

BU continue giant slaying

SPORTS REPORTER

Brothers Union continued to display their improved performance in the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League after they came from behind to hand a 2-1 defeat to leaders Muktiyoddha Sangsad in their home match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.



Brothers Union's Nigerian recruit Olalekin Joshua (L) celebrates his second goal with teammate Kingsley Cigozie during their Bangladesh Premier League match against Muktiyoddha Sangsad at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

At Tangail Stadium, hosts Team BJMC posted their second victory with a 2-0 win over visiting Feni Soccer Club with Biplob and Alfaz Ahmed scoring one goal each. With their second victory, BJMC also secured eight points from five matches and are ahead of Brothers Union on goal difference on fourth position.

Joshua struck the spectacular decisive goal late on to propel Brothers post their second successive victory against giants. The injury of Mamunul Islam forced Muktiyoddha coach Shafiqul Islam Manik to leave Brazilian defenders Lima out in a bid to strengthen the midfield by playing another foreign recruit. Muktiyoddha Sangsad had to pay a heavy price for this move as the

backline of the All Reds was exposed several times as Brothers Union cashed in on the vacuum created in the absence of their regular defender. Jamal Hossain was the nucleus of the Brothers midfield as his distribution of ball and quick movement helped Brothers to tighten their grip in the midfield. However, Muktiyoddha Sangad took a deserved lead through an organised attack

as Nasir curled a cross from the right for Emily, who brilliantly headed the cross home to put Muktiyoddha ahead in the 23rd minute.

Two minutes later, they could have doubled the margin but their Nigerian hitman Sunday Chizoba sent a Shakil through-pass wide to squander a scoring chance and let Brothers back into the game.

Brothers came close to equalising the margin in the 31st minute but the goalkeeper thwarted a Kingsley header at the cost of corner while defender Ariful Islam twice made goalline saves.

With three minutes left for the break, Muktiyoddha found the net again but referee Jalal Uddin ruled out Shakil Ahmed's strike and Muktiyoddha went into the break on a 1-0 lead.

After the resumption, Brothers stepped up attacks and unsettled the Muktiyoddha backline on a few occasions and finally levelled the margin in the 64th minute when Kingsley, availing a back-header by Joshua took a dipping shot from the edge of the area past goalkeeper Mustak. And as the game drew to a close, Joshua himself stepped forward and curled in a sumptuous right-footer past a static Mustak and consign Muktiyoddha to their first defeat in the league.

ICC increases T20 numbers

AFP, Dubai

International cricket chiefs backed an expansion of the Twenty20 format on Wednesday, agreeing three extra matches per major country should be played in years when a world championship is staged.

At the moment, each senior nation is limited to an annual maximum of 12 matches in the game's shortest format.

It was also decided at the ICC Chief Executives' Committee (CEC) meeting here that the 2014 World Twenty20, to be played in Bangladesh, should be increased to 16 teams.

The committee also said that Associate and Affiliate Members -- which include the likes of Ireland, Kenya, the Netherlands -- should consider submitting a proposition to host a future ICC World Twenty20 event.

"It was an important discussion and the CEC agreed that further conversations to strategically manage T20 cricket and also to promote all three formats would be beneficial," said ICC chief Haroon Lorgat.

Captain

FROM PAGE 16 because we are accountable for our performances," said the wicketkeeper-batsman. Mushfiqur was also happy with the team and he found nothing wrong with four pacers in the 14-member squad despite the belief that conditions here are more suitable for spin bowlers.

"The 14-member team we have, I think it's a good one. Though everyone keeps saying that these are spin-friendly conditions, it is not entirely true. With games being played with two new balls from each end, it will not be overly helpful to spin bowling. Perhaps keeping that in mind, four pacers were picked. So I think from various perspectives, the team is a good one," explained Mushfiqur.

The Bangladesh captain also found nothing wrong in playing T20 tournament like BPL before this [one-day] competition when rest of the teams are coming to the Asia Cup with a handful of one-day matches under their belt recently.

