

Bangladesh win battle of umpres

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Umpires XI recorded a nine-wicket win over Pakistan Umpires XI in an exhibition Twenty20 match at the Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan ground yesterday.

Bangladesh raced to 218 for one in 17.2 overs in reply to Pakistan's challenging total of 215 for five in the stipulated 20 overs.

Moniruzzaman Tinku blazed a 39-ball 98 striking eight sixes and as many fours while Ahsanullah Hasan and Masudur Rahman Mukul chipped in with 78 and 21 respectively to help Bangladesh post a convincing victory.

Earlier, Pakistan were asked to bat first and they posted a challenging total riding on a century from opener Asif Siddique, who hammered 120 off 58 balls with the helps of 12 fours and seven fours.



Abahani winger Mehdi Hasan Ujjal (C) is about to take a crack at the ball during his side's Bangladesh League match against Muktijoddha at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Ujjal scored once in Abahani's 5-0 win.

Young booters go to USA

SPORTS REPORTER

Twelve under-16 footballers, six male and six female, leave Dhaka today for the United States where they will take part in football events, teambuilding, leadership activities as part of a cultural exchange program organised by the State Department of the United States. They will stay at Washington DC for ten days when they will also participate in cultural programs, sightseeing, visit historical places and participate in other sports such as baseball, La Crosse etc.

The twelve young footballers were introduced to the media at a press conference at the BFF conference hall yesterday. The twelve footballers have been picked by coaches and development committee members.

Former national footballer Satyajit Das Rupu and member of BFF's football developing committee will lead the male group while the women's team will be led by Mahfusa Akter Kiron, secretary general of BFF's Women's football wing.

Sky Blues run riot

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Abahani consolidated their lead in the Bangladesh League when they thumped struggling Muktijoddha Sangsad 5-0 in their away match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Their 15th victory in 16 matches took the Sky Blues to 46 points, seven ahead of archrivals Mohammedan, who have played a match less.

Ghanaian striker Awudu Ibrahim, Mehdi Hasan Ujjal, Enamul Haque, Abul Hossain and Sherif Din Mohammed struck one goal apiece in a one-way, slow-paced affair in front of a few hundred spectators at the big bowl.

Abahani could have had a hatful of goals in this match and their coach Amalesh Sen might wonder why his side were not up by more than a 2-0 scoreline in the first half as Ghanaian striker Sheriff at least missed three easy chances of which one came off the bar in the starting moment and one

where he failed to beat Muktijoddha Sangsad's number-two goalkeeper Nizam Majumder.

However, Sheriff's compatriot Awudu broke the deadlock in the 19th minute with a shot from outside the box that initially seemed harmless, but eluded Nizam's grip.

Two minutes later, Ujjal a rebound off Awudu drove a grounder home to put them two up. Muktijoddha Sangsad mustered their first shot on the target in the 39th minute when Abahani goalkeeper Biplob Bhattacharya foiled Raphael Sagno's long-range effort for a corner.

After the resumption, Abahani kept their tempo and intensified the attack with the inclusion of striker Enamul Haque and the national striker being set up by Awudu made it 3-0 in the 72nd minute.

Substitute Abul Hossain did not mistake to put a rebound home in the 80th minute after Motiur Munna hit the woodwork from a free kick.

Sheriff finally found the back of Muktijoddha net in stoppage time of the second half when he struck his 12th league goal to join Sheikh Russel's highest scorer Samir Omari.

It was the 10th defeat in 16 matches for Muktijoddha, who had no urgency throughout the game.

Our Chittagong correspondent adds: Chittagong Abahani and Brothers Union once again shared points when they played out a 1-1 draw in their second meeting at the MA Aziz Stadium.

Visitors Brothers could have earned full three points had they not conceded an own goal by Yusuf Ali Khan in the 35th minute. However, four minutes later Ghanaian striker Enock Bentil levelled the margin. Bentil dodged past Abahani defenders and goalkeeper Biplob to place the ball home.

Brothers also saw a goal from Didarul ruled out due to offside. After the break, fouls took the centre stage with the players of both sides frequently involving in scuffles. Even at one stage, the Abahani officials entered the field in protest of brawls.

Rangers Wahid Murad passes away

SPORTS REPORTER

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Mymensingh also blasted three boundaries in his 29-ball 51 before holing out to long-on off Nadif.

Once Uttam fell, Chittagong lacked momentum to take into the final five overs as Rajshahi tightened the noose.

The crowd turnout was good and it piled in as soon as the shades grew longer, to be regaled by the songs of Ayub Bachchu and they were just in time to watch the stunning display of fireworks. They made their appreciation known with a loud cheer. And rightly so, as this was as good as it got on the day.

