

SPORT

Khulna's record sixth

Nasir misses a triple hundred

SPORTS REPORTER

A draw would have been enough for Khulna Division to seal a hat-trick of titles in the National Cricket League (NCL) but they opted to celebrate it with a crushing innings and 49-run win against Dhaka in the fourth and final day yesterday.

This is Khulna's sixth NCL title and subsequently they have surpassed five-time NCL champions Rajshahi Division to become the country's most decorated first-class team.

Dhaka resumed the day on 169 for 4 and were eventually bundled out on 297 in the morning session.

It was man-of-the-match Mehedi Hasan Miraz who set up the easy win for Khulna by picking up career-best figures of 7 wickets for 24 runs to dismiss Dhaka for just 113 in the first innings. In the second innings, the young right-arm off-spinner completed his third ten-wicket haul in first-class cricket.

Earlier, Khulna declared the innings on 459 for 8 after Anamul Haque smashed his second double hundred of the season alongside Mahedi Hasan, who scored his second century of the season by adding 177.

With 25 points from six games, Khulna remain on top of Tier-1 but on the other hand, the defeat meant that Dhaka have joined Barisal at the bottom of the table on 10 points. However, by dint of the most number of wickets taken in the tournament, Barisal managed to stay in Tier-1 while Dhaka were demoted to Tier-2.

Rajshahi, who had already confirmed their promotion to Tier-1 during the previous round, ended their campaign with a draw against Dhaka metro and a total of 25 points from six games.

During the encounter Rajshahi posted the highest team total of this season, riding on a fifth first class century from Forhad Reza, as the side were all-out on 668. Forhad scored 106 off 151 balls that featured 12 fours and five sixes. It was

the third century of the innings after Nazmul Hossain's 194 and Mizanur Rahman's 175.

Metro's left-arm spinner Nihad Uz Zaman and pacer Taskin Ahmed were the pick of the bowlers for the side as the former bagged four wickets while the latter bowled a fiery spell to dismiss Sabbir Rahman (0), Mushfiqur Rahim (8) and skipper Jahurul Islam (22) in no time.

In reply, Metro were in a spot of bother when Rajshahi's pacer Shafiqul Islam and Delwar Hossain scalped three and two wickets respectively - leaving them at 118.

Meanwhile, all eyes were on Chittagong's Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium where Rangpur's Nasir Hossain was eyeing his maiden triple hundred after resuming on 270 against Barisal. The right-hander is surely disappointed though as he offered a simple catch at deep square-leg to Fazle Rabbi off a short Linkon Dey delivery just five runs shy from the feat.

After Nasir finished on 295 off 510 balls, including 32 fours and three sixes, Rangpur declared the innings on 614 for 7.

In reply, Barisal scored 217 for 4 with Salman and Mosaddek Hossain scoring half centuries. Their stubborn stand for the fifth wicket made sure the game ended in a draw.

In the other game at Sylhet, in reply to Chittagong's second innings 380, veteran Rajin Saleh smashed a crucial hundred to help the home team secure a draw. Sylhet posted 309 for 7 in the second innings after being bundled out for just 137 runs in their first essay. Rajin was finally dismissed on 104 off 336 balls, his 18th first class hundred, which included 12 fours and three sixes.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ROUND 6

Nasir Hossain fell agonisingly short of a maiden triple century, which would have seen him become the second-ever Bangladeshi to reach the mark, after being dismissed on 295 against Barisal on the fourth and final day.

Khulna's wicketkeeper-batsman Anamul Haque smashed his second double hundred of the 19th NCL in the final round after getting one in the first round.

The sixth and final round of the NCL witnessed a total of seven centuries and two double hundreds.

Sylhet's left-arm spinner Enamul Haque bowled 19 no balls against Chittagong, 13 of which came in the second innings.

Khulna clinched a hat-trick of titles and sixth overall to eclipse five-time champions Rajshahi.

Dhaka division were demoted to Tier-2 while Rajshahi confirmed their promotion to Tier-1 after the fifth round.

SCORES IN BRIEF

KHULNA DIV VS DHAKA DIV

DHAKA: 113 and 297 all-out in 99.5 overs (Rakibul 58, Taibur 51; Rubel 3-64, Mahedi 3-89)
KHULNA: 459 for 8 declared in 91 overs (Anamul 202, Mahedi 177; Sharif 3-70, Shuvagata 3-81)
Khulna won by an innings and 49 runs

RANGPUR VS BARISAL

BARISAL: 335 and 217 for 4 in 62.2 overs (Salman 61, Mosaddek 50 not out; Tanbir 2-77)
RANGPUR: 614 for 7 in 176.3 overs (Nasir 295, Ariful 162; Monir 3-151)
Match drawn

RAJSHAHIS VS DHAKA METRO

METRO: 328 and 118 for 5 in 31 overs (Mehrab 36 not out, Marshal 26, Marshal 67; Shafiqul 3-21)
RAJSHAHIS: 668 all-out in 152.4 overs (Nazmul 194, Mizanur 175, Forhad 106; Nihad 4-218)
Match drawn

SYLHET VS CHITTAGONG

CHITTAGONG: 215 all-out and 380 for 7 declared in 106 overs (Yasir 102 n.o.; Enamul 3-131)
SYLHET: 137 and 309 for 7 in 126 overs (Rajin 104, Sayem 48.; Mehedi 3-68)
Match drawn



Clockwise (L-R): Nasir Hossain fell agonisingly short of a maiden triple century; Mushfiqur Rahim had a forgettable outing; Forhad Reza hit one of the nine centuries in the final round and Rajshahi celebrate their promotion to Tier 1 of the National Cricket League that concluded yesterday.

PHOTOS: BCB



Mahedi, Nazmul get reward

BCB names 32-member preliminary squad for home series

SPORTS REPORTER

Young Mahedi Hasan was rewarded for his magnificent performances in domestic cricket, being included in the 32-member preliminary

squad announced yesterday, for the upcoming home series, including the tri-nation comprising Bangladesh, Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka along with the two Tests and two T20Is against Sri Lanka.

All-rounder Mahedi had been terrific with the ball in the recently-concluded Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), where he picked up ten wickets, and also shone in the National Cricket League (NCL), finishing as the second-highest run-getter of the tournament with 501 runs including two centuries.

The performers from the BPL were also taken into consideration with Rangpur Riders' left-arm spinner Nazmul Islam Apu and Mohammad Mithun making the cut. Apu had picked up 12 wickets in 10 games in the BPL while Mithun had good outings with the willow.

The BPL was also a way back into the national fold for Ariful Haque, who was named in a preliminary squad after a long time following his display of power-hitting for Khulna Titans. The right-hander further underlined



MAHEDI HASAN



NAZMUL ISLAM



ARIFUL HAQUE

his credentials with a century in the last round of the NCL for Rangpur Division.

Fast bowlers Abu Jayed and Abu Hider, who were among the top five wicket-takers in the BPL this season, were rewarded as well while young left-hander Sadman Islam Anik also found

a spot in the squad.

Wicket-keeper batsman Anamul Haque also found his way into yet another preliminary squad, but he will be hoping to stage a comeback to the national side properly following his two double hundreds in the NCL alongside decent performances in the BPL.

The Tigers will begin their training camp from December 27 ahead of the start of the first tri-nation series since 2010 on January 15.

The hosts will take on Sri Lanka in the first of the two-match Test series from January 31 at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury stadium in Chittagong and then travel to Dhaka for the second Test from February 8.

The first of the two T20Is against Sri Lanka will be held on February 15 at the Sher-e-Bangla National stadium in Dhaka while Sylhet will host the second T20I on February 18.

Boult 7-for destroys WI

AFP, Christchurch



A career best seven for 34 by Trent Boult destroyed the West Indies as New Zealand

wrapped up their ODI series with a game to spare in Christchurch on Saturday.

Boult had three for six after his first three overs as the West Indies fell apart at the start of their innings after being set an imposing 326-run target.

The tourists struggled through to 121 before Boult finished off the tail to give New Zealand victory by 204 runs to go with their five-wicket win in the first ODI.

When Boult had finished off the West Indies top order, Lochie Ferguson plucked out the middle with three wickets in 10 deliveries, including Jason Mohammed and Rovman Powell with successive balls.

New Zealand, sent into bat first, posted a healthy 325 for six after an impressive final 10 overs by Henry Nicholls and Todd Astle which produced 103 runs.

Nicholls, given out lbw on 22 but reinstated on review when replays showed the ball would have missed the stumps, went on to be unbeaten on 83 at the close.

