

Mohammedans meet Biman today for fourth slot Champions make it to semis

Sports Reporter

Reigning champions Abahani buried nightmare in a facile victory to set themselves upon the title-defence dream again.

After a shock defeat to Victoria in their second round opener of the 15th Damal Summer cricket championship, they enjoyed a cakewalk against Greater Mymensingh Cricket Club (GMCC) at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday.

GMCC succumbed to Abahani's reinforced attack and were all out for 83 in 39.5 overs with just three batsmen, led by Akbar Baig, the top scorer with 22, reaching double figures.

While the key bowlers kept the tabs on the GMCC batsmen, second string arm wheelers like Minhazul Abedin reaped rich picking three for a ridiculously low expenditure of five runs.

However, Zahir Hassan, Abahani's new ball bowler, made early inroads with two scalps for 17.

Abahani's two Pakistanis, who made their debuts in Dhaka cricket, had eleven overs between themselves with Iqbal Sikander, one of Pakistan's World Cup winning squad, conceding just six runs from seven overs of spot-on leg spin.

Khaled Masud fell leg before to Mianur Rahman with the score on five after the wicket-keeper came out to open the Abahani innings along with veteran skipper Gazi Ashraf Hossain.

Although Ashraf's wan reflexes and laden feet made him look like a hen on a hot girdle, Manzoor Akhtar, who came at number three, played some authoritative strokes to bring up the victory in 22.4 overs.

The win leaves Abahani runners up in the three team group after Victoria, who await the runners up from the other group as the champions with an unblemished record from two matches.

Meanwhile, two former champions Mohammedans and Bangladesh Biman meet today at the Dhaka Stadium to determine the fourth and last

Abahani skipper Gazi Ashraf Hossain (L) and Naimur Rahman troop back to the pavilion after completing an eight-wicket demolition of GMCC at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. The win sent holders Abahani to the semis of the 15th Damal Summer cricket tourney. — Star photo

Stuttering start for Aussies

PERTH, Dec 2:

Australia opened the World Series one-day cricket campaign in unimpressive fashion Friday with a two-wicket victory over Zimbabwe at the WACA Ground, reports AP.

Chasing 166-9 to win, Australia limped home after 47.2 overs, losing way in the closing overs with part-time Zimbabwean spinner Grant Flower picking up three wickets to ensure a tight finish.

Mark Waugh, who strained a groin muscle while bowling his first, and only over, in the Zimbabwean innings, came in at No 9 with Michael Slater as a runner and scored an unbeaten six.

Mark Taylor and Slater got the home side off to an ideal start with an opening partnership of 69 at more than four runs an over.

But when the openers departed in the 15th and 16th overs, Zimbabwe tightened the screws to prolong what always seemed like inevitable.

Taylor was not happy with Australia's display.

"It was a very scrappy performance from both sides," he said. "There was nothing wrong with the pitch. At one stage I thought it looked like a 230-run wicket."

"We lost our way with a lack of urgency and some silly shots."

Zimbabwe captain Andy Flower said his side was inconsistent.

"Our guys bowled well but our batting was not up to scratch and we lost too many wickets in the middle stages after setting up a good platform," said.

Flower said Australia had not seen the best of his side in the opening contest.

"I honestly believe we can get up around the 250 mark against any side in the competition. We have the talent to do that, we just need a few of us to get going together."

Zimbabwe's next match is against the Australia A side at

31st Olympiad opens

MOSCOW, Dec 2:

The 31st Chess Olympiad began in Moscow's Cosmos Hotel on Thursday with a record 122 national sides competing in the men's event and 78 countries in the separate women's section, reports AP.

Each men's team has four players and each women's team three.

The Olympiad was originally to be held in Thessalonika, Greece, but the event was cancelled because of financial difficulties.

The World Chess Federation was then helped by world chess champion Garry Kasparov, who rallied financial support to hold the event in Hungary.

Results of first round after six hours of play:

Men
Russia-Singapore 3.5-0.5
Vietnam-Ukraine 2-2
England-Mongolia 3-0 (1 to finish)

United States-South Africa
3.5-0.5
Holland-Tajikistan 3-0 (1 to finish)

Women
Hungary-France 3-0
China-Vietnam 3-0
Australia-Georgia 0-3

Army athletics from today

The annual athletics championship of the Bangladesh Army will start at the Bangladesh Army Stadium at Banani today, reports BSS.

Notable absentees from the Olympiad include Anatoly Karlov, the current FIDE world

champion, Gata Kamsky of the United States and Viswanathan Anand of India.

Kamsky and Anand declined invitations as they are currently preparing for the final elimination of the PCA World Championship Cycle for the right to meet Kasparov. That event will be held in Las Palmas in April. Kasparov, however, would not play below Kasparov on the Russian side and also does not participate.

In the women's section, the favourites are the Hungarians, who boast two of the three Polgar sisters, Zsuzsa and Sofia. The third sister, Judit, is representing Hungary in the men's event as she is currently the top player in Hungary.

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