Nadal aims for historic 6th

Tennis

AFP, Monte Carlo

Rafael Nadal starts a quest for tennis history here Monday when he takes aim at a sixth straight Monte Carlo Masters title.

Nadal is seeded second behind Serbia's Novak Djokovic, the man he beat for the title a year ago at the elite Country Club overlooking the Mediterranean.

There is plenty on the line for Nadal next week, with the Spaniard failing to win an ATP trophy since the Rome Masters nearly a year ago. With various months off for knee problems, Nadal's confidence would be hugely boosted by a return to form on his favoured clay.

The world number three Spaniard's record of perfection in the principality is impressive with his lone loss in 32 Monte Carlo matches (he didn't play in 2004) coming a year earlier when he went out to Argentine Guillermo Coria in the third round after qualifying into the field.

Following his exit in last week's Miami semi-finals to

SCORERS IN BRIEF

CYCLONES OF CHITTAGONG: 132 all out in 19.3 overs (Uttam 51, Nafis 25, Tamim 14; Mukhtar 3-22, Nadif 2-17)

RAJSHAHI RANGERS: 133-4 in 17.1 overs (Naeem 56 not out, Blizzard 25, Juaeem 22; Nasir 1-14, Enamul 1-19)

Result: Rajshahi Rangers won by six wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Mukhtar Ali.

Two Essex players in Police probe

CRICINFO, undated

The ECB have confirmed that two Essex county cricketers are at the centre of a police investigation, following allegations of "match irregularities". With the investigation still underway, the ECB added that they would be making no comment on the matter, but quoted a statement they had received from Essex Police:

"Following allegations received about two Essex county cricket players involved in match irregularities we have initiated an investigation," read the statement, "and are working closely with Essex County Cricket Club and the English Cricket Board."

Real left in a Messi

FROM PAGE 17

The problem for Madrid was that despite some promising breaks that drew huge roars of anticipation, they created little. It was as if the obsession with closing Barcelona down, with screening into challenges, had blinded them to the need to build attacks. The asphyxiating pressure they applied to Barcelona applied to them, too. The pace was frenetic but there were more fouls than flow.

When Madrid did break, Gerard Piqué in particular showed pace, timing and judgment, to keep up with Cristiano Ronaldo. The Portuguese was too often guilty of imprecision. Much of what Madrid did went through him and he continued to run at Barcelona throughout, demanding the ball, determined to drag his side back into it, but this was not his finest night. One second-half free-kick, from a long way out, found its way through as

Wedding

FROM PAGE 17

Shoaib has already come under criticism from clergy for denying marriage with Ayesha Siddiqui even after admitting that he signed the 'nikahnama'. The Pakistani star last week divorced Ayesha after the latter filed a case of cheating against him.

He left behind his wife, two sons, a daughter and a lot of well-wishers.

Bangladesh Football Federation expressed their deep shock to the family of the deceased and prayed for his departed soul.

Big win for Punjab

PTI, New Delhi

Irfan Pathan returned with a three-wicket haul as Kings XI Punjab put up clinical all-round performance to register a seven-wicket comprehensive victory over Delhi Daredevils in their Indian Premier League match here yesterday.

Pathan's three for 24 and Piyush Chawla (2/16) helped Punjab shot out Delhi Daredevils for a lowly 111 at the slow and turning track of Ferozshah Kotla after home team captain Gautam Gambhir won the toss and elected to bat.

The Kings XI then returned to overhaul the target with eight balls to spare, courtesy Mahela Jayawardene (38), Kumar Sangakkara (33) and Yuvraj Singh's unbeaten 21 off 25 balls.

Earlier, Gambhir's decision to bat first backfired as Delhi's much-famed batting line-up collapsed like a house of cards and they lost half of the side in exactly 10 overs with just 63 on board, before folding for the lowest IPL total in Delhi.

CLUB CUP HOCKEY MSC want to make it now

SPORTS REPORTER

Title contenders Mohammedan Sporting Club take on Sonali Bank SC in the first semifinal of the Dhaka Bank Club Cup Hockey Tournament at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium today.

A youthful Mohammedan SC were eliminated from the semifinals of the season's curtain-raising tournament last season after conceding a 1-2 defeat to these opponents, but this time the Black and Whites have formed a better side, at least on papers, compared to others and they are looking forward to booking a place in the final defeating Sonali Bank.

"There is no alternative but to win against Sonali Bank because our target is to play the final as well as regain the Club Cup title," said Mohammedan coach Barkatullah Chapal before the start of their final practice yesterday.

