

Muktis rain goals in opener

MSC struggle against BJMC

SPORTS REPORTER

 Title contenders Muktijoddha Sangsad got off to a rip-roaring start in the Federation Cup as they ran up a cricket score but fallen giants Mohammedan stumbled on the opening day at two separate venues yesterday.

National midfielder Mamunul Islam slammed the tournament's first hat-trick to power Muktijoddha Sangsad to a massive 10-0 win over ten-man Cox's City FC at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium while Mohammedan were held to a goalless draw by newcomers Team BJMC at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The result at Kamalapur was even more amazing as Muktijoddha were deprived of the services of suspended strikers Zahid Hasan Emily, Mithun Chowdhury and Nigerian Sunday Chizoba. But Shafiqul Islam Manik's charges dominated the show from the outset to take a comfortable 6-0 lead in the first half before adding four more

goals in the second half to deliver a clear message that they are one of the real contenders for the season's curtain raiser. The 10-0 scoreline represents the biggest victory margin in the history of the Federation Cup. Muktijoddha had previously beat Bangladesh Navy 8-1 in the qualifying rounds of last season's Federation Cup.

Apart from Mamunul's treble, Rajon Mia, Ariful Islam, Rokonzaman Kanchan, Shakil Ahmed, Moroccan Samir Omari, Nasirul Islam and Firoz Mahmud Titu netted one goal each to celebrate the return of coach Shafiqul Islam Manik, who joined the All Reds this season after a six-year break.

After being reduced to 10 men in the 62nd minute with goalkeeper Rajon Barua sent-off for a foul on Samir Omari, Cox's City conceded a further three goals for a bitter experience of top-level football.

But while it was raining goals at Kamalapur, away at the BNS, it was an insipid draw to start proceedings for Mohammedan's former Nigerian star Emeka as well as Team BJMC's who

returned to top-flight football after 29 years.

The focus was on how Emeka's charges would play against newcomers Team BJMC but the Black and Whites disappointed all and sundry even failing to capitalize on Team BJMC going a man down after 75 minutes.

Team BJMC featuring veteran war-horses like Alfaz Ahmed, Abul Hossain, Ashraf Karim, and Abdullah Parvez dominated the first half and came close to a lead in the 14th minute but Alfaz Ahmed's well-judged lob to the far corner of the net was brilliantly saved by goalkeeper Titumir Chowdhury.

Both sides launched a series of sporadic attacks but none could capitalize on a pitch wet from the unseasonal drizzle.

After failing to rope in quality local booters, the Mohammedan officials promised to sign up some good foreign performers but all four of their Nigerian recruits failed to impress some 1,000 spectators. Coach Emeka

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Mohammedan and Team BJMC players jostle for possession during their match of the Federation Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. The match ended goalless.

BCB names U-19 squad for England

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced an 18-member Bangladesh Under-19 squad for the home series against the England Under-19 team.

SQUAD

Soumya Sarkar, Aslam Hossain, Al Amin, Mosaddek Hossain, Rubel Hossain, Asif Ahmed, Abu Zayed, Taskin Ahmed, Dewan Sabbir, Nasum Ahmed, Nayeem Islam, Nur Hossain, Zakaria Masud, Kazi Nurul Hasan, Liton Kumar Das, Anamul Haque, Salman Hossain and Touhid Tareq Khan.

The England Under-19 team will arrive in Dhaka on January 13 to play seven one-day matches against their Bangladeshi counterparts.

The visitors will kick-off their tour with a warm-up match on January 17 at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong

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'Fixing row is history'



AFP, London

England Test captain Andrew Strauss has insisted his side are prepared to play against Pakistan players named in the spot-fixing trial that led to three cricketers being jailed.

But the opening batsman warned that, despite the impact of the case, it was too soon to say that corruption had been eradicated from world cricket.

Wahab Riaz, Umar Akmal and Imran Farhat -- all named in the trial in London in October as having links with agent Mazhar Majeed, who was himself sent to prison -- have been included in Pakistan's squad for the forthcoming three-Test series against England in the United Arab Emirates, which starts on January 17.

Majeed was jailed along with former Pakistan Test captain Salman Butt and bowlers Mohammad Aamer and Mohammad Asif for their roles in a plan to deliberately bowl no-balls as part of a spot-fixing scam during the 2010 Lord's Test against England.

However, left-arm quick Riaz and batsmen Akmal and Farhat had no charges brought against them and Strauss did not regard their selection for the series as a provocative gesture by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

"It's their obligation and duty to pick the best side they think is available to them," Strauss, speaking at England's Heathrow Airport hotel ahead of their departure for the UAE, said Monday.

"I think the spot-fixing stuff is something we are desperately keen to move on from. I don't think there's any good that can come from churning it all up again and it's time to just concentrate on the cricket.

"We will play whichever XI is selected."

But Strauss urged everyone involved in world cricket to remain "vigilant" in the fight against corruption, adding he was unable to say the whole game was entirely "clean".

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'They are idiots'

SPORTS REPORTER

After a disappointing goalless draw against newcomers Team BJMC in their first match of the Grameenphone Federation Cup, Mohammedan coach Emeka Euzegio was booed from a section of the Mohammedan supporters group on way to the dressing room at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The former star striker-turned-coach reacted angrily and sought the help from all quarters to revive the image of the club.

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Feni cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan Sporting Club handed Pubali Sangsad a massive 343-run defeat in their Beacon Group First Division Cricket League match at the Shaheed Salam Stadium in Feni on Monday.

Batting first, Mohammedan amassed 359 runs for the loss of six wickets, thanks to 88 from Shahadat and 76 from Ratul. Then Mohammedan's Sazzad took five wickets for three runs as Pubali Sangsad were bowled out for 16 runs.



Victoria batsman Jahurul Islam smashes one over long-on during his cameo knock in the Premier Division Cricket League match against Old DOHS at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Rain the spoilsport



SPORTS REPORTER

Sudden rain in the capital played havoc with the Dhaka Premier League matches yesterday as all three had to be shifted to a second day for completion.

The Bangladesh Biman-Kalabagan Krira Chakra game did not even begin at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium as incessant rain kept the players off the field, though the other two will continue their shortened course.

It was a stop-start affair at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur where Victoria Sporting Club were sent into bat by Old DOHS skipper Mohammad Ashraf after the game was curtailed to a 26-overs-a-side affair.

Opener Tamim Iqbal struck two boundaries before he was bowled by Shuvogoto Hom Chowdhury for 12 in the third over. His partner at the other end, Ahmed Shehzad, steadied the innings with 27 though Victoria skipper Shakib Al Hasan was stumped off left-arm spinner Zohaib Khan after he

made 18 runs.

Jahurul Islam, who struck the first century of the Premier League against Biman in the first game, breezed to a 15-ball 29 with the help of two sixes and a four as the Motijheel-based side made 134-8 in 23 overs as the match was shortened further due to another rain break after the fifth over.

Faisal Hossain's left-arm spin took three wickets while Zohaib and Shuvogoto Hom took two each.

Old DOHS will now chase 135 to win

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