

## MSC start winning

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club got their bid to win the elusive professional football league title off to a winning start when the Federation Cup champions handed an easy 3-0 defeat to newcomers Feni Soccer Club in the Bangladesh League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Defender Hasan Al Mamun, midfielder Zahid Hossain and striker Zahid Hasan Emily scored one goal apiece for the Black and Whites although their performance was not so impressive compared to the showings in the season's curtain-raising Federation Cup.

True that they were not up to the mark in the opening match of the renamed B. League, they still never looked losing points against a side they routed twice in the Federation Cup, first 4-0 and then 3-0.

Even the margin could have been wider had Abdul Baten Komol, who replaced fever-hit striker Alamu Bukola, not missed a couple of easy chances in the first half.

The Motijheel-based outfit took 22 minutes to take their first shot on target. Nigerian Emeka Christian curled a beautiful left-footer from the left for Komol, whose side volley went inches over the Feni crosspiece much to the relief of the visitors, who had the first shot on target on the half-hour mark when Ashraf Kader Manju dragged a shot straight to goalkeeper MN Shakil, who returned under the Mohammedan bar after missing the last three matches of the Federation Cup duo to shaky performance.

Mohammedan however went ahead in the 38th minute capitalising on a fumble from goalkeeper Golam Mustafa Tuhan, who failed to grip a high cross from Nasir and Hasan Al Mamun tapped the ball home from close.

Midfielder Enamul Haq Sharif took the position of injured Mohammedan captain

Arman Aziz, but he could hardly inspire others and the opponents controlled the midfield for the rest of the first half. But they were kept at bay by the strong Mohammedan backline manned by Hasan Al Mamun, Nasir, Wali Faisal and Ariful Islam, the most valuable player of the Federation Cup.

After resumption, the Black and Whites created more chances and could cash in on only two of those and Emily struck the woodwork early in the second half.

Speedy winger Zahid, who looked unimpressive in the game, doubled the Mohammedan advantage when Emeka cut the ball back to Zahid, who suddenly took a powerful drive from the edge of the right side of the box and saw his one-bounce shot kiss the Feni net hitting the sidebar.

Four minutes later, Feni Soccer Club nearly conceded an own goal when defender Mintu Sheikh attempted to clear a Mamunul Islam free kick only to see his header hit the crossbar.

Mohammedan could have taken a 3-0 lead in the 76th minute, but Zahid, instead of passing the ball to a free Emily, struck to the post only to be denied by goalkeeper Tuhan.

With 10 minutes left, Mohammedan stepped up the attack by bringing in Shakil Ahmed and Alamgir Rana in two wings and went close to widening the margin, but Emily saw his overhead shot fly just over the crosspiece in the 83rd minute.

The national striker, however, did seal the match striking his league's first and season's eighth goal five minutes from time. Mamunul Islam curled a free kick from the right and Arif's header was denied by Tuhan and Emily headed home the rebounder from close.

Mohammedan coach Maruful Haq thought that his charges could not perform well because they were still recovering from the hangover of the Federation Cup and hoped that

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## U-19s thrash England

SPORTS REPORTER

Saikat Ali and Abul Hasan wreaked havoc with the new ball as Bangladesh Under-19 recorded a crushing seven-wicket win against their English counterparts in the second limited-overs match at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Coming in as the first change bowler, Saikat took three wickets for 11 runs in an astonishing spell of 10 overs that yielded five maidens while Hasan took two wickets as England U-19s collapsed to 97 all out in 35.4 overs.

Shaker Ahmed, the man-of-the-match of the first game, also picked up two wickets for 29 while Mahmudul Hasan

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SAIKAT ALI ... 3 for 11

## Shakil Kasem new Academy head

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has selected Shakil Kasem as head of the GP-BCB National Cricket Academy.

"His (Shakil Kasem) name was approved as head of the academy during Sunday's board meeting. And it will be a contractual job. A management committee will be formed soon to run the academy," informed Jalal Yunus, BCB's media committee chairman, yesterday.

Former cricketer Shakil Kasem was the immediate past chairman of the BCB's development committee, the committee which watches over the academy's activities.

The board selected Khaled Mahmud, Nazmul Abedin Fahim, Sarwar Imran, Wahidul Gani, Minhajul Abedin and Jafrul Ehsan to take part in the level-3 coaching course that will start from November 3 under the guidance of Asian Cricket Council (ACC). It would be the first level-3 coaching course in the country and the Bangladesh team fielding coach Mohammad Salahuddin was the notable absentee in the list.

In another major decision, BCB brought 12 women's cricketers under payroll in four different grades. Salma

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## ODI SERIES STARTS TODAY

# Tigers' guarded optimism

SPORTS REPORTER

The recent graph between the two teams clashes clearly tips in favour of the Tigers but the home side took a guarded stance ahead of today's first one-day of the five-match series against visiting Zimbabwe.

Captain Shakib Al Hasan was not ready to kick off the series with the tag of 'favourite' while talking in a pre-match press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday although his Zimbabwean counterparts Prosper Utseya had no doubt about it.

"What I believe is that the chance is fifty-fifty because this Zimbabwean side has the ability to cash in on mistakes. And their biggest advantage is that these players are playing together for a long time. So, there is no chance to be complacent with the recent good results," said Shakib, who continues with the captaincy, as Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is yet to recover from his knee injury.

There was a reason for the home side to be cautious as they had to fight hard to win the last home series against the same opponents in January but Shakib, the world's number one all-rounder in one-day rankings, was however confident that they would continue their supremacy over their opponents and hoped that his boys would be able to play as per their game plan.

"We recently beat them at their home and now we just

need to play our natural game and make sure that we play as per our potential. We want to play our best cricket. In my opinion the main difference is that we have more match winners than our opponents. On the other hand the home conditions also favour us," said a confident Shakib, who guided the team to a historic Test and ODI series triumph against West Indies followed by a 4-1 victory over Zimbabwe.

"We have to make sure that we show much better performance than the last series

which we won in 4-1 in August and make sure that we don't make the same mistake what we did in Bulawayo," he added.

Coach Jamie Siddons was also echoed his captain's sentiment regarding his side's chance to win the series and both skipper and coach expressed their unhappiness over the preparation.

"It was not ideal to play T20 cricket before the one-day series. It could have been better if we could play some one-day matches. Anyway there is a fifty-fifty chances but

we should win the series as a home team," said the Australian.

Shakib however said that it would not be a big factor for them to adjust to the 50-over format.

"It's true that it was not an ideal preparation for us because we go into the series with a bad tendency to play too many shots after playing the T20 tournament but we all are professional players, so we have to adjust with this situation," said Shakib.

After a long gap both teams

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Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan (R) and his Zimbabwe counterpart Prosper Utseya pose with the Grameenphone Cup ahead of the five-match one-day series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.



Mohammedan midfielder Zahid Hasan (L) leaps to head the ball ahead of a Feni Soccer Club defender during their Citycell Bangladesh League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.



### BTV & SuperSport7

Grameenphone Cup  
Bangladesh v Zimbabwe  
First ODI  
Live from 2:30pm

### ESPN

Sportscenter India  
Sports News  
Live at 9:30pm

### SuperSport7

Carling Cup  
Barnsley v Man United  
Live from 2:30am (Tuesday)



### Grameenphone Cup

Bangladesh v Zimbabwe (2:30pm)  
First ODI  
Venue: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium

### Citycell Bangladesh League

Sik Russell v Shuktra (5:30pm)  
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium  
BD U-19 v Eng U-19  
Third Youth ODI  
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium

## Aussies hit by injuries

Cricket

AFP, Vadodara

Australia are grappling with injuries to three key bowlers ahead of the second one-day international against India in Nagpur on Wednesday.

Pace spearhead Brett Lee suffered a sore elbow, fast bowler Mitchell Johnson picked up an ankle injury and James Hopes sustained a hamstring strain during Sunday's first match here, which Australia won by four runs.

Australian team physiotherapist Kevin Sims ruled out Hopes for the Nagpur game and said the other two would have late tests.

"Hopes, Lee and Johnson all underwent scans in Vadodara this morning," Sims said in a statement issued by Cricket Australia.

"James has suffered a minor right hamstring strain. He will therefore be unavailable for the next match, but is expected to be available for the latter games of this series."

"Lee has a mild right elbow strain and will continue to be treated and assessed prior to

the next game.

"Johnson suffered an inversion strain of his left ankle. He will now receive treatment and, as with Brett, it will depend on how he responds to treatment over the next two days before a decision is made on his availability for the second game of the series."

Lee, 32, has been Australia's form bowler, regaining his pace and rhythm during the recent Champions Trophy in South Africa after

## MS hails Ishant

PTI, Nagpur

India pacer Ishant Sharma, who has struggled for form since his fine show in Australia last year, has come in for praise from skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni after his impressive performance in the first one-day international in Vadodara.

