



Jamal Bhuiyan scored a wonderful goal from 30 yards out to power Saif SC to a 2-1 win over Rahmatganj MFS in their Bangladesh Premier League fixture at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Mohammedan end winless streak

SPORTS REPORTER

Falling giants Mohammedan tasted victory in the Bangladesh Premier League after 11 matches when the Black and Whites came from behind to hand a 2-1 defeat to Team BJMC in their first match of the second leg at the Shaheed Bulu Stadium in Noakhali yesterday.

Elsewhere, at Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka, Saif SC beat Rahmatganj MFS 2-1 to start their second-leg campaign with a victory like the first-leg where they also beat the same opposition by the same margin.

Mohammedan, who were in danger zone after collecting only six points from 12 matches, got to relative safety to raise the point tally to nine points following the victory while Team BJMC remained rooted to the bottom with only four points from 13 matches.

Mohammedan apparently appeared no different from their first-leg performance despite fielding three new foreign players in the match against Team BJMC, a side they handed a 2-1 defeat in their first leg meeting in January.

However, Malian striker Souleymane Diabate was a bit better than the rest of his teammates by scoring winner in the second half after setting up the equaliser in the in the first half.

The Motijheel-based outfit strengthened their defence with Cameroonian Jean Jules Ikanga, but the defence still remained vulnerable and BJMC capitalised on the hole to take the lead in

Team BJMC Otabek 3'	1 – 2 Mohammedan Nagata 21', Diabate 61'
Rahmatganj 1 – 2 Saif SC Enamul 55'	Cordoba 12', Jamal 14'

the very third minute.

Uzbek striker Otabek chipped the ball over the advancing Mohammedan goalkeeper after the Mohammedan defence failed to stop a long ball from BJMC goalkeeper Uttam Barua before Japanese midfielder Uryu Nagata converted a spot-kick to level the margin following a rough

tackle on Diabate by Uttam in the 21st minute.

After resumption, both sides fought equally hard but Mohammedan had the last laugh. Availing a fumble from Abdul Halim Tutul, Amir Hakim Bappy delivered a forward pass to Diabate, who darted into the box to place the ball home in 61st minute.

At the BNS, visitors Saif SC got off to a sparking start with three new-signing foreign players but the heroes of the match were their old ones, with Colombian Deiner Andres Cordoba and captain Jamal Bhuiyan scoring for Saif before Emanul Islam pulling one goal back for Rahmatganj.

Saif took the lead in the 12th minute, thanks to a glancing header from Cordoba off a Yeasin Arafat corner before Jamal doubled the lead with a strike from 30 yards out two minutes later.

Despite conceding two goals, Rahmatganj showed their fighting character and reduced the margin through Enamul in the 55th minute, who tapped in a powerful shot from teammate Landing Darboe. Faisal Ahmed then rattled the crossbar in the 61st minute, but they left the field with defeat.

MSC fall short against Rupali

SPORTS REPORTER

Farzana Haq Pinky struck an unbeaten 126-ball 110 to guide Rupali Bank Krira Parishad to a 22-run win over Mohammedan Sporting Club in a Premier Division Women's Cricket League encounter at BKSP-4 in Savar yesterday.

Electing to bat, Rupali Bank were jolted by the loss of opener Isma Tanjim off the very first ball of the innings. Rupali Bank were left reeling on 41 for four soon after but a resilient Pinky helped the side post 225 for eight through a brilliant unbeaten knock, which featured 10 fours and two sixes.

In reply, Mohammedan fell short as they could only manage 203 for nine with Disha Kashai top scoring for the Motijheel-based outfit with 57.

At BKSP-3, despite half-tons from Shahnaj Parveen and Panna Ghosh, Bangladesh Ansar and VDP could not avert a four-wicket defeat at the hands of Abahani Limited.

