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Mohammedan-Abahani 'final' today

SPORTS REPORTER

Warm-up over, Abahani and Mohammedan gear up for the third and final match of the Teletalk Series hoping that the decider will put an end to the scarcity of crowd.

With the charity series -- organised by the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) to raise fund for the victims of Cyclone Sidr that ripped through the southern part of the country last month -- locked 1-1, today's match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium will separate the winners.

The match will kick off at 4.30pm.

The two perennial foes' failure to attract fans in the last two matches was not totally unexpected as people have already turned their faces from the game. Even during competitive matches between the city rivals, the stadium remained half-full.

A total of 14,000 tickets worth just over Tk four lakh have been sold so far but the organisers are still hoping for a boost by the holiday crowd.

Mohammedan won the first encounter 5-4 on penalties after a goalless draw in regulation 90 minutes but Abahani bounced back with a 2-1 victory in the second match to level the scores.

Abahani captain Arif Khan Joy and Mohammedan's guest defender Hassan Al Mamun, who were sent off during the incident-packed first game, will return after serving one-match bans.

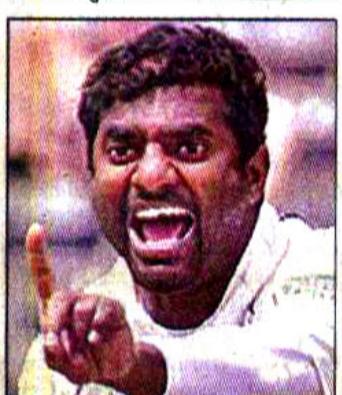
On the other hand, black and whites coach Shafiqul Islam Manik who inspired his boys to walk off the ground in protest of a disallowed

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Did U Know?

The main court at the Wimbledon is called Centre Court, while Court 1 hosts other important matches. Court 2 bears the nickname 'The Graveyard', since it is here that many seeded players are knocked out.



Muttiah Muralidaran

(Sri Lanka's world record-breaking spinner)

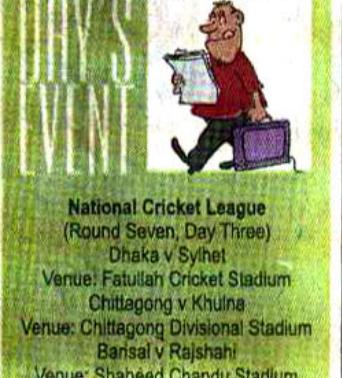
"I tried to spin the ball one way and it went the other way. But it's a special wicket."

While admitting his record-breaking dismissal of Paul Collingwood didn't quite go to plan.



STAR Sports

Zimbabwe v West Indies
Fourth One-Day International
Live at 1:30pm



National Cricket League
(Round Seven, Day Three)

Dhaka v Sylhet

Venue: Fatulian Cricket Stadium
Chittagong v Khulna

Venue: Chittagong Divisional Stadium
Bansal v Rajshahi

Venue: Shaheed Chandu Stadium



PHOTO: STAR
Khulna opener Nazmus Sadat pulls one during his sparkling 91 against Chittagong on the second day of the National Cricket League match at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Mullick recognised

National Sports Awards announced

SPORTS REPORTER

Late Ataul Huq Mullick -- a journalist who lived in cricket -- was reportedly removed from the National Sports Awards list last year as a vice-president of the previous executive committee of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) manipulated the selection.

The BCB official, an MP of the BNP went on to receive an award at the cost of everyone's favourite Ata bhai, who has finally been honoured by the government.

Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury yesterday announced eight sportsmen and two organisers including Ataul Huq Mullick as the recipients of the National Sports Awards for 2007.

The others winners are Sharmila Roy (athletics), Ranajit Das (football), Amir Hossain Pathaway (kabaddi), Lt Com (retd) M Arshad (swimming), Aminul Islam (judo), Nurul Islam (hockey), Sheikh Abul Hashem (badminton), Prof. Dr Rashid Uddin Ahmed (basketball) and Kazi Anisur Rahman (organiser).

It was sight for sore eyes to see so many veterans in the list. It was also the first time that the awards have been announced in front of the media.

"We tried to reward the veterans

ans, who really deserved it but have been ignored for long," said Tapan Chowdhury who announced the awards at the conference room of the Youth and Sports Ministry.

The sports adviser added that he wants to change the tradition of giving the awards on the basis of applications.

"We will not take any applications from the next year. We have seen that there are many protests against applicants. So we are trying to change the policy officially," said Tapan.

It was learned that a 19-year-old footballer, star of a school tournament, applied for this year's national award.

This incident irked most members of the 23-man selection committee who forwarded the final selection to the ministry.

Ataul Huq Mullick was not just a journalist but the statistician who provided the young generation invaluable information about any sports and their laws. He played cricket for three decades and was a first class cricketer before becoming a class cracker.

Ataul, a noted commentator and organiser, later shaped both the umpires' and scorers' organisations.

Meanwhile, the youngest winner for 2007 is 45-year-old judoka

Aminul Islam, who won gold in South Asian competition and the 8th Japan Cup international meet.

Sharmila Roy, 48, won 45 medals including gold at the National Athletics Championships from 1979-1990 and also participated in SAF Games and Asian and World Athletics Championships, bagging silver and bronze.

Ranajit Das, a veteran of 74, was East Pakistan state football team goalkeeper from 1955-66 and stood under the bar for the East Pakistan hockey team from 1965-69.

The other 70-plus winners are swimmer M Arshad, a gold medalist at RCD swimming in Tehran in 1964, and Kazi Anisur Rahman, who served different federations and clubs and was member of the Bangladeshi Olympic Association from 1994-99.

Rashid Uddin Ahmed, one of the top neurosurgeons of the country, was the first captain of the East Pakistan basketball team and a founder member of the inaugural basketball league in Bangladesh.

Nurul Islam was a national hockey player from 1978-86, Abdul Hashem won three national singles badminton titles and Amir Hossain, the best kabaddi player in the ongoing National Cricket League.

Both the fax did not mention any accommodation or financial details. However, the invitation is for the ongoing domestic season in the town.

When contacted, Shahriar said that it is an initial offer and it is up to the cricket board to decide.

NZ club invites Al Shahriar

SPORTS REPORTER

Experienced batsman Al Shahriar received an invitation to play for Havelock North Cricket Club, a premier division side in New Zealand's north island.

A fax from the club reached Bangladeshi Cricket Board (BCB), asking for permission to approach the gifted right-handed batsman, who is captaining Dhaka in the ongoing National Cricket League.

But the fax did not mention any accommodation or financial details. However, the invitation is for the ongoing domestic season in the town.

When contacted, Shahriar said that it is an initial offer and it is up to the cricket board to decide.

Sangakkara top batsman

AFP, Colombo

Prolific Sri Lankan Kumar Sangakkara took over as the number one Test batsman after his record-breaking feats in the first Test against England, according to official new rankings released Thursday.

Sangakkara's teammate Muttiah Muralidaran, who this week overtook retired Australian Shane Warne as the leading wicket-taker, already tops the Test rankings for bowlers, according to the International Cricket Council rankings.

Left-handed Sangakkara, 30, continued his brilliant recent form by making 92 and a match-winning 152 to help Sri Lanka defeat England by 88 runs in the Kandy Test on Wednesday.

His second-innings century made him the first batsman in history to score 150-plus in four consecutive Tests, having scored 200 not out and 222 not out against Bangladesh at home in July and 192 against Australia in Hobart last month.

Australian legend Don Bradman, Wally Hammond of England and Mudassar Nazar of Pakistan did it in three successive Tests.

Sangakkara, with 938 points, overtakes Australian captain Ricky Ponting, who is now in second place with 936 points.

Muralidaran ended the first Test with 713 wickets from 116 matches.

The Chinnaswamy Stadium has been a lucky ground for us. We will go into the match with a lot of confidence and you will see a different Pakistan in Bangalore," he said.

Pakistan drew the opening Test at Mohali in 2005 before losing the second at Kolkata.

Younis also played a key role in his team's series-leveling win here two years ago, scoring a double-

century of the sixth round, and then trapped experienced all-rounder Mashfiqur Rahaman, as Rajshahi slipped to 130-6.

Naeem Islam, with 68 in more than three hours, added 65 for the seventh wicket with Mahbub Alam, who made 27.

Barisal were off to a rocky start, losing opener Hannan Sarkar in the 13th over and then further going into the mire with skipper Shahriar Nafees going off due to headache. Imran Ahmed fell for 6 in the end as Barisal were perilously placed at 48-2.

Off-spinner Yasin Arafat took three wickets while Kamrul Islam and Mohammad Younus took one each.

DHAKA-SYLHET

In form Golam Mabud helped add 89 runs to first day's 223-7 as Sylhet somehow took charge of the match from the onset.

Mabud's unbeaten 75 had ten boundaries in his 206 runs as they reached 312 all out in 116 overs.

Paceman Mohammad Sharif ended with figures of 4-60 while Mahbub Alam and Mohammad Rafique took two each.

Golam Rahman and Rashidur Rahman trapped Dhaka early on as they fell to 10 for two and then Nabil cashed in to take three more.

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SPORTS REPORTER



9th National Cricket League

Sylhet had a handsome lead over Dhaka while Chittagong kept their upper hand over Khulna and Barisal took a slender lead over Rajshahi on the second day of the 9th National Cricket League across the country yesterday.

Dhaka were struggling at 148-5

in Fatullah with left-arm spinner Nabil Samad playing the key role with the ball after Sylhet had reached 312 in their first innings.

At the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra, Rajshahi were first bowled out for 204 and then took two late Barisal wickets as the home side ended the day at 48-2.

Away in Chittagong, the hosts led by captain Habibul Bashar, back from a shoulder injury, went to 35 but fell when it was time to stay for his side. That created a little flutter as new boy Sanjay Chakraborty fell for a duck and Salim was last man out for 7.

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