

Abahani cross

Mehrab Hossain also chipped in with 34 off 42 balls inclusive of one six and three boundaries while his partner Azam Iqbal added 20 off 29 balls with two fours.

The prospect of chasing at roughly six-run-per-over proved too daunting a task and the national airlines club reached 145 all out in 31.1 overs.

Abahani's left-arm Pakistani spinner Mohammed Hussain brought the Biman down with a superb five-wicket haul.

The Lahore-born player conceded only 34 runs in seven overs to earn his best bowling performance in the league so far.

The leading wicket-taker of the Premier league, raised his individual tally to 27, more than Mohammed's left-arm spinner, Mohammad Rafique who follows with 18.

Biman opener Javed Omar fought a lone battle with 45 off 60 balls. He has now amassed 489 runs in 11 innings, the highest runs scored by a local batsman this season.

But his heroics went in vain as his teammates could not stay long enough at the crease. It was Biman's third defeat in eleven matches which left them sharing second spot with Kalabagan and Surjo Tarun each having 16 points.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Premier Division Cricket League match between Abahani Krira Chakra and Biman at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday: ABAHANI KC

Table with columns for batsman names and runs scored. Includes names like Azam c Hasan b Shariful, Mehrah c Faruque b Manzoor.

Extras: (lb-1, nb-1, w-5) Total: (For 6 wks in 33 overs) 191

Did not bat: Mizanur Rahman, Amir Wasim and Iqbal Hossain.

Fall of wickets: 1/49; 2/63; 3/74; 4/171; 5/182; 6/190.

Table with columns for bowler names and figures. Includes names like Aminul jr, Jahangir, Aminul sr.

Extras: (lb-4, w-7) Total: (All out in 31.1 overs) 145

Fall of wickets: 1/49; 2/63; 3/74; 4/171; 5/182; 6/190.

Table with columns for batsman names and runs scored. Includes names like Javed Omar, Manzoor b Hossain.

Extras: (lb-4, w-7) Total: (All out in 31.1 overs) 145

Fall of wickets: 1/49; 2/63; 3/74; 4/171; 5/182; 6/190.

Table with columns for bowler names and figures. Includes names like Wasim, Faruque c Anis b Naimur.

Extras: (lb-2, nb-1, w-12) Total: (All out in 29.3 overs) 188

Fall of wickets: 1/27; 2/45; 3/70; 4/116; 5/134; 6/138; 7/148; 8/154; 9/164.

Table with columns for batsman names and runs scored. Includes names like Rezaul, Al-Amin, Rehan.

Extras: (lb-1, nb-4, w-12, nb-2) Total: (All out in 49.3 overs) 180

Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-99, 3-105, 4-121, 5-122, 6-123, 7-145, 8-146, 9-175.



Raul's (C) Real Madrid teammates rushing towards the ace marksman to celebrate his strike against Manchester United during their Champions' League fixture at Old Trafford on April 19.

Champions thrown out Real, Raul invade Old Trafford

MANCHESTER, England, April 20: Holders Manchester United were sent crashing out of European competition on Wednesday after losing 3-2 to Spanish giants Real Madrid in the Champions League quarter-final second leg clash at Old Trafford, reports AFP.

A first-half own goal by United captain Roy Keane was followed by a double strike by Spanish international striker Raul, making it 3-0, before England winger David Beckham and Paul Scholes from the penalty spot replied for the visitors.

Real got through to the semi-finals winning the tie 3-2 on aggregate after the teams played out a goalless draw at the Bernabeu Stadium two weeks ago.

Vicente del Bosque's side are the third Spanish club to make it through to the last four, joining Barcelona and Valencia. Germany's Bayern Munich are the other qualifiers.

The Real coach was a proud man after watching his side dump the reigning champions out of the competition. "That was an absolutely brilliant victory. Our players showed extraordinary application throughout."

This was the best result in my time as a manager and given the quality of the opposition it makes it even more remarkable, he said.

Asked if he was surprised to see his side take a three goal lead against the English Premiership leaders he said: "United were a little cavalier when we scored the first goal and this gave us spaces to exploit in midfield."

"At one nil they had to come forward in search of goals and this worked in our favour as we were able to hit them on the break."

The Real coach also congratulated Barcelona and Valencia for reaching the semi-finals along with Real and said it was "wonderful for Spanish football."

United manager Sir Alex Ferguson was understandably upset to lose to Real but paid tribute to the Spanish side's 18-year old goalkeeper Iker Casillas.

