



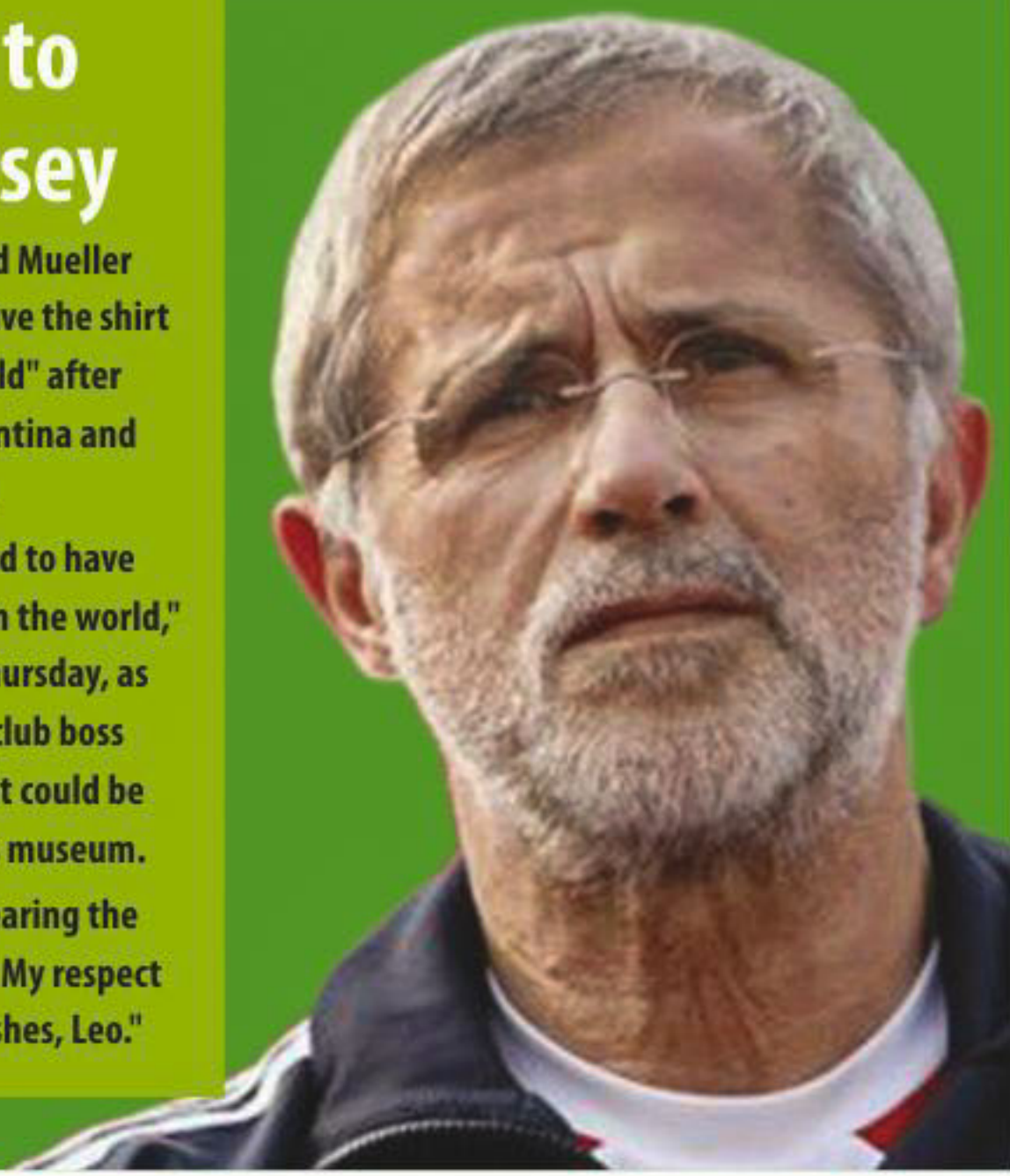
9, 2013, E-MAIL: sports@thedailystar.net

Gerd proud to own Leo jersey

German football legend Gerd Mueller has said he was "proud to have the shirt of the best player in the world" after receiving a jersey from Argentina and Barcelona star Lionel Messi.

"I am very grateful and proud to have the shirt of the best player in the world," said Mueller in Munich on Thursday, as he handed the shirt over to club boss Karl-Heinz Rummenigge so it could be placed in the Bavarian club's museum.

Messi sent Mueller a shirt bearing the message: "For Gerd Mueller. My respect and my admiration. Best wishes, Leo."



Royals make light work

SPORTS REPORTER

Aggressive knocks from Paul Stirling and Mominul Haque and some good spin bowling led the Sylhet Royals to a 33 run victory over the Barisal Burners in the second match of the Bangladesh Premier League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Batting first, Sylhet began on an aggressive note as their openers, Paul Stirling and Hamilton Masakadza provided an early impetus.

