

Barisal bowl out Khulna

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Starting the fourth round of National League at fifth in the table Barisal strengthened their position against Khulna at the end of the first day at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

Dhaka and Sylhet also ended the day with a respectable score against Rajshahi and Chittagong respectively.

Dhaka-Rajshahi

Two half-centuries from opener Mohammad Mazid (51) and middle-order Taybeur Rahman (55) helped Dhaka to reach a respectable total of 245 losing eight wickets after they decided to bat first.

To fill in the place of Shuvagata, another opener Rony Talukder batted at no.5 and managed a steady 39 from 76 balls.

Sanjamul Islam was once again the pick of the bowlers for Rajshahi taking three for 98, while Farhad Hossain and pacer Shubhashish Roy took two wickets each.

Dhaka skipper Mohammad Sharif (12*) and Mosharraf Hossain (0*) were at crease when the day was called off for bad-light at 4:00 pm.

Chittagong-Sylhet

At BKSP-2, Sylhet batted first after they won the toss and made a very slow progress at the end of the day with only managing 201 runs losing six wickets in 92 overs.

Sylhet batsmen batted with patience, but could not contribute much with the highest coming from Rajin Saleh's 161 ball 55, hitting eight boundaries. Golam Rahman scored 48 off 117 balls.

Chittagong's Abdullah Al Mamun grabbed three wickets for just 32 runs.

Barisal-Khulna

Off-spinner Shohag Gazi once again led the bowling attack for Barisal as he claimed four wickets for 49 runs to restrict Khulna to 197 runs at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

Pacer Shafaq Al Zabir and Ariful Haque supported well picking up three and two wickets respectively.

Khulna were in trouble from the beginning when Ariful picked early wickets and soon left the batting side tottering at 29 for four. No.5 and 6, Jobaydur Rahman (40 off 140; six boundaries) and Nizamuddin (78 off 184; 12 boundaries) steadied their ship with a 90 run partnership.

Once the partnership was broken by Shohag picking up Jubaydur, it was all to Shafaq and Shohag to clean the rest up.

Barisal batted two overs before the end of the day and both the openers Fazle Rabbi and Bikash Sharma were unbeaten on zero.

BRIEFScores

DHAKA: First inns 245-8 (Taybeur 55, Mazid 51; Sanjamul 3-98, Shubhashish 2-26).

KHULNA: First inns 197 all out (Nizamuddin 78, Jubaydur 40; Shohag 4-49, Shafaq 3-48).

SYLHET: First inns 201-6 (Rajin 55, Golam 48; Mamun 3-32, Nazmul 1-33).

BARISAL: First inns 0-0 (Fazle 0*, Bikash 0*)

PIONEER LEAGUE Nawabpur champions

SPORTS REPORTER

Nawabpur Krira Chakra emerged champions in the Dhaka City Corporation Pioneer Football League with a 3-0 win over Dhaka Ekadosh in the final at the Bishreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Saiful put Nawabpur KC, a team packed with BKSP students, ahead in the 33rd minute while Saddam doubled the margin in the 51st with a long-range shot from the right side.

Play was suspended for few minutes following a scuffles among the players of two teams.

Ratul tapped in the third availing a through-pass from Saiful two minutes before the regulation 70-minute.

The Champions, the runners-up and the third placed Samajkallyan KS have been promoted to the third division.

DCC Mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka distributed prizes among the winners.

Much ado about

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the group, but sometimes that hasn't always been the best thing for us. If you look at our performances, whenever we've won well we've backed it up with a poor performance so that has probably been the majority of the talk within the team - that we can't afford to be up and down at the knockout stages.

"We've had our up performance so we've got to make sure we've got another one in the bag because we know how strong Sri Lanka can be in their home conditions," he explained.

But Vettori also agreed that a tournament format such as this is good for smaller sides as sudden-death games put a balance on the game, leaving no real favourites.

"I think in a knockout sort of tournament you get lucky on the day and you put that really good performance together. Our two really good performances came against Pakistan - probably to allow us to get to the quarters - and then the game

against South Africa. "So I think that's the way every team will be looking at it. I don't think there are any favourite tags. It's just who can turn up on the day.

