

## It's match of the day

SPORTS REPORTER

Local powerhouses Abahani and Mukhtijodha face off today in another big match in the Premier Football League with the kick-off at 5 pm at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

To stay alive in the title race, the giants will desperately looking forward to cash in on full points from the crucial fifth round game.

With eight points from four matches, the popular Sky and Blues who are fifth in the ten-team table, are still unbeaten in the competition but draws in the previous two rounds put them one point adrift of Mukhtijodha, who lost their last game to leaders Mohammedan after three consecutive wins.

Abahani shared points with their traditional foes Mohammedan in the last game and their defence looked vulnerable, which would be a vital factor against the Reds' formidable attack today. But coach Amlesh Sen was confident that it would be far better after full recovery of central defender Pradeep Poddar.

"No doubt, defence is a real problem as we have conceded a goal in every match but Pradeep is now fully fit to guard the territory. I am really concerned with my forwards as Ibrahim and Farhad missed too

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TIMBER: Australia opener Matthew Hayden's stumps are shattered by Bangladesh paceman Nazmul Hossain (not in picture) during their NatWest Series one-day international in Cardiff on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Too many surprises

Cricket

AL-AMIN from Cardiff

It was a disturbing morning for the Bangladeshi journalists at Sophia Gardens as they failed to get a seat in the small press box that could accommodate only ten reporters.

So, they had to run to the other side of the ground and eventually find a place on the rooftop of the main building and underneath an umbrella, which was kept for in case of overflooding.

They were also bewildered reading the final eleven of Bangladesh where Tapash Baisya had been included in place of Khaleed Mahmud. Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar on Friday categorically said that they would pick the playing eleven from the 12-

member squad they had announced for the first game against England.

But the Bangladesh team that arrived late in the afternoon on Friday even got the chance to inspect the wicket before the match and decided against a second left-arm spinner.

While talking to a Bangladeshi reporter, coach Dav Whatmore said that they went for a third seamer seeing dampness on the wicket. The late decision however proved productive.

Bangladesh might have lost the toss for second successive occasion but Australia surprised all and sundry on Saturday when they decided to bat first on a ground where the team batting second has won the four previous ODIs.

The mighty Australian were reduced to 9-2 in 5.2 overs with Tapash winning an lbw appeal against Ricky Ponting after

Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza struck with the very second ball of the day to get remove Adam Gilchrist.

There were a few hundred Bangladeshi supporters in the half-packed venue and they really enjoyed some lively bowling from Mashrafe, Tapash and Nazmul Hossain. They relentlessly blew on the horns and waved red and green flags that they bought for five pounds just outside the ground.

Among them was also a seven-year-old English boy also waving the Bangladesh flag.

"I like them very much and love to see the batting of Aftab," he said. The boy also pronounced the name of the other members of the team the way any Bangladeshi does.

There are about ten thousand Bangladeshi living in the Welsh capital. But attendance in the ground was not at all inspiring. And that irked a man in his 50s

who was born and brought up in Kolkata.

"You know a lot of Bangladeshis live here but they are not coming to the ground to cheer the team. It's a shame," said the gentleman accompanied by his son.

A Bangladeshi fan however defended the low turnout.

"Saturday is a very busy day for us since most people work in restaurants."

There were few women supporters in the crowd except the noticeable presence of the family members of Afzalur Rahman Sinha, a BCB director and leading businessman.

But outside the ground there was a food stall where five Bangladeshi women wearing red saris, sold Indian cuisine, which is very popular in England.

## Tiger Pataudi surrenders

CRICINFO, undated

Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi, the former Indian captain embroiled in a controversy surrounding the hunting of an endangered black buck, has surrendered before a Jhajar Court in Haryana on Friday.

Pataudi, accused of violating the Wildlife Protection Act, had been incommunicado for several days.

Pataudi's surrender comes a day after the Punjab and Haryana High Court rejected his application for anticipatory bail, the Press Trust of India reported.

Pataudi, nick-named 'Tiger Pataudi, is among six accused in the alleged hunting of one black buck and two rabbits, but is the only involved in this case to surrender.

Hanief Qureshi, a senior superintendent of police, said that the next course of action depended on the directions from the courts.

The police had earlier conducted raids simultaneously in multiple locations in search of Pataudi, but had failed to find him. If convicted Pataudi faces a jail term of upto seven years and a fine of 25000 rupees.

## B'DESH V AUS SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Australian innings against Bangladesh in the second match of the one-day triangular NatWest Series at Sophia Gardens in Cardiff on Saturday:

| AUSTRALIA   |     |   |    |   |
|---|-----|---|----|---|
| Gilchrist lbw b Mortuza   | 0   |   |    |   |
| Hayden b Nazmul   | 37  |   |    |   |
| Ponting lbw b Baisya  | 1   |   |    |   |
| Martyn c Iqbal b Baisya   | 77  |   |    |   |
| Clarke c Mortuza b Baisya   | 54  |   |    |   |
| Hussey not out  | 31  |   |    |   |
| Katich not out  | 36  |   |    |   |
| Extras: (lb-3, nb-8, w-2)   | 13  |   |    |   |
| Total: (For 5 wkts in 50 overs)   | 249 |   |    |   |
| Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-9, 3-57, 4-165, 5-183   |     |   |    |   |
| Did not bat: Hogg, Gillespie, Kasprovicz, McGrath   |     |   |    |   |
| Bowler  |     |   |    |   |
| Mortuza   | 10  | 2 | 33 | 1 |
| Baisya  | 10  | 1 | 69 | 3 |
| Nazmul  | 10  | 2 | 65 | 1 |
| Rafique   | 10  | 0 | 31 | 0 |
| Aftab   | 10  | 0 | 48 | 0 |
| BANGLADESH: Javed, Iqbal, Ashraf, Bashar, Imran, Aftab, Mashud, Rafique, Mortuza, Baisya, Nazmul. |     |   |    |   |
| Umpires: Billy Bowden (New Zealand) and David Shepherd (England).                                 |     |   |    |   |

## Mushtaq Ali passes away

Cricket

AGENCIES, Indore

Legendary all-rounder Syed Mushtaq Ali, the first Indian to score a Test century on foreign soil, died here early Saturday morning. The 90-year-old former India

captain and Padma Shri winner, the only surviving member of India's first ever full cricket Test tour overseas in 1936, famous for his dare-devil approach towards fast bowlers, passed away in his sleep.

Born on December 17, 1914 in Indore, Ali made his debut for India at the age of 19 as a left-arm spin bowler in the 1933-34 season in Kolkata against England.

And by the time he retired, a tall and flamboyant Ali had also established himself as an opening batsman scoring 612 runs with two centuries in the 11 Tests he got to play.

In first-class cricket, Ali had a

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SYED MUSHTAQ ALI

## FACTFILE

**Full name:** Syed Mushtaq Ali  
**Born:** December 17, 1914, Indore, Madhya Pradesh  
**Died:** June 18, 2005, Indore (aged 90 years 183 days)  
**Major teams:** India, Central India, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Muslims, Uttar Pradesh.  
**Batting style:** Right-hand bat  
**Bowling style:** Slow left-arm orthodox  
**Test debut:** India v England at Kolkata -- Jan 5-8, 1934.  
**Last Test:** India v England at Chennai -- Feb 6-10, 1952.

### TEST AVERAGES

| Batting and fielding |      |      |       |      |       |     |    |    |    |    |
|----------------------|------|------|-------|------|-------|-----|----|----|----|----|
| Match                | Inns | NO   | Runs  | HS   | Ave   | 100 | 50 | 6s | Ct | St |
| 11                   | 20   | 1    | 612   | 112  | 32.21 | 2   | 3  | 0  | 7  | 0  |
| Bowling              |      |      |       |      |       |     |    |    |    |    |
| Match                | Runs | Wkts | Ave   | Econ |       |     |    |    |    |    |
| 11                   | 202  | 3    | 67.33 | 3.20 |       |     |    |    |    |    |

## MEXICO V BRAZIL LIVE ON ESPN 12:40 AM

## When style meets substance

AFP, Hannover

The precocious flair of Robinho against the midfield mastery of Zinha is what's on offer when Brazil clash with Mexico in the Confederations Cup here Sunday.

Robinho, the latest prodigy to fall off the Samba production line, earned high praise after a dazzling display in the world champions' opening 3-0 win over Greece on Thursday.

That left Carlos Alberto Parreira's team top of Group B and victory over second-placed Mexico would see them all but assured of a berth in the semifinals.

Brazil, who need three points from their last three qualifiers to secure their World Cup ticket, could be forgiven for approaching this game with revenge weighing heavy on their minds after losing to Mexico 4-3 in the 1999 Confederation Cup final.

While Parreira is unhindered by

injury concerns his opposite number Ricardo Lavolpe looks set once again have to make do without his talismanic offensive defender Rafael Marquez, who appears to have lost his race against time to recover from a muscle injury.

For the pint-sized Zinha, whose goal in Mexico's 2-1 win over Japan on Thursday took the breath away, this match has added significance as he is taking on his fellow countrymen.

"I can't think of myself as Brazilian. I'll defend Mexico's colours to the death," said the Sao Paulo-born playmaker who was encouraged to take up Mexican citizenship by Lavolpe.

The CONCACAF champions' high ball strategy worked a treat against Zico's Japan but is unlikely to reap such rewards against a back row marshalled by AC Milan's Dida -- who played in the 1999 final -- in goal.

Despite the exuberance on show against the Greeks, Parreira knows Mexico -- with Zinha feeding Jared Borgetti and Francisco Fonseca in

attack -- represent an altogether more dangerous foe.

"The Mexicans have a very different footballing background to the Greeks. They knock the ball about better and they're more dangerous in possession.

"While Greece place great store on steely defending, Mexico rely on a more measured approach. We are going to need to keep our wits about us," Parreira said.

Lavolpe, who with his gauch-style moustache and ever-present cigarette hanging from his lips could quite easily fill a lead role in a spaghetti western, is a noted strategist and will have been up all night at Mexico's plush team hotel deep in the heart of the lower Saxony countryside plotting Robinho and world footballer of the year Ronaldinho's downfall.

Summing up his game-plan for Sunday's match the Argentine said: "Keeping the ball -- if you give it to the Brazilians, they will kill you, so you have to keep it for as long as possible."

## Mohammedan win hard way to claim top spot

SPORTS REPORTER

Premier Bank Senior Division Football League

Mohammedan Sporting Club returned to the top of the Premier Football League table with a scrappy 1-0 win over last year's runners-up Sheikh Russel Kriira Chakra at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The fourth victory in five rounds pushed Mohammedan's collection to 13 points and put them alone on top but apart from an early strike by Arman Aziz, the Black and Whites

were so unimpressive that they even failed to take a single shot on their rivals' goal.

Russel, who stuck to seven points after their second defeat, were the better side on the day but must have felt dejected after missing a number of chances and helplessly watching referee Ramkrishna Ghosh turn down two strong appeals for penalties in the first half.

Mohammedan, who meet holders and second-placed Brothers Union in the next round, went ahead four minutes after kick off from a setpiece. Sierra Leone forward

Donald forced a corner at the right side and Rony's low drive from the flag-kick was sidefooted into the far post by Arman Aziz through a forest of legs.

Russel enjoyed superior ball possession but their Moroccan trio just failed to show the cutting edge during a series of attacks. Captain Egrir Mohammed finally raced past the rival three-man backline in the 27th minute but when Russel's Moroccan skipper was tripped by Arman inside the penalty area, the match official ignored the foul.

Biplab then made two saves inside one minute under the Mohammedan bar. The custodian timely reacted to stop a wicked deflection when defender Mintu headed a left-side centre toward their own post before holding on to a close range header by Moroccan striker Majid.

Mohammedan, who missed their inspirational skipper and national striker Afaz through injury and defender Hassan through suspension, on a rare occasion threatened to score in the 36th minute but Manju, left unmarked at the far post, miscued his shot after Donald set him up.

Russel could have got the equaliser four minutes from the breather but Ramkrishna's whistle once again remained silent after overlapping fullback Mishu was pulled down by Rony ten yards out of goal after a long run down the middle.

With the tremendous heat taking its toll on the players as well as silencing the 7,000-strong crowd, the ball remained mostly in the

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PHOTO: STAR

A Sheikh Russel defender spoils a Faisal (No. 20) attempt during his side's Premier Bank Premier Football League encounter against Mohammedan at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Saturday.