Dhoni felt the Delhi youngster's performance against Australia in the opening ODI Sunday was an indication that he was on his way back to form.

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being sidelined for the Ashes series in England.

The fast bowler also played a key role with both bat and ball in New South Wales' title victory in a Twenty20 competition in India last week.

Johnson hurt his ankle while fielding early in the match on Sunday and appeared to be in significant pain. He left the field briefly but returned to complete his 10 overs and take two wickets.

Hopes picked up the hamstring strain in his right leg after he had sent down just two overs and had to be replaced by part-time spinner Adam Voges.

The world champions have two more specialist fast bowlers in their 15-member squad in Doug Bollinger and Ben Hilfenhaus.

Australia are already depleted by injuries to key middle-order batsman Michael Clarke, first-choice wicketkeeper Brad Haddin, paceman Nathan Bracken and batsman Callum Ferguson.

India's Yuvraj Singh, who missed the first match of the seven-match series after failing to recover fully from a finger injury, is expected to take the field in Nagpur.

## MU crash at Anfield

AFP, London



Chelsea ended this weekend on top of the English Premier League table as all their nearest pursuers dropped points.

After winning 5-0 against Blackburn on Saturday, the Blues saw Liverpool end a four-match losing streak Sunday with a 2-0 win at home to Manchester United, a defeat that saw the second-placed champions fail to regain top spot and left Chelsea two points clear at the top.

Arsenal then missed the chance to close the gap on Chelsea to three points when, having gone 2-0 up against second-bottom West Ham, they saw the home side come back to force a 2-2 draw at Upton Park in a match where the Hammers finished a man down after Scott Parker was sent-off.

Manchester City, who could have gone fourth, squandered a 2-0 lead in a 2-2 draw at home to Fulham while, in Sunday's other match, Bolton pulled further clear of the relegation zone with a 3-2 win over Everton at the Reebok Stadium.

Spain striker Fernando Torres, played in by Yossi Benayoun, put Liverpool ahead when he shot high past United keeper Edwin van der Sar in the 65th minute before, five minutes into added on time, David Ngog kept his cool to seal victory.

The Gunners went ahead when West Ham and England goalkeeper Robert Green made a mess of Bacary Sagna's cross, allowing Robin van Persie to shoot into the unguarded net.

Van Persie then turned provider, Willaim

Gallas heading in from the Dutch international's corner in the 37th minute.

But, with 16 minutes left, Arsenal keeper Vito Mannone could only parry Alessandro Diamanti's free-kick and Carlton Cole's follow-up header gave the Hammers hope.

And, 10 minutes from time, they were level when, after Alex Song brought down Cole, Diamanti equalised from the penalty spot.

It was a draw that was bound to raise fresh questions about whether Arsenal were too "soft" to win the title.

At Anfield, both teams finished a man down after United defender Nemanja Vidic and Liverpool midfielder Javier Mascherano were sent-off after collecting two yellow cards apiece.

"The mentality was good, everyone was working together, plus the 'keeper (Jose Reina) to the last fan on the Kop," Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez told Sky Sports.

"The players answered a lot of questions, that is the most important thing," the Spaniard, who'd received a public vote of confidence from Liverpool managing director Christian Purslow before kick-off, added.

Victory ended Liverpool's worst run for 22 years and saw them close the gap on Chelsea to six points.

United manager Sir Alex Ferguson, whose team have now lost their last three league encounters against Liverpool, admitted: "All in all, Liverpool were the better team," Ferguson said. "They deserved their victory."

Ferguson promised United would bounce back, saying: "At some points of your season

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## No astro-turf at Balur Math for now

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday decided to delay the installation of astro-turf on the 'Balur Math' adjacent to its headquarters in Motijheel.

The decision came after a meeting among three parties - the BFF, the National Sports Council and the local dwellers, who have been demanding to keep the Balur Math free for the children as well as elderly diabetics.

The game's governing body was forced to sit with the local dwellers, who have been very vocal against any construction work on the field ever since the BFF got lease from the NSC in March last year.

The BFF is scheduled to install an astro-turf worth nearly 500,000 dollars on this ground under the FIFA Goal Project-2.

Abul Kasem, the convenor of the Balur Math Rakkha Committee, said that they would sit again to reach a

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Liverpool striker Fernando Torres (L) breaks clear of Manchester United defender Rio Ferdinand to score the opening goal during their Premiership match at Anfield on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP