

## DOHS down Abahani too

SPORTS REPORTER



Three days after their thrilling three-run victory over Mohammedian Sporting Club, defending champions Old DOHS pulled off yet another nervy nine-run win against proven giants Abahani Krira Chakra in the Aktel Premier Division Cricket League yesterday.

It was DOHS's third consecutive hard-fought win to secure maximum 16 points, two points ahead of second-placed Victoria Sporting Club who handed a 85-run defeat on Agrani Bank to confirm the Super Six berth along with the holders.

The match at the BKSP was almost a replay of their Friday's thriller at Fatullah, and interestingly DOHS set a demanding 249 for Abahani to win -- one run more than they had thrown at Mohammedan to chase.

Although many felt it was like a mountain to climb for Abahani, especially after their poor run of form with a mediocre set up, the popular Dhanmondi outfit showed the spirit and fight they are famous for and almost chased down the target reaching 239, their highest innings total in the League.

But in a match of lot of similarities with the one of Friday's, Khaled Mahmud stopped the surprise Abahani surge dismissing the last two batsmen in the penultimate over with Abahani needing 14 runs from the final 12 deliveries.

The former national captain also took two wickets in the nail biting last over against Mohammedan after national wicket-keeper Khaled Mashud had tilted the balance, hitting the first ball for a massive six.

On Monday, Anwar Hossain Munir dispatched Mahmud's first delivery for a four. But the 'fighter' gave a fitting reply by uprooting the stumps of Munir and Ishtiaq Siddiqi in the next two deliveries.

Man-of-the-match Mahmud actually took the last three wickets in his last two overs to snatch the victory from Abahani's jaws, who looked well on course after Ahsanullah Hasan and Pakistani Shadab Kabir clobbered 31 runs in three overs including 13 runs in the 46th over off left-arm spinner Manjarul Islam.

In that eventful over, Hasan smashed a huge mid-wicket six while Shadab steered one to the long-leg boundary for four. But Mahmud separated the menacing pair uprooting Hasan's stumps with a well-directed yorker in the next over.

But Abahani's hopes of an intriguing finish was all but over

when Pakistani Shadab, on 25, was run out following a mix-up with Ali Arman. Arman refused a second run leaving Shadab stranded out of his crease when a Golam Rahman throw from deep point broke Abahani hearts.

Anwar Hossain Munir for a while reignited his team's hopes but only to be denied by Mahmud.

Earlier, DOHS's commanding 248-7 was built around a fine 79 by Nazimuddin and an aggressive run-a-ball 46 from their Kenyan star Steve Tikolo. Skipper Akram Khan scored 12 against his former club. The holders at one stage were 194-4 in 40 overs but they failed to excel during the slog overs.

For Abahani, opener Jahurul Islam and Imran Ahmed struck half centuries to lay the foundation. Jahurul scored a 61-ball 54 while Imran contributed 65 off 90 deliveries before being run out.

Like elsewhere in the League, the players wore black armbands to show their respect for former Bangladesh coach Eddie Barlow, who died in Wales on Friday.

### SCORES IN BRIEF

DOHS: 248-7 in 50 overs (Golam Rahman 19, Nazimuddin 79, Manjarul 23, Tikolo 46, Akram 12, Mahmud 20 not out, extras 31; Ali

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Rajin Saleh of City Club plays a pull shot on way to a blazing 90 against Indira Road at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium on Monday.

## Sri Lanka due on Feb 17

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The Sri Lankan cricket team are expected to arrive in Dhaka on February 17, ten days ahead of the original schedule, to play three one-day internationals and two Tests against Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) sources said that a fresh itinerary would be announced soon.

The Sri Lanka Cricket had requested the BCB to bring forward their first ever tour to Bangladesh following the postponement of Asia Cup.

## Ton-up Swapan steers Prantik

SPORTS REPORTER

Gazi Tank and Prantik Krira Chakra recorded comfortable victories in yesterday's First Division Cricket League matches in the city.

Swapan smashed 102 as Prantik (273-7) stormed to a 49-run win over Uttara Sporting Club (224) at the City Club ground.

At the Jagannath Hall ground, Sumon Barua made 68 and Biplab 60 as Gazi Tank, having scored 221-8 in the stipulated 50 overs, defeated Lalmeta Club (182) by 39 runs.

It was Gazi Tank's ninth win while Prantik's sixth victory in the fray.

## Now wait for Tondulkar!

AFP, Mumbai

An Indian schoolboy, whose name and insatiable appetite for runs bear a strong resemblance to superstar Sachin Tendulkar, is making waves in cricketing circles.

Rahul Tondulkar, like the original master, hails from cricket-crazy Mumbai and is a right-handed batsman who has already notched up record-breaking feats in schools cricket at the age of 14.

Last week, Tondulkar smashed an unbeaten 357 with 49 fours and three sixes for Sule Guraji School in a Harris Shield elite group match against St. Francis School in the city.

It is the same tournament in which Tendulkar burst onto the scene as a 15-year-old in 1988 by making 326 not out in a world-record stand of 664 with childhood friend Vinod Kamble.

Kamble, whose tournament record of 349 not out was overtaken by Tondulkar, was delighted at another youngster posting a 300-plus score.

"I know how it feels to score 300 runs in school cricket," Kamble said. "It's not an easy task to reach a triple hundred. He must have concentrated hard."

Tendulkar, however, cautioned against putting the young lad under the media glare.

"Any youngster performing well is good for the country, but since he is still in school he has a long time to get to the highest level," said Tendulkar, who played Test cricket at 16.

"It is not right to put Rahul under pressure by expecting a lot from him. Leave him alone to enjoy and develop his game."

Rahul's father Ravindra said that when their son came home and told them he was batting on 227, "we told him he must get to 300."

"We are very proud of his achievement, but not surprised at all. He breathes cricket. But he has a long way to go still. You can't compare him with Sachin."

## Pak veterans clinch series

PTI, Kochi

Pakistan captain Rashid Latif's scintillating unbeaten 124 and fast bowler Waqar Younis' four-wicket haul helped Pakistan thrash India by 121 runs in their fourth one-day international of the veterans' cricket series for NTPC trophy and clinch the series 3-1 here on Monday.

Electing to bat, Pakistan scored 289 for 7 wickets in their allotted 40 overs.

India, chasing a victory target of 290 runs, were all out for 168 in 29 overs.

Waqar scalped four for 26 off 6 overs while Mansoor Elahi gave him ample support capturing three wickets for 7 runs in 2 overs.

Latif, who began cautiously, later went after the Indian bowlers to score his 124, which included 10 boundaries and five sixes, off just 87 balls. He was declared the man-of-the-match. Latif, along with Shujad Ali (20), added 140 runs for the seventh wicket off 97 balls.

Pakistan opening batsman Naveed Anjum scored a breezy 48 off 40 balls which included 8 boundaries and a six.



Mohammedan midfielder Khokon Das is under pressure from Samabesh players as he tries to execute a side-volley during their Nitol-Tata NFL clash at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Monday.

## Mohammedan in semis

SPORTS REPORTER



Veteran striker Imtiazuddin Ahmed Nakib came on as a substitute to score twice and help Mohammedan Sporting Club seal a place in the Nitol-Tata Fifth National Football League semifinals with a 2-1 come-from-behind win over Samabesh Club of Munshiganj yesterday.

Needing at least one point from their last match in the Super Six to finish among the top four, the Dhaka giants were sweating at the break after Samabesh forward Sohag's 36th minute strike put the visitors ahead.

But Nakib, who has lost his place in the Mohammedan starting

line-up after return of the national stars, proved to be the rescuer with goals on the hour and then eight minutes from time.

The Black and Whites, who drew goalless with second-placed Brothers Union and thrashed Bangladesh Army 6-0 in their previous outings, ended the six-team table on eight points with their second successive victory while bottom-of-the-table Samabesh finished their maiden national campaign on one point.

The last semifinals will be decided today from the match between last year's losing finalists Muktiyoddha Sangsad (five points) and Bangladesh Army (3 points). A draw will see Muktiyoddha set a semifinal clash against table-toppers Abahani while only win will get Army through. Muktiyoddha will meet Brothers if

they win by a four-goal margin today, making way for another Mohammedan-Abahani battle in the semis.

The Munshiganj outfit made a lively start and their mighty rivals had no answers to the neat short-passes in the middle. Mohammedan's three-man central defence, working overtime in absence of Nigerian Peter Odaf, negotiated a series of Samabesh attacks before Alfaz threatened to score in the 27th minute. But the national star's effort from a 25-yard freekick was spurned by Samabesh goalkeeper Al Amin for a corner.

Samabesh, who fought bravely against Abahani in the last game but unfortunately suffered a huge 6-1 loss, broke the deadlock from

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## NZ aim to wrap up series

AFP, Christchurch

The New Zealand cricket team returns to its happy hunting ground at Jade Stadium confident of wrapping up their one-day international series against Sri Lanka on Tuesday.

A win would put New Zealand firmly into fourth place in world rankings while Sri Lanka would drop out of the all important top six teams guaranteed direct entry into the Champions Trophy tournament later in the year.

New Zealand lead the five-match series against Sri Lanka 2-0 and relish the opportunity to return to the Jade wicket where just three weeks ago they produced a world-record run chase of 332 to beat Australia.

In their last 12 matches on the ground, New Zealand have won nine including the last five when in their favoured position of batting second.

Black Caps skipper Daniel Vettori said they would like to bat second again on Tuesday after easily topping Sri Lanka's paltry 164 with seven wickets remaining in the opening match of the revived series played in Queens-town on Saturday.

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## Punishments' two faces

### Mohammedan lose while Sonargaon win

SPORTS REPORTER



Punishments played contrasting roles for Mohammedan Sporting Club and Sonargaon Cricketers in the eighth round of the Premier Cricket League yesterday.

Following a fine on the club and a ban imposed on team coordinator by the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan, Mohammedan crashed to an eight-wicket defeat to Bangladesh Biman.

Sonargaon on the other hand, bounced back with a massive 9-wicket victory against Brothers Union after finding their top players being show-caused and fined by club officials after a series of losses.

Mohammedan, who suffered a three-run defeat to Old DOHS at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium just a couple of days earlier, were shot out for a paltry 128 at the same venue as Biman's out-of-favour national all-rounder Mushfiqur Rahman claimed four wickets for 17.

Khaled Mashud made highest 30 for Mohammedan but it was another disappointing day for captain Habibul Bashar who was dismissed for his second consecutive duck.

Biman thrived on an unbeaten 62 by national opener Javed Omar to overtake the total with more than 15 overs to spare.

Mohammedan slipped to fourth position with ten points while Biman remained in third slot improving their tally to 12 points.

At BKSP, Al Shahrar returned to his belligerent best to silence his critics as big-spending Sonargaon demolished Brothers to keep their Super Six hopes alive with eight points.

The dashing right-hander, stripped off captaincy and fined Tk 50,000 for 'reckless batting' along with some of his colleagues after their 5-wicket loss to Kalabagan in the previous round, smashed ten boundaries and four over boundaries in an explosive 92-ball 84 not out as Sonargaon romped to 164-1 in 29 overs in reply to Brothers' 160.

Opener Ejaz Ahmed, also fined

by the club, was the other notable scorer with 69 from 86 balls during an opening stand with Shahrar that levelled the opposition total.

At the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, man-of-the-match Rezaul Haque Nayem's unbeaten 95 went in vain as Indira Road suffered a 38-run defeat to last year's runners-up City Club.

Rajin Saleh hammered 90 and Zimabwean international Tatenda Taibuh hit his back-to-back half-century (57) as City were all out for mammoth 283. In reply, Indira Road were booked for 245.

With five wins, City joined Mohammedan at the fourth place.

Victoria continued their dream-run with an 85-run win against Agrani Bank at the Comilla Stadium.

Victoria rode on handsome fifties by Nasruddin Faruque (75) and under-19 batsman Sakib Al Hasan (83) to reach 297, the highest total on the day.

The bankers were bundled out for 212 in reply.

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## 'I'm happy that '05 has passed'

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly said on Monday he was determined to revive his faltering fortunes in Pakistan after enduring the "worst" year of his career.

"It was the worst year as far as my cricketing career is concerned. I'm really happy that 2005 has passed," Ganguly told the Mumbai-based 'Mid-Day' newspaper.

The left-hander, sacked as captain and dropped from the one-day side after a spat with new coach Greg Chappell, was a controversial selection for the upcoming tour of Pakistan.

But the 33-year-old said he was ready for the challenge despite being written off by former players both in India and Pakistan.

"It is their opinion," he said. "I've nothing to do with what they think or believe."

"I know that I've to score runs. If I can do so, that will be the best for me. And I don't want to be distracted at this moment. I just want to avoid controversies."

"The bottomline is, I have to make runs, lots of runs."

Ganguly was brought back for

the first two Tests against Sri Lanka before being dumped again for the third Test, a move that created a public outcry across India.

When Ganguly was picked in the 16-man squad for the Pakistan tour, local media speculated that the president of Board of Control for Cricket in India Sharad Pawar had forced the selectors to include



SOURAV GANGULY

him in a bid to cool tempers.

Ganguly, India's most successful Test captain with 21 wins, led India to victory in both the Test and one-day series on the last tour of Pakistan in March-April 2004.

Pakistan, which toured India

earlier last year, drew the Test series 1-1 and won the one-dayers 4-2.

The selectors said Ganguly, who has scored 5,150 runs in 86 Tests, was picked for Pakistan because of his experience.

The former captain said India had a good chance to succeed again on Pakistani soil.

"Why not? If we are to beat them, we have to bat well first. That's the basic thing. And there's no reason why we can't do that," he said.

Ganguly, who made his Test debut in 1996, said his New Year resolution was to "toil hard and come out successful".

"In 1996, it was tough to break into the team. Now it's tougher. But I am ready to accept it. That's the challenge of 2006," he said.

Ganguly and three other players, Virender Sehwag, Anil Kumble and Parthiv Patel, have delayed their departure for Pakistan after being asked by the selectors to play a domestic match on Tuesday.

The rest of the squad, led by Rahul Dravid, is scheduled to leave on Thursday for Lahore where they will play a three-day practice match on Saturday.

India will play three Tests and five one-day internationals in Pakistan.

**What to WATCH**

**ESPN**

New Zealand vs Sri Lanka  
Second ODI  
Live at 5:00 am  
Football Focus  
Live at 5:00 pm  
Sportscentre  
Live at 8:30 pm

**English Premier Football League**  
Arsenal vs Man United  
Live at 1:55 am (Wednesday)

**STAR Sports**  
Australia vs South Africa  
Third Test, Day Three  
Live at 5:00 am (Wednesday)

**DAY'S EVENT**

Fifth Nitol-Tata Nat'l Football League (Super Six)  
Muktijoddha vs Bangladesh Army (4:00 pm)  
Venue: Bangabandhu Nat'l Stadium