"Personally I feel that whichever format you are playing, as long as you are playing competitive matches it is helpful," observed Mushfiqur. In the end Mushfiqur believed that the big challenge lied ahead of them but this was also an opportunity for his team to show their ability on the big stage.

Dravid quitting today?

Cricket AFP, New Delhi

Indian batting superstar Rahul Dravid, the second-highest run scorer of all time in Tests, is set to announce his retirement from international cricket on Friday, reports say.

The Press Trust of India and the Cricinfo website both said the 39-year-old was poised to call time on his career in the national team after a wretched Test series in Australia, where India were whitewashed 4-0.

Dravid, popularly known as "The Wall", scored only 194 runs in eight innings and was bowled out in six of them as Australian paceman Ben Hilfenhaus repeatedly breached his once-formidable defences.

India's famous but ageing batting stars Dravid, Virender Sehwag, V.V.S. Laxman and Sachin Tendulkar are all under pressure, with the national team in crisis less than a year after it lifted the World Cup on home soil.

Dravid is to address a press conference in

Bangalore on Friday alongside the president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, N Srinivasan, the Press Trust of India reported, citing a statement.

The one-time India captain, lauded for his sportsmanship and level temperament, retired from short formats of the international game last year, but had vowed to continue in Tests.

He was one of few players to emerge with any credit after India's disastrous tour of England last year where he defied the years to crack three hundreds in different innings.

As speculation grew in India about his imminent retirement, tributes poured in.

"Holding back my thoughts till I hear a formal announcement, but if he retires it will be an emotional moment for me," wrote leading cricket commentator Harsha Bhogle on Twitter.

Dravid was rumoured to be set to retire in January during the Australia tour, but the reports were dismissed as "baseless" by the team management.



RAHUL DRAVID

McKay's all-round show fetches Aussies series

Cricket AFP, Adelaide

Paceman Clint McKay bowled Australia to a 16-run victory over Sri Lanka to capture the one-day international tri-series in the third final at the Adelaide Oval on Thursday.

Man-of-the-match McKay claimed five wickets for 28 off 9.5 overs to go with his 28 off 32 balls in Australia's innings as he proved the winning difference over the World Cup finalists.

Australia looked as though their total would not be enough when they were dismissed for 231 with three balls left of their 50 overs.

But inspired bowling by McKay, backed up by veteran paceman Brett Lee's three wickets, squeezed the home side across the line.

"We had to bowl and field very well and we certainly did that tonight," skipper Shane Watson said. "That's a serious performance to be able to defend 231 on that wicket, so I am very proud of all the boys."

"Clint McKay was absolutely brilliant tonight. It's great to see someone like him bowl so well."

SCOREBOARD

Table with columns for team, batsman, runs, and bowler. Includes Australia vs Sri Lanka match details.

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Local snippets

FROM PAGE 16 Shooting Complex in Gulshan with chairman of Sonali Bank board of directors Kazi Baharul Islam declaring the three-day meet open.

Some 650 shooters and officials across the country are taking part in the competition which includes 10 events five for men's and five women's.

The main competition gets underway from today while the Sports Minister for Youth and Sports Ahdad Ali Sarker will be present on the concluding day on Saturday, said a press release yesterday.

2nd Div Football

BG Press S&R Club recorded a 2-0 win over Matuail Udayan Sangsad in the Destiny Group Second Division Football League at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Nurul Islam and Pavel struck one goal each for BG Press.

School Football

Faridpur Muslim School entered to the Divisional Competition after emerging Faridpur district champions with a 2-0 win over Alfadanga Nawapara High School yesterday.

Shamsu and Russel struck one goal each in the inter-upazila final. Munshiganj High School emerged Munshiganj Sadar upazila champions with a 1-0 win over Bikabee Bazar High School, Kishorganj Multilateral High School defeated Magur High School 1-0 in the final to emerge Kishorganj Upazila champions while Nabinagar Pilot High School defeated Shibpur High School 2-0 to clinch the Nabinagar Upazila title and advanced to the district-level competition.

