

Bowlers rule the day

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Khulna left-arm spinner Bishwanath Halder and Rajshahi opener Myshekur Rahman were the opening day's heroes during the National Cricket League's third round that began yesterday.

The young right-hander followed up from his last round's ton to score a fighting 126 on a day when the bowlers mostly dominated proceedings across the three venues.

RAJSHAHI-KHULNA

Winning the toss, Rajshahi decided to bat at the Sylhet Divisional Stadium and riding on Myshekur's 195-ball 126, they posted a challenging total of 318 before being all out at the end of the day's play.

Dhiman Ghosh came in at number seven and was unbeaten on 50.

It was the left-armed Bishwanath who took six wickets for 91 to damage Rajshahi's batting, picking up the key wickets of the openers Avishek Mitra and Myshekur as well as dismantling

the tail.

BARISAL-SYLHET

Put into bat first at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra, the Sylhet batsmen surrendered cheaply for only 160 runs.

Only three batsmen made it to double figures with the highest of 39 coming from the bats of Nadif Chowdhury and Tasamul Haque.

Medium-pacer Ariful Haque was the pick of the bowlers with four for 28, well supported by off-spinner Sohag Gazi (3-19), helping Barisal to restrict their opponent to a below-par total.

Barisal batted one over before the end of the day's play and scored eight runs without losing a wicket with Mohammad Nuruzzaman and Fazle Rabbi the unbeaten openers at the crease.

DHAKA-CHITTAGONG

Dhaka's part-time medium-pacer Shuvogotom Chowdhury ripped through the middle-order of Chittagong's batting picking up four wickets after the port city side chose to bat first after winning the toss.

Chittagong were all out for 227 runs with left-hander Mominul Haque (56) the only batsman to pass the half-century mark. Left-arm spinner Mosharraf Hossain also claimed three wickets for 31.

Dhaka lost an early wicket when they came out to bat, Rony Talukder caught behind in the very first ball of their innings off left-arm seamer Kamrul Islam.

However, Dhaka did not lose any more wickets before the close of play, finishing the day with 29 for one with all-rounder Elias Sunny not out on 21.

BRIEF SCORES

RAJSHAHI: First inns 318 all out (Myshekur 126, Dhiman 50*; Bishwanath 6-91, Nizamuddin 2-46).

SYLHET: First inns 160 all out (Nadif 39, Tasamul 39; Ariful 4-28, Shohag 3-19).

BARISAL: First inns 8-0 (Nuruzzaman 8*)

CHITTAGONG: First inns 227 all out (Mominul 56, Irfan 42; Shuvogoto 4-33, Mosharraf 3-31).

DHAKA: First inns 29-1 (Sunny 21*; Kamrul 1-13)

Pepe to stay with Real till 2015

AFP, Madrid

Real Madrid's Portuguese international Pepe has agreed a contract extension until June 2015, sports daily Marca reported Monday.

The 28-year-old defender, who joined Real from Porto in 2007 for 30 million euros after helping the Portuguese side win back-to-back league titles, will sign the new contract before the end of the season, the newspaper said.

His current contract with Real ends in June 2012.

Under the new deal Brazilian-born Pepe will earn around four million euros annually, up from 1.8 million euros, according to Marca. His agent had been asking for his salary to be lifted to six million euros per year.

Pepe moved to Porto from CS Maritimo in 2004 after three successful seasons with the Madeira club which he joined from third division SC Corinthians Alagoano in Brazil.

AFC CHALLENGE CUP QUALIFIERS

Bangladesh lose to Palestine

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh made a frustrating start to the AFC Challenge Cup qualifiers when they suffered a 2-0 defeat against Palestine in Group A opener at the Youth Training Centre, in Yangon yesterday.

Bangladesh, who last time qualified for the 8-team finals and then went on to beat mighty Tajikistan 2-1 before losing against Myanmar and Sri Lanka, found it hard this time in their group opener against Palestine, who are four places below Bangladesh in the FIFA rankings. In the only previous meeting between the two sides, Bangladesh came from behind to hold Palestine to a 1-1 draw on home soil during the inaugural AFC Challenge Cup in 2006.

In yesterday's match, Bangladesh gave Palestine the lead two minutes into the second half when midfielder Monaem Khan Raju struck his one net while trying to clear a powerful shot from Palestine's Murad, who later doubled the margin in the 65th minute.

The defeat was on the cards as Bangladesh had only three days of preparation compared to the Palestinians who had been preparing for the qualifiers for the last two months. They also played two warm-up matches against Pakistan and won one and drew one.

Robert Rubcic's side have an uphill task on their hands now if they are to qualify for the finals as hosts Myanmar and Philippines shared points in the day's other fixture. 10-man Myanmar came from behind to hold Philippines to a 1-1 draw with Maung Lwin cancelling a 76-minute goal from Joseph Placer in the stoppage time of the second half.

Bangladesh will take on hosts Myanmar tomorrow at the same venue.

Independence Day kabaddi

SPORTS REPORTER

Border Guard of Bangladesh and Bangladesh Army won their respective matches of the Independence Day Kabaddi tournament at the Kabaddi Stadium yesterday.

BGB defeated Bangladesh Fire Service 67-34 while Army beat Bangladesh Navy 29-22.

Independence Day basketball

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan registered a hard-fought 72-68 win over Border Guard of Bangladesh in the Independence Day Basketball tournament at the Dhanmondi Wooden Floor Gymnasium yesterday. Dumketu Club also recorded a tense 69-67 win over Bangladesh Police in the day's other match.

State security

FROM PAGE 16

He said West Indies players took cover on the floor of the bus.

Police said the attack was a case of mistaken identity as the fans' real target was the Bangladesh team vehicle.

Police and elite security force, the Rapid Action Battalion, arrested 38 people in connection with the attack.

Fans also attacked Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan's home.

Former West Indies captain Chris Gayle blasted Bangladeshi officials for the attack through a Twitter message while the West Indies Players Association (WIPA) claimed that more should have been done to protect the players.

Board meeting

FROM PAGE 16

have certain demands which will be talked about in the meeting," he added.

Jalal also informed that bowling coach Ian Pont will not be available during the upcoming one-day series against Australia as he'll be on holiday.

Jalal also informed that the technical committee discussed the Bangladesh A side that is set to tour South Africa early next month.

It was however learned that the national selectors will sit to discuss the team today, with some national team players being considered for the second string side apart from domestic performers and upcoming players.

Pak riding

FROM PAGE 16

(Dhaka) and Sri Lanka face England (Colombo) in the last quarter-final a day later - with the winners to play the first semi-final in Colombo on March 29.



PHOTO: AFP

Inter Milan striker Giampaolo Pazzini celebrates his all-important goal in trademark style during their Serie A clash against Lecce at the Giuseppe Meazza Stadium on Sunday.

Inter close gap

AFP, Rome

Inter Milan closed the gap on leaders AC Milan to just two points ahead of the top of the table city derby in two weeks time with a 1-0 victory over lowly Lecce

curled it past the near post. Pazzini struck just a minute after Lecce goalkeeper Antonio Rosati had made a brilliant one-handed save low to his right from the striker's free header from eight yards.

But with his second chance he controlled the ball with his chest as he burst past his marker and fired across Rosati into the far corner.

Julio Cesar had to come to Inter's rescue late on as he blocked a point-blank shot from Andrea Bertolacci.

In Naples Uruguay striker Edinson Cavani was the star of the show as he scored both goals.

He converted a 49th minute penalty after strike-partner Ezequiel Lavezzi was felled in the box.

And although Robert Acquafresca restored parity with a shot from an angle, Cavani hit the winner as he ran onto Marek Hamsik's scooped ball over the top and lobbed goalkeeper Michael Agazzi.

Earlier Francesco Totti scored his 200th Serie A goal for Roma but it wasn't enough to inspire his team to victory at Fiorentina.

Twice the hosts led through Adrian Mutu and Alessandro Gamberini, who scored his first goal since 2007, but Totti netted from the spot and then added his 201st league strike after the break.

Udinese went back above Lazio into the Champions League qualification positions with a 2-0 win over Catania while Juventus won for only the fourth time in 14 league games with a 2-1 success against second-bottom Brescia.

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RESULTS

Fiorentina 2 (Mutu 21, Gamberini 34)
Roma 2 (Totti 27-pen, 52)
Bari 1 (Ghezzal 41-pen) **Chievo 2** (Pelissier 38, Moscardelli 49)
Bologna 1 (Di Vaio 28) Genoa 1 (Dainelli 43)
Inter Milan 1 (Pazzini 52) Lecce 0
Juventus 2 (Krsic 23, Del Piero 68) Brescia 1 (Eder 42)
Sampdoria 0 **Parma 1** (Zaccardo 20)
Udinese 2 (Inler 22, Di Natale 74-pen) Catania 0
Napoli 2 (Cavani 49-pen, 61) Cagliari 1 (Acquafresca 56)

'Stars are exhausted'

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho admits his side are suffering from fatigue as they challenge on three fronts after his stars laboured to a fortunate 2-1 win over derby rivals Atletico Madrid on Saturday to stay five points behind Barcelona in the title race.

Real needed a stellar display from their goalkeeper and captain Iker Casillas to net the three points at the Vicente Calderon after first half goals from Karim Benzema and Mesut Ozil had put them 2-0 up.

It was a second big game in four days for Madrid, having beaten Lyon 3-0 on Wednesday to reach the quarterfinals of the Champions League, and Portuguese boss Mourinho admitted his stars needed a rest.

"They (Atletico) had a week to prepare for the duel and us, two days," said Mourinho. "The team was tired. I was also tired and I'm the coach. The second half was difficult. We couldn't hit them on the counter-attack."

"We defended as well as possible and we achieved an important derby win. They are all tired, physically and mentally."

Real are still fighting for three trophies having reached the King's Cup final, Champions League quarterfinal and they continue

to try and catch Barcelona in the title race.

Spain captain Casillas was the undoubted man of the match for Real with four or five terrific stops and Mourinho heaped praise on his skipper.

"(Iker) Casillas has done a fantastic job. I like it when my goalkeeper doesn't have much to do in a game, and he had a lot to do and he was fantastic," said Mourinho.

"Atletico have shown their great spirit and quality of play, and Madrid had an answer to those who thought that the league finished today."

"I was very worried (about an equaliser), but at the same time I was full of trust in the players' mentality and fighting spirit. I know football and many things happen in the last minutes and change the result. But they fought, they gave everything and I'm pleased for the players."

One black spot for Madrid was the injury to Cristiano Ronaldo with the Portuguese winger, who has only just returned from a thigh injury, hobbling off with a hamstring injury that is expected to sideline him for two to three weeks.

Real trail pacesetters Barcelona by five points with nine games left to play although one is the second 'El Clasico' between the two sides at the Santiago Bernabeu on the weekend April 16/17.

Djokovic dispels Nadal

Tennis

AFP, Indian Wells

Australian Open champion Novak Djokovic won the ATP Indian Wells title on Sunday, rallying to beat world No. 1 Rafael Nadal 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 and improve his record this season to 18-0.

Djokovic, who took over the No. 2 world ranking by beating Roger Federer in the semi-finals, avenged a loss to Nadal in the 2007 Indian Wells final.

The 23-year-old Serbian has looked invincible this season and Sunday's victory in the California desert underlined that.

Djokovic fired four aces, including two key ones to hold serve in the second set, in the two-hour, 25-minute match to capture his second Indian Wells crown.

"I am having the best period of my life on the tennis court," Djokovic said. "I am playing with a lot of confidence. I'm feeling the ball well on the court. I'm very dedicated and I have a big will to win each match."

"So it will not stop here."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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ACROSS
1 Entreaty
5 Reverberate
9 Hope or Newhart
12 Skirt edges
13 Christmas refrain
14 Rhyming tribute
15 Instrument panel
17 Intention
18 Group of actors
19 Greene of "Bonanza"
21 City-related
24 "Leave It to Beaver" dad
25 Any moment now
26 Square dances
30 Greek vowel
31 Journal
32 "That feels so good"
33 Rump
35 Hodge-podge

DOWN
1 Third degree?
2 Meadow
3 Type squares
4 Garbage receptacle
5 Eve's grandson
6 Layer of paint
7 That girl
8 Wife or mother, slangily
9 "Monopoly" property
10 Valhalla VIP
11 Everly Brothers' "Let It Be"
16 Prohibit

20 Acapulco gold
21 Second-hand
22 Memory method
23 Staff meeting site
24 Existed
26 Hastens
27 Rowing need
28 Hammer's target
29 Oxford, e.g.
31 Literary condensations
34 Disen-cumber
35 Toppers for Whoppers
37 Priestly garment
38 Suspend
39 Do as you're told
40 "— Lisa"
41 Vacation-ing
44 Wacko
45 Have a bug
46 Nipper's co.
47 Morning moisture

Solution time: 21 mins.

EMUS OHO STAB
KITLOGRAM ARIA
ENTANGLE LIDS
PAY LLAMA
MOTET SEAM
EGAD ENTWINE
GRR SMUTS ORB
ENTEBBE MONO
EROS NAKED
CASHW ION
ODOR ENTRACTE
LAMA RELIGION
AMEN SOL EDGE

Italy drop De Rossi

AFP, Rome

Roma midfielder Daniele De Rossi has paid for a wayward punch by being excluded from Italy coach Cesare Prandelli's 25-man squad to play Slovenia in a Euro 2012 qualifier.

De Rossi was given a three-match ban by UEFA on Friday after TV evidence showed him hitting Shakhtar Donetsk's Dario Srna during the teams' Champions League clash last week.

The 27-year-old said he would accept the national team ban which rules him out of contention for the Group C clash in Slovenia next Friday and a friendly against the Ukraine in Kiev the following Tuesday.

"I accept with serenity my exclusion from the national team because there's a code of conduct and the rules are made to be respected," he said.

"I hope this exclusion will only last one (qualification) match and that I can return to the squad as soon as possible."

There is also no place for controversial Manchester City forward Mario Balotelli while Cesena midfielder Marco Parolo received his first call up to the squad.

Cassano is the only player from Serie A leaders AC Milan while Villarreal's Giuseppe Rossi is the only player based outside Italy.

Despite their troubles in the league, Juventus are the most represented side with six players.

Group C leaders Italy are unbeaten on 10 points from four matches with Slovenia second, three points behind.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers:
Gianluigi Buffon (Juventus), Salvatore Sirigu (Palermo), Emiliano Viviano (Bologna)
Defenders:
Davide Astori (Cagliari), Federico Balzaretti (Palermo), Leonardo Bonucci and Giorgio Chiellini (Juventus), Domenico Criscito (Genoa), Daniele Gastaldello (Sampdoria), Christian Maggio (Napoli), Andrea Ranocchia (Inter Milan), Davide Santon (Cesena)
Midfielders:
Alberto Aquiliani and Claudio Marchisio (Juventus), Stefano Mauri (Lazio), Riccardo Montolivo (Fiorentina), Thiago Motta (Inter Milan), Antonio Nocerino (Palermo), Marco Parolo (Cesena)
Forwards:
Antonio Cassano (AC Milan), Alberto Gilardino (Fiorentina), Sebastian Giovinco (Parma), Alessandro Matri (Juventus), Giampaolo Pazzini (Inter Milan), Giuseppe Rossi (Villarreal/ESP)

CRYPTOQUIP

SQHJIAQ KOQ DQTTVB AKJFKQW

RMHTIWRMN LVFQ NFRM

OIAE RM ORA WRQK, OQ

DQTK TREQ J SFJM-MQB LJM.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF SOMEONE PLAYS THE SAME HOCKEY POSITION FOR MANY YEARS, I RECKON THAT'S A LONG-TERM GOALIE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals H