



Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club celebrate with the trophy after beating Muktiyoddha Sangsad KC in the final of the Federation Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

## Sk Jamal take the crown

ANISUR RAHMAN



Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club lifted the Federation Cup for the second time overcoming a dogged Muktiyoddha Sangsad KC with a 1-0 win in an absorbing final at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Centre-back Nasiruddin Chowdhury separated the sides, heading in a corner from Sony Norde seven minutes from time and gave the big-budgeted side the first trophy of season and their first since 2011.

The pre-match speculation was whether the three-time champions Muktiyoddha, who are now much inferior in terms of star quality and financial prowess compared to Sheikh Jamal, could stop the attacking threat from Sony and his strike partners Wedson Anselme and Emeka Darlington. The All Reds did their job admirably enough, building a compact defence and narrow midfield but could not foil the danger that came from Sony's expertly taken corner-kick which Nasir headed in power-

fully. The one goal dashed Muktiyoddha's hopes of regaining the title for the first time in nine years while it gave Sheikh Jamal their first title after a barren season.

Sheikh Jamal, as usual, went with their attacking 4-3-3 formation against Muktiyoddha's 4-4-2, but could hardly entertain the 5000-strong holiday crowd, thanks to an well-oiled midfield which stifled the attacking threat from Sheikh Jamal, in addition to some expert defending. The main threat in midfield was Sheikh Jamal's skipper Mamunul Islam, but narrowing the midfield down gave the Sheikh Jamal skipper very little space to work the ball forward.

Sheikh Jamal, playing their fourth successive Federation Cup final, launched the first attack in the fifth minute when right-back Raihan Hasan put a long ball for Sony, who

darted into the box but uncharacteristically floated it over the bar before Wedson drove an attempt wide.

Sony was in an unusual role of taking the set-pieces instead of Mamunul and his efforts set his colleagues free twice inside the box in the first half. But the chances went begging as Nigerian midfielder Abdullahi headed one of those free-kicks narrowly wide in the 34th minute, before Wedson drive one wide of the target. Muktiyoddha Sangsad goalkeeper Liton, who was playing in place of injured Aminul Haque, brilliantly foiled an effort from Wedson, just before the break, to keep his side in the match.

Early in the second half, Muktiyoddha Sangsad created one glorious opportunity when Nkwocha Kingsley back-heeled for Mohammad Biplob, who darted into the box to cut it back for Eleta Kingsley, but Sheikh Jamal goalkeeper Ziaur Rahman rescued his side with a diving save.

When it was looking as if the match would go into extra time, Sheikh Jamal broke the deadlock in the 83rd minute, as centre-back Nasir, who was left unmarked

inside the box, headed in Norde's corner.

The goal gave Sheikh Jamal the lead they were desperately looking for and they strengthened the backline sending in Didarul Haque in place of midfielder Shohel Rana. Muktiyoddha stepped up the attack and created some pressure in the dying moments, but failed to eke out a goal as Sheikh Jamal defence held firm.

### TEAMS

**SHEIKH JAMAL:** Ziaur Rahman (GK), Yeasin Khan, Raihan Hasan, Nasir Chowdhury, Linkon, Abdullahi, Soheli Rana (Didarul Haque), Mamunul Islam, Emeka Darlington, Wedson Anselme and Sony Norde.

**MUKTIJODDHA SANGSAD:** Rasel Mahmud Liton (GK), Saiful Haque, Uttam Kumar Bonik, Eleta Benjamin, Gerard Ledoux, Enamul Haque, Shafiqul Islam Bipul (Imtiaz Sultan Zitu), Zahed Parvez Chowdhury (Mohammad Ibrahim), Mohammad Biplob, Nkwocha Kingsley and Eleta Kingsley.

**Yellow cards :** Linkon, Abdullahi (Sheikh Jamal), Enamul (Muktiyoddha)

**Referee:** Mizanur Rahman

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## 'My stepping stone'

ATIQUE ANAM



Sheikh Jamal coach Joesph Afusi termed the Federation Cup success as a 'stepping stone for coaching career' after his side claimed the first trophy of the season, the Federation Cup, beating

Muktiyoddha Sangsad KC 1-0 in an absorbing final the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. The Nigerian, who came second in three tournaments last year in his debut season as full coach, said it was the first of the missions accomplished for him.

"We had set our target of winning all the silverware this season. This is the beginning. It is, you can say, the stepping stone for my coaching career and I'm delighted with the trophy," said an emotional Afusi.

"I think there are three coaches in Bangladesh. Maruf (Maruful Haque), Titu (Saiful Bari) and Manik (Shafiqul Islam). I am just an apprentice. But I'm happy to take the first successful step and I thank my players and the club president for the success."

The final, at least on paper, was thought to be a battle between David and Goliath. Sheikh Jamal have a starcast which boasts nine national team players as well as the highest-paid player in the domestic circuit, Sony Norde, who is enough to demolish oppositions on his own. Muktiyoddha, on the other hand, do not have any have national players and their foreign recruits are arguably less lethal compared to Sheikh Jamal's. But the All Reds proved as worthy opponents in the final and as they stifled the attacking verve of Sheikh Jamal, keeping them at bay till the 83rd minute.

"I knew it would be difficult, but It was more difficult than I thought," said Afusi after the match. "I know Manik, he is a very good tactician. He strategised in the way which made it difficult for winning with my 4-3-3 formation. I had instructed my players to take their chances and thankfully Nasir got the late goal," said Afusi.

Afusi's opposite number, Manik was satisfied with his team's performance but rued the lack of marking which gave away the goal.

"I am very happy with my players as they tried their best. Everyone knows Sheikh Jamal much stronger than us, but I cannot take anything away from the effort that my players put in. We marked the forwards throughout the match, but unfortunately Nasir was not marked which gave away the goal," said Manik, who had delivered two Federation Cup titles along with four runners-up trophies to Muktiyoddha Sangsad.

Everyone was expecting that Sony Norde would prove to be the difference between the two sides. But despite a good effort from the Haitian, who won the man-of-the-tournament award for scoring seven goals, the decider in the final match came from an unlikely source. The once striker in the domestic circuit proved his predatory skills with a powerful header on a corner from Norde to seal the victory. "We have many goalscorers in our side. But thinking that my goal won us the match and the title, makes it so much more precious," said the national team's centre-back.

## Mashrafe safe but unsure for finisher

SPORTS REPORTER

When Mashrafe Bin Mortaza dived and hurt himself while attempting to save extra runs in the last ball of the second innings on Thursday's T20 Challenge Series match in Mirpur, there was a familiar sense of fear that spread across national team's dressing room. "Has he just injured his knee yet again?" was the question that immediately sprung up among many on the field. Fortunately for the Narail Express, it was nothing of that sort. As described by the national team's physio Vibhav Singh, the pain that the bowler felt immediately after the fall, was due to the impact of the dive.

"I had a check on him immediately after the match and it was not anything serious. The knee did swell a bit, but that was just because of the impact of him falling to the ground. It was not related to any of his previous knee problems," said Vibhav.

The last match of the practice series takes place at Mirpur today at 1pm. Whether Mashrafe will participate in that is still uncertain though.

"I will have a check on him before the match and assess the situation. Based on that we will take a final decision. But as of now there is nothing to worry about," said Vibhav.

## Security coming up as an issue

SPORTS REPORTER



The issue that is steadily becoming the talking point of the cricketing fraternity following the withdrawal of the West Indies under-19 team from their seven-match youth ODI series after an explosion near the team hotel in Chittagong is security in Bangladesh.

There have been talks about how the growing political unrest may put the upcoming cricketing events in Bangladesh in danger, despite Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon's statement that he was not worried about the upcoming events.

Bangladesh's busy international schedule in 2014 will begin with the series of Sri Lanka, who will arrive in Dhaka on January 24, and the series will be followed by two multinational events - the Asia Cup in February and the ICC World Twenty20 in March-April.

Sri Lanka Cricket secretary Nishantha Ranatunga has said that they would commission an independent security appraisal of the political situation in Bangladesh ahead of their team's tour, but Pakistan Cricket Board's acting chairman Najam Sethi made it clear yesterday that the PCB would take no unilateral decision about pulling out of the Asia Cup or the ICC World Twenty20 despite the growing security concerns.

"We have to monitor the situation over the next few weeks and take a decision on the tour. However, we don't want to make hasty announcements right now as Bangladesh is a fellow Asian country which maintains a very good relationship with us. We have to keep in mind that we had a similar situation not so long ago and all our Asian neighbours were very supportive of us," said Ranatunga.

"But we are in talks with the Bangladesh board. We have to be very careful because of the very bad experience we had in Pakistan before," he added.

On the other hand Sethi said, "Both the events are multi-nation tournaments and providing security is responsibility of the Asian Cricket Council and International Cricket Council which are the hosts of these events."

Sethi said as far as the Asia Cup was concerned, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh were all stakeholders in the ACC.

"If a need arises the four boards will collectively discuss the issue and decide what to do but for now the Asia Cup is still scheduled in Bangladesh," Sethi said.

"Whatever the decision the ICC takes, the PCB will follow it but we will keep an eye on things as well," he added.

When attention was drawn about this security issue, BCB's acting CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury said, "We are in constant touch with our Sri Lankan counterparts. We already have given them all the details regarding the security issue in advance. Right at this moment we have to wait and I can't say anything more."

## Clarke rules ICC awards

AFP, New Delhi



Australian captain Michael Clarke stole the honours in the International Cricket Council awards announced Friday, winning both player of the year and the Test crick-

eter of the year.

Clarke, whose Australia team have taken a firm grip of the ongoing Ashes series, beat five other nominees including England skipper Alastair Cook to bag the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for the player of the year.

"I was very surprised, to be honest, probably because there are so many guys who are playing so well around the world at the moment," Clarke told the cricket.com.au website.

Hashim Amla, James Anderson, Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Kumar Sangakkara were the others on the shortlist to miss out.

In the Test player of the year category, Clarke scored over five other nominees -- Amla, Anderson, Ravichandran Ashwin,

Cheteshwar Pujara and Dale Steyn.

Sri Lanka's Sangakkara was named the one-day player of the year, while Indian batsman Pujara was voted the emerging player of the year.

Sri Lanka's Mahela Jayawardene beat Bangladesh's Forhad Reza to win the spirit of cricket award for not waiting for the umpire's decision after edging a catch when he was on 91 against New Zealand in a Test match in Galle in November 2012.

### THE WINNERS

**Cricketer of the year:** Michael Clarke

**Test cricketer of the year:** Michael Clarke

**One-day cricketer of the year:** Kumar Sangakkara

**Emerging cricketer of the year:** Cheteshwar Pujara

**Associate and Affiliate cricketer of the year:** Kevin O'Brien

**Twenty20 international performance of the year:** Umar Gul

**Umpire of the year:** Richard Kettleborough

**Spirit of cricket award:** Mahela Jayawardena

## Smith lifts Aussies

AFP, Perth



A vital century by Steve Smith put Australia in a strong position and frustrated England in the third Ashes Test after they had threatened to bowl the hosts out cheaply on Friday.

Australia's fragile top order again stuttered as the hosts slumped to 143-5 on the first day, before Smith came to the rescue with his second Test ton in what could be the series decider.

At stumps Australia were 326-6 with Smith unbeaten on 103 and Mitchell Johnson on 39, further loosening England's grip on the trophy

### SCOREBOARD

<b>AUSTRALIA:</b> First innings				
Rogers run out			11	
Warner c Carberry b Swann			60	
Watson c Swann b Broad			18	
Clarke c Cook b Swann			24	
Smith not out			103	
Bailey c Pietersen b Broad			7	
Haddin c Anderson b Stokes			55	
Johnson not out			39	
Extras: (lb-5, w-3, nb-1)			9	
Total: (For 6 wickets in 87 overs)			326	
Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-52, 3-106, 4-129, 5-143, 6-267.				

<b>Bowler</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>W</b>
Anderson	17	4	44	0
Broad	17	1	78	2
Bresnan	21	4	72	0
Stokes	14	2	52	1
Swann	17	0	71	2
Root	1	0	4	0
<b>ENGLAND:</b> Cook (capt), Carberry, Root, Pietersen, Bell, Stokes, Prior, Broad, Swann, Anderson, Bresnan.				
<b>Toss:</b> Australia				
<b>Umpires:</b> Marais Erasmus and Billy Bowden.				

at 2-0 down and three to play.

Having turned the first two Tests with his fiery fast bowling, Johnson was threatening to inflict more pain on the English, this time with the bat.

Johnson had hit six boundaries as he and Smith added a quickfire 59 and counting for the seventh wicket.

Australia lead the five-Test series after big wins in Brisbane and Adelaide, and can secure the Ashes with victory in Perth.

But not for the first time in the series they found themselves in early trouble with the bat after winning the toss.

Playing his 100th Test, as was his English counterpart Alastair Cook, Australian captain Michael Clarke elected to bat on a sweltering day.

## V-Day TT

SPORTS REPORTER

Blazer BD Victory day Open Table Tennis competition started at the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. In the men's team event, Paradise defeated Mohammadpur Greens in 3-0 sets, Club Technique beat Ekta Sripur in 3-1 sets, Spin outplayed Udayachal in straight 3-0 sets while Mohammadpur Reds defeated Elux TT Club in 3-1 sets. In the girls' singles, Nahima beat Lopa in 3-2 games while Sharmin outplayed Tamanna in 3-0 sets. A total of 40 games of different events were completed on the opening day. The competition will conclude today.

### Football Quiz

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**Winners of Quiz 09**

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- Yaser Khan, Uttara
- Shamim Imtiaz, Mohammadpur
- Fardeen Almas, Mohammadpur
- Abdullah Al Mamun Liton, Panthapath

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