

Nasir stars in tense win

SPORTS REPORTER

All-round brilliance from Nasir Hossain handed GP-BCB National Cricket Academy a precious seven-run win over Sri Lanka Development side in the first one-day match at the Sylhet District Stadium yesterday.

The Academy take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series after having a torrid time in the four-day series. The 18-year-old Nasir picked up three vital wickets with his accurate off-break as the home side defended a modest 183. The Lankans were skittled out for just 176 in 48.5 overs.

Nasir broke the third wicket 72-run partnership between Mahela Udawatte (60) and Gihan Rupasinghe (45) and then picked up the wicket of Milinda Siriwardena.

Left-arm spinner Nabil Samad also picked up three wickets, getting rid of the tail in the closing stages of the game. Imtiaz Ahmed, Mukhtar Ali and Farhad Hossain took one each on a dry, turning surface.

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PHOTO: AFP

RED IS THE COLOUR: The Manchester United team celebrate with the Premiership trophy for 08/09 season at the end of their 0-0 draw against Arsenal at Old Trafford on Saturday. The single point was enough for the Red Devils to sew up their third consecutive title and 18th overall; putting them level with Liverpool as the highest winners of the English top division title.

Abahani stay alive

SPORTS REPORTER



Abahani put in a good performance against formidable Ashgabat Football Club but still failed to break the stalemate as the all-important last Group B match of the AFC President's Cup ended in a goalless draw at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The outcome however was good enough for the Turkmenistan side to enter into the last four as they became group champions by virtue of better goal difference. The result also leaves Abahani with a bright chance to make their semifinal berth as best runners-up team.

But the popular Dhanmondi outfit have to wait until June 14 to know their fate when the group matches will be completed.

The central Asian side came into the match on the back of a 5-1 mauling of Sri Lanka Army but were nowhere near as imposing against the hosts as Abahani's defensive strategy worked brilliantly.

Rather the B.League champions dominated the proceedings for most of the time but lacked

finishers to put the result at bed. Ghanaian Awudu Ibrahim was under constant marking but still managed to show his class on a number of occasions but national striker Emily was off colour for the second consecutive game.

On the other hand Abahani wrongly tried to beat the opponents in the air but failed as the Ashgabat defense was marshaled by their tall goalkeeper Harchik who foiled the local side's attempts.

Emily got the first chance in the fifth minute but the young striker played a feeble shot to the opponents goalie after receiving the ball from Ibrahim.

Zahid Parvez and captain Nazrul foiled a further two chances.

But it was substitute striker Shahajuddin Tipu who was close to becoming a hero for the successive second match but his shot in the injury time came back from the side bar to frustrate the local crowd at the big bowl.

Everybody however was surprised by the Abahani's think-tank decision to bring in Tipu with only three minutes to go but coach Amalek Sen defended his decision by saying that the team played according to their plan.

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PHOTO: STAR

Abahani striker Awudu Ibrahim (C) holds off Ashgabat players Rustom (L) and captain Parhat during their AFC President's Cup Group B qualifier at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

England on run-spree

Cricket

AFP, Chester-le-street

James Anderson took three wickets after Alastair Cook had made a Test-best 160 as England closed in on a series win over the West Indies at the Riverside here on Saturday.

The West Indies, at stumps on the third day of the second and final Test, were 94 for three in reply to England's first innings 569 for six declared.

That left them 475 runs behind and still needing a further 276 to avoid the follow-on.

Anderson, aged 26 but now the senior bowler in England's attack, ended the day with figures of three wickets for 36 runs in 11 overs, his wickets coming in a burst of three for 21 in 36 balls.

Anderson then had Lendl Simmons caught in the slips by England captain Andrew Strauss.

Ramnaresh Sarwan, hit on the side of his helmet by a Graham Onions bouncer, was 41 not out and Shivnarine Chanderpaul three not out at wide of the stumps.

But he did help make the umpire's mind up by not playing a shot.

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Anderson's haul capped a fine day after he'd started Saturday by gamely defying everything fast bowler Fidel Edwards sent at him, includ-

Biman fly into final

SPORTS REPORTER

Elias Sunny's solo performance took Bangladesh Biman to the final of the Public University & Service Cricket tournament after a facile 65-run win over Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) at the Jahangirnagar University ground yesterday.

However the national air-liner will find out their final opponents today after the Dhaka University-Jahangirnagar University semifinal will continue at the BKSP after it was interrupted by rain.

But it was the southpaw Sunny who hogged the lime-light, slamming a century in Biman's 232-8 in 50 overs. He struck ten boundaries in his almost run-a-ball 102. Mofizur Rahman, who took

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Red Devils in heaven

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United clinched their third successive Premier League title on Saturday after a 0-0 draw against Arsenal at Old Trafford.

Sir Alex Ferguson's side were well below their best in a surprisingly subdued encounter but the point was all they needed to end Liverpool's challenge and win the English title for the 18th time - equalling the record set by the Anfield club in 1990.

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aggregate to United.

Yet Arsene Wenger's side were clearly intent on spoiling the party as they subjected a nervous United to several anxious moments during a goalless first half.

Robin van Persie, who was totally unmarked and eight yards out, spurned a glorious chance to put the visitors into the lead when he headed Sami Nasri's 13th minute cross over the bar when it would have been easier to score.