Kamal's

FROM PAGE 16 fearless to express what he believes.

"As far as I know, Tamim is hundred per cent fit. He has practised with us for the last two days. As a captain it does not concern me who is left out or included. I think this team is a good one. Of course, if Tamim is included it is going to be a big plus point," said the wicketkeeper-batsman at a press briefing yesterday.

"Not just me, a lot of people will want a player like Tamim in the Bangladesh team and perform. Over the last 4-5 years he has performed consistently, so it is natural that people want him in the team. As a captain of course I want him in the team. Seeing as he is fully fit, if he is included in a 15-man squad, then it will be a big plus point for us," added Mushfiqur.

His coach Stuart Law was no exception to judge the value of a cricketer like Tamim.

"As far as I know, Tamim's fit, he is ready to play. We are just waiting for the clearance from the cricket board. He got through a fitness test today, he did everything that was asked of him. The trainer's report was good, the physio's report was clear and he batted and fielded without any problem. He is ready to go," said Law.

But a clearance from Kamal was far from reality.

It was learnt that Kamal messaged through his personal secretary yesterday confirming his rigid stand of sticking to his choice of 14-member squad. A lawmaker of the ruling Awami League, Kamal was reportedly pushing hard to force Akram to withdraw his resignation and to do that he was even seeking the support from country's highest office.

Kiwis squeeze ahead

Cricket AFP, Dunedin

New Zealand ground out a narrow lead over South Africa on the second day of the first Test in Dunedin Thursday, despite a four-wicket haul for Proteas paceman Vernon Philander.

With the tourists bowled out for a disappointing first innings total of 238, Philander's four for 50 played a crucial part in preventing New Zealand from building on an solid start with the bat.

The Black Caps ended the day at 243 for nine, a five-run advantage that appears unlikely to increase significantly with tailenders Trent Boult (8) and Chris Martin, yet to score, at the crease.

While the New Zealanders will be pleased to overhaul South Africa's total, they face the prospect of batting last on a University Oval pitch likely to deteriorate in the final days.

South Africa resumed at 191 for seven and Jacques Rudolph notched his 10th Test half century as the tourists added extra 47 runs

before they were all out within the first hour of play.

The Proteas' attack ensured runs were at a premium defending the modest total, Philander enjoying early success to remove debutant opener Rob Nicol for six just before lunch.

Morne Morkel stuck immediately after the break, clean bowling Martin Guptill for 16 then giving Ross Taylor a torrid time.

The bowler sent deliveries crashing into Taylor's sternum, shoulder and gloves, making it a bruising 28th birthday for the New Zealand skipper on his return from a six-week injury layoff.

Brendon McCullum also faced his share of bouncers but combined with Taylor for a stubborn 65-run partnership.

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FROM PAGE 16 of the arch-rivals since India's seminal victory in the 2011 World Cup. "Whoever we are playing, we have to play to win every game. Against India it is something special because of the interest of our supporters and the Indian supporters. Everyone wants to see India-Pakistan matches," said Pakistan skipper Misbah. "Also Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are tough competitors in these conditions. We really have to play good cricket."

Neither coach nor captain seemed to be overly concerned about the whitewash they suffered at the hands of England in the recently concluded ODI series in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, and have their sights set firmly on doing well in the Asia Cup.

