

## Abahani meet Farashganj in 1st semi today

SPORTS REPORTER

Farashganj will take inspiration from their all-win run in the Citycell Federation Cup to challenge mighty Abahani for a berth in Monday's final when they meet in the last four.

The Abahani-Farashganj first semifinal will kick off today at 5 pm the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Farashganj have won all their four matches including a 2-0 quarterfinal victory against fellow B. League side Arambagh and the riversiders will heavily rely on the scoring ability of Enamul Haque.

Five-goal Enamul, the tournament's second highest scorer, has struck in every match but he will have to be in his best against the tightest defence of the competition although title contenders Abahani miss skipper Nazrul through suspension.

Abahani's winning run is blemished by a goalless draw against Chittagong Mohammedan in a group match but the sky-blues made the semifinals knocking out giants Sheikh Russel 2-0.

Amalash Sen's men have so far conceded just one goal in four

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

## A Mohammedan affair



SPORTS REPORTER

Chittagong Mohammedan made history when they reached the semifinals of the Citycell Federation Cup for the first time yesterday.

Goalkeeper Mamun Khan saved two penalties as the port city side set a semifinal clash with their more illustrious Dhaka namesakes when they ended BKSP's impressive run with a 4-2 tiebreakers victory after the last quarterfinal ended 1-1 in extra time at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

The Dhaka and Chittagong Mohammedans will play the second semifinal tomorrow.

Both sides came to the quarterfinal unbeaten but the B. League outfit had an edge over the students of BKSP in the first half, taking a 1-0 lead.

Ridon shot Chittagong Mohammedan ahead in the 39th minute with a spectacular first-

time volley from 15 yards after skipper Daulat sent a cross from the right.

Daulat had also created the first chance for the Chittagong black and whites when he picked up foreign recruit Tommy with a through after 18 minutes. But Tommy toe-poked the chance over the bar near from the penalty spot.

The students of the Savar sport institute, who played brilliant football against their matured opponents in the competition and go out with their heads high after remaining unbeaten in all eight games before eventually losing on penalties, had their chances before the break but Sumon and Royal fluffed good opportunities.

Sumon twice forced fine saves by goalkeeper Mamun Khan, who held a long range shot by the striker on the line before rushing out of his goal to deny a solo run.

Royal on the other hand, saw his delicately placed effort miss the far post by inches.

Just before Ridon had scored, the Chittagong striker set another chance for Tommy who failed to take advantage of a rebound off

BKSP goalie Mustak.

Indian coach Birumal's boys had a better second half but Manik was denied by woodwork when his freekick from 30 yards came off the crosspiece in the 55th minute.

Sabuj finally equalised 11 minutes from regulation time when the striker received a high ball by substitute Rabi to race past two rival defenders before chipping the ball over Mamun Khan and into the net.

Ridon could have finished the job inside 90 minutes but he failed to control the ball inside the box three minutes from the final whistle.

After an even extra half-hour, BKSP's saviour Sabuj -- who got five goals in the meet -- let his side down when he failed to beat Mamun from the spot in their first attempt from the spot. Rabi found the rival goalie in the fourth shot for BKSP after Rana and Manik had converted their chances.

On the other hand, Tommy squandered his spotkick but goals by Dhinan, Pavel, Daulat and lastly, Shawkat, ensured Chittagong Mohammedan's passage to the last four.

## This is how BTV goes!

STAR SPORT DESK

Bangladesh cricket team will take on Australia in the first of three one-day internationals at Darwin on Saturday. The match is scheduled to start at 6 o'clock in the morning.

Usually the ESPN-STAR Sports network brings live coverage of cricket matches down under to this part of the world. Checking the programme schedules on the network's website, we found that neither ESPN nor STAR Sports would be telecasting the series. We were doing so to let our valued readers know which channel was going to show the matches.

We then turned to the state-run Bangladesh Television to get the information if they have taken any initiative to show the matches to

crores of viewers in this country. We tried to contact BTV's deputy

director general of programme (DDG-P), who is supposed to have information in this regard, over telephone yesterday afternoon but to no avail. She/he had already left the office, although we phoned before 5pm.

Then we were looking for the PA to DDG-P, hoping that he could update us about it. Someone -- who identified himself as Fazlul Haque, an MLSS -- picked the phone and requested us to call again after 10/15 minutes as the PA was in the washroom. We duly did and that person again requested to call 10 minutes later as the man in question was still in the toilet. We reminded him that it was already well past 5pm and if he called again after 10 minutes, would it be too

late to get him? Haque replied, "No problems. PA saheb will be here."

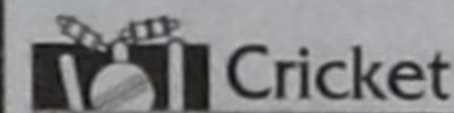
Here starts the BTV saga.

When we called again after about 10 minutes the PA saheb is gone. Haque claimed that he informed the PA about The Daily Star reporter's phone call, but he ignored it and left the office.

Dear readers, we looked at the other satellite channels, which usually show live cricket, broadcast schedules but could not confirm who was going to give coverage of the series. The BTV has a TV Schedule of their own on its website as well. We request you the readers to have a look at it!

The world is only moving forward and so should be the motto of the BTV. And a little more sense of responsibility and belonging will take us on that road.

## Dhoni unites India



CRICINFO, Colombo

India don't like being favourites, and being written off by many even before their young ODI side assembled in Colombo ultimately worked just fine. Defeat in the final Test at the P Sara Stadium was so comprehensive that it was difficult to see where the one-day recruits would turn for solace as they landed for five matches against Ajantha Mendis and Co. Now, after beating the hosts by 46 runs, India have sealed their first series win in Sri Lanka. And central to their success has been their captain, Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

From the day he landed in Colombo, Dhoni stressed the past should be left alone and the focus should be on the task facing his side. He admitted Ajantha Mendis

would be a threat but said it was up to the individual to handle him. He stressed on the importance of the batsmen to back themselves to score briskly, despite the setbacks. India's recent record in the sub-continent included losses in the finals of the Kityly and Asia Cup, which Dhoni termed as "crucial games", and he hoped to rectify that trend. This match was a final in itself, and India held their nerve to win it.

He is a very important cog in this wheel, and for the second game running he was at the centre for India, overcoming health issues -- he had a fever yesterday and evidently hadn't recovered fully. Dhoni and Suresh Raina showed how it should be done, scoring runs at a good clip after Sri Lanka left India 81 for 3 in the 18th over. He led the way in proving Mendis could be thwarted, even as he struggled to remain on his feet

towards the end of his innings. Overall, Dhoni has top scored in the series with 192 runs at a strike-rate of 79.33, won four tosses in a row, made the right selection choices, and been proactive in the field.

Under lights, with Sanath Jayasuriya in a punishing mood, Dhoni tossed the ball to Harbhajan Singh in the 18th over. With pace taken off the ball, Jayasuriya edged the third ball to a smartly-placed wide slip. After that Dhoni added an extra cover, who was sharp to deny runs. Attempting to work Yuvraj Singh off his pads, Chamara Kapugedera was trapped lbw. These are minor moves Dhoni makes, but they often have a resounding resonance. Dhoni opted for four specialist bowlers in the last two games and he was rewarded with wickets from Yuvraj. Dhoni also won four successive

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



Harbhajan Singh reacts wildly after removing Sri Lanka batsman Sanath Jayasuriya (not in picture) in India's 46-run triumph in the fourth one-day at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on Wednesday. The off-spinner picked up three crucial wickets in a match-winning performance.

PHOTO AFP



BKSP skipper Sabuj (L), who scored an equaliser against Chittagong Mohammedan but missed a penalty in the shootout, tries to race past the port city side's midfielder Asad during yesterday's Federation Cup quarterfinal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

PHOTO: STAR

## A tough wicket to bat on: Ashraful

TIGERCRIKET.COM, Darwin

The Bangladesh team had a rest day on Thursday and some of the players and the coaching staff took this opportunity to watch Australia's warm up match against the AIS at the TIO Stadium.

The Australian squad, which arrived in Darwin yesterday, was given a scare by the AIS side who bowled out their fancied opponents for 177 before experience prevailed. The AIS in their chase folded for 123 after being 51/2 at one stage and left-arm pacer Mitchell Johnson ran out with figures of 4-1-5-3.

The rusty batting effort of the Aussies was however closely followed by Jamie Siddons and his charges and the slowness of the drop-in pitch also gave reasons to feel encouraged.

"It looked different from the Gardens Oval wicket. Balls tend to skid a bit but generally on the slower side. The outfield is also a lot bigger than the gardens and hitting boundaries appeared difficult. You have to work the gaps for your runs here," said Tigers skipper Mohammad Ashraful.

The team attended a reception hosted by Northern Territory's Minister for Sports Karl Hampton at the Parliament Building in the afternoon. Addressing the audience which included the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

## LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Narinda Pragati Boys Club play Old Ideals in a title-deciding match of the Cute Premier Division Handball today afternoon at the Outer Stadium handball ground.

Both the teams, which maintained all-win records in the league games securing 15 points, will lock horns at 3:30pm.

In yesterday's matches, Menzis outclassed Victoria 35-12 after leading the first half 23-7 at the same venue.

Man-of-the-match Russell scored highest thirteen goals for Menzis. Dhaka Mariners Youngs Club beat Bharratito Samaj Kalyan Sangha 18-6.

**NATIONAL KABADDI** Holders Bangladesh Rifles, Bangladesh Army and Khulna moved into the semifinals of the 28th National Kabaddi Championship at the Stadium Gymnasium in Comilla.

BDR earned a comfortable 50-30 victory over Tagail, Army crushed Dhaka 43-13, while Khulna edged past hosts Comilla 8-7 to reach the last four.

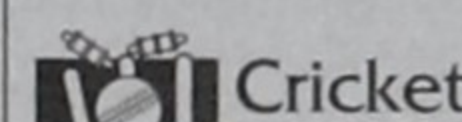
In the semifinals this afternoon, BDR will play Khulna while Army will meet the winners of the Satkhira-Police quarterfinal.