Bangladesh Ansar posted a modest 188 in their allotted 50 overs, courtesy of 72-ball 50 from Shahnaj and a 46-ball 51 from Panna. However, Abahani reached the target in 49.1 overs with four wickets to spare.

BD archers eliminated in mixed events

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh recurve mixed team exited from the pre-quarterfinals of Hyundai Archery World Cup (Stage-2) after suffering a 6-0 sets defeat against Chinese Taipei in Shanghai yesterday.

The Bangladesh team, comprising Ruman Sana and Beauty Roy, notched a hard-fought 5-4 sets win over Australia in the first round but they surrendered meekly to Chinese Taipei in the second round as the duo could not produce any resistance except for the first set, which they lost by one-point margin.

In compound mixed team event, Bangladesh team, comprising Sushmita Banik and Ashim Kumar, suffered a 151-137 points defeat to their Japanese counterparts.

Bangladesh will fight for bronze medal in men's recurve team event on Sunday.

ICC WORLD CUP 2019 BITES

19 DAYS TO GO

We're ready for it: Langer

AFP, Brisbane

Australia coach Justin Langer said his team won't be rattled by a hostile reception at the World Cup as England's Barmy Army gave them a taste of what to expect.

The defending champions are on a hot run of one-day form and have been boosted by the return of Steve Smith and David Warner after their

one-year bans for ball-tampering.

But a trip to England is never easy, and the visit for the World Cup -- followed by an Ashes Test series -- is shaping up to be even more challenging than usual after the cheating row.

England's fiery Barmy Army

supporters rarely need much incentive to get stuck into their arch-rivals and got the ball rolling on Twitter Thursday with a brutal pot shot.

In a taste of what to expect from British crowds, they doctored an image of Warner's official World Cup player portrait, replacing 'Australia' on the front of his shirt with 'Cheats'.

They also photo-shopped Mitchell Starc and Nathan Lyon holding sandpaper.

Smith, Warner and Cameron Bancroft were all banned over the scandal last year in Cape Town involving sandpaper to alter the ball.

"We're ready for it," Langer told SEN sports radio late Thursday. "If we're under siege the second we get off the plane, we're ready for it."

"The World Cup might be a bit different to start off, but certainly once the Ashes kicks off there will be plenty of commentary."

Warner returned to the Australian team this week after prolific form at the Indian Premier League, while Smith stroked an unbeaten 89 in Brisbane against a New Zealand XI on Wednesday.



'We can bounce back from anywhere'

ICC

Azhar Ali knows the fickleness of Pakistan's cricketing fortunes as well as anyone.

Back at the start of 2017, he was his country's ODI captain. In his last one-day innings of 2016 he'd scored a century at almost a run a ball to seal a whitewash over the West Indies. By the end of January, three knocks and a heavy series defeat to Australia later, he was ousted not just from his leadership role but from the side altogether.

By the start of the Champions Trophy in June, he was back in the side, but though he started well personally, scoring 50 in his comeback knock, Pakistan began terribly, swatted aside by arch-rivals India. The rest, of course, is history, with Sarfaraz Ahmed leading a written-off team to the title.

"It's annoying for us to keep being unpredictable, but it's true," Azhar said. "We know we can bounce back from anywhere and that makes us dangerous."



'It's awesome, the summer of our generation'

AFP, London

Stuart Broad believes the England team have a once in a lifetime opportunity as the country prepares to play host to both a men's World Cup and Ashes this year.

For the first time since the inaugural men's World Cup in 1975, England will be staging the two biggest events in its international calendar -- the 50-over global showpiece and a Test series against Australia -- in the same home season.

"It's awesome, the summer of our generation," England paceman Broad

said Thursday. "What an opportunity for the game to grow and inspire."

"I look back to when I was a kid, you get inspired by big series like World Cups and the Ashes," explained Broad, whose father Chris, an opening batsman, was a key member of the England side that enjoyed a triumphant tour of Australia in 1986/87.

"That's the added pressure on us as players," the four-time Ashes-winner said. "We can make this a summer to remember by winning trophies."

No England men's team have yet won

a one-day World Cup, with the 2010 World Twenty20 their lone International Cricket Council trophy.

But Eoin Morgan's side, currently involved in a series with Pakistan, are now top of the men's one-day international rankings.

Broad, now a Test specialist after appearing in 121 ODIs, believes a top order set to feature Jason Roy, Jonny Bairstow, Joe Root, Morgan, Ben Stokes, Jos Buttler and Moen Ali surpasses any England have had in limited overs cricket.

'Hope to have Riyadh bowling soon'

Rhodes backs struggling Fizz

SPORTS REPORTER

Even before the Bangladesh cricket team departed for Ireland, there were injury concerns over tqwo key players in the experienced Mahmudullah Riyad and left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman.

The team management were eager to have batsman Mahmudullah's shoulder fit enough to bowl his part-time off-spin, especially by the time the World Cup in the United Kingdom rolls around on May 30. Mahmudullah last bowled just one over against New Zealand during the first Test in Hamilton and since medical reports have shown that the cricketer suffered a Grade 3 tear on his right shoulder, depriving the Tigers of his useful off-spin in the middle overs.

Bangladesh coach Steve Rhodes was however not concerned about Mahmudullah's injury and was hopeful that the experienced cricketer would be able to bowl a few overs in the latter stages of the ongoing tri-series.

"Riyad is quite confident about his shoulder, that he can get himself in a fit position at the World Cup. Maybe the back end of this tournament might be a good opportunity for him to bowl one or two overs. We need him bowling as he gives us an option as a sixth or seventh bowler

because, as you know, he started his career as an off-spinner and a good one," Rhodes told reporters after Bangladesh's match against Ireland was washed out in Dublin on Thursday.

On the other hand, left-arm seamer Mustafizur -- who just recovered from an ankle injury -- is yet to find his rhythm. The star paceman remained bite-less, conceding 84 runs from his 10 overs for two wickets in the 10-wicket win over the West Indies on Tuesday.

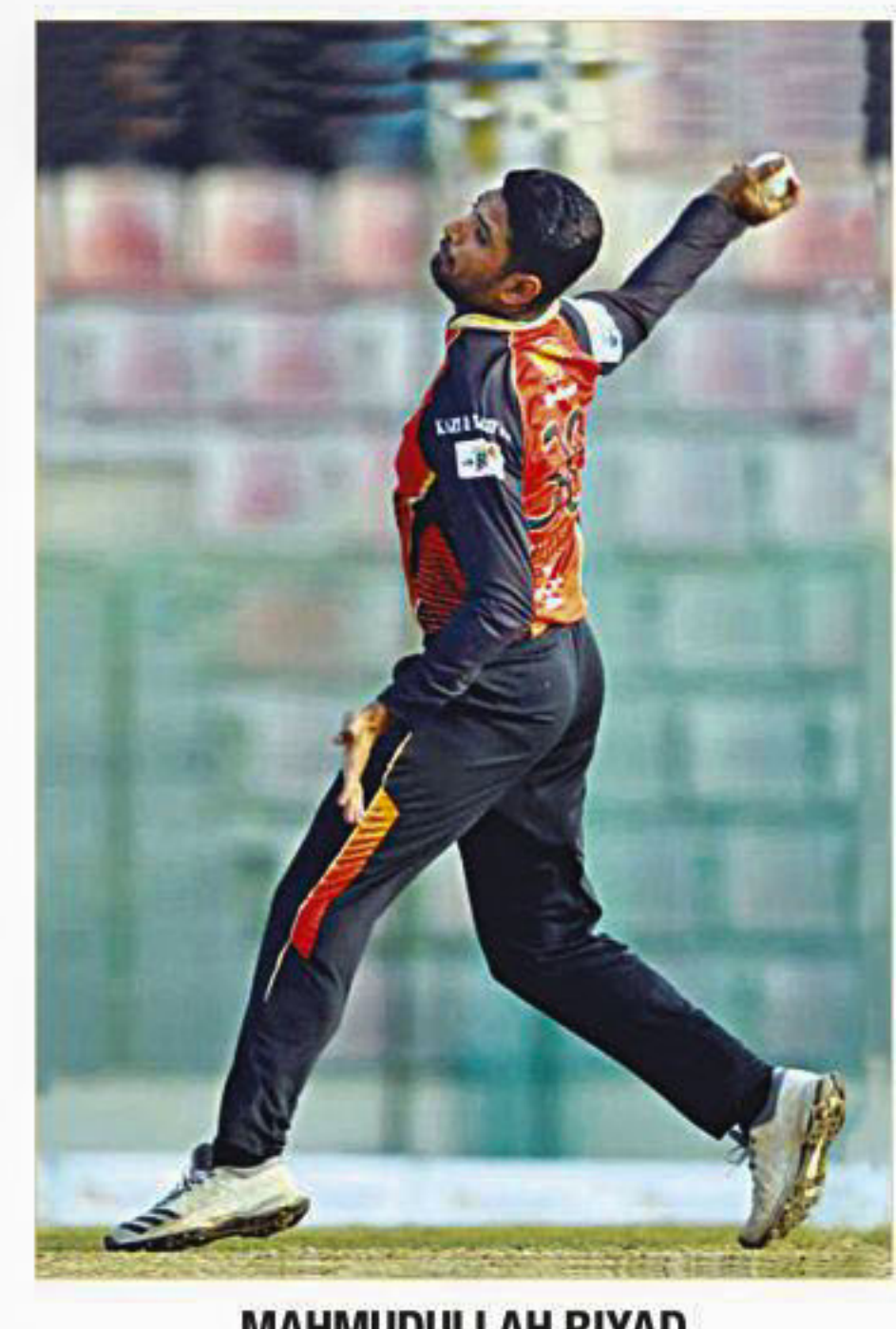
Rhodes however backed his man and said that Mustafizur is capable enough to threaten the opponents on his given day.

"I am not concerned. I think he is a wonderful one-day bowler. It was not too long ago that he was ranked in the top five in the world. We haven't got many of our Bangladeshi players ranked in the top five but I do think that we have got some very good players. They showed it the other day against West Indies.

"And that's why some of the teams will be guarded against us in the World Cup as they will be a little worried before playing against Bangladesh. But we all know as well that we are capable of a bad game and my job and Mash's [Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's] job as captain and the rest of the team is to try our best to be a little more consistent. If we start to do that then maybe we can go a long way in the tournament," he said.



MUSTAFIZUR RAHMAN



MAHMUDULLAH RIYAD

Ireland seek course correction

Take on West Indies today

AGENCIES, Dublin

After conceding the tri-series opener to West Indies by 196 runs, Ireland will look for their first win of the series when the two teams collide again on Saturday.

Their second game against Bangladesh was then washed out. With the Asian side also winning a game so far, it is highly impossible for Ireland to beat the odds and enter the final.

The last clash between West Indies and Ireland had a world-record opening partnership, a near-400-run total, and a near-200-run victory. On the positive side, that's the sort of performance that will do wonders for the side's confidence ahead of ICC World Cup 2019.

On the flip side, however, West Indies could do with more competition -- the harder they are pushed ahead of CWC 2019, the better.

Ireland are not a part of the tournament, so there are no immediate big-picture implications from their perspective. But a win against two of the top ten ODI teams in the world would be a wonderful next step in their progression, exactly a year removed from their Test debut.



Steve Smith scored an unbeaten 91 to help Australia beat an under-strength New Zealand by five wickets during Australia's final warm-up game on Friday before leaving for England to defend their World Cup title.

PHOTO: AFP