

Feni staving off relegation

SPORTS REPORTER

Feni Soccer Club earned a valuable point in the Nitol Tata Bangladesh Premier League when the relegation-threatened side came from behind to play out a 1-1 draw against Brothers Union at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Nigerian midfielder Chuka Charles cancelled out a 21-minute strike from Nigerian Simon Ezeodika 10 minutes into the second half to provide a crucial point to Feni Soccer, who increased their points tally to 15 from 24 matches, just three ahead of bottom-placed Uttar Baridhara Club.

Fresh from a 4-1 win over Uttar Baridhara Club in the previous match, Brothers Union could have topped fourth-placed Mohammedan with a straight win over Feni Soccer but the Gopibagh-based outfit appeared to have no urgency for a victory and had to be content with a single point that helped them raise 37 points from 24 matches to stay at fifth place.

Brothers Union have been a feared side, especially because of the way they have been performing in the professional football league, but yesterday that spirit was lacking and even opponents Feni appeared to be in a relaxed mood in the scorching heat.

Despite the lethargy, Brothers took a lead in the 21st minute with Simon placing a low cross from Kester Akon while Akon saw his header go wide, kissing the crossbar one minute from the break.

After resumption, Charles levelled the margin with a slide on a Rony Islam cross in the 55th minute while Gambian Landing fired wide in a one-on-one situation on the hour-mark.

From then on, both teams managed only sporadic attacks and purposeless movement.

Katich quits cricket

REUTERS, Sydney

Former Australia test opener Simon Katich brought the final curtain down on his cricket career by retiring from the Twenty20 format on Saturday.

The left-hander, who scored 4,188 runs in 56 tests with 10 hundreds, had retired from Australian first class cricket after a major row with the country's board following his dumping from the national side.

Katich, who turns 39 next month, had continued playing English county cricket until 2013 and captained Perth Scorchers to the Big Bash League title (BBL) last season.

"It's always difficult when it comes to making these sorts of decisions," Katich said. "I've obviously been in a similar situation when I made the decision to retire from first-class cricket in Australia a few years ago.



LOW RIDERS: England's James Anderson and Joe Root (R) leave the field for the lunch break after breaking the record for the highest 10th-wicket partnership in Tests on the fourth day of the first Test against India at Trent Bridge in Nottingham yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Jim & Joe baffle India

AFP, Nottingham



England's Joe Root and James Anderson rewrote the record books with a Test record last-wicket stand but a docile Trent Bridge pitch threatened to have the last word in their series opener with India.

The pair put on 198 to take England to 496 on the fourth day in reply to India's first innings 457. However, India were 167 for three in their second innings at stumps, a lead of 128 runs. Virat Kohli was eight not out and Ajinkya Rahane, looking in fine touch, 18 not out.

But just when India were on the verge of making a draw all but inevitable, they lost two well-set batsmen with the score on 140. First innings' century-maker Murali Vijay (52) went down the pitch to part-time off-spinner Moeen Ali and got an edge which wicketkeeper Matt Prior held, although the batsman was so far out of his ground he could have been stumped as well. Next ball Cheteshwar Pujara (55) cut at fast bowler Liam Plunkett and Ben Stokes, at backward point, grabbed the catch at the second attempt after the ball hit his chest.

Earlier, Root made 154 not out -- his third

TOP FIVE 10TH WICKET PARTNERSHIPS IN TESTS				
Partners	Runs	Against	Venue	Date
JE Root, JM Anderson (Eng)	198	India	Nottingham	Jul 2014
PJ Hughes, AC Agar (Aus)	163	England	Nottingham	Jul 2013
BF Hastings, RO Collinge (NZ)	151	Pakistan	Auckland	Feb 1973
Azhar Mahmood, Mushtaq Ahmed (Pak)	151	South Africa	Rawalpindi	Oct 1997
D Ramdin, Tino Best (WI)	143	England	Birmingham	Jun 2012

score in excess of 150 in 18 Tests.

Meanwhile, Anderson's personal best 81 was the third highest score by any Test match No 11 after Australian Ashton Agar's 98 against England at Trent Bridge last year and Tino Best's 95 for the West Indies, also against England, at Edgbaston in 2012.

The England duo's stand surpassed the previous tenth-wicket Test record of 163 -- shared by Agar and Phil Hughes in Nottingham last year.