**FED CUP TABLE TENNIS**

Bangladesh Biman and Abahani moved into the women's team final of the invitational Federation Cup table tennis competition at the

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

## Aussies not complacent



AFP, Darwin

Australia appear to hold all the aces, but they won't be underestimating Bangladesh in their three-match one-day series starting on Saturday.

All three games are being played in Darwin, the series originally scheduled as a Champions Trophy warm-up before that tournament was postponed due to security concerns over the host country Pakistan.

Despite being without captain Ricky Ponting, opener Matthew Hayden and leading paceman Brett Lee, the defending World Cup champions are expected to be far too strong for Bangladesh.

However, Australian seamer Nathan Bracken said they wouldn't underestimate their opponents, having been beaten by them in Cardiff in 2005.

"They've done it before so, yeah, we've got to go out and play well,"

he said on arriving here Wednesday.

"We're off a break, we're I guess under a bit of pressure and it's up to these guys now."

"It's up to us to put our hands up and perform well and basically if they play good cricket we have to match it."

Only two of the Australians who played in the Cardiff match, Australia's only defeat in 13 one-day matches against Bangladesh, are in their 13-man squad for this series -- interim captain Michael Clarke and his deputy, Mike Hussey.

Bracken said he expected the conditions in Darwin to suit his swing bowling.

"The Australian A team said it swung up here a bit early in the morning," he said.

"So hopefully if we get the chance to bowl early we can utilise that and it would actually give me more of a chance to get a few early wickets and hopefully just bowl well."

The Australians have lost just six

of their last 36 one-day internationals, but were upset by India in their home tri-series finals earlier this year.

Hayden's absence could allow injury-plagued all-rounder Shane Watson to open the batting, with wicketkeeper-batsman Brad Haddin another option.

Uncapped Tasmanian seamer Brett Geves was called into the Australian squad to replace Lee and could make his international debut.

Bangladesh, who are coached by former prolific Australian domestic batsman Jamie Siddons, have warmed up with a series of matches in Darwin and shown mixed form.

Captain Mohammad Ashraful has looked in very good touch with the bat and the century maker in the Cardiff upset will be crucial to their chances of another shock win.

Teenager Tamim Iqbal has also looked in good form, while inexperienced 21-year-old Mehrab Hossain warmed up for the series

SEE PAGE 18 COL 5

## Djokovic hobbles on

AFP, New York



Serbian stars Novak Djokovic and Jelena Jankovic hobbled to

victory on centre court while the Russian assault continued on day four of the 20.6 million dollar US Open.

An ailing Djokovic overcame a left foot injury to defeat Arnaud Clement 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 in his opening match, while Jankovic struggled with fatigue but held on to beat Sofia Arvidsson 6-3, 6-7 (5/7), 7-5 in their second round match on Wednesday.

"I had to be consistent and try to get a high percentage of my first serves in," Djokovic said. "I didn't return so well and I had a lot of ups and downs and big frustrations."

"But it is the first match. It is always the trickiest one but hopefully the next one will be better."

Djokovic reached the final in New York last year where he lost to four-time reigning champion Roger Federer and has won three titles this year including his first Grand Slam title at the Australian Open.

The 21-year-old Serbian is also fresh off winning the bronze medal at the Beijing Olympics.

"I played good tennis today, enough to win," Djokovic said.

Djokovic moves through to the second round where he will face American Robert Kendrick. In the third set against Clement, Djokovic twisted his left ankle while lunging for a shot on the main Arthur Ashe Stadium.

At the time he was two sets up and leading 2-1 in the third. After a 10 minute time out to get the ankle taped, the match resumed with Clement winning the next point to level the final set at 2-2.

But Djokovic cruised from there winning four of the next five games, clinching the win in straight sets when Clement's final shot sailed long.

Djokovic expects the foot to be almost as good as new in a couple of days.

"It is going to be a good two

days," Djokovic said of his ankle. "After it happened I was thinking more of it than I was the pain, so it is not really a big deal."

"But in a certain moment I felt big pain, so I had to get it taped."

The 23-year-old Jankovic has reached two semifinals in Grand

SEE PAGE 18 COL 6



Serbian star Novak Djokovic pumps his fist after defeating Arnaud Clement of France in the first round of the US Open at Flushing Meadows on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP



## Did U Know?

Thousand dollars were handed out to the men's and women's champions at the 1973 US Open; it was the first time in Grand Slam history the men's and women's winners received equal prize money.



## Michael Atherton

(English cricket commentator) "No tears need be shed for the ICC Champions Trophy, a misnomer of a tournament conceived out of pure greed. Like most things with a solely monetary value, it is a worthless affair."

Giving his opinion on the Champions Trophy postponement.



## TEN Sports

Sri Lanka v India

Fifth ODI

Live from 3:00pm

## STAR Cricket

England v South Africa

Third ODI

Live from 3:45pm

## BTV

Federation Cup

Farashganj v Abahani

Semifinal

Live from 5:00pm

## ESPN

Sportscentre India

Sports News

Live at 10:30pm



## Citycell Federation Cup

SEMIFINAL

Farashganj v Abahani

Time: 5:00pm

Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium