



Did U Know?

Soccer found its status and popularity as a chief sport in Scotland and England in 1872.



Elena Dementieva
(Russian tennis star)

"I think it was very impressive the way Kim Clijsters was coming back, especially by winning in New York the US Open. I think it was very impressive."



ESPN

SportsCenter India
Sports News
Live from 5:30pm
ICC Champions Trophy
England v New Zealand
Live from 7:15pm

TEN Sports

UEFA Champions League
Rubin Kazan v Inter Milan
Live from 11:00pm
SuperSport3
UEFA Champions League
Arsenal v Olympiacos
Live from 1:45am (Wednesday)

SuperSport7

UEFA Champions League
Fiorentina v Liverpool
Live from 1:45am (Wednesday)

Transfer market opens today

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Old foes Mohammedan and Abahani are all set to complete their registration formalities after having confirmed the services of their targeted players as the much-talked inter-club cricketers' transfers get underway at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

Holders Abahani brought in a heat wave in the market after signing up superstars Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Shakib Al Hasan with record deals of Tk 20 lakh each, long before the start of the three-day official transfers, that subsequently brought archrivals Mohammedan in the bourse.

Mohammedan apparently woke up from the slumber to snatch sensational opener Tamim Iqbal from the Abahani tent and signed up Mohammad Ashraful and the officials of Mohammedan also declared that the duo would not get less payment than Mashrafe and Shakib.

Meanwhile, when the two giants were busy flexing their muscles, new powerhouse Gazi Tank Cricketers were apparently engaged in strengthening their line-up to challenge the perennial dominance of Abahani and Mohammedan.

The club officials this time have showed huge interest in batting specialists, all-rounder and the ICL-returned players and did not hesitate to offer lucrative payment to them. But

they did not show any interest in the national team pacers, who struggled to get a good team.

Abahani, who are bidding for the fourth successive prestigious Dhaka Premier League title, have already confirmed Mashrafe, Shakib and Imrul Kayes from the national pool. Besides, the Dhanmondi-based side roped in pacers Robiul Islam and Mukhtar Ali and retained the services of Rony Talukdar, Nasir Hossain, Sahagir Hossain and Shubhasis Roy.

They also have so far retained the services of opener Mahbubul Karim and left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique. The duo missed the last season due to their commitment in the ICC unapproved ICL (Indian Cricket League).

Mohammedan, who remained crownless for the last seven years since their last victory in 2001, have built the strongest side on paper after confirming the three pool players -- Tamim, Ashraful and Mahmudullah Riyad.

Besides, the Motijheel-based outfit so far confirmed Shamsur Rahman, Marshall Ayub, Khaled Mashud, Nabil Samad, Mohammad Shahzade, Delwar Hossain, Saqlain Sajib, Foysal Hossain and ICL-returned Aftab Ahmed. Sri Lankan cricketer Farveez Maharoof is supposed to play for the traditional powerhouse.

Nevertheless, the title race will not be limited only between Abahani and Mohammedan as Gazi Tank appear the real threat for the two traditional rivals.

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India spinner Amit Mishra (R) is over the moon after dismissing Australia batsman Tim Paine (not in picture) during their Champions Trophy clash at the SuperSport Park in Centurion on Monday.

FED CUP RESUMES TODAY

Rain may spoil again

SPORTS REPORTER



After a two-week break following the inclement weather as well as the vacation of Eid-ul-Fitr and Puja, the season's curtain-raising tournament, Citycell Federation Cup, resumes today with two matches set to be held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The Bangladesh Football Federation was forced to postpone the meet three days before the scheduled Eid and Puja vacation following steady rain that made the ground unplayable.

The football's governing body, however, made the venue ready this time after filling the earth as well as rolling it and paving a way out for the rainwater. The task was supposed to be carried out by the National Sports Council, but the owners of the stadium remained silent on BFF's demands for a level playing field.

But amid the current forecast of continuing, the tournament may face yet another setback as the BNS will now have to bear the stress of hosting two matches every day after the Army Stadium was scrapped from the venue list.

Chittagong Mohammedan SC and

Rahmatganj MFS, having won their respective first matches, will be looking for a quarterfinal berth with a win as they square off in the day's second match after Arambagh KS and Shukhtara Jubo Sangsad of Narayanganj play the first match at 3:00pm.

The last year's giant killers, Rahmatganj, are considered the favourites, especially after the way they played against Arambagh KS that gave them an emphatic 3-1 win over their rivals. Besides, their foreign striking duo Raphael Sango and Idris Kasirye are also in scoring form.