It was the second tenth-wicket stand of this Test after Bhuvneshwar Kumar (58) and Mohammed Shami (51 not out) had put on 111 in India's first innings.

And it meant this match was also the first in 137 years of Test cricket where both sides had seen their last-wicket duo share hundred partnerships and both number elevens -- Shami and

Anderson -- had made fifties.

England, after losing six wickets for 68 runs in the face of accurate bowling from Kumar and Ishant Sharma on Friday, resumed on 352 for nine. Root was 78 not out and Anderson 23 not out. But India's seamers were unable to generate the same reverse swing they'd managed on Friday.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: First innings 457 (Vijay 146, Dhoni 82, Kumar 58, Shami 51 not out; Anderson 3-123)

ENGLAND: First innings 496 (Robson 59, Ballance 71, Bell 25, Root 154 not out, Broad 47, Anderson 81; Kumar 5-82, Shami 2-128, Sharma 3-150)

INDIA: Second innings 167 for 3 (Vijay 52, Pujara 55, Dhawan 29; Ali 2-39)

Magura magic stuns Germans



Farmer Amzad Hossain (L) receives a token of appreciation from German Charge d'Affaires Dr Ferdinand von Weyhe. Amzad sold 1 bigha of his farm land to make a 3.5 km-long German flag (R) which was displayed during the reception at the Magura Stadium yesterday.

PHOTOS: STAR

AMANUR AMAN from Kushtia

From painting a multi-storeyed building with colours of their favourite team to the large-scale placards with pictures of their favourite players in the random gullies of the city, Dhaka's football fans left no stones unturned when it came to announcing their favourite team in this year's World Cup.

However, none of them matched the vigour shown by Magura's Amzad Hossain, who made a 3.5 km-long German flag before the World Cup began to show his support for his team.

Amzad's creation was brought to the notice of the German Embassy, which organised a reception for the die-hard German fan at the Magura Stadium yesterday and displayed his flag there.

"Amzad has proved his unthinkable dedication to support a sports team and the German people will be happy to hear about him," said German Charge d'Affaires Dr Ferdinand von Weyhe in his speech at the ceremony.

"It is really amazing. This did not happen even in my country but took place in a remote village in Bangladesh and I am very pleased to meet with him," he added.

A farmer of Choramara village in Sadar Upazila of Magura district, Amzad spent Tk 1.5 lakh to make the flag. He had to sell 1 bigha of his farmland to raise the money required to make the flag.

Explaining the reason behind his support for Germany Amzad said that he was diagnosed with a disease in

1986 which he was not recovering from despite taking a lot of medication. At the end however, it was medicine brought from Germany that cured him. This incident led to him supporting the football team since 1986.

In his speech Amzad said that he wanted to meet the German national football players. In reply, Dr Ferdinand said that although it would be a difficult task he would try his best.

As a token of appreciation Dr Ferdinand gave Amzad a German jersey, a football and a lifelong membership certificate of the Germany Fan Club.

Amzad, in turn, presented a few Bangladeshi rural items such as a bamboo flute and a hand-fan.

SA clinch series

AFP, Hambantota



South Africa rode on aggressive hundreds from Quinton de Kock and AB de Villiers to beat Sri Lanka by 82 runs in the third and final one-day international on Saturday.

Left-hander De Kock smashed a 127-ball 128 while skipper De Villiers hit a fiery 71-ball 108, making a century off just 66 balls, as South Africa posted their highest total against Sri Lanka of 339-5 in windy conditions at Mahinda Rajapaksa Stadium in Hambantota.

The Proteas then restricted the hosts to 257 in 44.3 overs for their first-ever one-day series win on the island by 2-1.

South Africa had won the first one-day in Colombo by 75 runs while Sri Lanka claimed the second by 87 at Pallekele.

Sri Lanka, who needed their record one-day chase, had promised a positive chase by smacking 57 in the sixth over with Kusal Perera (37) and Tillakaratne Dilshan (30) but a middle order slump saw them lose Dilshan, Kumara Sangakkara (36) and Mahela Jayawardene (two) in the space of just six runs.

When Lahiru Thirimanne went for 22 to make it 151-5, Angelo Mathews (58) and Ashan Priyanjan (30) put up some resistance during their 83-run stand but the target proved too much for the hosts.

For South Africa paceman Ryan McLaren took 3-37 while Jean-Paul Duminy and Mome Morkel grabbed two wickets apiece.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SOUTH AFRICA: 339 for 5 in 50 overs (Amla 48, De Kock 128, De Villiers 108, Duminy 29; Mendis 2-48, Herath 2-48)

SRI LANKA: 257 all out in 44.3 overs (Perera 37, Dilshan 30, Sangakkara 36, Thirimanne 22, Mathews 58, Priyanjan 30; Morkel 2-49, McLaren 3-37, Duminy 2-43)

Result: South Africa won by 82 runs and clinched 3-match series 2-1.

Player-of-the-match: AB de Villiers.

Player-of-the-series: Hashim Amla.

'Red carpet for Messi'

GOAL.COM



Diego Maradona hopes Lionel Messi can deliver a performance that betters his 1986 displays to lead Argentina past Germany in Sunday's final.

The Albiceleste, who progressed to the showpiece at the Maracana after a 4-2 penalty shootout win over the Netherlands, are aiming to lift their third World Cup and their first since Mexico in 1986 where they defeated Die Mannschaft 3-2 in the final.

Maradona inspired the Argentines to the trophy with his displays in 1986, winning the Golden Ball en route to the triumph, and says he would be delighted if Messi does the same.

"If on Sunday Messi has to overcome Maradona to lift the cup, I'll give him the red carpet," the 53-year-old told the De Zurda TV programme.

"He will be the player who will define the game. The only fear I have is that he is tired, but in the end you cannot be tired. I think he will understand. If you miss a shot on Sunday, you only resemble the best in the world."

Sunday's final represents the third time Germany and Argentina have met at this stage of the competition, and Maradona insisted that he was happy to face Joachim Low's side despite their stunning 7-1 win over Brazil in the semis.

"Germany is not impossible," he added.

German shirts sold out

AFP, Berlin

Germany fans have snapped up more than two million shirts on their run to Sunday's World Cup final with sponsors Adidas struggling to keep up with demand.

"We have already sold over two million shirts," Adidas boss Herbert Hainer told SID, an AFP subsidiary.

"I had to get a shirt for an acquaintance and it was pretty difficult, even for me.

"And from what I have heard, the stores are also pretty much sold out."

If Germany beat Argentina in Sunday's World Cup final at Rio de Janeiro's Maracana Stadium to win a fourth title, Adidas will start producing shirts with an extra fourth star over the German FA (DFB) badge.

"The shirts with the three stars on will probably soon become collectors items," said Hainer.

"They should all be snapped up quickly - just like the shirts with a fourth star on."

After Germany crushed Brazil 7-1 in Tuesday's semi-final wearing their black-and-red striped away shirt, the alternative shirt has also been snapped up by eager 'Mannschaft' fans.

"We were surprised by how well the away shirt has sold," admitted Hainer.

'Don't blame Scolari'

AFP, Brasilia

Brazil captain Thiago Silva on Friday spoke out in defence of coach Luiz Felipe Scolari, who has come in for a barrage of criticism in the wake of the World Cup hosts' embarrassing semi-final defeat to Germany.

"The defeat was not Felipe's fault. We are a group, and although I was not on the field I am part of that group," said Silva, who missed Tuesday's record 7-1 defeat in Belo Horizonte due to suspension.

The Paris Saint-Germain centre-back, who is set to return to the side in Saturday's third-place play-off against the Netherlands in Brasilia, watched on as Brazil found themselves 5-0 down inside half an hour in the semifinal after conceding four goals in just six minutes.

"Unfortunately that is what happened. It was six minutes of panic," he said, before admitting his regret at not being able to take part in Sunday's final at the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro.

ICC bans Senanayake

AFP, Colombo



Sri Lanka's off-spinner Sachithra Senanayake has been banned from international cricket with immediate effect after his bowling action during a match against England proved illegal, it was announced Saturday.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) which investigated a complaint following Sri Lanka's victory over England at Lords in May concluded that he used a "an illegal bowling action," Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) said in a statement.

Senanayake, 29, who twice recorded career-best figures in the Royal London series, was reported by umpires Ian Gould and Marais Erasmus during a One-Day International series that Sri Lanka won.

"The Standard ICC Illegal Action Testing Protocol was used to assess the degree of elbow extension from the point of upper arm horizontal to ball release within the bowling action," SLC said.

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