"Who are your one or two batsmen who can stand up and who's our bowler who can have a great day and get the wickets of Sangakkara and Jayawardene, because that's going to make the difference rather than being a favourite team," he said. Another advantage for the Black Caps is their new coach John Wright and Vettori believes that the former India coach has brought the pride back into his side.

"John's been fantastic for us but the players took the blame for those losses (to Bangladesh) so I think the players have to take credit for the wins as well.

"So it's been a combination of the two. I've loved working with Wright and he's brought a lot of passion to the team. And his knowledge of people over here has been a tremendous help as well," he said.

ASIAN ZONAL CHESS Zia, Liza lift titles

SPORTS REPORTER

Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman and Shamima Akhter Liza became champions in men's and women's section of the Asian Zonal Chess Championship in Sri Lanka, said a press release from Bangladesh Chess Federation yesterday.

16 chess players from Pakistan, Nepal, Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh took part in the men's section while nine female competitors participated in the women's section.

Touch and go

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Expectations of the home crowd would still be there but it is something teams from the sub-continent have to live with. "It is always there and not something we can control. We will talk about it in the evening that we should remain realistic and in the moment. We should make sure that our focus is 100 per cent tomorrow," he said.

Sangakkara also hinted that it could be Nuwan Kulasekara could be drafted in, given his excellent performance against the Kiwis in Mumbai two weeks ago. The seamer took 1-19 from his seven overs, but it was enough for the skipper to consider this option for the semifinal.

"Playing three spinners is a question we have to ask ourselves today. Nuwan Kulasekera has done well against New Zealand every single time he's gone out there. He's a strong contender to play as well but everyone's in the mix. We will make our decision based on what we think is best to play New Zealand," he explained, also adding that playing three spinners remains a choice for him but it is more likely that it will only happen if Muralidaran is playing.

"The last game we had three spinners because we thought that was the best combination against England. We have to think about our fast bowlers, especially Nuwan (Kulasekera). We have to make sure we play the right combination.

"Sides around the world have improved in playing spin. England have come a long way from 5-6 years ago. They make sure that their players, when traveling, play spin well. We can't think of just turning up and bowling just to think that everything will go our way," said Sangakkara.

Obituary

Paigamuddin Ahmed, father of GM Ziaur Rahman, died of kidney failure on Sunday at a city hospital. He was 69.

Ahmed, a former national chess player, had been suffering from kidney ailments for a long time. He left behind his wife and three sons, grandsons, a grand daughter and a many-well-wishers.

The Bangladesh Chess Federation condoled the death of Paigamuddin and extended its sympathies to the family members of the deceased.



PHOTO: AFP

Argentina superstar Lionel Messi is seen upon his arrival at the International Juan Santamaria Airport in Alajuela on Sunday ahead of their international friendly against Costa Rica tonight.

USA hold Argentina

Football

AFP, East Rutherford

Lionel Messi dazzled, and Argentina dominated, but the United States still eked out a 1-1 draw Saturday in a friendly international football match.

Teenager Juan Agudelo scored in the 59th minute to give the spirited hosts the surprising draw.

Esteban Cambiasso put Argentina ahead in the 42nd minute after Messi made a scintillating run and passed through the legs of US captain Carlos Bocanegra.

US goalkeeper Tim Howard stopped Angel Di Maria's initial shot, but Cambiasso fired home the rebound. The match was played before 79,800 spectators at New Meadowlands Stadium, home of the NFL's New York Giants and New York Jets.

After Argentina's dominance of the first half, US fans were energized by manager Bob Bradley's switch to a more attacking style.

Agudelo, 18, came on for the second

half and scored his second goal in three international appearances.

It followed a swinging corner kick by Landon Donovan and a initial header attempt by Bocanegra that was saved by Argentine goalkeeper Mariano Andujar.

Most of the night, however, belonged to Argentina and Messi -- Barcelona's two-time world footballer of the year.

Wearing gloves and a long-sleeved shirt under his jersey on the cold New Jersey night, Messi zigzagged around US defenders as if they were standing still, and threatened almost every time he touched the ball.

US midfielder Jermaine Jones tried to stay with him in midfield, and Oguchi Onyewu knocked the Argentinian star down with a clumsy elbow to the head while going up for a header in the 24th minute.

After he received treatment and got to his feet, fans chanted "Mess-iiii! Mess-iiii!"

In the 40th minute, Messi stripped Clint Dempsey of the ball near midfield and raced toward the goal.

Sepp urges Brazil to speed up

AFP, Geneva

FIFA president Sepp Blatter on Monday urged Brazil to speed up its 2014 World Cup preparations, warning that Rio and Sao Paulo might not be ready to host Confederations Cup matches a year beforehand.

"If you make a comparison between the state of play in South Africa and Brazil three years before the World Cup, Brazil is behind Africa. It shouldn't be said but it's a fact," the head of world football's governing body told journalists.

"If they carry on working like that when we have the Confederations Cup... a year before the World Cup as a rehearsal, there won't be matches in Rio and no matches in Sao Paulo," he added. "The World Cup stadiums are still not ready."

Blatter said he was waiting for "a bit of effect" from the five time World Cup winners "because it's not moving forward, it's not moving forward very fast."

Chelsea ideal for Neymar

Football

AFP, London

Brazil coach Mano Menezes believes Neymar would be a big hit in the Premier League if the teenage striker joined Chelsea.

Neymar has already been the subject of one rejected bid by Chelsea and the Santos star bolstered his growing reputation with both goals in Brazil's 2-0 friendly win over Scotland at Arsenal's Emirates Stadium on Sunday and.

The 19-year-old only made his full Brazil debut in August but he already has three goals in three international appearances and Menezes admits a move to England would add another

dimension to Neymar's game as he would have to learn how to cope with a more physical style of play.

"That could only be good for Neymar as a final complement to his transformation," Menezes said.

"The style in England will give him stronger physical strength and he would develop to escape the strong marking. If he did that he would be a more complete player.

"I don't see any problem if he moved, although it is never good for the supporters in Brazil to see the best players leave.

"I understand the personal motivations and financial ones that decide these things."

Whether Neymar would like to move

to England is another matter after he claimed he was subjected to racist abuse during the match, while it was also reported that a banana was thrown at the teenager.

Neymar's dazzling show was just what Menezes needed after defeats against France and Argentina and the coach is confident Neymar and debutant striker Leandro Damiao both have the potential to become key players as he builds towards the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

Menezes said: "We had a well defined plan, the team followed the tactics well."

"This is a good starting point. We will speak to Neymar and Leandro and see how far they can go in the future with the national team."



PHOTO: STAR

Nawabpur KC players celebrate with the trophy of Dhaka City Corporation Pioneer Football League after beating Dhaka Ekadosh 3-0 in the final at the Bishreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Mystery of the Technical

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to save their lucrative job instead of speaking their minds.

The Rafiqul Alam-led selection committee however for once salvaged some pride when they stuck to their chosen team for the ICC Cricket World Cup but now one can easily say that that was a 'separate incident' after the way they bowed to the pressure of technical committee.

The whispering has been around that it's a desperate attempt of the Rafiqul-led panel to be in the good books of the board officials with their contract expiring in April this year.

most important question is; why did the BCB make a committee like the 'technical committee'?

True the board president has the right to form a committee on a temporary basis to solve any urgent or critical issues but no way could it supersede other existing standing committees.

It seems that this committee has been formed to allow few people to put their noses into each and every matter.

If all the cricketing issues are to be discussed in this technical committee then there is no need of other standing committees like the "cricket operations committee". It is funny enough

that Enayet Hossain Siraj is the chairman of the cricket operations committee and the same man also heads the technical committee.

The activities of the technical committee made all the standing committees look like a working committee and the cricket operations committee non-functional, which is no way a healthy practice for any professional organisation.

It's inexplicable the way the current board is running its show under a shadow committee. This board is formed through an election but there is hardly any sign of democratic practice in its activities.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across, Down, and Solution time: 21 mins.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with letters and numbers.

CRYPTOQUIP

Q S F H Q N M K K F D S M L H A W F M Q O A Z N Q O Q U U M B F S Q T G A M W M B L O A K L N G A Z I G N T Q D X B M N N L: " U M Q X F S I O M Q Z N L. "

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I PENNED A VOLUME OF POEMS REFERENCING FAMOUS LEGAL CASES AND TITLED IT "VERSUS VERSES."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: T equals W