On the other hand, Chittagong Mohammedan's 2-0 win against newcomers Shukhtara Jubo Sangsad was not so impressive, but their striking duo Akbar Hossain Ridon and Ariful Kabir Farhad may cause problems for any side.

Nevertheless, Shukhtar Jubo Sangsad, the champions of the Club Cup Championship, are desperate to stay in the race by defeating Arambagh, whose coach Wazed Gazi also rates the Narayanganj outfit as being ahead of his charges.

Meanwhile, a number of foreign recruits will be seen in the second round matches as struggling Brothers, who were humiliated 7-1 by

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Bangladesh A on back foot

SPORTS REPORTER

Maharashtra Cricket Association (MCA) Under-22 side lead Bangladesh A by 155 runs with five second innings wickets in hand going into the last day of the three-day warm-up match at Nasik in Maharashtra.

The MCA side were 87 for 5 in their second innings at the close of play on the second day yesterday, after they had bowled the visitors out for a paltry 147 to take a first innings lead of 68 runs.

Earlier, the second-string Bangladesh side resumed their first innings on 29-2 on the second day. But their hopes of overtaking the hosts evaporated soon as they fell 68 runs short of the local side's first innings score of 215.

The only notable contribution in the Bangladesh A

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NZ have all to play for

AFP, Johannesburg



England and New Zealand want to maintain run-rich form when they clash today at the Wanderers in the final Group B fixture of the ICC Champions Trophy.

Dismissed with the West Indies as tournament no-hopers, England made 323-8 against hosts South Africa Sunday to become the first qualifiers for the semifinals of the mini-World Cup.

It was the highest tally so far in the one-day extravaganza, eclipsing the 319 made by Sri Lanka in the opening match en route to a surprise victory over South Africa.

"That batting performance was the best I can remember from England. Owais [Shah] took control, clearing the boundary so many times, well backed up by Paul [Collingwood] and Eoin [Morgan]," boasted skipper Andrew Strauss.

"We can play the shots because of skills practice. The only problem sometimes is our mindset, whether we loosen the shackles and go out there and take the game to the opposition."

Shah, 98-run catalyst of the second highest Champions Trophy innings after the 347 posted

by New Zealand against the United States at The Oval five years ago, echoed South Africa-born Strauss.

"The Australia series was not good for our batsmen. Coming to South Africa our confidence was low. We needed to go out, play with freedom and express ourselves."

New Zealand also smashed the 300-run barrier Sunday against Sri Lanka, amassing 315-7 to win by 38 runs. Another victory against England will take them into the knockout phase of the four-million-dollar tournament.

However, if the 'Black Caps' lose at the 30,000-capacity home of South Africa cricket, hyper-erratic Sri Lanka will cling to second spot on net run rate and squeeze through.

England have been the revelation of the second most important national team ODI tournament after the World Cup, outplaying Sri Lanka and a South African team ranked number one in the world within 72 hours.

They and Pakistan are the only countries never to have lifted the Champions Trophy since its introduction 11 years ago and a 6-1 series thrashing from Australia preceded the flight to Johannesburg.

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(L) Influenza-hit Wali Faisal cuts a forlorn figure as Mohammedan's assistant coach Jewel Rana (R) gets ready for a practice session at the BUET ground while (R) Abahani players take a jog round their club ground on Sunday. The Federation Cup resumes today after Eid and Puja vacations.



PHOTOS: STAR

SL fined

AFP, Johannesburg

Sri Lanka were fined Sunday for a slow over rate during a 38-run defeat by New Zealand in a Champions Trophy match at the Wanderers.

Captain Kumar Sangakkara was fined 20 per cent of his match fee and the rest of the team 10 per cent each after falling two overs short of the target set for the Group B fixture.

It was the second disciplinary action following the game with top New Zealand scorer Jesse Ryder fined 15 per cent of his match fee for smashing a chair with his bat after being dismissed.



Federation Cup Football
Arambagh v Shukhtara (3:00pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
Cig MSC v Rahmatganj (5:00pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

Vettori's eyes on semis

AFP, Johannesburg



New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori has a Champions Trophy semi-finals place in his sights after victory over Sri Lanka Sunday in a Wanderers run-feast.

Put in to bat, the Black Caps overcame a mid-innings crash to post 315-7 off 50 overs, the second highest total of the tournament after Sri Lanka scored four runs more in defeating South Africa on the opening day.

A defiant 77 from Mahela Jayawardene gave Sri Lanka hope of an unlikely win, but they fell 38 runs short after being all out for 277 with 20 balls left of a Group B match staged in stifling heat.

"Our fate is in our hands and we know the Wanderers wicket where the game against England will be played," said Vettori ahead of the Tuesday day-night clash that will determine the final mini-league standings.