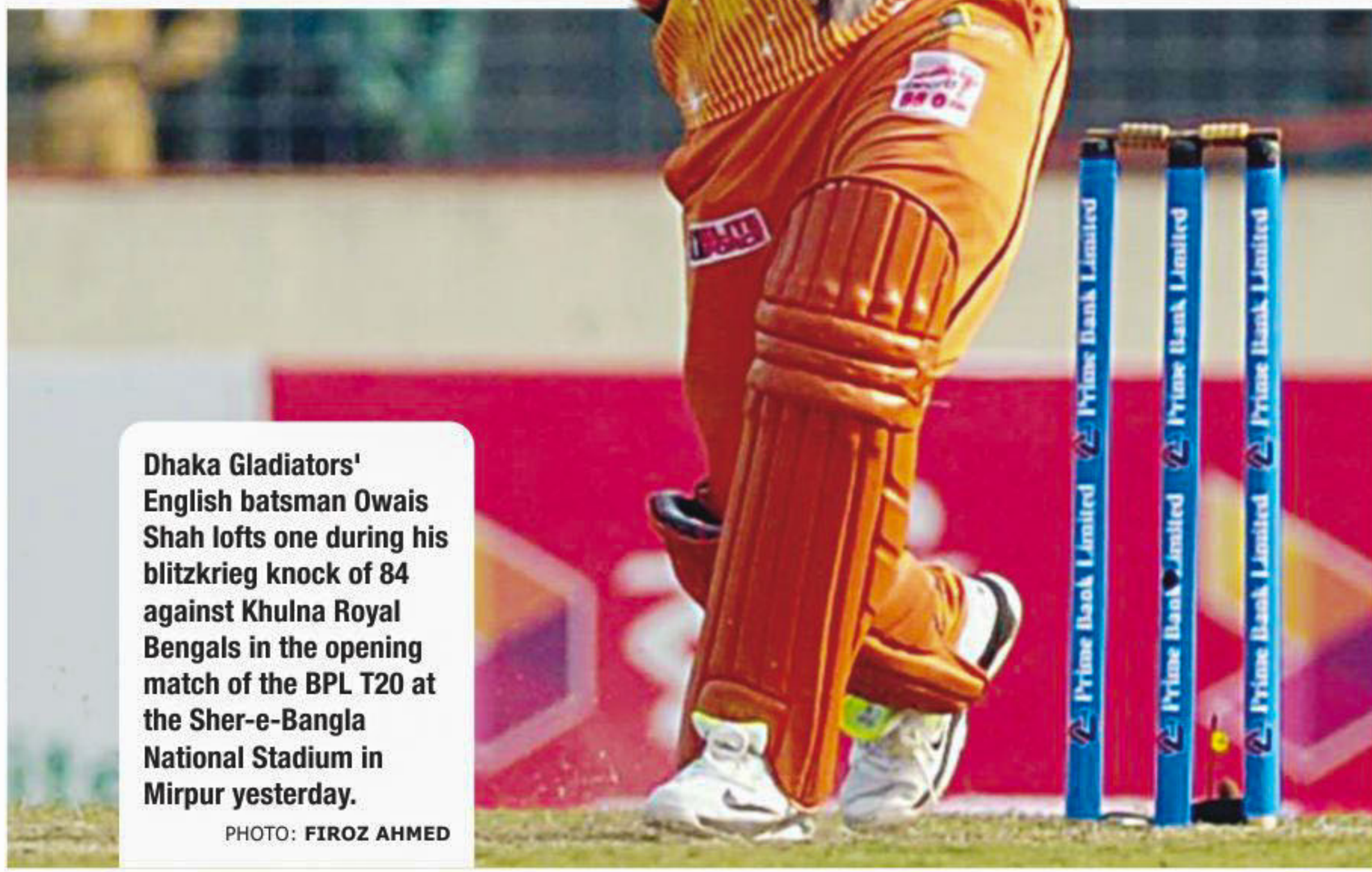
Stirling in particular looked menacing in the early part of the match as he consistently came out of his crease to attack the spinners. He made exactly 50 with eight fours and a six before getting run out in the 9th over by Elias Sunny.

Stirling was ably supported by Mominul Haque, whose 45 anchored Sylhet's middle order. He was involved in a 50 run partnership with Stirling for the second wicket. Captain Mushfiqur Rahim, who came at number four, began his innings with a six off the fourth ball that he faced.

However, he fell soon after as he was caught at deep midwicket off Alok Kapali, while attempting to clear the ropes, in the 12th over. Boundaries from Shohag Gazi and Suhrawardi Shuvo towards the end of the innings helped Sylhet reach 175 for 7.

In reply, Barisal's batting order crumbled as they struggled to stay in par with the required rate.

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Dhaka Gladiators' English batsman Owais Shah lofts one during his blitzkrieg knock of 84 against Khulna Royal Bengals in the opening match of the BPL T20 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Crushing win for Gladiators

SPORTS REPORTER



Defending champions Dhaka Gladiators produced an exciting performance in the opening match of the second edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) to hand a 62-run defeat to Khulna Royal Bengals; a team which had even struggled to form a full playing quota following the absence of Pakistani players.

In front of a small crowd, Anamul Haque and man-of-the-match Owais Shah first excelled with the bat and then left-arm spinner Mosharraf Hossain bowled brilliantly giving away just nine runs in four overs for four wickets as the star-studded Gladiators showed the gulf in class at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The margin of defeat was huge for Khulna but one must be happy knowing the fact that they had to hire two rookie cricketers for water-carrying duties. "We don't have even the 12th man in the team. Our management is trying their best to find the replace-

ment of the Pakistani players but it's a very tough job as the players in Sri Lanka, Australia and South Africa are busy with their commitments. As far as I know Sri Lanka is not willing to release their players before next month," said Khulna's skipper Shahriar Nafees.

In the match, pacer Dollar Mahmud gave Khulna an early breakthrough removing Joshua Cobb in the second over but Mohammad Ashraful smashed some wonderful boundaries before he was dismissed

for an 11-ball 22. Then Anamul and Shah shared a 90-run partnership to help Dhaka amass 204 for four in their share of 20 overs.

Anamul hit 50 off 39 balls that contained four boundaries and three sixes before he was caught by Nabil Samad off Dollar Mahmud. That bought in Shakib Al Hasan who played a cameo knock of 27 from 14 balls with two fours and a six.

It was however Shah who made the maximum from the poor and erratic bowling effort during his 48-ball 84 with the help of four boundaries and six sixes; mostly played on the on-side. Shah found his form immediately in the BPL after a poor display in the Big Bash League.

In reply to a mammoth target Khulna mostly depended a lot on Riki Wessels, their lone foreign player, but the Australian's 23-ball 30 made hardly any impact in the match. Mosharraf sealed the fate of the match taking the wickets of two openers Nazimuddin and Wessels with the scoreboard reading at 67 for 2 in 8.4 overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF

DHAKA GLADIATORS: 204-4 in 20 overs (Cobb 17, Ashraful 22, Anamul 50, Shah 84, Shakib 27 not out, extras 4; Dollar 3-40, Reza 1-42)

KHULNA ROYAL BENGALS: 142-8 in 20 overs (Nazimuddin 27, Wessels 30, Reza 17, Asif 29, extras 7; Mosharraf 4-9, Shakib 1-27, Lokuarachchi 2-29)

Result: Dhaka Gladiators won by 62 runs.

BPL AUCTION

BCB refutes PCB claims

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) yesterday dismissed the claims of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) who had alleged that they were left in the dark when Pakistan players were being registered for the second edition of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20.

BCB denies PCB claim of not having informed them of players auction

BCB says they sent letter to all national associations on December 5

BCB alleges that PCB only raised concern

"The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is surprised and disappointed at the claims made by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) in a media release issued on 16 January 2013. It was alleged in the statement that the 'PCB was kept out of the process' when the Pakistani players were being registered for BPL T20 Season 2 auction and that the auction of Pakistani cricketers was done without the prior intimation of the PCB," stated a BCB media release yesterday.

In this regard the BCB also cleared their position.

"On 05 December 2012 the BCB had formally written to the National Cricket Associations of all Full Members seeking support and cooperation for issuance of 'No Objection Certificate' to the cricketers

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Shah's trust in BCB

SPORTS REPORTER

It was a rollicking 84 of 63 balls by Owais Shah that propelled the Dhaka Gladiators' innings against the Khulna Royal Bengals yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

The English batsman who is playing his second consecutive T20 competition in as many months, following his stint at the Big Bash for the Hobart Hurricanes, has transformed himself into a T20 specialist of sorts over the last couple of years. His stint with the Dhaka Gladiators makes this the eleventh team that he has played T20 cricket with.

"I enjoy it a lot. The way I see it, when I was young I wanted to play for England, I wanted to play

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Russian glamour girl Maria Sharapova lets out a loud shriek after annihilating America's Venus Williams 6-1, 6-3 in the third round of the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Novak, Maria a class apart

AFP, Melbourne



Novak Djokovic reached the Australian Open fourth round without dropping serve Friday and Maria Sharapova was also a class apart as she floored seven-time major-winner Venus Williams.

As the sports world digested cyclist Lance Armstrong's doping confession, Djokovic won an entertaining clash with Czech crowd-pleaser Radek Stepanek to move towards the tournament's first title hat-trick since the 1960s.

And Sharapova turned day five's showpiece into a disappointment for Williams with a remorseless 6-1, 6-3 win, which briefly threatened to be her third 'double bagel' 6-0, 6-0 victory of the tournament.

Polish fourth seed Agnieszka Radwanska also reached round four without dropping a set, and there were wins for China's Li Na and former world number one Ana Ivanovic.

As baking temperatures which tested players on Thursday subsided, Djokovic, the world number one,

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Focus on Dhoni

Third ODI against England today



PTI, Ranchi

Propped up by the massive series-levelling win in the second ODI, India will look to keep the momentum going when they go into the third one-dayer against England here on Saturday, hoping that skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni's first match in his hometown will prove lucky.

After they fell short by mere nine runs in a high-scoring 326-run chase in Rajkot, India came back strongly in Kochi to level the series 1-1 with a 127-run win, their second highest margin of victory against England.

The manner in which the victory came for Dhoni's men gave a fresh lease of life to the struggling outfit and it would look to take the crucial lead going into Mohali and Dharamsala.

Another destructive innings by Dhoni (72 from 66 balls) coupled with Ravindra Jadeja's unbeaten 61 from 37 balls set the momentum after yet another top-order failure in Kochi as England choked in the 286-run chase.

But come Saturday, and it will be all about Dhoni when India play their first match at the skipper's home ground. The World Cup-winning captain has an aura about himself at the newly-constructed JSCA International Stadium Complex in the south-western fringes of the city, like Sourav Ganguly has in Kolkata.

England's hope for a double, and a repeat of the 1984-85 series, where they won both the Tests and ODIs, would largely depend on how Kevin Pietersen performs in the next three ODIs.

SQUADS

INDIA (from): Mahendra Singh Dhoni (capt and wk), Ajinkya Rahane, Gautam Gambhir, Virat Kohli, Yuvraj Singh, Suresh Raina, Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Ishant Sharma, Shami Ahmed, Rohit Sharma, Cheteshwar Pujara Amit Mishra and Ashok Dinda.

ENGLAND (from): Alastair Cook (capt), Ian Bell, Kevin Pietersen, Joe Root, Eoin Morgan, Craig Kieswetter (wk), Samit Patel, Chris Woakes, James Tredwell, Steven Finn, Jade Dernbach, Tim Bresnan, Danny Briggs, Stuart Broad, Jos Buttler, Stuart Meaker.

Russel win at Feni

SPORTS REPORTER



Title contenders Sheikh Russel KC toppled Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club to grab the solo lead in the Grameenphone Bangladesh Premier League with a 3-1 win over Feni Soccer Club at the Shaheed Salam Stadium in Feni yesterday.

Moroccan midfielder Tareq El Janaby put Sheikh Russel ahead before Sajib levelled the margin but winger Zahid Hossain and midfielder Mamunul Islam struck one goal each either side of he break to ensure Sheikh Russel's sixth win in eight matches. The win raised their tally to

19 points, two more than Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, who play their eighth match today against Brothers Union.

On the other hand, a seventh defeat in eight matches confined Feni Soccer to the bottom of the nine-team table with only three points.

Shrugging off the cautious display of the goalless last match against Sheikh Jamal, Sheikh Russel put on a display of attacking football and took the lead in the sixth minute when Tareq found the back of the net with a free-kick from the edge of the box.

Despite missing three regular players due to injury and suspension, Feni Soccer hit back and cancelled the lead in the 26th minute

when Abu Sufian Zahid whipped in a cross from the left for Aminur Rahman Sajib, who headed past Sheikh Russel goalkeeper Biplob Bhattacharjee.

But the lead lasted 19 minutes as Zahid Hossain found the back of the net with a neat chip. Zahid, who returned to the fold after missing the match against Sheikh Jamal, broke the off-side trap and availed an aerial through ball from Mamunul Islam before sending it over advancing Feni goalkeeper Al Amin to double the lead.

With three minutes left for the game, Mamunul Islam struck the final blow by stabbing the ball home after two efforts from Zahid Hasan

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Winners of the Lancer Cup Golf Tournament pose with chief guest Lieutenant General Mollah Fazle Akbar, Commandant of National Defence College at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday. Other guests and Chairman of Rangs Group A Rouf Chowdhury are also seen.

PHOTO: STAR

Akibur, Hong Lancer Cup golf champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Shah Akibur Rahman won the men's title while S J Hong clinched the ladies' crown in the 30th Lancer Cup Golf Tournament at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday.

A large number of participants took part in the two-day prestigious meet.

Earlier, Lieutenant General Mollah Fazle Akbar, Commandant of National Defence College, inaugurates the meet as chief guest and later he distributes prizes among the winners. A Rouf Chowdhury, Chairman of Rangs Group and other members of the company attended the function.

OTHER WINNERS

Senior winner: Nurul Hoq Prodhan; Super Senior winner: Syed Moazzem Hussain; Junior winner: Master Siddhantha.