

## Kanchan KOs Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER



A dream goal by Rukunuzzaman Kanchan enabled Mohammedan Sporting Club to win the season's first battle-royale against bitter rivals Abahani Krira Chakra 1-0 to book their tickets to the final of the Nitol-Tata Third National Football League yesterday.

The busy marksman broke the deadlock with a sublime left-footer in the 38th minute of the second half at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

The holders will now take on Muktiyoddha Sangsad Krira Chakra in Friday's final. Earlier the Muktis brought high-flying Moulvibazar Wanderers down to earth also by a solitary goal win in the other semi.

It was not only Kanchan's fifth goal in the competition but perhaps his most priceless.

The only goal in a high-voltage drama came from a quick counter-

attack when Mohammedan left-back Mahmudul Hasan sprinted down the flank in a way as if his black and whites shirt was on fire.

The nimble defender didn't stop running until he reached the top of the box to float a curling cross to the unmarked Kanchan who received the ball and spun around weighed his options from an acute angle. The innovative national striker then took a swerving left-footer that sailed over a bemused Abahani custodian Titumir and entered the net kissing the far post. As soon as the ball entered the net the Mohammedan half of the gallery exploded into wild celebrations.

And after the goal, Moha-mmedan had to endure a nerve-wracking seven minutes before referee Ibrahim Nesar blew the long whistle.

But it was Abahani who created more chances than their Motijheel rivals in what was a cracking encounter in front of nearly 40,000 spectators.

The first half gave little indication of what was to follow. The two popular clubs finished goalless at the breather but it was full of action.

Abahani could have gained advantage in the 21st minute of the second half. But Mohammedan custodian Nizam Majumdar denied a Khokon bounced header making a smart goalline save. But despite Nizam's brilliance the ball was hanging dangerously near the post before Hasan cleared it from a mishit of Rezaul Karim Liton.

The match between the giants brought a sigh of relief for the organisers worried that that the stadium wouldn't attract crowds. Apart from a minor on-field incident the game was conducted peacefully.

Yellow cards: Hasan and Farhad (Mohammedan), Liton (Abahani).

**TEAMS**  
**MOHAMMEDAN SC:** Nizam, Jewel Rana, Masud Rana, Hasan, Riyad, Joy, Titoo, Monwar (Pappu), Dabran (Salisu), Kanchan and Farhad.

**ABAHANI KC:** Titumir, Nazrul, Aminul, Sila Fode, Mintoo, Liton (Nayan), Pranatosh, Donald Ague, Asad (Shuvro), Sandro and Khokon.

**Referee:** Ibrahim Nesar.



HERO OF THE MOHAMMEDAN NIGHT: Rokunuzzaman Kanchan (L), who scored the lone goal, gets past an Abahani defender during the second semifinal of Nitol-Tata Third National Football League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Premier Hockey League 'final' today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Green Delta Premier Division Hockey League could not have asked for a better finish as archrivals Mohammedan Sporting Club and Abahani Krira Chakra meet in the virtual final today.

The match starts at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium at 4pm.

Table-toppers Mohammedan go into the last game of the 'Super Five' phase with an edge as only a draw today will see them regain the title. They have 32 points in their account from 12 matches.

On the other hand, it was like rubbing salt to Abahani's wounds as Indian superstar Dhanraj Pillay was refused a Bangladesh visa yesterday. The sky blues, who have 31 points, sought for his services in the must-win match. The mercurial playmaker applied for his visa at Bangladesh High Commission in Calcutta which he failed to obtain.

The two teams' previous meeting in the league ended 2-2.

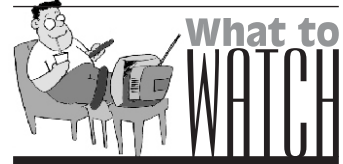
However, Abahani captain Hedayetul Islam Rajib was full of spirit. "Yes, we have to win the match. But in one sense the point deficit will help us. Because all the players are determined to give their best to win the match as they have no option."

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## Did U Know?

The highest transfer fee quoted for a player is a reported 13,033,000,000 Spanish pesetas (£47 million) for France's Zinedine Zidane from Juventus to Real Madrid on July 9th, 2001.



## TEN Sports

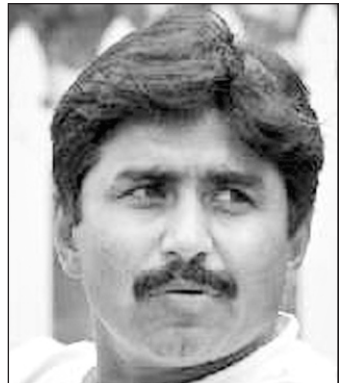
Bangladesh vs Pakistan  
Third Test, Day One  
Live at 11:00 am

## ESPN

Sportscentre Hindi  
Sport News  
Live at 8:30 pm  
English Premier Football League  
Southampton vs Man United  
Repeat at 9:30 pm

## STAR Sports

Sportline Tonight  
Sport News  
Live at 8:00 pm  
US Open Tennis  
Men's/Women's Quarterfinals  
Live at 9:00 pm



## Javed Miandad

(Pakistan cricket coach)  
"The way Bangladesh have played in the two Tests showed they have the potential to improve."

## Moody extends Worcs days

AFP, London

Tom Moody has extended his contract as Worcestershire's director of cricket until the 2005 season, the English county confirmed Tuesday.

Former Australia all-rounder Moody played for Worcestershire before moving into a coaching position at New Road.

Were he to see out his contract, he would have been the county's coach for five years.

Worcestershire also said they intended to re-engage all-rounder Andrew Hall as one of their overseas

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## Alfaz ends Wanderers

SPORTS REPORTER



The Nitol-Tata National Football League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

It was Alfaz Ahmed whose 58th minute made the difference in an absorbing first semifinal in front strong crowd. The lethal marksman produced a spectacular header after a long throw from Hasan-al-Mamun came his way via a back header from Saifur Rahman Moni.

The all-red section of the crowd roared in approval as soon as the ball entered the net eluding the fingertips of Wanderers keeper Mohammad Ali, who had been outstanding under the bar until that moment.

Although Muktiyoddha picked up the pace in the second half, chances were even in the first 45 minutes.

The match started with a lot of promise for the big-spending Sylhet outfit. They came close to scoring in the 16th minute when Bode Baba Lola, one of their two inspirational Nigerian recruits, had Muktiyoddha custodian Amin at his mercy. But he rushed his left-footer only to see the ball travelling wide of the mark.

But it was Wanderers striker Milon who should take the blame for missing three distinct chances in a pulsating affair.

But despite being eliminated

from the knockout stage, the unheralded yet enterprising Wanderers can take heart they certainly impressed everybody in their first season at the national level.

For Muktiyoddha the victory also broke their jinx for not appearing in the final of the previous two editions.

Their central defender Rajani Kanta gave a virtuoso performance to win the man-of-the-match award.

Wanderers will now have to summon their strength to play Abahani in the third-place play-off match tomorrow at 4.30 pm the same venue.

**Yellow cards:** Ladi Baba Lola (Moulvibazar Wanderers) and Hasan-al-Mamun (Muktiyoddha)

**MUKTIJODDHA:** Aminul, Hassan-al Mamun, Rajani, Sujon, Papel,

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PHOTO: STAR

Mercurial Muktiyoddha striker Alfaz Ahmed (C) dribbles his way past a Moulvibazar Wanderers defender during the first semifinal of Nitol-Tata Third National Football League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

## Lanka close to new TV deal

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's new cricket management was set to clinch a settlement with its television partner, Singapore-based WSG Nimbus, and expected a reduction in the 11 million US dollar Singapore court-ordered penalty.

Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka (BCCSL) said it hoped to reach agreement with WSG Nimbus, whose contract to televise matches played in Sri Lanka was aborted by the board's interim committee in 2001.

WSG Nimbus appealed to a Singapore court, which ruled in its favour and left the BCCSL facing a huge financial penalty.

"What we are hoping to do is reduce the 11 million dollar damages claimed on us and ensure that future matches are televised," BCCSL secretary Mohan de Silva said.

"The talks have been going very well and we are hopeful of arriving at an amicable settlement within a week."

BCCSL officials said they hoped NSW Nimbus will be able to televise

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## Mushfiq for one-dayers



SPORTS REPORTER from Multan

Bangladesh team management has decided to drop opener Javed Omar, left-arm seamer Monjurul Islam and right-arm paceman Anwar Hossain Monir for the five-match one-day series against Pakistan.

Although the team management is absolutely tight lipped about the changes in the team for the limited-overs series starting in Multan on September 9, it was learnt the omitted trio would fly back home after the third Test.

Javed scored his maiden hundred (119) in the second Test at Peshawar last week while Monjurul is set to play in the third Test beginning here today. Young Anwar however will return home without featuring in any of the three Tests.

They will be replaced by middle-order batsman Tushar Imran, veteran paceman Hasibul Hossain and

all-rounder Mushfiqur Rahman, who are scheduled to arrive in Karachi today and join their teammates in Multan tomorrow.

The other ODIs will be played in Faisalabad on September 12, at the



MUSHFIQUR RAHMAN

Ghaddafi Stadium in Lahore on September 15, in Rawalpindi on September 18 and the fifth and final one in Karachi on September 21.

## BNCC assault journalists

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh National Cadet Corps (BNCC) members who were on duty at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium during the Nitol-Tata National Football League second semifinal match between Mohammedan and Abahani went over volt and physically assaulted journalists after the match.

The incident took place when some journalists mistakenly boarded a bus which was allocated for the BNCC members. As the journalists were getting down from the vehicle on learning the mistake, some cadets challenged them and hurled expletives towards them.

When the journalists protested, the BNCC members attacked Kamruzzaman Hiru of Daily Sangram and Lutfur Rahman Badal of fortnightly Joy Parajoy and few others.

Badal lost his mobile phone during the skirmish.

## Latif advises BD to be positive

REUTERS, Multan

Pakistan captain Rashid Latif has criticised Bangladesh for adopting a negative strategy in the Test arena, and believes they can only improve if they change tactics.

The two sides meet in the final Test of a three-match series starting in Multan on Wednesday, and Pakistan are expected to complete a clean sweep.

"Bangladesh have played negative cricket in the first two Tests and I don't think they are going to learn anything or improve until they play positive cricket," Latif told reporters on Tuesday.

"They have a mediocre bowling attack and they have managed to stay in the matches by bowling to open fields. They have played negative cricket, and it is doing them no good."

"I don't want to interfere in what their captain or coach thinks or plans. But they need to play positively win or lose."

Latif added that Pakistan's overall dominance had been blunted by slow pitches for the first two Tests in Karachi and Peshawar.

"We didn't get the tracks we would have liked," he said. "If the pitches had had some pace in them, I think we would have won the Tests inside three days."

"In Multan, we have to assert our authority completely and try to finish off the match as soon as possible," he added.

## Amol omitted by Mumbai

CRICINFO, Mumbai

Amol Muzumdar, once rated among the best batsmen in the country by pundits here, has been dropped from the squad that will take on Rest of India for the Zai Irani Trophy in Chennai later this month.

Sachin Tendulkar returns to the Mumbai squad as captain and Sairaj Bahutule has been named vice-captain. Vinod Kamble, just back from a reasonably successful stint at Boland, also makes a comeback.

Muzumdar's omission is hardly

## Tigers for more fight



HASAN MASOOD from Multan

The objective remains the same for Bangladesh. Coach Dav Whatmore hoped that his boys would not make the same mistakes they made in the two Tests played so far and show more consistency and determination against Pakistan when the third and final Test begins at the lush green Multan Cricket Stadium today.

The Sri Lanka-born-Australian also believes that his team would guard against the loss of confidence following their heart-breaking collapse at Peshawar last week.

Bangladesh capitulated to a nine-wicket defeat in the second Test after the dominating their fancied opponents over the first three days.

"We had a review meeting after that match in Peshawar. The players have already understood that we lost

that match from a position of very good strength," said Whatmore.

"We had a terrific ending to the Pakistan's first innings with a hatrick and every one was on a high. But again within the next 30 minutes we lost four wickets. So, the message is 'You can't relax after you have totally outplayed the opposition in the first part'."

He said that Bangladesh team should now totally focus on how good they can be.

When asked whether his team was lacking in confidence, Whatmore replied in the negative.

"As long as we get down on the things I believe we did pretty well and we continue in doing that and not doing the naughty things, I think the confidence will never go down," he said.

Answering to another question, Whatmore said that it was not only the mistakes of his batsmen but also the quality bowling of Pakistan speedster Shoaib Akhtar that was

responsible for Bangladesh's second innings collapse in Peshawar.

"You can't totally disregard the bowling because they bowled well," he said.

About the inclusion of Pakistan's top off-spinner Saqlain Mushtaq who joined the team on Monday, Whatmore said that he was not concerned about any individual.

"We will only play against what Pakistan give us to play and not against any individuals."

Whatmore said that his team was now focusing on a victory. He said that any game they were going to play, they wanted to win. That is the given aim of the team.

"And in order to win the game there are a number of things you need to do. And that's the only thing we are concerned to do, to fight even harder every hour every day to get that win," he said.

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## Raring to spin



HASAN MASOOD from Multan

Saqlain Mushtaq is happy returning to play in international cricket for his country after a six-month lay-off.

The champion Pakistani off-spinner, who joined the team a day before after playing for English county side Surrey, is however feeling the pressure to perform in the third Test against Bangladesh.

Talking to this correspondent at the Multan Stadium before practice yesterday, Saqlain also gave full credit to Bangladesh for their recent improved showing under Dav Whatmore whom he considered as one of the best coaches in the world.

"I am happy to be back in the Pakistan fold. There is nothing bigger than playing for your country and I want to take full advantage of



SAQLAIN MUSHTAQ

that," said Saqlain adding that he was obviously feeling the pressure to be under spotlight after a long absence.

"I'm only human and I do feel the pressure and tension of a comeback," said the player, who was one

of the eight cricketers dropped after the World Cup this year.

Saqlain said that his mystery delivery, better known as 'Dusra' was no more a mystery to the cricket world now.

"I think everybody knows about that delivery. That's why I'm not focusing much on that these days. I have learnt and practised some new things during my stay in England and I'm going to deliver those against Bangladesh," Saqlain said without elaborating.

"It was a frustrating period for me being out of the national team for six months. But I don't want to dwell on why the selectors have dropped me and I want to give 100 per cent for my country," said the 26-year-old.

Saqlain is one of the two players recalled in the team for the third Test with middle-order batsman Younis Khan.



PHOTO: STAR

REMAINING WITH HOCKEY, IN ONE WAY OR THE OTHER: Jummon Lusai, who was the Abahani coach until a life ban was slapped on him during the Club Cup final a few months ago, watering the turf of Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday. He is preparing the field for today's title-deciding Mohammedan-Abahani clash in the Premier Division League. Ironically, it was another battle between the big rivals when he beat up the umpire following a ruling that went against his team.