

MSC 'win' Club Cup

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club lifted the Dhaka Bank Club Cup Hockey tournament trophy after they beat Usha Krira Chakra 4-2 in darkness, confusion and farce at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday. The match started some 80 minutes after schedule due to a huge disagreement between the two teams regarding a foreign player recruited by Mohammedan without having him properly registered.

The match was an entertaining one for the 55 minutes of play when bad light brought an early finish to the game, that had a frantic pace about it from the very beginning. Usha started the match brightly and made a potent attack in the first minute while on the counter Mohammedan earned a penalty corner. Those early attacks suggested it would be a game full of goals and it turned out to be so.

It took nine minutes for Usha to take the lead, with skipper Maksud Alam Habul deflecting a goal-ward shot from Krishna Kumar.

However it didn't take the Motijheel giants long to equalise. From Musa Mia's penalty corner, Mamunur Rahman Chayan slotted the ball at the back of the net. A few minutes later, Mohammedan took the lead through an opportunistic goal from Ariful Haque Prince. As Rajon's original shot was half-saved by the goalkeeper Mahubullah, Prince pounced on it and pushed the ball home to make it 2-1.

But Usha were not to give in so easily as they came back in the game in the twentieth minute, courtesy of a penalty corner taken by Sheikh Mohammad Nannu, and converted by Mostafizur Rahman.

The see-saw nature of the game then took a vital turn as Mohammedan restored their lead with virtually the last shot of the half, ironically from their Malaysian recruit Chua Boon who had been at the centre of controversy that surrounded the game. It was a beautiful

field goal, as the Malaysian took a powerful reverse hit from inside the box after being set up by Sabbir Hossain.

After the breather, Usha stepped up the pace in search of another equaliser and they came close to scoring on two occasions. But against the tempo of the game, it was Mohammedan who scored on the 47th minute through Rahul Kanti Roy. It was probably the best goal of the match as Rahul deflected a fierce shot from outside the box from Chayan into the empty net.

At 4-2, Mohammedan held the match and slowed the pace while the Usha players did all the running in fading light for the rest of the game, that was brought to an premature end 15 minutes from time. Mohammedan players ran into muted celebrations while the Usha players showed their sportsmanship to come out and take their fans' plaudits.

But it was hardly an ideal end to the beginning of a new season which was supposed to give local hockey a headstart after two lean seasons when clubs found very little activities on the field.



Mohammedan Sporting Club players celebrate after they were declared winners of the Dhaka Bank Club Cup hockey tournament in a controversial final against Usha Krira Chakra at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: BANGLARCHOKH

Sultans into semis

SPORTS REPORTER

Sultans of Sylhet became the second team to confirm their semifinal berth after Dhaka Dynamites in the Destiny Group National Cricket League T20s when they posted a hard-fought four-wicket victory over Barisal Blazers at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

In the low-scoring affair under floodlights, Sri Lankan Indika De Saram hit an unbeaten run-a-ball 39 as the Sultans of Sylhet reached the target of 120 runs for six wickets with five balls to spare. Later he was adjudged man of the match.

Captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, who conceded only 13 runs in three overs, also made a notable contribution

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Cyclones brew trouble

Tamim injures left hand

SPORTS REPORTER



Cyclones of Chittagong became the first team to be knocked out of the Destiny Group National Cricket League T20s yesterday but the afternoon match nearly did not see the light of day after the Cyclones protested against the match being put back by an hour.

But when the match did finally go ahead, Dhaka Dynamites (155 all out) ended up defeating the Chittagong side (138-8) by 17 runs at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, rubbing further salt into their wounded morale.

The trouble began when the Cyclones gave the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) tournament committee a letter protesting a one-hour delay to the afternoon's match. BCB had pushed back the afternoon match from 1pm to 2pm because of Juma'a prayers.

But according to Cyclones owner Lutfor Rahman Badal, they were kept in the dark about the matter. In the letter, the Cyclones stated their intention of refusing to participate in the match.

Finally, it took the request of tournament committee chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain to convince Badal and for the game to finally begin, albeit after a gap of another 30 minutes.