A win for the Kiwis and they are guaranteed a place in the semifinals of the second most important one-day national team competition after the quadrennial World Cup.

Depressed after a five-wicket loss to South Africa in their opening match at SuperSport Park in Centurion continued a run of poor batting performances, Vettori hopes his team have turned the corner.

"We have been inconsistent with the bat, especially in Sri Lanka recently, and without good partnerships a team cannot hope to win a tournament like the Champions Trophy."

Vettori could also do with a change of luck as Jesse Ryder, 74-run hero of the win over Sri Lanka, has joined bowler Jacob Oram in quitting the tournament through injury.

Ryder, who scored 10 fours and one six with the aid of a runner in his 58-ball stand at the crease, struggled with a hamstring injury and was ruled out.

He also had to attend a disciplinary hearing for breaking a chair with his bat as he returned to the pavilion after being caught by Sri Lanka skipper Kumar Sangakkara off the bowling of Nuwan Kulasekara.

Sangakkara was furious with the fielding of his team who were suffering their second consecutive loss after surprising South Africa in the opening match of the two-week tournament.

"The standard of our fielding has to improve if we are going to challenge for titles like the Champions Trophy. For many months now we have been really shoddy in this area."

"We were in the hunt for a long time against New Zealand but, unfortunately, the one big innings that could have swung the match our way never came and now we are relying on England defeating New Zealand to survive."

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BFF executive committee meets today

SPORTS REPORTER

In a bid to make the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) congress in Dhaka a success, the executive committee of the Bangladesh Football Federation will sit at the BFF House today.

The meeting is likely to distribute the duties among the BFF members during the day-long congress on Saturday next where all eight federations' president, except India and Pakistan will attend the meeting. The congress will also elect the new SAFF president to put an end to the Gonesh Thapa-led committee.

Kazi Salahuddin, president of Bangladesh Football Federation, is like to replace Thapa as most members of the eight-nation SAFF committee have wished to see a change in the top position following the inactivity of the present committee.

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Eng defy Smith bravery

AFP, Centurion



England stormed into the Champions Trophy semifinals with a 22-run victory over South Africa who crashed out of the tournament despite captain Graeme Smith's brave century on Sunday.

Smith hit a career-best 141 for his eighth one-day hundred but his team were still restricted to 301-9 while chasing a 324-run target.

The defeat also eliminated the hosts, who needed 313 to stay ahead of Sri Lanka on net run-rate.

"It's hugely disappointing. I think it's about giving your all, unfortunately we fell 22 runs short," said Smith.

"Two of the games, we have given away over 300 runs. It's difficult to chase that much regularly. You have to give credit to the way England batted. Anything around 300 we would have cruised in, but 324 was a step too far."

England have won both of their games in the four-team Group B, while South Africa and Sri Lanka finished their league engagements with one win apiece in three matches.

New Zealand, who have one win in two matches, will take on England in the last group match today.

England owed their highest one-day total against South Africa to man-of-the-match Owais Shah and Eoin Morgan, who gave a superb exhibition of power-hitting. Shah smashed 98 off 89 balls, while Morgan cracked a 34-ball 67.

"The way Paul Collingwood and Owais played the spinners was crucial, setting the platform for Morgan at the end. James Anderson (3-42) has been exceptional," said England captain Andrew Strauss.

South Africa went for their shots early in their innings in a

bid to achieve a stiff target, with Smith and Herschelle Gibbs putting on 42 in seven overs.

Smith, dropped on 82 by Shah at long-on off seamer Collingwood, sustained his team's hopes with a gutsy knock. He reached his century when he cut Collingwood for his 10th four.

Smith, refused a runner after suffering from cramp later in his innings, put on 78 for the third wicket with AB de Villiers (36) and 64 for the next with Jean-Paul Duminy (24).

But the asking-rate kept climbing as the hosts needed 94 to win in the closing 10 overs. It was all over when Smith fell in the 47th over after hitting 16

fours in his 134-ball knock. Shah was earlier in the limelight, putting England on course for a big total with a gem of an innings containing six sixes and five fours. He added a record 163 for the third wicket with Collingwood (82).

England's previous best for the third wicket against South Africa in one-day internationals was 114 between Marcus Trescothick and Anthony McGrath in Manchester in 2003.

"I'd love to bat on this pitch everyday. It was a beautiful wicket to bat on," said Shah.

The stage was set for the final onslaught after the Shah-Collingwood stand, with

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South Africa skipper Graeme Smith miscues a shot during his otherwise swash-buckling knock of 141 that almost won the game for his side against England in their Champions Trophy match at SuperSport Park in Centurion on Sunday.