



PHOTO: STAR

AGE NO BAR: (L to R) Dashing top-order batsman Aftab Ahmed of Mohammedan cracks the ball on the off-side during his unbeaten 57 against Victoria in the second semifinal while former national captain Khaled Mahmud of Old DOHS takes off for a single during their semifinal clash against Abahani in the Kai-Altech Premier Division Twenty20 League at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.



Did U Know?

GR Viswanath is the only Indian player to score a duck and a century on his Test debut.



Bill Lawry
(Former Australian cricket captain)
"We never imagined this fat, podgy kid... would end up as one of the world's best bowlers."
On Shane Warne.

What to WATCH

ESPN
Australia v England
Fourth Ashes Test, Day 3
Live at 5:30 am
Sportscenter India
Live at 8:30 pm

STAR Sports
New Zealand v Sri Lanka
First ODI
Live at 4:00 am
India v South Africa
Second Test, Day 3
Live at 2:00 pm

Amol's double crown in V-Day tennis

SPORTS REPORTER

Amol Roy clinched double crown in the Victory-Day tennis tournament which concluded yesterday at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna.

In the men's singles final, Amol defeated Dipu Lal 6-4, 6-3. With Laxman Lal, Amol won the doubles final 6-3, 7-6 over the Dipu-Alamgir Hossain duo.

Ho Jo Fosaka emerged as women's singles champion when she also won in straight sets, 6-1, 6-0, against Sathi Sarkar.

The boys' under-16 trophy went to Delwar Hossain who edged Omar Faruki 6-3, 7-6.

Earlier, Ma Hi Ching clinched the under-16 girls' singles title on Tuesday defeating Sadia Hossain 6-2, 6-1.

DOHS, Mohammedan in final

SPORTS REPORTER



There was everything but fireworks in the two semifinals of the Kai-Altech Premier Division Twenty20 League at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday where Old DOHS and Mohammedan Sporting Club won their respective battles to secure their rightful places in Friday's final.

In the bowler-dominated contests, dashing Aftab Ahmed produced something to cheer about with an unbeaten 51-ball 57 that ensured Mohammedan's comfortable seven-wicket victory against Victoria Sporting Club after DOHS rode on Khaled Mahmud's smart all-round performance to manage a five-wicket victory against Abahani in the first semifinal.

The heavy early-morning fog won almost half the battle for DOHS captain Akram Khan when he perfectly tossed the coin and decided to field first on a dicey pitch. Mahmud made most of the conditions to wrap up the Abahani innings for 74 in 18.5 overs, the

veteran medium pacer finishing with figures of 4-17.

The former Bangladesh skipper Mahmud, however, should give credit to Nadif Chowdhury for the most important scalp of Tushar Imran. Nadif, already well known for setting a high standard in fielding, spectacularly dived to snatch a low catch at point to send back the Abahani batsman.

While DOHS bowlers were backed by tremendous fielding on a slippery outfield, it was the opposite for Abahani. Suhravordi Shuvo's blunder proved costly for the Dhanmondi outfit as he spilled a vital catch of man-of-the-match Mahmud, who ultimately took his side safely to 77-5 in 18.2 overs.

At one stage, even a small target looked enough to defend for Abahani and it could have been a different story had Shuvo not dropped the catch at third man with DOHS still needing 17 runs from the last four overs.

Mahmud made no mistake to ride on his luck and hammered an unbeaten 23 off 16 balls with three boundaries. To add more woes to Shuvo's wounds, he hit the left-spinner for consecutive bound-

aries through mid-wicket to finish the chase with ten balls to spare.

"We were lucky enough to win the toss," Mahmud commented only to depict how important it was to win the toss.

It was a contrasting episode in the second match as Abahani's traditional rivals Mohammedan also lost the toss but Habibul Bashar's attack proved neighbouring Victoria skipper Sabbir Khan's decision to bat first wrong.

Despite a 75-run third wicket partnership between Nasiruddin Faruque and Mahmudullah Riyad, the mediocre Victoria completed their 20-over quota for 116 for five. Faruque smashed three fours and two sixes to score a 45-ball 41 while Riyad hit a run-a-ball 34.

In reply, Mohammedan lost their last match hero Zunaed Siddique, who cracked a brilliant hundred against Sonargaon on Monday, in the very first over as the left-hander made a first-ball duck but in-form Aftab along with opener Imtiaz Hossain added 48 runs for the second wicket stand to set the stage for a cruise.

Imtiaz scored a 20-ball 31 featuring five fours and one six

while man-of-the match Aftab smashed three lusty sixes including two against spinner Riyad over mid-wicket and cover respectively and as many boundaries during his 57 off 51 balls.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ABAHANI: 74 all out in 18.5 overs (Sadat 16, Nazimuddin 12, Mashud 10, Ziaur 11 not out, extras 5, Mahmud 4-17, Shahadat 1-15, Nazmul 1-19, Razzak 1-11, Dollar 1-11).

DOHS: 77-5 in 18.2 overs (Tamim 16, Ehsanul 10, Nadif 14, Mahmud 23 not out, extras 7; Ziaur 1-13, Shahajada 1-14, Manjarul 1-16, Shuvo 1-21).

Result: Old DOHS won by five wickets.

VICTORIA: 116-5 in 20 overs (Faruque 41, Riyad 34, Wasel 13 not out, extras 8; Monjurul 1-16, Hasibul 2-20, Sunny 1-22).

MOHAMMEDAN: 119-3 in 16.4 overs (Imtiaz 31, Aftab 57 not out, Bashar 18, extras 9; Shuvro 2-13, Milon 1-23).

Result: Mohammedan won by seven wickets.

Astle given all-clear



AFP, Napier

An erratic New Zealand side received a welcome boost on the eve of the first one-day cricket international against Sri Lanka here Thursday with veteran Nathan Astle cleared to play.

Astle was in doubt amid fears his hand was broken when hit by a Marvan Atapattu throw during Tuesday's Twenty20 match, where the 216-match veteran played a key role in New Zealand's five-wicket victory.

But after x-rays confirmed Astle was only bruised, he was confirmed to open the batting with Brendon McCullum as New Zealand and Sri Lanka launch their World Cup

buildups in earnest.

The five-match series offers a contest long on incentive but short on form after the performances of both sides during their recent flirtations with the science of Test cricket and the flamboyance of Twenty20.

Both series were tied 1-1, with New Zealand and Sri Lanka taking turns at running hot in one match and cold in the other.

It's this shortcoming which New Zealand coach John Bracewell and Sri Lanka's Tom Moody will be working on as they fine-tune their sides for the World Cup in the West Indies in March.

They are also introducing a rotation policy to avoid burnout, meaning their top sides will not be fielded in every match, with the World Cup the ultimate goal.

With New Zealand resting regu-

lar captain and lead run-gatherer Stephen Fleming for the first two games of the series, Astle's clearance solved one problem -- providing another aggressive stroke-maker against the new ball.

Astle conceded it would have been disappointing to be sidelined, given there was no chance of a run-out when he was hit.

"It would have been a funny way to break a bone. I didn't know he was going to throw it -- I was two meters past the stumps," said Astle.

However, doubts still remain over the fitness of pace bowlers Mark Gillespie and Michael Mason, both with leg injuries and facing last-minute assessments before the match.

"We'll leave it as long as we can,"

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

Dalmiya quits CAB

PTI, Kolkata

Under pressure from the Cricket Board, former BCCI president Jagmohan Dalmiya on Wednesday resigned from the post of the president of Cricket Association of Bengal but promised to soon bounce back into reckoning.

In a letter to the members of the Working Committee of the CAB, Dalmiya said he had decided to resign due to what he alleged as "a pre-determined and vindictive attitude of the current regime of the BCCI".

Dalmiya, who had been expelled for life by the BCCI earlier this month said he would continue to fight against "injustice" on his own accord saying, "I am sure my stand would be fully vindicated through the process of law in which

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

Symonds, Hayden sparkle



AFP, Melbourne

Belligerent centuries by Matthew Hayden and Andrew Symonds crushed England's hopes of making a fight of the fourth Ashes Test with Australia well on the road to seizing a 4-0 series lead at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Wednesday.

Australia, in trouble at 84 for five chasing England's modest first innings of 159, rebounded ferociously with the two Queensland mates pounding the tourists' bowlers in a demoralising 279-run sixth-wicket partnership.

At the close, Australia had surged to a commanding 213-run lead at 372 for seven with three days to play. Symonds was unconquered on 154 in 316 minutes and Shane Warne was not out four.

Hayden was out nearing stumps for 153, caught behind off Sajid Mahmood and compiled in seven hours off 265 balls with 13 boundaries and two sixes.

"I felt like I let of emotion out when I celebrated," Symonds said

of his first Test hundred. "I have done a lot of things with him over the years with my cricket and with my life and for me it was very fitting to do it with him, he was like a pillar of strength for me out there."

They were hundreds of contrasting significance, with Hayden taking his 27th to join Allan Border as Australia's fourth-highest century-maker, and Symonds releasing the demons of an unfulfilled Test career.

Hayden claimed his first century of the series and continued his fondness for the MCG, scoring his fifth century in his last six Tests at the ground to rank with Border as the top-scoring left-hander of Test hundreds for his country.

Only current captain Ricky Ponting (33), Steve Waugh (32) and Don Bradman (29) have scored more Test centuries than Hayden in Australian cricket.

"It's an incredible ground. The ultimate for a Test cricketer is to play before big crowds and this is exactly why we come here so excited about this venue as being the highlight of the Test calendar year and today (Wednesday) was no different," Hayden said.

"I like the occasion, it's just so

awesome to play in front of big crowds in Test match cricket."

Meanwhile Hayden's long-time mate Symonds took 21 cautious balls to get off the mark before clubbing a 151-ball century sealed with a massive six straight over bowler Paul Collingwood's head. He finished the day with 15 boundaries and one six.

Symonds, who went to the crease with a mediocre Test average of 18 in 11 matches, howled with delight and excitedly flung himself into Hayden's arms to celebrate his maiden Test century.

The breakthrough hundred has probably booked his place in the crack Australian team for the immediate future.

Australia, stung by last year's series loss in England, regained the Ashes inside 15 days after winning the opening three Test matches and are trying to emulate Warwick Armstrong's team's 5-0 Ashes sweep of 85 years ago.

Adam Gilchrist's boom and bust form continued when he was out for one caught in the slips off Mahmood nearing stumps after

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



PHOTO: AFP

SLIGHTLY TALLER: Australian batsman Andrew Symonds howls in delight as he leaps into the arms of batting partner Matthew Hayden after scoring his maiden Test century on the second day of the fourth Ashes Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Wednesday.

Athletes' camp at Tata concludes

SPORTS REPORTER

The first group of Bangladeshi athletes completed a special training camp at the JRD Sports Complex in Jamshedpur, India on Tuesday.

The camp, conducted in three disciplines -- archery, athletics and boxing -- since November 6, was organised by Tata Steel who had signed an MOU with the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) last September to provide training facilities to Bangladeshi sportsper-

sons.

The 18 athletes selected by the BOA were put through a rigorous training regimen, which not only covered training in their respective disciplines, but also areas in mental fitness, coaching in yoga and personality development.

This endeavour is in line with the philosophy of Tata Steel, which has international standard sports facilities and the capability of producing international athletes.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 8



PHOTO: COURTESY

Athletes from Bangladesh pose with the officials and coaching staff of Tata Steel at the Tata Sports Academy in Jamshedpur on Tuesday.

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