But the holdup did not quite throw off the Dynamites' concentration. Openers Shamsur Rahman and captain Mohammad Ashraf set off rapidly but after a 37-run stand, Ashraf's batting woes continued. After smashing three boundaries and inside edging one, he chopped a Kamrul Islam delivery to the stumps to be dismissed for a 14-ball 20. Shamsur followed a couple of overs later, edging Saqlain Sajib for 25 off 19 balls.

Like Shamsur, Dynamites' middle-order of Jahurul Islam, Jeewan Mendis and Mahmudullah Riyad all got starts but failed to

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Tearful end for Shuvo

SPORTS REPORTER

Former national striker Moududur Rahman Shuvo retired from domestic hockey through the farcical final match of the Club Cup hockey tournament at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

It could have been a good farewell game for Shuvo yesterday, but the striker of Usha Krira Chakra had to leave his favourite ground with tears after Usha lost 2-4 to Mohammedan in a game which was marred with the inclusion of Mohammedan's foreign recruit and ended 15 minutes before the regulation time.

"Before the game, I thought I would go into retirement in a good manner but nothing happened and the federation destroyed everything today (Friday)," said a tearful Shuvo, who has been with hockey for the last 15 years.

Salma destroys Indira Road

SPORTS REPORTER

Salma Khatun's four-wicket haul helped Mohammedan Sporting Club beat Indira Road Krira Chakra by seven wickets in the Women's Club Cup cricket tournament at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Batting first, Indira were bowled out for just 70 runs from 23.1 overs with Soheli Akhter scoring 18. Apart from Salma's four, Rumana Ahmed took three wickets.

In reply, Mohammedan took 19.3 overs to knock off the target with Rumana hitting 25 off 46 balls with the help of three boundaries.

For Indira, Tithi Ghosh took two wickets.

Deccan dispose Kings XI

SPORTS REPORTER

A sparkling half-century from Rohit Sharma propelled Deccan Chargers to a 5 wicket win over Kings XI Punjab in their IPL match at Dharamshala yesterday.

Sharma partnered with Tirumalsetti Suman to steer Deccan to a comfortable win.

Sharma's heroics overshadowed the efforts of Sri Lanka duo Mahela Jayawardene and Sangakkara who had both struck fine half-centuries to help the Punjab side post what looked like a defensible total.

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Farcical final

It was no match: Jamil

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's crippling hockey saw an unprecedented incident yesterday, centring on fielding an unregistered foreign player in the final of the Dhaka Bank Club Cup Hockey tournament at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

The final between Mohammedan Sporting Club and Usha Krira Chakra started nearly 80 minutes late and ended in a way that defied the rules and regulation of the game as the umpires blew the whistle 20 minutes into the second half, 15 minutes before the scheduled end with Mohammedan leading Usha 4-2 at that stage.

Usha at the point refused to play on citing the rapidly declining light. Mohammedan was awarded the trophy but Usha declined to receive the runners-up trophy.

Questions about the status of the game was raised after the ridiculous ending with Bangladesh Hockey Federation general secretary Khondoker Jamil Uddin calling it 'unfinished' and 'an injustice'.

"It was no match and an injustice to Usha Krira Chakra. It was an unfinished game and

the only reason the match went ahead was because the chief guest (Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith) was present," said Jamil.

"In the true sense, Mohammedan are not the champions. I thank Usha for their cooperation and spirit," said the general secretary.

The match was only the tip of the iceberg as the events preceding it only added to the sense of farce surrounding it.

The chaos started when Mohammedan brought Malaysian forward Chua Boon for the Club Cup final.

He arrived in the capital early on Friday morning, though the Black and Whites' team management did not officially inform the tournament committee. Usha officials verbally let the tournament committee know that they had serious objections if Mohammedan fielded an unregistered foreign player in the final.

It all boiled over half-an-hour before the start of the scheduled match at 4:00pm when Mohammedan attempted to play the Malaysian in

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Bangladesh Hockey Federation president Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman (R) tries to convince Mohammedan official Sajed AA Adel (L) for his side to take the field as the final of the Dhaka Bank Club Cup hockey tournament was delayed at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: BANGLARCHOKH



PHOTO: STAR

MIDDLE STUMP TAKES A WALK! Rubel Hossain uproots the middle-stump of Dhaka Dynamites' Mehrab Hossain to pick up his fourth wicket in the National Cricket League T20s at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Rubel's five-wicket haul was the only bright spot in an otherwise terrible day for the Cyclones who lost to the Dynamites by 17 runs.