Astle went for 49 in the final over after the pair had put on a whirlwind 130 for the sixth wicket.



New Zealand's left-arm pacer Trent Boult took a career best seven for 34 in the second ODI against West Indies at Christchurch yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan name NZ ODI squad

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan have recalled experienced opener Azhar Ali for their ODI series in New Zealand next month, but left batsman Ahmed Shehzad and all-rounder Imad Wasim out of the squad.

"We kept the conditions in New Zealand in mind and the recent performances of some players in the domestic tournament," chief selector Inzamam-ul-Haq said after the squad announcement on Saturday.

Ali was rested for the Sri Lanka series, but is now fully fit after recovering from a knee problem, Haq added.

Pakistan's first ODI against New Zealand is in Wellington on January 6. The two sides will also play three Twenty20s, for which Pakistan will make a separate squad announcement.

SQUAD: Sarfraz Ahmed (captain), Azhar Ali, Fakhar Zaman, Imam-ul-Haq, Babar Azam, Shoaib Malik, Mohammad Hafeez, Haris Sohail, Faheem Ashraf, Shadab Khan, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Amir, Hasan Ali, Aamer Yamin, Rumman Raees.



PHOTO: STAR

Both Bangladesh skipper Maria Manda (L) and her Indian counterpart Bannya Kabiraz were in a cheerful mood ahead of the final of the SAFF U-15 Women's Championship yesterday. Only one of them will have the last laugh come this afternoon. The match will kick off at 2:00pm at the Kamalapur Stadium.

First SAFF title beckons girls

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh will be looking for a repeat of Thursday's performance when they take on India in the final of the SAFF U-15 Women's Championship today. The hosts started without three of their regular forwards in that match against India, yet ran out with a comfortable 3-0 victory in that last league match of this four-nation tournament.

With all three of those forwards - Anuching Mogini, Sara Ban Tahura and Shamsunnahar - expected to be back in the starting eleven, coach Golam Rabbani Choton will be hoping for a similar, if not an even more ruthless, performance as the hosts look to clinch the title of the inaugural edition of this competition.

A win today would ensure a fourth consecutive victory for Bangladesh over the same opposition, carrying on from two victories in the AFC U-14 Girls' Regional Championship last year. Bangladesh had won the group stage match 3-1 before winning the final 4-0 against India in that competition in Tajikistan last year. Despite those wins in AFC tournaments, Bangladesh have not yet won any title in women's football in the South Asian region. So this could be the ideal time to break that duck and win their first SAFF title overall since the U-16 boys' tournament triumph in Sylhet in 2015.

The match will kick off at 2:00pm at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur. Entry into the venue has been made free for all. The match will be broadcast live on BTV World and Bangla Television. One can also watch the match on the YouTube channels of Prothom Alo and Somoy TV.

Choton was full of confidence that his charges could replicate their performance from Thursday. "We beat them in the league stage. So we are confident about tomorrow's [Sunday's] match," the coach said during a press conference at the BFF

house yesterday ahead of the final. "However, we are making sure that the players don't get complacent or over-confident."

Having scored 12 goals while conceding none during the three matches in this competition, the coach feels all the departments are well prepared.

"We have all the respect for the India team as they are historically the regional powerhouse. However, we are prepared for them. We have worked with every department separately. We have even prepared for shoot-outs in case the game ends in a draw in attacking position," the successful coach said, adding that the lure of a SAFF title is a big inspiration for his side.

Following on that victory from Thursday, the team had full rest on Friday before having a light training session yesterday. Forward Sara Ban Tahura, who did not feature in that game, has recovered from her injury while another forward, Sajeda Khatun, is unlikely to take part in the final after picking up a niggles during that match.

That means the hosts could be back to their regular starting eleven, with Tahura, Shamsunnahar and Marzia as the three attacking players behind No. 9 Anuching. Monica Chakma and Maria Manda are likely to play in midfield in a 4-2-3-1 formation.

Skipper Maria said they are confident about winning the title. "We have won three matches in the competition, so we are prepared to win the final as well. We are not thinking about the previous matches, and all our focus is on the final," said the midfielder.

India coach Maimol Rocky was, meanwhile, looking to turn the tide of defeats against the hosts. "We don't think the defeat will discourage our team, instead it should work as a motivation to do well. There is no pressure on us. I have told my players to go out and enjoy the game," she said.