Mohammedan, however, toiled hard to beat a youthful Abahani in the group phase match to emerge group champions and Chapal was not thinking of the past.

"Mohammedan is a good balanced side and the boys should not face much trouble to beat Sonali if they follow my instruction in the game," said the former national player.

Sonali Bank captain Ashiqur Rahman was also expecting to face Mohammedan rather than Abahani in the semifinals and his wish turned true.

"There was no hockey in the last two years, all players of Mohammedan are not fully fit, which is the key of Abahani. That's why we were expecting Mohammedan. Besides, last season we reached final beating them and want to repeat the feat tomorrow [Monday]," said the Sonali Bank captain, who played for Mohammedan for 11 consecutive years.

He also informed that they had problems in the backline and in attack and the problems were now over with the inclusion of Pakistani forward Mohammad Osama and penalty corner specialist Wasif Siddique, who was the highest Pakistani scorer during the South Asian Games in Bangladesh.

Tiger stays in contention

Golf

AFP, Augusta

Tiger Woods, who paid a heavy price for uncontrolled lusty, struggled to control his emotions but blasted out curses on several bad shots while staying in contention Saturday at the 74th Masters.

Woods unleashed a profane tirade during a run of three bogeys in four holes on the front nine, failing to live up to his goal of curtailing the curses out of respect for golf before eventually regaining his composure and shotmaking.

"Tiger Woods, you suck. God damn it," Woods yelled after a poor shot off the sixth tee that led to back-to-back bogeys.

After his round, Woods said he couldn't recall his outbursts.

"Did I?" Woods said. "If I did then I'm sorry."

Woods has also apologized for cheating on wife Elin with multiple mistresses even as more than a dozen women have claimed sexual affairs with the golf superstar, whose

reputation and sponsor support have taken a major blow.

"It's an extraordinary story how this man has been able to concentrate with all this going on," three-time Masters champion Nick Faldo said.

Woods fired seven birdies against five bogeys in a two-under par 70 third round to stand on eight-under par 208, sharing third place with four-day South Korean playing partner K.J. Choi, four behind leader Lee Westwood of England.

"I just wanted to put myself in contention. I did that. Good round tomorrow, you never know," Woods said. "The guys were running away from me there. I was seven back at one point. To kind of claw my way back, I'm proud of that."

After five months in an adultery firestorm, he was also happy that he was able to inspire applause and supportive cheers rather than silence or heckling.

"After what has transpired, to have that support out there is fantastic," Woods said.

World number one Woods, a 14-time major champion, seeks his fifth green jacket victory at the Masters and hopes to move closer to the all-time record of 18 majors won by Jack Nicklaus in his return event from a five-month layoff.



Barisal Blazers captain Shahrar Nafees (2nd from L) addresses a press conference at a city hotel yesterday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

- 1 Expire
- 6 Homer's outcry
- 9 Ashen
- 12 Reef
- 13 Where, to Caesar
- 14 Rhyming tribute
- 15 Brit's service
- 16 Cheer-leader's pair
- 18 Celebrated magazine
- 20 Sun's output
- 21 Sticky stuff
- 23 Infinitesimal
- 24 Podiatry cases
- 25 Responsibility
- 27 Banished one
- 29 Wall hanging
- 31 Takes as one's own
- 35 Beginning
- 37 Drench
- 38 Some tides

DOWN

- 1 Young fellow
- 2 Consumed
- 3 Arrogant
- 4 Black-thorn fruit
- 5 Knee counter-part
- 6 Two-family house
- 7 Reed instrument
- 8 That guy
- 9 Clio
- 10 nominee, maybe
- 11 Fits inside snugly
- 17 Snapshots
- 19 Jurors, in theory
- 21 Red-staters' org.
- 22 Yoko of music
- 24 Scoundrel
- 26 Clog
- 28 Tops of heads
- 30 Em halves
- 32 — Beach, Fla.
- 33 Pitch
- 34 Tackle moguls
- 36 Beethoven's Third
- 38 Himalayan land
- 39 Contaminant
- 40 Ready for battle
- 42 Hens' pens
- 45 Penpoints
- 46 Now, on a memo
- 48 Water (Fr.)
- 50 Comprehend
- 51 Goller Ernie

Man-of-the-match: Mukhtar Ali.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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F P N U T G H M K P K H R G W W G H

D J T M L L D O H G K D " M T P B G

P Z K M D D J I M U Z E M D T R J O ! "

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN SINGER DELLA PENNED HER OWN MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS, I GUESS THOSE WERE REESE'S PIECES.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals Y