Surrey aim to lure Lara

Cricket

AFP, London

English county Surrey are reportedly trying to tempt West Indies great Brian Lara out of retirement in a bid to have the legendary batsman play Twenty20 cricket for the Oval-based side this season.

The former West Indies captain retired from international duty after the 2007 World Cup in the Caribbean and has not played competitively for two years.

However, the BBC website quoted a Surrey statement as saying: "We have been in discussion with Brian regarding his possible involvement with the club."

"However we have no further comment to make at this stage." Surrey's headquarters are in London where Lara was seen on Thursday attending a film premiere.

Bringing left-hander Lara, 41 next month, to the Oval would represent a major coup for Surrey, although whether he could be in a format that was in its infancy when he retired remains an open question.

What is beyond dispute is Lara's international record.

His tally of 11,953 Test runs, at an average of

just under 53 with 34 hundreds, is second only to that of India star Sachin Tendulkar.

But it is Lara who still holds the world record for the highest individual Test score with 400 not out against England in Antigua in 2004.

Lara also averaged 40.48 in 299 one-day internationals.

Immediately recognisable at the crease thanks to a distinctively high backlift, few batsmen in history have been blessed with the ability to make huge scores as often as Lara at his best.

In the space of two months in 1994, Lara's 375 and 501 not out (for Warwickshire against Durham in the English County Championship) broke world records for the highest Test and first-class scores respectively.

He also enjoyed a stellar home series against the 1999 Australian tourists, who boasted a formidable bowling unit featuring two greats in Glenn McGrath and Shane Warne, with a run of 213, eight, 153 not out and 100.

But it was Lara's misfortune to play the bulk of his international cricket in a generally weak West Indies team and his spells as captain, although marked by occasional triumphs, were largely unsuccessful.

Surrey have already recruited controversial Australian all-rounder Andrew Symonds to play Twenty20.



BRIAN LARA

What to WATCH

Max & SuperSport2

Indian Premier League
Bangalore v Mumbai
Live from 4:30pm
Kolkata v Rajasthan
Live from 8:30pm

ESPN

English Premier League
Man City v Man United
Live from 5:40pm
Blackburn v Everton
Live from 7:55pm
Tottenham v Chelsea
Live from 10:25pm

STAR Sports

English Premier League
Birmingham v Hull City
Live from 7:55pm

SuperSport7

Primera Liga
Espanyol v Barcelona
Live from 12:00am (Sunday)

ATN Bangla

NCL T20s
Sylhet v Khulna
Live from 9:30am
Rajshahi v Dhaka
Live from 2:20pm

The ties that bind

AFP, New Delhi

Indian tennis star Sania Mirza has said her relationship with her new husband, Pakistan cricket star Shoaib Malik, emerged stronger from controversy over claims he was already married.

Mirza and Malik married on Monday after a settlement was reached with the family of Ayesha Siddiqui, an Indian woman who said she wed the former Pakistan cricket captain in 2002.

"It was a great test for our relationship and for our families and they supported us wholeheartedly... they were there for us," Mirza said in comments broadcast Friday by the NDTV television network.

Malik denied marrying Siddiqui, but her family said he had agreed to sign divorce papers as part of a settlement that would allow his wedding with Mirza to go ahead.

Mirza said her husband had been honest

with her throughout the saga, which transfixed millions in India and Pakistan for days.

"We did not even have one argument because we were honest and I think that is why our relationship got a lot, lot stronger," the tennis player said.

"There was a lot of things that we learnt," said Mirza, who is currently recovering from a wrist injury that has seen her world ranking slip from 27 in 2007 to 89.

"We learned that through thick or thin... we will stick to each other and we weren't even husband and wife then and today we are," she added.

The couple, both Muslims, were married in Mirza's hometown of Hyderabad in southeast India.

Mirza has been a celebrity in India since 2005 when, aged 18, she became the first Indian woman to win a WTA Tour title.

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Pakistan Minister for Population Welfare Firdous Aashiq Awan (L) places a crown on Indian tennis player Sania Mirza as Pakistan cricketer Shoaib Malik (R) looks on during their wedding reception in Hyderabad on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP