

A feisty draw

ATIQUE ANAM

Grameenphone
Bangladesh League 2010

Ten-man Arambagh KS frustrated Mohammedan SC to a goalless draw in a feisty encounter of the Grameenphone Bangladesh League at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday. Neither team disturbed the league standings with Mohammedan in seventh position on 23 points and Arambagh with 18 points in eighth.

The match started with a minute's silence observed in memory of their recently-deceased Rwandan player Habumugisa Ismael and former coach-cum-player Nasser Hejazi.

However, any sense of sombreness soon gave way to a feisty environment as both teams struggled to establish outright dominance. The frustration got the better of the hosts Arambagh when in the fortieth minute skipper Deen dangerously elbowed Mohammedan defender Uwiringiyimana Amani to the ground. The challenge was so blatant that it left the Ugandan with a bloody head and resulted in Deen being sent off. The decision did not go down well with the Arambagh players and officials as they stormed the pitch and had a go at the match officials.

It may be mentioned here that Deen has a reputation for being undisciplined on the field; his altercation and alleged attack on Sheikh Russel coach in the earlier part of

the league saw him suspended for two matches.

Back to the match -- with more than a ten-minute stoppage, the ten-man Arambagh outfit came close to scoring when Guinean striker Bangoura Ismael produced an act of brilliance, as he danced down the left flank, cut back inside a defender and let fly a curling shot that brushed off the crosspiece.

Mohammedan had a couple of chances too, both falling to Nigerian striker Sunday Chizoba, and both ruefully wasted.

Mohammedan should have got the lead at the hour mark but for some indecisive play from striker Anwar Hossain and valiant keeping on the part of Arambagh's glovesman. As Anwar ran down the middle, and had Sunday standing alone on the left, he needed just to take the ball past the keeper. But again Mostafizur rushed off his blocks and pounced the ball away from Anwar to frustrate the Motijheel powerhouse.

And interestingly enough, as was the case with Arambagh, this time too the frustration was directed towards the match officials. The referee and his colleagues made their way off the pitch in a police cordon amid incessant swearing from the MSC players, officials and supporters.

"That **** referee just ruined the match. We were denied two definite penalties," was the angry reaction of Mohammedan coach Shafiqul Islam Manik.



DOWN, BUT NOT OUT: Mohammedan SC's bandaged defender Uwiringiyimana Amani tries to get the ball past his opponents having previously been elbowed by Arambagh KS skipper Deen Mohammad during their Bangladesh League match at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

NAT'L JR ATHLETICS

Day of records

SPORTS REPORTER

Three new records were set on the second and final day of the 27th National Junior Athletics Championship as BKSP were crowned champions at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Laboni Haque of Bangladesh Kriya Shikha Protisthan (BKSP) got gold in u-18 women's high jump equalling the previous record of 1.55 metres.

Papia Sarker of BKSP set the long jump record jumping 5.28 metres, beating the previous record of 4.99 metres. In the same event, Taslima Akter, also from BKSP, became second jumping 5.24 metres.

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China's Liu Gang hits a return against compatriot Sun Meng during the girls' singles final at the Wooden Floor Gymnasium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

China sweep all but one

Table tennis

SPORTS REPORTER

Chinese players swept the gold in the boys', girls' singles and mixed doubles on the last day of the Bangabandhu International Invitational Youth Table Tennis Championships at the Wooden Floor Gymnasium yesterday.

China's Zhang Di became champion in the boys' singles with a 4-2 win over compatriot Zhang Jiaru. Zhang Di won the sets in 11-5; 12-10; 5-11; 10-12; 11-8; 11-9 games.

In the girls' singles final, Liu Gang of China thrashed compatriot Sun Meng En in 4-0 sets. Liu Gang (CHN) won the sets in 11-7; 11-1; 11-9; 11-9 games.

In the mixed doubles finals, Zhang Di and LIU Gaoyang of China defeated compatriot Zhang Jiaru and Liu Xin in 3-1 sets to take gold.

Earlier on Thursday, China won the boys' doubles gold but lost the girls' doubles to the Thai team.

At the end of the competition, minister for local government, rural development and cooperatives Syed Ashraful Islam distributed the prizes among the winners as the chief Guest of the closing ceremony. State minister of youth and

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A difficult return awaits Tigers in Tests

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

A lot more than usual will be riding on the Tigers' preparatory camp that begins on June 4.

The newly-appointed selection panel will call up 30 players to train at the Shere-e-Bangla National Stadium ahead of the nearly month-long tour to Zimbabwe that begins in the end of July.

It's safe to say that half of those 30 know they will be touring the African nation and would have to go through more than the normal fitness load and net sessions.

Under trainer Grant Luden, the Tigers will have to undertake all the necessary fitness routines as well as getting used to the red ball, the most crucial aspect of the camp.

Evidently, the senior members of the squad have expressed concern privately over their acute lack of preparedness when it comes to the game's No. 1 format.

The concern is quite obvious -- the Tigers haven't played a Test match since June 6 last year, and their next Test will be on the first week of August against Zimbabwe. Essentially, they will be playing a Test after 14 months, the longest break the Tigers have taken since becoming a Test-playing nation.

The last time such a break took place was between April 2006 and May 2007, a 13-month lull. There has been an eight-month break (between February and October, 2008) and several 6-

month interruptions since the early days.

"It is always difficult for the team," said former national captain Habibul Bashar yesterday. "Everything starts anew and it is hard to adjust. It was particularly hard for us because immediately after we finished the World Cup, we had to play Tests against India."

Bashar, the country's highest Test scorer, is a selector now and believes that this team is in a slightly more advantageous position as they will have a two-month camp before they play the longer-version game. "They at least will have time to think. Some-

LONG BREAKS IN TESTS

14 months -- June 2010 to August 2011
13 months -- April 2006 to May 2007
8 months -- February 2008 to October 2008
6 months -- July 2009 to January 2010
6 months -- January 2009 to July 2009
6 months -- July 2007 to January 2008

times a long, hard discussion also helps. Someone points out a mistake and you talk about it, things become slightly easier for the batsmen," he said, adding that Zimbabwe too will be playing a Test match after six years.

After the Manchester Test (which the Tigers lost by an innings and 80 runs) last year, the Tigers have played 26 ODIs, including series wins over New Zealand and Zimbabwe and the uninspiring World Cup at home.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) cancelled a scheduled Test series against New Zealand last year, shunting it back by a year because it

was at the top of the "run-up" to the World Cup. What difference would it have made if the Tigers had played Tests then is a question only the authorities would be able to answer; Australia, England, India and South Africa, the purported models for Bangladesh cricket, played Tests as late as January this year.

Barring injuries and other concerns, the Tigers' batting line-up will bear a familiar look when they take on Zimbabwe in August but even those in the top seven haven't played that many first-class games in the interim.

The chief worry is that the openers -- Tamim Iqbal and Imrul Kayes -- haven't played a four-dayer since Test last year while skipper Shakib Al Hasan's stint with Worcestershire last year was his last foray into first-class cricket (September 2010).

Shahriar Nafees, Mahmudullah Riyad, Junaed Siddiqui, Mohammad Ashraful and Mushfiqur Rahim played in the latter stages of the National Cricket League, with Junaed and Ashraful batting out two innings in South Africa for Bangladesh A.

Bashar believed however that it would be tougher for the bowlers to adjust to five-day mode.

"They have to be a lot more patient. I think it is harder on the bowlers as they are used to operating differently. They are more focussed on line and length and bowl a smaller spell than they have to in Test cricket."

"They still have two months now, and with diligent planning, things can turn around," said Bashar.

Sk Jamal stay in the hunt

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club held slim title hopes with a six-wicket victory over Azad Sporting Club in the final round of the 3rd Women's Club Cup cricket tournament at the City Club ground yesterday.

With the victory, Sheikh Jamal improved their tally to eight points to share the lead with Mohammaned a Sporting Club, who will take on Abahani today at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur in the title-deciding match.

A win will confirm Mohammaned's triumph. But the net run-rate will decide the title if Abahani win the match, which will put the three teams on eight points each.

Back to the match and Tithi Rani claimed four wickets and Suborna Islam captured three wickets to wrap up the Azad innings for 84 runs in 39.5 overs.

In reply, Sheikh Jamal reached the target losing four wickets in 22.3 overs. Tithi top scored with 32 of 36 balls that featured four boundaries.

In the day's other rain-interrupted match, Sharmin Akhter led from the front with a 116-ball 95 s BKSP posted a massive 108-run victory over Gulshan Youth Club at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

SPORTS POLL

WEEKLY QUESTION

Do you think Shakib Al Hasan is being overworked?

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What to WATCH

STAR Sports

French Open Tennis Day Eight's Play Live from 3:00pm

STAR Cricket

England v Sri Lanka First Test, Day 4 Live from 4:00pm

ESPN

F1 World Championship Monaco Grand Prix

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh League

Feni Soccer v Sk Russel

Time: 4:00pm



On May 23 last year, we rejoiced Musa Ibrahim's (R) climb atop Mount Everest, the first Bangladeshi to do so. The first anniversary of his precipitous climb is being celebrated and yesterday, on the sixth day, a mini-marathon was inaugurated at Dhaka University, where the roller-skating competition was also held. Jahangirnagar University hosted a triathlon, while today the final day of celebrations, the Zumar Climbing Competition will be held at the DU Gymnasium.

Hammam cries foul

Football

AFP, Doha

Attempts to discredit Mohamed bin Hammam ahead of the FIFA presidency elections were a "tawdry manoeuvre" that showed "increasing evidence of a conspiracy", a statement issued by the Qatar's office said Friday.

Bin Hammam is running against incumbent Sepp Blatter to become president of world football's governing body but both men have been called to appear before FIFA's ethics committee over allegations of corruption.

Bin Hammam, FIFA vice-president Jack Warner and two Caribbean Football Union officials were summoned to the committee over reported possible misdeeds during a May 10 and 11 meeting in Trinidad.

British media reports said Bin Hammam and Warner are accused of offering \$40,000 cash gifts to national associations at the Trinidad conference in return for their votes in the June 1 presidential election.

But Bin Hammam's office said Friday: "After having analysed and answered the accusations of bribery made against Mohamed Bin Hammam, it seems obvious that they are without substance."



"During his campaign for the FIFA presidency, Mohamed Bin Hammam wanted to visit as many national associations as possible.

"It is true that Mr. Bin Hammam addressed representatives of the Caribbean Football Union (CFU) at an extraordinary meeting in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, which took place on May 10 and 11.

"Nobody has ever tried to hide the fact that Mr. Bin Hammam paid for the delegates' travel and accommodation expenses and covered the meeting's administrative costs.

"At this congress, Mr. Bin Hammam presented his programme, which included proposals to give more say, more pay, more support and more responsibility to the national associations. Mr. Bin Hammam reiterates that any allegations about him trying to buy votes are completely false."

The statement added: "It is obvious that these allegations have been made to discredit Mr. Bin Hammam as a candidate in the imminent election for the FIFA presidency."

"For example, it took 14 days to formulate these allegations, whereas Mr. Bin Hammam was given less than 48 hours to respond."

"It is quite obvious that, following previous failed attempts, this is part of a final effort to prevent Mr. Bin Hammam from running for the FIFA presidency."