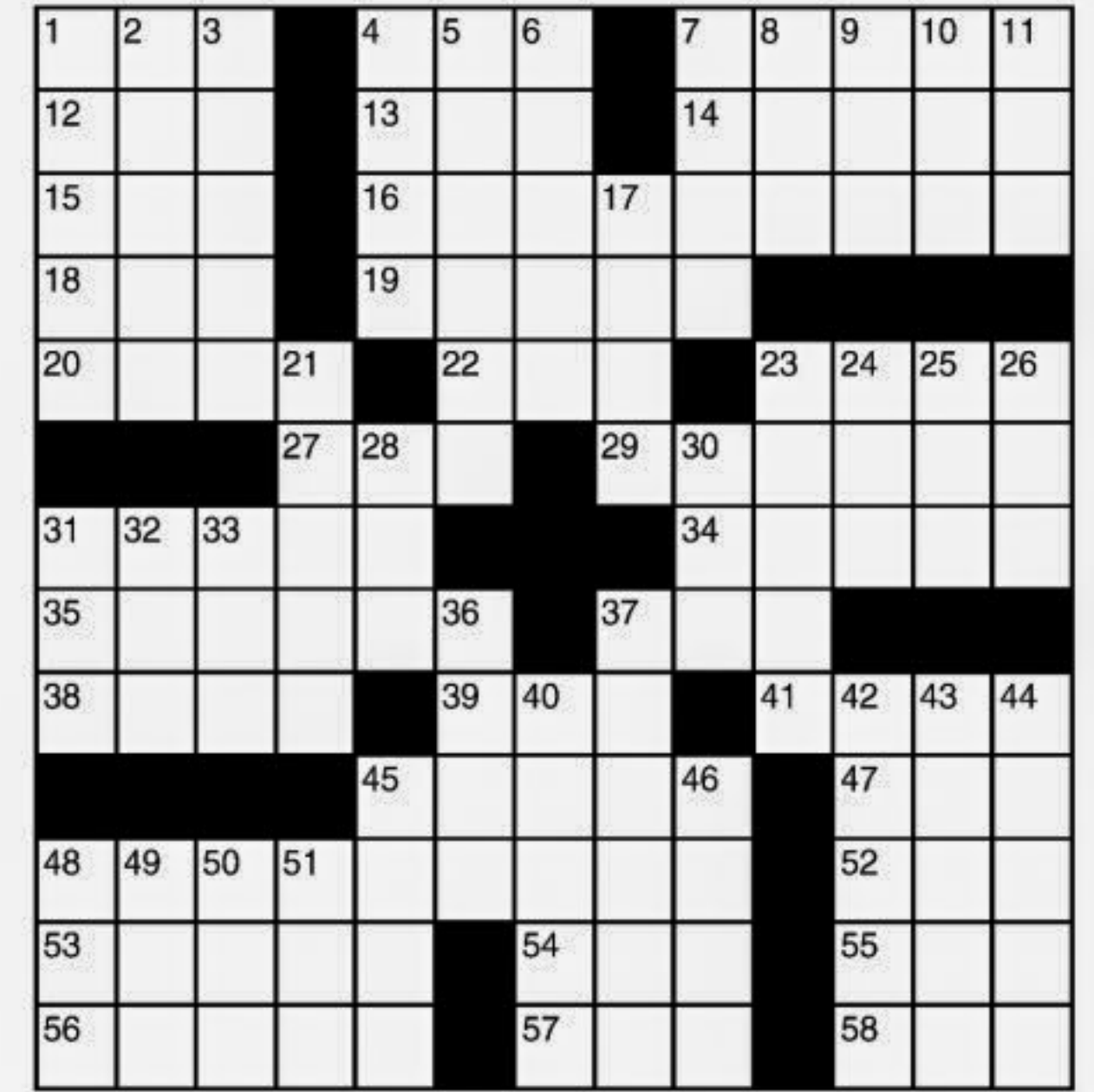
"We just want to forget that [England] series. We did very well in the last year and a half, and we want to just remember that, remember the positive things. We did very well here in these conditions, we did well against Sri Lanka, and we did well against Bangladesh. I think these are the positives we should look at before this big tournament," Misbah insisted.

Whatmore added: "Series are won, series are lost. What matters is what happens next. It matters to us in this tournament that we have another opportunity to begin well and do well. It is very difficult to win every game, so I wouldn't be too worried about the odd series that comes and goes."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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