"Casillas was brilliant," said score from close range. A below par first half from Porto had one golden moment when only heroics from Bayern keeper Oliver Kahn denied brilliant Brazilian Jardel's 23rd minute header from going in.

Bayern, defeated by Porto in the classic 1987 Champions league final, held on to their advantage in front of a 45,000 crowd at the Olympic Stadium until that dramatic 90th minute.

Jardel's header left Porto's band of 600 travelling fans ecstatic and referee Hugh Dallas contemplating extra time but along came Linke to kill the game off, his head connecting sweetly with a free kick from Mehmet Scholl.

The unheralded defender remarked: "We didn't play a great match but we couldn't have fought any better."

Premiership Ginola inspires Spurs

LONDON, April 20: Frenchman David Ginola scored the only goal of the match to help Tottenham Hotspur to their first win in six matches Wednesday at the expense of Leicester City in the English Premiership, reports AFP.

Ginola turned home a cross from substitute Matthew Etherington in one of the few memorable moments of an eminently forgettable match.

The statistics show that the only effort on target in the entire game before the goal was a low shot from Leicester substitute Theo Zagorakis - and that failed to fully extend Tottenham goalkeeper Ian Walker.

Tottenham were even more lacklustre, and the withdrawal of twin strikers Chris Armstrong and Steffen Iversen after 75 minutes summed up their contribution to proceedings.

Ironically, it was one of their replacements Etherington, who wasted their best chance of the game before the same player helped Ginola break the deadlock.

Etherington had just mis-cued a shot but made amends in the last minute when he squared the ball across the area, and Ginola side-stepped Phil Gilchrist before drilling the ball wide of Tim Flowers.

Lazio not after Rivaldo ROME, April 20: Italian soccer club Lazio on Thursday denied reports they have signed Barcelona's Brazilian striker Rivaldo for 99 billion lire (48 million dollars), reports AFP.

Respected Italian sports daily Gazzetta Dello Sport had claimed the Brazilian hotshot would leave the Nou Camp in the summer and join Sven-Goran Eriksson's Serie A giants.

There is no basis to the reports. Neither President Sergio Cragnotti, nor other officials, have ever had meetings or contacts with the Catalan club regarding the transfer of Rivaldo.

Lazio said in a statement. The 28-year-old was reported to be signing a five-year contract worth at least 4.7 million dollars a year.

The newspaper report had claimed that Lazio would be selling several players to help finance the purchase, including Croatian striker Alen Boksic, Chilean striker Marcelo Salas, Argentine midfielder Matias Almeyda and Yugoslav midfielder Dejan Stankovic.

But the Lazio statement added: "Assertions relating to possible player transfers offered by Barcelona are also without foundation."

Rivaldo joined the Spanish champions from Deportivo La Coruna for 25 million dollars in August 1997 and is the holder of the World, European and Spanish player of the year titles.

He helped Barcelona to a thrilling 5-1 victory over Chelsea and a place in the Champions League semi-finals this week with two goals, including a penalty in extra time.

WC qualifier One Kanu for Nigeria LAGOS, April 20: Christopher Kanu, younger brother of Arsenal's Nwankwo Kanu, has been ruled out of Nigeria's World Cup qualifier at home to Eritrea on Saturday after his Dutch club Ajax refused his release, reports AFP.

Nigeria's Dutch coach Jo Bonfrere told reporters here Thursday that Ajax are holding on to the young defender after they received Nigeria's application for the player's release late.

"I spoke with the Ajax coach and he told me he can only release Tijjani Babangida for Saturday's match while Christopher Kanu won't be making the trip as our application for his release was made 12 days, and not the stipulated 14 days, before the match", Bonfrere said.

However, Christopher's more famous brother, Nwankwo, is expected in the country Friday after Arsenal's UEFA Cup semi-final match against French side Lens for the match against Eritrea.

Terim apologises for slain fans Galatasary land in Leeds

LEEDS, England, April 20: Turkish side Galatasary touched down here Wednesday at the start of a tense 24-hours before their UEFA Cup semi-final second leg match against Leeds United, reports AFP.

The security surrounding the side was tight with a sharp-suited anti-terrorist squad, all wearing dark glasses, first off the team's Turkish Airlines Boeing 737 after the plane landed at Leeds Bradford Airport.

They were followed by the team, wearing red and yellow track suits, who immediately boarded a coach on the runway along with their protection squad and some VIPs who will attend Thursday's game.

There was tight security at the airport due to fears of re-primination from fans over the murder of Leeds United supporters Kevin Speight and Christopher Loftus in Istanbul two weeks ago before the UEFA Cup semi-final first-leg.

But the team did not enter the terminal, where there was a heavy police presence, and there were no fans waiting outside.

MP's hunt for ticket! ANKARA, April 20: A Turkish member of parliament was on Wednesday desperately seeking tickets for Thursday's UEFA Cup clash between Leeds United and Galatasary to which only a handful of Turkish spectators will be admitted, the Anatolia news agency reported, reports AFP.

Rasim Zaimoglu, a deputy of the centre-right True Path Party (DYP), even brought up the issue in the parliament's general assembly hall, accusing Sports Minister Fikret Unlu of "unlawfully seizing" the small number of tickets given to Galatasary.

"Eighty-five MPs have got British visas, but we cannot find any tickets," Zaimoglu complained during the parliament's rostrum.

"We have even leased a Turkish Airlines plane, capable of carrying 117 passengers, and this has cost us 30,000 dollars," he added.

European football's governing body UEFA last week banned Turkish supporters from the UEFA Cup semi-final second leg match at Elland Road over security fears following the stabbing deaths of two British fans in Istanbul before the first leg game two weeks ago.

The decision left Galatasary with only 80 tickets to be distributed to fans who were not likely to cause trouble.

Faced with a wave of requests from Turkish MPs for tickets, the Istanbul-based club asked Leeds for an additional 30 passes, but the request was denied, Turkish press reports said.

Minister Unlu is scheduled to take off for Leeds Thursday on an official plane along with two other ministers, parliament speaker Yildirim Akbulut and two of his deputies.

Other guests on the plane include one deputy from each of the five political parties in parliament and two bureaucrats.

It is believed that immigration officials went on to the plane after it landed to check the team's protection squad was not carrying weapons.

After leaving the airport the team headed straight for Elland Road for a training session.

At Elland Road club workers had spent most of the day removing floral tributes and scarves from the statue of Leeds legend, Billy Bremner. They had been placed in memory of Speight and Loftus but it was felt that such tributes could be misinterpreted as provocative ahead of an already tense clash with the Turkish side.

There will be no Galatasary fans present at the game Thursday night - after UEFA upheld Leeds' request to ban Turkish supporters from travelling to Yorkshire 1,750 tickets have been returned - but Leeds chairman Peter Risdale appealed for calm from the Leeds supporters with tensions continuing to run high.

He said: "I sincerely hope that in the depths of despair at the totally unnecessary loss of life, we all ensure that football can never again become a reason to justify anybody being injured or killed."

And Risdale, clearly aware that any sort of violence would be a severe blow to English hopes of hosting the 2006 World Cup, added: "I appeal to all Leeds United supporters to ensure that neither this week, when we play Galatasary, nor at any time in the future, do they do anything to undermine our reputation or put anyone's personal safety at risk."

Galatasary fear reprisals after their players have been subjected to a barrage of death threats from English fans according to the club's Romanian interpreter Gheorghe Popescu.

"At club headquarters we receive dozens of faxes and e-mails daily from England threatening to kill us if we come to Leeds," Popescu said.

"There's more talk now about our safety than the match. Our families are worried," said the 32-year-old defender.

Later Galatasary turned down an invitation to a welcoming dinner.

Risdale observed: "We merely extend the hospitality. Whether or not they accept is up to them. They felt they would like to spend this evening in a strange city in the company of their players. Such is life."

Galatasary had trained at Elland Road for an hour, managing to work out with coach Fatih Terim afterwards dismissing suggestions his players would be wearing bulletproof vests during the match.

"We are coming for the football," he asserted.

"As for the death threats, everybody writes things on the e-mail. But we are not concerned and we are not taking it seriously. We have never seen something happen through e-mail."

"We don't believe there will be any occurrences in the stadium. The players, the club and those who are generally supportive and involved in soccer are not responsible for what happened and therefore I don't think there will be any problems."

Porto. Galatasary may have said goodbye to their title aspirations last week with the draw with Bremen but are solid in their third-place positioning as they visit Frankfurt.

Frankfurt were stunned by the German football federation when told they would be docked two points at the end of the season for infringing financial regulations.

It could mean the difference between staying in the top flight or relegation to the Second Division as Frankfurt are only above the relegation zone on goal difference although they are to appeal the deduction.

Bundesliga preview

Bremen test for leaders

BERLIN, April 20: Bayer Leverkusen face a difficult trip to Werder Bremen on Thursday as they look to pull away from Bayern Munich in the race for the Bundesliga title, reports AFP.

Champions League quarter-finalists Bayern do not play until Sunday when they visit struggling Borussia Dortmund who are trying to halt a slide into the relegation zone under new coach Udo Lattek.

Third-placed Hamburg travel to relegation threatened Eintracht Frankfurt, while SSV Ulm entertain Hertha Berlin in a key game for both clubs.

Leverkusen chasing their first league title and first success of any kind since they lifted the German Cup in 1993 take on a Bremen side at the Weststadion who are fighting for the fourth and final Champions League spot.

The top three places will definitely go to Leverkusen, Bayern and Hamburg but there are six clubs chasing the final spot and Bremen need the three points to stay in the race.

A well-earned 0-0 draw at Hamburg in their last outing left the fallen UEFA Cup quarter-finalists still in the chase but 1860 Munich who entertain VfB Stuttgart on Saturday turned up the pressure on the other Champions League hopefuls by beating co-tenants Bayern Munich 2-1 at the Olympiastadion.

Leverkusen are just four games away from glory after coming so close in previous years. They have hit form at just the right time and with their 4-1 thrashing of relegation candidates Arminia Bielefeld last week moved three points clear as Bayern crashed.

SC Freiburg are another club fighting for survival as they host mid-table Schalke 04 at the Dreisamstadion on Saturday.

Freiburg are coming off a tough loss against Stuttgart last week when they gave up a late winner while Schalke could only draw at home against SSV Ulm.

FIXTURES: Thursday: Eintracht Frankfurt v Hamburg SV, Werder Bremen v Bayer Leverkusen.

Saturday: VfL Wolfsburg v Kaiserslautern, SSV Ulm v Hertha Berlin, SC Freiburg v Schalke 04, 1860 Munich v VfL Stuttgart, Hansa Rostock v MSV Duisburg.

Sunday: Arminia Bielefeld v SpVgg Unterhaching, Borussia Dortmund v Bayern Munich.

Arsenal to push ahead with plans for new stadium LONDON, April 19: English Premiership side Arsenal will submit planning application for their proposed 150 million pounds (230 million dollars) 60,000-capacity new stadium in October, the Press Association reported Tuesday, reports AFP.

If the relocation plan succeeds the new stadium is still likely to bear the Highbury name.

Linke takes Bayern through

MUNICH, Germany, April 20: Thomas Linke's header in the dying seconds carried Bayern Munich a 2-1 win over Porto here Wednesday night and a Champions league semi-final date with Real Madrid, reports AFP.

The German champions went into this quarter final second leg with a precious away goal in the 1-1 first leg tie in Portugal, courtesy of Paulo Sergio.

And the Brazilian striker once again showed his mettle, planting the Bavarian giants - seeking their fourth win in Europe's top competition - ahead after quarter of an hour.

The scoreline remained like that until an explosive final minute when Porto's influential Mario Jardel got the equaliser only for Linke's goal to save Bayern's blushes as extra time loomed.

A relieved Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld observed: "We've won, that was the essential thing, but it was hard on the nerves."

"We had the advantage of opening the scoring, but then couldn't find a second and that put pressure on ourselves. The whole team displayed strong qualities as we were at a disadvantage starting favourites."

Club president Franz Beckenbauer, mindful of the way Manchester United had come 2-1 for the Champions League crown in 1999, said: "We were fortunate but we also showed our morale in preventing a repeat of last year's final."

Michael Tarnat, replacing Bayern's injured French international defender Bixente Lizarru, set up the first goal, crossing to Sergio, who streaked in from the right to

contemplating extra time but along came Linke to kill the game off, his head connecting sweetly with a free kick from Mehmet Scholl.

The unheralded defender remarked: "We didn't play a great match but we couldn't have fought any better."

Bayern's win - achieved without their talismanic playmaker Stefan Effenberg - will have eased the pain of losing last Saturday's local derby against 1860 Munich which allowed Bayer Leverkusen to go top of the Bundesliga.

Bayern Munich's Brazilian Paulo Sergio (L) is under pressure from Porto's fellow countryman Esquerdinha during their Champions' League encounter at the Olympic Stadium in Munich on April 19.



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