It was an incredible let off for United but they almost made the visitors pay four minutes later, Wayne Rooney heading Michael Carrick's inch-perfect cross narrowly wide.

This was anything but a vintage performance from a United team which has dominated the Premier League during the second half of the season.

Despite being cheered on by Jamaica's Olympic sprint champion Usain Bolt, the hosts found it hard to make the running.

There were more signs of nerves when Nemanja Vidic and Edwin van der Sar got in one another's way while trying to defend a free-kick before a header by the dangerous van Persie was saved by van der Sar in the closing moments of the first half.

Arsenal continued to chip away at the

United defence after the break, young full-back Kieran Gibbs rifling a 58th minute effort into the side netting after a patient build up involving Barcay Sagna and Andrey Arshavin.

United responded through Cristiano Ronaldo but United's 26-goal leading scorer fired woefully over the bar after good work by Carlos Tevez.

That was Tevez's last action. Moments later the Argentine international was substituted to the displeasure of United fans who jeered the decision.

Tevez, whose two-year loan expires in the summer, had hardly set the game alight yet United continued to struggle without the South American.

Ronaldo went close with a trademark dipping free-kick before van der Sar came to United's rescue with a stunning late save in a dramatic finish.

The United keeper gets the slightest of touches on a fierce shot from Cesc Fabregas before it hammered the outside of the post. It was a huge wake up call for United but within five minutes the party was underway.

Referee Mike Dean's final whistle saw a grey suited Ferguson rush on to the pitch to congratulate his players. "Are you watching Merseyside" bellowed from the stands after Liverpool's hopes of catching United finally vanished.

MCA-BCB XI 1st T20 today

SPORTS REPORTER

Maharashtra Cricket Association (MCA) take on Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) Eleven in the first Twenty20 match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium today.

Bangladesh Television (BTV) will telecast the match live from 1:30pm.

The tourists arrived in the city yesterday for a 23-day trip and is set to play three one-dayers and two four-day matches against Bangladesh A after the three Twenty20s.

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comprise of mostly national players who are England-bound for the ICC World Twenty20s.

The 29-member squad including seven officials will fly for the Iran capital today.

The participants of the tournament are all eight SAARC countries and the hosts Iran.

Bangladesh Football Federation held a press conference at its office on Saturday. BFF president Kazi Salahuddin, vice-president Kazi Nabil Ahmed, member Anwarul Haq Helal, technical director Shahidur Rahman and general secretary Al Musabir Sadi were present on the occasion.

Salahuddin expressed a bit of infatuation over the football

Mashrafe's losing debut

AFP, Johannesburg

Deccan Chargers climbed one place to third in the Indian Premier League table after a thrilling six-wicket win over struggling Kolkata Knight Riders at Wanderers on Saturday.

Kolkata made 160-5 after they lost the toss and were sent in to bat and Deccan reached

166-4 off the last ball of their 20 overs, handing bottom team Kolkata their 10th loss of the tournament.

Deccan captain Adam Gilchrist and Herschelle Gibbs combined in a 68-run opening partnership as the Chargers took another step closer to the semifinals.

Gilchrist thumped Mashrafe Bin Mortaza for successive sixes in the second over and eventually got a top edge to deep square leg trying



Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (L) of Kolkata Knight Riders appeals unsuccessfully for the wicket of Deccan Chargers captain Adam Gilchrist during their IPL Twenty20 match at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg yesterday.

to sweep Brad Hodge.

But his 43 off 31 deliveries got Deccan off to a speedy start in their run chase.

Gibbs was the next to go, contributing 28 off 34, and Tirumalasetti Suman followed with 31 from 24.

Australian all-rounder Andrew Symonds added a cameo 18 off 13 balls, and

Ganguly made 33 off 41 balls before being removed by Ishant Sharma in the 15th over.

Earlier, Kolkata opening batsman Sourav Ganguly had shared 55 runs with Brad Hodge for the second wicket.

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Hayden dashes Mumbai hopes

AFP, Port Elizabeth

Matthew Hayden made a controlled half-century as Chennai Super Kings beat Mumbai Indians by seven wickets in the Indian Premier League at St George's Park here on Saturday.

The defeat virtually ended Mumbai's chances of reaching the semifinals. With only one match left, against the top-of-the-log Delhi Daredevils, they are stuck in seventh place.

Hayden made 60 not out off 57 balls, pacing his innings superbly as Chennai chased down a moderate Mumbai total of 147-5, winning with five balls to spare.

Chennai entrenched themselves in second place in the eight-team competition.

Jean-Paul Duminy was mainly responsible for Mumbai reaching their total. The South African left-hander

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Talk Turkey

AFP, Chester-le-street

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Anderson's haul capped a fine day after he'd started Saturday by gamely defying everything fast bowler Fidel Edwards sent at him, includ-

ing a few verbal volleys, for nearly an hour in a gutsy display as nightwatchman.

After Friday's total washout, England resumed on 302 for two, with Cook 126 not out and Anderson unbeaten on four.

They continued to pile on the runs thanks to fifties from Matt Prior (63) and Paul Collingwood, 60 not out on his Durban home ground when Strauss declared at tea.