

SPORT

It's a 3-way race

SPORTS REPORTER

WALTON
A six-wicket win for Mahmudullah Riyad-led Prime Bank Cricket Club took them to the top of the table after the third round of the Dhaka Premier League's Super Sixes yesterday. On the other hand, defeats for Anamul Haque's Kalabagan Cricket Academy and Shakib Al Hasan's Legends of Rugganj have effectively put them out of the title race with two rounds remaining.

The league is now a three-horse race between league leaders Prime Bank CC, Mushfiqur Rahim's Prime Doleshwar and Abahani.

In a topsy-turvy match at Mirpur, Abahani, after being put into bat by Mushfiqur, were restricted to 201 for 9. Muktar Ali, Elias Sunny and Sanjamul Islam took two wickets each and laid the foundation for a relatively comfortable chase for Doleshwar.

However, Doleshwar faltered at the start of their chase as Abahani's Al-Amin bowled a threatening opening spell, which saw Doleshwar lose their top four within the first 13 overs. Al-Amin first struck in the second over to get rid of Mehedi Maruf caught behind. Four overs later he removed the dangerous Mominul Haque and the very next ball saw him produce a jiffy of a bouncer to get Mushfiqur's edge.

In-form Rony Talukdar could not do

much under pressure and he was trapped in front by Nasir Hossain.

Doleshwar were looking down the barrel and seemed to have given up, but that was when tall left-handed Dawid Malan took up the charge. He played a cautious unbeaten knock and shared two vital stands with Asif Ahmed (22) and Elias Sunny (36) to take Doleshwar home.

Malan scored a patient 87 off 112 balls, hitting nine boundaries and a six. The win for Doleshwar has put them on level terms with Abahani, tying both teams on 20 points.

A combined effort from Prime Bank's bowlers helped restrict Kalabagan to 188 for 8 in 45 overs at Fatullah. Pacer Taskin Ahmed and slow left-armed Enamul Haque took two wickets each, while Soumya Sarkar's 69-ball 61 led Prime Bank's chase. Soumya shared a 113-run stand with Saykat Ali (49) for the first wicket and laid the foundations for the chase. They reached home with six wickets and eight overs to spare.

Shakib's Legends' slim chances of winning the league disappeared yesterday, after his side suffered a seven-wicket defeat to Mohammedan. Batting first, Legends' posted 204-9 in a reduced 34-overs-a-side match with Jahurul Islam following his 94 in the previous game with a 53-ball 47.

However, they were denied by a brilliant 120-run stand between Naeem Islam (76 no) and Sayem Alam (73) for the third wicket.



ONE LAST TIME ON ALL WHITES: India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni (L) shakes hands with his Australia's Chris Rogers on the final day of the third Test at the MCG yesterday. Dhoni made a surprise announcement of retiring from Test cricket with immediate effect after the game.

PHOTO: AFP

SCORES IN BRIEF

ABAHANI: 201 for 9 in 45 overs (Liton 44, Rakibul 41; Sanjamul 2-32, Muktar 2-33)
PRIME DOLESHWAR: 205 for 5 in 43.1 overs (Dawid 87 not out, Elias 36; Al-Amin 4-51)
Result: Prime Doleshwar won by five wickets.

LEGENDS OF RUGGANJ: 204 for 9 in 34 overs (Jahurul 47, Mosharraf 36; Naeem 2-27, Mashrafe 2-41)
MOHAMMEDAN: 208 for 3 in 32 overs (Naeem 76, Sayem 73; Shakib 1-32)
Result: Mohammedan won by seven wickets.

KALABAGAN CA: 188 for 8 in 45 overs (Mahmudul 33; Taskin 2-42, Enamul 2-46)
PRIME BANK CC: 191 for 4 in 37 overs (Soumya 61, Saykat 49; Darren 2-38)
Result: Prime Bank won by six wickets.



Prime Doleshwar's English batsman Dawid Malan drives his side to an empathic five-wicket win over Abahani in a crucial Dhaka Premier League Super Six fixture at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Malan struck a fluent unbeaten 87.

PHOTO: STAR

MS DHONI calls time on Tests

AFP, New Delhi



Dhoni, who is one of the world's highest-earning sportsman, has chosen "to retire from Test cricket with immediate effect in order to concentrate" on the 50-over and Twenty20 formats of the game, a statement from Indian cricket authorities said.

Former teammate and batting legend Sachin Tendulkar was among those paying tribute to Dhoni who was the most successful Test-match skipper in India's history. The announcement comes just weeks before India are due to begin their defence of the 50-over World Cup trophy that Dhoni lifted on home soil in 2011.

