounder Jacob Oram has also been left out as he recovers from an Achilles tendon strain, although he has returned to first-class domestic cricket.

"He's only had a couple of days in the domestic competition, and after talking with him, we agree he'd benefit from more game time to get up to the fitness level needed for the Test side," selection panel head Glenn Turner said.

Pace bowler Iain O'Brien and batsman Daniel Flynn, who suffered minor injuries in the Hamilton Test, will be monitored over the next two or three days, Turner said.

There were currently no plans to bring in additional players to cover their positions, he added.

SQUAD

Daniel Vettori (captain), Daniel Flynn, James Franklin, Martin Guptill, Tim McIntosh, Brendon McCullum, Chris Martin, Kyle Mills, Iain O'Brien, Jeetan Patel, Jesse Ryder, Ross Taylor.

Mohammedans

FROM PAGE 17 rank-outsiders Chittagong Mohammedan, who must win 2-0 to make the final pairing against Abahani.

"We beat them without key midfielders Arman and Sharif. So I think a full strength side can do it again," hoped Maruf, who has no injury problem after a long time.

Arman was banned for one match after receiving three yellow cards while Sharif was sent off in their last group stage match for the B. League runners-up.

"Still it's a new match for us and we will fight with our full strength to win," the Dhaka Mohammedan coach added.

The visitors, who finished fifth in the B. League but have established themselves as a potential title contenders after knocking out Sheikh Russel from the group stage, know they are in for a tougher battle.

"They will have their full midfield back. So it would be difficult to beat them. It was easier for us in the first game but we failed to score and conceded a late goal due to inexperience," said coach Nazrul Islam Ledy.

"But we played neck and neck and are ready to do the same again. All we need is a match winner and correct the mistakes of the last match," the port city coach added.

IPL shifting

FROM PAGE 17 government said it could not guarantee adequate security for the matches because the tournament would clash with general elections in the country in April-May. The decision to shift was taken after the IPL schedule was reworked several times and yet no solution could be found.

Nadal crushes Murray

Tennis

AFP, Indian Wells

World number one Rafael Nadal crushed Scotland's Andy Murray 6-1, 6-2 Sunday to win the Indian Wells ATP Masters series title.

Nadal, the reigning Australian Open champion, defied difficult, windy conditions to capture the crown in the California desert for the second time, after triumphing here in 2007.

As in the women's final that preceded it, the men's championship match was played in swirling winds that had both players scrambling.

But Nadal, who started the tournament as the top seed for the first time - after Roger Federer came in as the number one the past five years - kept his focus to get the job done in one hour, 20 minutes.

Despite the defeat, world number four Murray leaves California closing in on world number three Novak Djokovic, whose title defence here ended with a quarterfinal loss to American Andy Roddick.

Murray beat Federer in the semis to book his place in the championship match, giving himself a shot at a third title of 2009 to go with those he won in Doha and Rotterdam.

Since those successes Murray has been slowed by illness, withdrawing from the quarterfinals in Dubai and skipping Davis Cup.

Under the circumstances, he said, reaching the final was a good result.

Nadal was playing in his third final in four starts this season, including his five-set Aussie Open triumph over Federer and a loss to Murray in Rotterdam.

Nadal also lost to Murray in the semifinals of the US Open

last September, but the Spaniard said he wasn't out for revenge against the Briton.

The 22-year-old Spaniard, who saved five match points in a fourth-round victory over Argentina's David Nalbandian to keep his title challenge alive, said adding the first Masters series title of the year to his Australian Open triumph made for a "dream start" to 2009.

He now owns 13 elite Masters titles, and 33 ATP tour trophies - tied for 16th place on the Open Era list with Arthur Ashe and Mats Wilander.

Russian fourth seed Vera Zvonareva won the women's

title, denying former world number one Ana Ivanovic a second-straight Indian Wells crown with a 7-6 (7/5), 6-2 victory.

Zvonareva claimed her ninth WTA title, and the biggest of her career and was projected to overtake American Venus Williams for the world number five ranking on Monday, up one spot from her current sixth.

Ivanovic, the reigning French Open champion who was number one for 12 weeks last year, is now seventh in the world and remained in search of her first title of 2009.



PHOTO: AFP

World number one Rafael Nadal of Spain bites the winner's trophy after defeating Andy Murray of Britain in the Indian Wells final in California on Sunday.

Flintoff unhappy with IPL switch

CRICINFO, undated



News about the Indian Premier League (IPL) shifting from India this year due to its clash with the country's general elections has evoked mixed reactions from the players and officials involved. Andrew Flintoff, who was bought by the Chennai Super Kings for 1.5 million dollars in the second auction, expressed disappointment at not being able to play

the tournament in India. Flintoff said one of the big attractions of the IPL for him was the chance to play in India.

"I love playing cricket in India, particularly one-day cricket. I've never played a Twenty20 match over there but I can imagine it will be an unbelievable experience because as a player you don't get a chance very often to play in front of big crowds of 40,000 to 50,000 people. It's unfortunate but if we don't do that this year then hopefully we can do it again next year."

Flintoff said he would prefer the tournament to be hosted in England rather than South Africa since it would be logistically easier for him. "It would be good to spend some more time at home so obviously I'd prefer England, but I'm sure South Africa would do a good job of staging it if it went there as well."

But Brendon McCullum, the New Zealand wicketkeeper-batsman who plays for the Kolkata Knight Riders, said it was a sensible decision given the situation in India with the elections though he added it would be disappointing not to play in front of Indian crowds. "If you can't guarantee the safety of the players involved in the tournament it makes it pretty hard to hold the tournament regardless of where it is," McCullum was quoted as saying to NZPA.

Heath Mills, New Zealand Players' Cricket Association chief, also welcomed the move and said the players had had concerns over the level of security that would be arranged while playing in India. "That was always going to be an issue and we were having difficulty engaging the IPL and the Indian board on those security issues. So to have it moved is a good thing," Mills said.

Mills said news of the move had surprised him for despite the clash with the elections he had expected the IPL to insist on staging the tournament in India.

cross by substitute Abdullah Parvez just missed the far post five minutes from time.

Abahani were reduced to ten men in the fifth minute of stoppage time when Pranotosh committed a clumsy challenge ten yards out of their area but there was little time left for Brothers to take any advantage.

Red card: Pranotosh (Abahani)

Yellow cards: Joy, Mamun (Abahani) and Ashraf, Shuvra (Brothers)

TEAMS

ABAHANI: Biplab, Siraji, Sujon, Samad, Waly, Abul (Zahed, 60th), Joy Pranotosh, Mamun, Emeka and Emily. BROTHERS: Shakil, Ariful, Shuvra, Mishu, Arup (Liton, 78th), Zahid, Matiu Munna, Rikto (Ashraf, 62nd), Mohammed Shakil, Henry and Tapu (Parvez 83rd).

Abahani in final

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In the next two minutes, Abahani could have widened their one-goal lead but Mamun committed the cardinal sin. Emeka chipped a cross from the right to pick the midfielder unmarked at far post but Mamun's weak drop-header went straight to Shakil's hands.

Shakil kept Brothers in the game with a reflexive save a minute later when he held out Emeka's shot that deflected off a defender towards the keeper's wrong side.

An orange tide swelled the Abahani goal in the last 20 minutes but inspired defending by the Abahani back four and Biplab kept all the rival efforts at bay.

Biplab palmed away a 30-yard stunner from Matiu Munna in the 75th minute before Ghanaian forward Henry Quay's glancing header on a low

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Ramdin c Harrison b Collingwood 1
Sammy lbw b Collingwood 11
Miller b Collingwood 0
Edwards not out 36
Extras: (b-2, lb-6, w-7, nb-1) 16
Total: (For 8 wks in 50 overs) 264
Did not bat: Baker.
Fall of wickets: 1-15, 2-24, 3-157, 4-206, 5-237, 6-238, 7-256, 8-256.

Bowler O M R W
Baker 6 0 31 1
Edwards 6 0 31 1
Bravo 9 0 40 2
Sammy 10 1 36 1
Miller 9 0 42 1
Pollard 7.2 0 46 2
Gayle 1 0 5 0
Result: West Indies won by 21 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Shivnarine Chanderpaul.
Toss: West Indies
Umpires: Aleem Dar (PAK) and Clyde Duncan (WIS)
Match referee: Javagal Srinath (IND)

Collingwood b Bravo 1
Prior c Ramdin b Sammy 2
Mascarenhas run out 29
Broad c & b Miller 3
Batty run out 5
Harrison not out 18
Anderson b Pollard 8
Extras: (b-1, lb-11, w-12) 24
Total: (All out in 48.2 overs) 243
Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-36, 3-86, 4-88, 5-97, 6-156, 7-168, 8-185, 9-195, 10-243.

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LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Hosts Madaripur became zonal champions in the Exim Bank 20th National Women's Handball Championship with a 10-6 victory over Jessore in the final at the Madaripur Stadium yesterday.

The winners led the first-half 6-3. Shipra scored five goals for the winners while Bilqis netted four for Jessore.

Dolly of Madaripur was adjudged the player-of-the-meet.

DIVI HOCKEY

Combined SC registered a massive 9-0 victory over Dhaka Hockey Club in the Green Delta Metropolis 2nd Division Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

Ashiqur Rahman struck thrice while Azimuddin and Nizamuddin netted two goals each while Ching Marma and Faisal Faruk scored one each for the winners who dominated the first-half 6-0.

In the day's other match, Rakmit Sangha blanked East End Green 5-0.

After a barren first-half, Shahinul Islam scored two goals, Marjan Ali, Saddam Miah and Nurul Amin netted one each for the victors.

Smith back as captain

AFP, Cape Town

Graeme Smith returns as captain in the South African squad for the first two of five one-day internationals against Australia.

Smith headed a 14-man squad announced Monday.

Smith missed the third Test and will miss two Twenty20 internationals against Australia this weekend after suffering a broken bone in his right hand during the second Test in Durban earlier this month.

Smith also missed a one-day series in Australia because of tendonitis and a broken bone in his left hand. In his absence Johan Botha led the side to a 4-1 win.

The only changes from the squad that played in Australia are Smith for batsman Neil McKenzie, while left-arm swing bowler Lonwabo Tsotsobe, who was part of a 15-man squad in Australia, is not available because of injury.

The first one-day international is in Durban on April 3 and the second in Centurion on April 5.

SQUAD

Graeme Smith (captain), Johan Botha (vice-captain), Hashim Amla, Mark Boucher, AB de Villiers, Jean-Paul Duminy, Herschelle Gibbs, Jacques Kallis, Albie Morkel, Morne Morkel, Makhaya Ntini, Wayne Parnell, Dale Steyn, Vaughn van Jaarsveld.

C'wealth Games safe despite IPL switch: IOA

AFP, New Delhi

The decision to move cricket's Indian Premier League (IPL) out of the country due to security concerns will not affect the 2010 Commonwealth Games, a top sports official said on Monday.

"We are not worried about security for the Games," Indian Olympic Association secretary general Randhir Singh told reporters.

"Moving the IPL out of India does not reflect any security worries as far as other sports events are concerned, especially the Commonwealth Games, which we will host in New Delhi."

"The government has said it did not want to burden security forces at the time of the elections. There will be no such issues for the Games next year."

Indian cricket chiefs on Sunday decided to relocate this year's IPL to another country because the government says security forces need to be focused on the general elections scheduled for April-May.

The venue for the glitzy Twenty20 tournament from April 10 to May 24 is expected to be unveiled later on Monday.

Security concerns are high in India after the militant attacks in Mumbai in November and on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Pakistan earlier this month.

The Commonwealth Games are due to be held in the Indian capital from October 3-14 next year.

England frontrunners

AFP, London



England may be in pole position to stage the Indian Premier League (IPL), now that security fears have forced the event out of its home nation, but any transfer will not be straightforward.

There are several logistical problems, apart from finding hundreds of hotel rooms at short notice for the players and support staff, in trying to shoe-horn the lucrative April 10-May 24 Twenty20 tournament, featuring 59 fixtures, into the English cricket calendar.

IPL chiefs, who are also considering South Africa and Sri Lanka as alternative venues ahead of a final decision expected in the next couple of days, are attracted to England for several reasons.

Among these are the quality of grounds, the relatively short distance between venues and the strong support for Asian teams in and around the country's major cities, which are also home to Test match grounds that could stage fixtures.

However, if the likes of Headingley and Edgbaston are to put on IPL matches, counties such as Yorkshire and Warwickshire would have to move scheduled home fixtures to out-grounds.

"I think that all county clubs would be interested but the logistical issues in such a short space of time would be tough," Yorkshire chief executive Stewart Regan told Monday's edition of The Times.

"How would we sell tickets, how do we accommodate the IPL sponsors and how do we organise security? My head would say yes, let's do it, my head would say it probably wouldn't be possible."

The latter weeks of the IPL tournament will clash with England's two home Tests against the West Indies.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB)

has a contract with Sky TV for the broadcast rights of domestic matches in England, including Tests. However, Sky's satellite rival Setanta has the rights to the IPL. That may lead Sky to seek compensation from the ECB if it agrees to stage the IPL.

England, which saw its plans for staging Twenty20 events in partnership with Allen Stanford that might rival the IPL collapse when the Texan businessman was accused of a multi-billion dollar fraud by US authorities, is already due to host the World Twenty20 tournament, a competition for full international teams, from June 5.

Staging the IPL would allow some of the world's best players to acclimatise to English conditions before that event.

Former India wicketkeeper Farokh Engineer, who lives in England, told Sky Sports: "Everything fits in beautifully. We've got the infrastructure to hold the World Twenty20 a month later, so why not have the IPL here?"

Whether large crowds will come to grounds for matches that will start in the morning and early afternoon English time, to fit in with Indian television schedules, remains uncertain.

But IPL commissioner Lalit Modi believes the lure of a big cash injection is likely to overcome any problems.

"The IPL is a big competition," he said. "We would bring around US dollars 100 million of revenue to the British economy and anybody in a recession would want to have us."

And, according to a plan put forward last year, English cricket would have made even more money if the go-ahead had been given to a nine-franchise team tournament modelled on the IPL.

Then, a combination of the self-interest of England's 18 first-class counties and the ECB's involvement with Stanford sunk the scheme while it was still on the drawing board.

What no-one could have anticipated then was that the IPL itself might come to England.

A new home wanted

AFP, New Delhi



Organisers of the Indian Premier League (IPL) scrambled on Monday to find an emergency venue for the lucrative cricket tournament after security fears forced them to abandon the event's home nation.

England and South Africa are regarded as the front-runners to host the IPL's glitzy Twenty20 games from April 10 to May 24, although the United Arab Emirates and Sri Lanka are also being considered.

A decision is expected late Monday or Tuesday after hectic round-the-clock talks between IPL commissioner Lalit Modi and cricket authorities in the prospective countries.

With the 59-match extravaganza less than three weeks away, Modi and his team face a race against time to finalise the schedule and arrangements, described by one team official as a "logistical nightmare."

The IPL, which was only founded last year, features Indian cricketers and the world's top players in eight teams owned by Bollywood film stars and the country's wealthiest businessmen.

But the Indian cricket board, which owns the IPL, moved the tournament abroad on Sunday after the government said it could not provide security at the same time as protecting general elections.

Modi said shifting the tournament was a "painful decision," but that he was determined to secure a suitable alternative.

Brothers rue mistakes

FROM PAGE 17

Brothers and Abahani in his heydays.

Abahani's stand-in captain Biplab Bhattacharya was in superb form, especially after his poor show during the previous match.

"We tried to play all out but in the second half, it was difficult to go attacking under tremendous pressure. Now we are in the final and we will go for the championship, which is more important to us than the money," he said about the Tk one-crore prize money for the winners.

"We had a good first half when we created chances but missed. Brothers were really spirited after the second half when we had to

defend," told Amalesh Sen.

Manager Satyajit Das Rupu confessed that they missed Ibrahim.

"We have a strong bench but there can't be any replacement for your best player. Still, I never thought that we were losing because our lead was always safe," Rupustated.

"We told Biplab to shrug off his shakiness from the last match and he just did that. He was great and hope he will be at his best in the final."

"We will miss Joy and Pranotosh (in the final) but our reserve bench has adequate players to make up for their absence and we hope to overcome that."

Tamim tears

FROM PAGE 17

Ashraf scored 69 off 79 balls with seven fours before offering a simple catch to Rony Talukdar at cover off a full toss from 'spinner' Mashrafe while Pravanjan added 38 off 60 balls.

Nayeem Islam was not out on 46 off 88 balls with a boundary only to reduce the margin of the defeat.

BRIEF SCORES

ABAHANI: 344-7 in 50 overs (Tamim 164, Rony 0, Imran 19, Ranjan 66, Sahag 25, Mashrafe 15, Nasir 8, Nadif 26 not out, Sunny 12 not out, extras 9; Rubel 3-74, Enamul 2-66)

GAZI TANK: 230-6 in 50 overs (Kayes 0, Mithun 0, Nafis 13, Ashraf 69, Pravanjan 38, Nayeem 46 not out, Hasan 16, Mukher 39 not out, extras 9; Shahadat 2-30, Mashrafe 2-53)
Result: Abahani won by 114 runs.

Strauss ton goes awry

FROM PAGE 17

opener Gayle, for 20, inside the first six overs.

Urged on by the largest crowd for an international match in Guyana, Chanderpaul and Sarwan hit 74 from 89 balls.

But James Anderson had Sarwan caught at deep mid-off in the 35th over, and Collingwood and Mascarenhas prevailed in the closing overs to limit the damage of the West Indies batsmen.

Anderson captured three for 37 from nine overs, Collingwood took three for 49 from 10 overs, and Dimitri Mascarenhas bagged two for 53 from 10 overs.

SCOREBOARD
Final scorecard of the second one-day international between West Indies and England at the Providence Stadium in Guyana on Sunday:

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer