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Usha maintain winning run

SPORTS REPORTER

Tarik Aziz and Maksud Alam Habul each scored a brace as Usha Krita Chakra survived a scare when the defending joint champions edged Azad Sporting Club 6-4 in a come-from-behind thriller yesterday in the Green Delta Premier Hockey League.

Unfancied Azad went ahead in the second minute of the game through Ajit but Usha replied with the equaliser two minutes later when Tarik converted a penalty stroke at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

Goals poured from both sides and it was Tarik who put Usha ahead in the seventh minute with a field goal but Pushkar levelled the margin when the match was ten minutes old.

Usha did not lose the grip after Habul fired twice to give the champs a 4-2 lead at the break while Khondokar Hassan Ahmed put the result beyond Azad when he made it 5-2 from a 41st minute penalty corner.

Azad still did not give up hopes but even strikes from Mansur and Pushkar were not enough as veteran Shahidullah Titu added the sixth for Usha to seal their third victory in as many games.



Did U Know?

The 1994 FIFA World Cup held in the United States had the highest average attendance with over 68,990 for each match.



Shoaib Akhtar

(Pakistan speedster)
"This is a great relief for me as I am keen to play in the IPL. But this is just one battle won and we still have to win the final case." After being cleared to play in the Indian Premier League.



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Chennai Super Kings v Deccan Chargers
Live from 7:30pm
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Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

6 to contest in BOA re-election

SPORTS REPORTER

Six councillors bought nomination papers yesterday for the May 14 re-election of the Bangladesh Olympic Association in three posts.

Organiser Rafia Akhter Dolly and ex-shooter Kazi Shahana Parveen bought nomination papers for the posts of members for women's sports federation and Olympians respectively. Both will be elected unopposed if their nomination papers are in order.

For the post of one member for sports federations under Olympic disciplines, the candidates who bought nomination papers are Jovera Rahman Linu (cycling), Ahmedur Rahman Babul (gymnastics), Jobaitur Rahman Rana (badminton) and Sajed Adel (hockey). The deadline for submitting nomination papers is 3pm today.



Afghanistan forward Ata Yamrall (C) tries to slice through Bangladeshi defenders Saikat (L), who was later sent off, and Rajani during their opening match of the AFC Challenge Cup Group C qualifiers at the Spartak Stadium in Bishkek yesterday.

An escape for Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER

Abu Yusuf's debut as Bangladesh national football coach was spoiled when his side escaped with a goalless draw against AFC Challenge Cup qualifying Group C rank-outsiders Afghanistan yesterday.

The opening match of the qualifying rounds at the Spartak Stadium, which saw an Afghan goal cancelled and Bangladesh defender Mofazzal Hossain Saikat sent off in the third minute of stoppage time, kicked off after a splash of rain but the conditions were soothing until heavy shower poured in the second half.

Yusuf had five defenders on the pitch and a lively Afghanistan, guided by German coach Klaus Staerk, were the more attacking with three forwards in the lineup. Obaidullah Karimi sent the ball

over the Bangladesh goal after five minutes while Bangladeshi captain Hassan Al Mamun was cautioned ten minutes later for a foul against Ata Yamrall that started a series of fouls.

SAFF Football runners-up Bangladesh got back into the game after the early initiative by their South Asian rivals and midfielder Arman Aziz shot just over from 25 yards in the 24th minute.

A minute later, Aminul pulled off a superb save from Hashmatullah Barezai's header after Karimi's quick counter attack.

The Afghans, who are pitted against Bangladesh in the coming SAFF Championship group stage, threatened to score again in the 34th minute with Bashir Azimi frightening the Bangladeshi defence. The midfielder began celebrating after his placing shot from a tight angle looked convincing to beat Aminul but fortunately, it missed the mark.

On a slippery pitch, the two teams exchanged more fouls in the second half, bringing cautions for Saikat in the 50th minute and Afghanistan's Djelaluddin Sharitayr a minute later.

Bangladesh, however, were unlucky not to open the account in the 58th minute when striker Emily rattled the post.

The climax of the match was in the 68th minute when Afghanistan scored a goal only to be disallowed by UAE referee Jasim Al Senan for offside. Just before the final whistle, Saikat received his second booking to be ruled out for Bangladesh's remaining game against hosts Kyrgyzstan on May 9.

Bangladesh coach Yusuf told the-af.com that the tactics of the opposition were very good. "I didn't expect such a high level game from the Afghans. They didn't win because of bad luck," admitted Yusuf.

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NATIONAL CRICKET Sylhet enter zonal final

SPORTS REPORTER

Tanhar claimed five wickets as Sylhet secured a massive 111-run victory over Sunamganj to reach the zonal final of the 28th National Cricket Championship at the Sylhet Stadium yesterday.

They play the final tomorrow against the winners of today's match between Habiganj and Moulvibazar.

Besides, Mymensingh, Nilphamari and Faridpur reached the zonal semifinals by eliminating their rivals at different venues across the country yesterday.

Hosts Sylhet made 233 after deciding to bat with Azad making team highest 60 runs. Jahangir and Shahab took three wickets each.

In reply, Sunamganj were bundled out for 122 runs in 43.3 overs. Tanhar captured his wickets for 29 runs.

In the other matches, Mymensingh (306-8 in 50 overs) thrashed Sherpur (151 all out in 49.4 overs) by 155 runs at the Tangail Stadium, Nilphamari (135-3 in 31.3 overs) defeated Gaibandha (134 all out in 30.3 overs).

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PCA whitewash GP-BCB Academy

SPORTS REPORTER

Pakistan Cricket Academy (PCA) completed a whitewash of GP-BCB National Cricket Academy (NCA) as the visitors registered an eight-wicket win on the final day of the second four-day match at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Pakistan took the series 2-0 as they also recorded an identical victory in the first four-day at Bogra.

NCA were completely outclassed by their Pakistan counterparts after also losing all three one-day matches in the triangular series badly.

Khalid Latif led from the front with an unbeaten 88 to make sure the tourists finished the tour in style.

Resuming the day on 56 for one, Pakistan Academy posted 154-2 in 39.3 overs by losing the wicket of Ahmed Shehzad who was trapped in front by pacer Nazmul Hossain.

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PCB pardons Akhtar after apology

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Nasim Ashraf said Monday he had withdrawn a defamation lawsuit against Shoaib Akhtar after the banned fast bowler made a public apology.

The 32-year-old paceman was banned for five years last month for breaching the players' code of conduct by criticising the PCB when it did not offer him a central contract in January.

Ashraf and the PCB sued him for three million dollars after Akhtar alleged in an interview the day after the ban that the board chief had demanded payments from the bowler's contract to play in an Indian tournament.

"I have withdrawn the defamation case as my honour was vindicated after Akhtar apologised publicly and retracted his baseless allegations," Ashraf told AFP.

"I forgive him as it was a matter of the honour of the PCB," he said.

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WOMEN'S ASIA CUP Lanka crush Bangladesh

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh failed to keep the momentum as they suffered an eight-wicket defeat to Sri Lanka in the opening match of the Women's Asia Cup at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium yesterday.

Bangladesh bounced back brilliantly from a huge 182-run defeat in the opening match against defending champions India when they pulled off a historic four-wicket victory against Pakistan in the next game but their poor batting let them down in the third and last game of the first leg.

SP de Alwis scripted the home side's facile victory as she claimed three wickets for 13 runs before contributing an unbeaten 26.

The Bangladeshi women made a disastrous start after deciding to bat first, losing five wickets for 53 and failed to recover from the early damage. Eventually, they lost four wickets in the span of two runs to bundle out for 94.

Opener Sathira Jakir hit 25 off 43 balls with the help of five boundaries while number four Ayesha Akhter added 24.

Alwis, who caused the major damage, got good support from Kumarihami and Weerakody who bagged two wickets each. Sri Lanka lost only two wickets to reach the target of 95 in 19.3 overs.

Kumarihami and Alwis shared unbeaten 59 runs for the third wicket stand to secure their second victory after they had beaten Pakistan by 96 runs in the first match on Friday. Sri Lanka lost their second match against favour-

ites India by 29 runs. Kumarihami was unbeaten on 32 off 62 balls that featured six fours.

Panna Ghosh and skipper Salma Khatun took one wicket each for 21 and 23 runs respectively. In the day's other match at Welagedara Stadium in Kurunegala, India maintained their all-win record by crushing Pakistan by 182 runs.

Bangladesh women's team will play their first return-leg match against India today, take on Pakistan on May 8 and face Sri Lanka on the following day.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH: 94 all out in 46 overs (Sathira 25, Ayesha 24, Tithy 17; Weerakody 2-17, Alwis 3-13).
SRI LANKA: 95 for two in 19.3 overs (Kumarihami 32*, Alwis 26*, Salma 1-21, Panna 1-23).
Result: Sri Lanka won by 8 wickets.



Bangladesh's Ayesha Akhter drives the ball during her side's Women's Asia Cup match against Sri Lanka in Dambulla yesterday.

ECB gives Ashes dates

Cricket

AGENCIES, London

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has confirmed Australia's full itinerary for their tour of England next year, which includes seven one-dayers in addition to the usual five Tests. Australia will spend four months in England with the Ashes set to follow the ICC World Twenty20, which takes place in June.

They switch formats with a four-day match against Sussex at Hove, followed by another against England Lions at New Road to prepare themselves for the five Test matches. The Rose Bowl was chosen as the venue for the third ODI on September 9, preceded by the first two games at Old Trafford.

"The summer of 2009 promises to be one of the most exciting in the history of cricket in England and Wales," David Collier, the ECB chief executive, said. "The Ashes and the NatWest Series along with the

NatWest International Twenty20 matches have the potential for providing the sort of wonderful cricket which can fire the nation's imagination.

"And of course all this follows the ICC World Twenty20 which guarantees that all the best Twenty20 players in the world will be in this country in June 2009."

The news follows Glamorgan's coup last month when they were awarded the first Ashes Test, their inaugural Test match.

Mark Newton, Worcestershire's chief executive, was delighted with the news that a taste of the Ashes is coming to New Road. "This is the closest we will ever get to playing a Test match in Worcester and I couldn't be more pleased about the timing," he said. "2009 will be a huge year for cricket in England and for four days Worcester will be centre of the cricketing world."

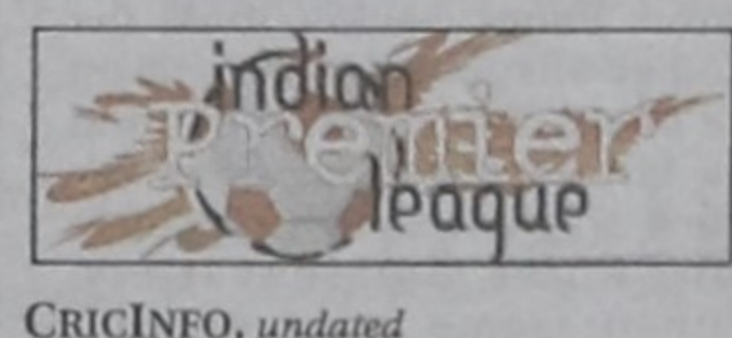
A two-day match against Kent at Canterbury has been earmarked for August 15, in between the fourth and fifth Tests, though

Australia could alternatively face England Lions if Kent are involved in Twenty20 finals day. In addition, Scotland will host a one-day warm-up to the seven ODIs with a fixture at Edinburgh on August 28.

FIXTURES

June 24-27: 4-day game v Sussex
July 1-4: 4-day game v England Lions
July 8-12: 1st Test at Cardiff
July 16-20: 2nd Test at Lord's
July 24-26: 3-day game v Northants
July 30-Aug 3: 3rd Test at Edgbaston
Aug 7-11: 4th Test at Headingley
Aug 15-16: 2-day game v Kent
Aug 20-24: 5th Test at The Oval
Aug 28: ODI v Scotland
Aug 30: 1st T20 International at Old Trafford
Sept 1: 2nd T20 International at Old Trafford
Sept 4: 1st ODI at The Oval
Sept 6: 2nd ODI at Lord's
Sept 9: 3rd ODI at Rose Bowl
Sept 12: 4th ODI at Lord's
Sept 15: 5th ODI at Trent Bridge
Sept 17: 6th ODI at Trent Bridge
Sept 20: 7th ODI at Durham
Sept 21: Australia depart

Teams told to behave



CRICINFO, undated

The Indian Premier League's (IPL) governing council has reacted to the series of recent controversies that has dented their inaugural season by sending a letter to all the team owners, asking them to rein in their players, particularly the captains.

The letter was sent last week by Lalit Modi, the IPL commissioner, and asks the owners, including Bollywood actors and top Indian industrialists, to ensure that their skippers use official channels to lodge their protests during the 44-day tournament, rather than go public about them.

Modi's letter also reminds them to ensure that the IPL code of conduct, which is an adaptation of the ICC's norms, is strictly adhered to, said sources.

Fraser Castellino, the CEO of the Jaipur franchise that owns the Rajasthan Royals, confirmed to Cricinfo that they have received the IPL's letter. "We understand the IPL's concerns and I have already had a chat with Shane Warne, our captain and coach, about the letter," Castellino said.

The IPL's umpires have been separately warned, too, after it emerged that Amiesha Saheba, the on-field official for the tournament's most controversial game so far, in Mohali on April 25, gave both teams 10/10 in his confidential report to the match referee, the sources said.

Saheba later told a Mumbai tabloid that he had repeatedly warned Shanthakumaran Sreesanth

during the heated game after which the Kings XI Punjab fast bowler was slapped by Harbhajan Singh, the rival Mumbai Indians' skipper.

Harbhajan was banned from the rest of this IPL edition, but it was yet another incident seven days later, involving Shane Warne and Sourav Ganguly, rival skippers for a

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Rajasthan Royals' Sohail Tanvir (C) is being congratulated by teammates after taking the wicket of Stephen Fleming of Chennai Super Kings during their Indian Premier League match at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur on Sunday.

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