Star batsman Virat Kohli, who was the vice-captain under Dhoni, will lead the Indian team in the fourth and final Test against Australia that begins in Sydney on January 6. While India managed to hang on for a draw in the third Test in Melbourne earlier Tuesday, it was not enough to prevent Australia from regaining the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

The 33-year-old Dhoni, who is also the team's wicketkeeper, took over as Test skipper in 2008 after a successful spell captaining the one-day and T20 sides.

Under his leadership, India became the top-ranked Test nation in 2009, building on their victory in the inaugural World Twenty20 in South Africa in 2007 in Dhoni's first outing as captain.

But India have struggled when playing away from home in recent years. The poor record includes two 4-0 whitewashes in England and Australia in 2011 and a 3-1 loss in

DHONI TESTLINE										
M	I	R	HS	Ave	100	50	4s	6s	Ct	St
90	144	4876	224	38.09	6	33	544	78	256	38

England earlier this year. Dhoni was nevertheless India's most successful Test captain winning 27 of the 60 Tests he led the national side in, with 18 losses and 15 draws.

He scored 4,876 runs during his 90 Test career at an average of 38.09 with six centuries.

But the pressure of being captain, batsman and wicketkeeper in all three formats of the game took its toll amid criticism of his defensive approach in the five-day game.

It was rumoured before the tour of Australia that Dhoni will quit Tests after the series, but his decision to do

so even before the Sydney Test surprised many.

Dhoni, who also captained the Chennai Super Kings franchise in the Indian Premier League, was rated by Forbes earlier this year as the fifth richest sportsman in the world with an annual brand value of \$20 million.

Record-breaking batsman Tendulkar, who quit Test cricket last year, urged Dhoni to target the World Cup that opens in Australia and New Zealand on February 14.

"Well done on a wonderful career in Test cricket," Tendulkar tweeted. "Always enjoyed playing together. Next target 2015 WC my friend!!"

Batting great Sunil Gavaskar said India will miss Dhoni in Test cricket despite the recent criticism.

"India will miss Dhoni big time because he gave a new dimension to Indian cricket," the former captain told NDTV.

"Over the last year or so, the pressure of captaincy was probably affecting his wicketkeeping. The amount of cricket he was playing probably told on him."

Another former captain Bishan Bedi said Dhoni's decision to retire in the midst of a series left him "perplexed."

"But that's his prerogative. I wish him happy retirement," Bedi said.

Noted commentator Harsha Bhogle, meanwhile, tweeted: "If Dhoni says that the strain of playing all forms is telling on him, we should accept and say 'thank you'."

Siddikur swings 9-under

SPORTS REPORTER

Two-time Asian Tour winner Siddikur Rahman extended his lead to nine shots after a scintillating nine-under (63) in the second round of the Gemcon Players Championship at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday. Starting the day at five-under (67), the 30-year-old golfer took his tally to 14-under (130) after the end of day two.

Jamal Hossain Mollah was joined by Dulal Hossain in second position with an aggregate of five-under (139) while Delwar Hossain Dilu dropped down to eighth position with a score of one-over (145).

A total of 30 professional golfers from Bangladesh are taking part in the Tk 10 lakh tournament.

Australia clinch series

Third Test ends in a draw

AFP, Melbourne



India were never in the hunt on the final day after Australia took till lunch to declare at 318 for nine, leaving them to chase 384 runs for victory off 70 overs.

Their task became even more Herculean when they were reduced to 19 for three in the ninth over and from there it was a matter of survival.

The match was called off with four overs remaining when India were 174 for six with skipper M.S. Dhoni on 24 and Ravi Ashwin on eight. It was the first drawn Melbourne Test in 17 years.

The Australians have won the four-match series with one Test left to play in Sydney next week after winning in Adelaide and Brisbane.

"India have some very good batters in their side, it was still a very good wicket and we really didn't want to give India a sniff," Australia skipper Steve

Smith said of his declaration decision.

"We've got another series win, which is what we were after, and hopefully we can finish well in Sydney."

The draw means that India have not won at the Melbourne Cricket Ground for 33 years.

India resisted for a time through Virat Kohli and Ajinkya Rahane, who shared in a record 262-run stand in the first innings, but once Kohli was dismissed to break an 85-run partnership, pressure again mounted on the tourists, who have a notorious reputation for lower-order batting collapses.

"We lost early wickets, we put pressure on ourselves and we had to fight it out and overall it's a good performance by the team," Dhoni said.

"It was very tough to score over 300 on this kind of wicket in one day so overall I'm quite happy."

Kohli was out to a poor shot on the first ball after tea, spooning a catch straight to Joe Burns at square leg off Ryan Harris for 54.

Mitchell Johnson then bowled Cheteshwar Pujara (21) with a gem of a delivery, straightening off the pitch to

crash into off-stump. Johnson rattled Pujara with a short-pitched snorter into the grille of his helmet and then two balls later produced his wicket-taking delivery to leave the tourists at 141 for five with 18 overs left.

Rahane mistimed a pull shot off Josh Hazlewood to Shaun Marsh for 48 off 117 balls to expose the India tail with 14 overs remaining.

SCORES IN BRIEF
AUSTRALIA: First innings 530 (Smith 192, Harris 74; Shami 4-138)
INDIA: First innings 465 (Vijay 68, Dhawan 28, Pujara 25, Kohli 169, Rahane 147; Johnson 3-135, Harris 4-70, Lyon 2-108)

AUSTRALIA: Second innings 318 for 9 decl (Warner 40, Rogers 69, Watson 17, Marsh 99, Johnson 15, Harris 21; Yadav 2-89, Shami 2-92, Sharma 2-49, Ashwin 2-75)

INDIA: Second innings 174 for 6 (Vijay 11, Kohli 54, Rahane 48, Pujara 21, Dhoni 24 not out; Johnson 2-38, Harris 2-30, Hazlewood 2-40)

Result: Drawn.
Player-of-the-match: Ryan Harris.

SA-WI 2nd Test drawn

AFP, Port Elizabeth



No play was possible on the final day and the match ended with the West Indies on 275 for nine in their first innings in reply to South Africa's 417 for eight declared.

South Africa take a 1-0 lead into the third Test starting on Friday.

South African captain Hashim Amla said a result had been "on the cards" if there had been a full day's play possible on Tuesday.

"We were hoping to get the last wicket quickly and then set them a target with 50 or 60 overs to go."

Amla said he was satisfied with South Africa's performance.

SCORES IN BRIEF
SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 417 for 8 decl (Elgar 121, Du Plessis 103, Amla 33, Van Zyl 29, Steyn 58; Taylor 2-114, Peters 2-69, Gabriel 2-80)

WEST INDIES: First innings 275 for 9 (Brathwaite 106, Smith 22, Samuels 101, Ramdin 20; Morkel 4-59, Tahir 3-108)

Result: Match drawn.
Player-of-the-match: Kraigg Brathwaite

Tamim to rehab in Australia

SPORTS REPORTER

Opener Tamim Iqbal will stay in Australia for a two-week rehabilitation programme instead of coming back to Dhaka, after a successful surgery on his left-knee.

"I talked with him (Tamim) and he told me that he will stay in Australia for the next two weeks for rehab, as the surgeon wanted him to stay there. Tamim has already contacted a physiotherapist," informed BCB's senior physician Debashis Chowdhury yesterday.

Tamim underwent the surgery on Monday under the supervision of Australian surgeon Dr David Young, who confirmed that the player would be able to return to training in two to three weeks following his rehabilitation.

Sanjida scores 4.61

SPORTS REPORTER

Sanjida Akhter, the star forward of Bangladesh National U-16 football team, passed this year's Junior School Certificate (JSC) examinations with a grade point average (GPA) of 4.61. The 15-year-old forward, who scored four goals in an emphatic performance during the AFC U-16 Women's Championship Qualifiers in Dhaka in October, had gone straight to her home in Dhobaura, Mymensingh to prepare for the class VII year-end exams right after the end of the championship.

Sanjida, who pulled out of the squad for the SAFF Women's Championship due to the exams, said she was especially happy because the result justified her decision to withdraw from the regional football extravaganza held from November 11-19 in Islamabad.

"I am very happy with my result because I could not study properly due to matches and training. I used to read only in the nights," said an elated Sanjida when contacted yesterday evening.

Sanjida's mentor Mohammad Mafizuddin, who is a football instructor at the Kalshindur Girls High School in Mymensingh, informed that the national U-16 team's goalkeeper Leo Azim Sheuli and a couple of other age-lever players from the same school passed the exams with high GPAs as well.

Sanjida is currently training two hours a day at her school for local tournaments as there are no national engagements at the moment.

Nat'l h'ball in semis stage

SPORTS REPORTER

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), Bangladesh Police, Bangladesh Ansar and Chapainawabganj DSA reached the semifinals of the Exim Bank 24th National Men's Handball Championship yesterday.

In the first quarterfinal held at the Shaheed Captain Mansur Ali Handball Stadium yesterday, BGB beat Kushtia DSA by 54-22 goals; Police outplayed Madaripur DSA by 42-27 goals; Bangladesh Ansar thrashed Gopalganj DSA 52-6 and Chapainawabganj DSA beat Chittagong DSA 32-27.

BGB will play against Chapainawabganj DSA and Police will meet Bangladesh Ansar in the semifinals at the same venue today.