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## Abahani's flying start

**Cricket**  
SPORTS REPORTER

Under foggy conditions, low scoring matches were the order of the day as the Premier Division Twenty20 cricket began at different venues across the country yesterday.

Defending champions Abahani and their traditional rivals Mohammedan made winning starts while another giant Bangladesh Biman suffered a defeat at the hands of Surjo Torun Club on the opening day.

Old DOHS, BKSP and Gazi Tank also won their respective opening day games.

At the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, Ariful Haque smote three sixes during his unbeaten 22-ball 32 but his effort was not good enough to put up a challenging total for the holders after the match was reduced to 17-over-a-side due to fog.

Abahani skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza missed the first game as he was rested as per the national physio Michael Henry's advice but even without their inspirational bowler the Dhanmondi-based club restricted Partex to 103-5 in 17 overs.

Wicketkeeper batsman Sahagir Hossain took charge in the chase as the right-hander smashed five boundaries and two sixes during his 32-ball 44 while vice-captain Imran Ahmed was not out on 38 off 42 balls with the help of four boundaries and a six as Abahani reached the target for two wickets in 15.2 overs.

In the second match at the same venue, pacer Delwar Hossain made early inroads in the Biman innings by picking up three wickets and then left-arm spinner Saqlain Sajib mopped up the tail with three wickets as Biman managed only 101. Surjo Torun made a disastrous start by losing two wickets for four runs but Hannan Sarker (44) and Rajin Saleh (50) associated an unbeaten 101-run stand in the third wicket stand as Surjo Torun made 105-2 in 17.1 overs.

Like Mirpur, the first match was reduced to 13-over-a-side affair at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium where Mohammedan rode on their bowlers performance to secure a 16-run

victory over Young Pegasus. Faisal Hossain smashed an unbeaten 16-ball 26 as Mohammedan scored 93 for six in 13 overs while opener Rajesh hit a 34-ball 35 but still Pegasus managed 77 for five in their share of 13 overs.

At the same venue, Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful returned among runs after a frustrating home series as the right-hander scored an unbeaten 37 off 29 balls after Mithun Ali's 45 as Gazi Tank scored 107 for 6 in 19.1 overs in reply to CCS's 106 all out in 19.4 overs.

Earlier left-arm spinner Enamul Haque claimed three wickets for 15 runs as CCS were bundled out for 106 with opener Uttam Sarker making

the team highest 36 off 34 balls.

At BKSP, only seven overs could be managed for the sides in the first game due to dense fog where Victoria scored 42 for 5 and Old DOHS overcame the hurdle in 4.5 overs for the loss of one wicket.

It was full of action in the second game where man-of-the-match Shaikat Ali slammed 52 off 49 balls to guide BKSP to a 38-run victory over City Club.

Mohammad Furkan was the other notable scorer with an unbeaten 32 off 31 balls as BKSP posted to 123-8 in stipulated 20 overs.

In reply, City Club lost wickets at regular intervals

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2



Abahani's wicketkeeper-batsman Sahagir Hossain is in full flow during his blazing knock of 44 off 32 deliveries in his side's Premier Division Twenty20 Cricket League fixture against Partex at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

## Crucial 4th ODI today

### Aussies play for survival, SA for series

**Cricket**  
CRICINFO, undated

Australia must win on their national holiday on Monday to keep the five-match series alive following another nerveless chase from South Africa in the third game in Sydney on Friday night. Apart from the 2-1 disadvantage, the most troubling thing for the hosts is that they don't feel safe with any total. South Africa have been stunning during their pursuits of 271 in Melbourne and 269 at the SCG, and the only time they fell short was in the five-run defeat in Hobart.

Australia have plenty of fire at the top of the order, but things haven't been going as well in the middle, and the bowling during South Africa's batting Powerplay and at the death has been loose. Nathan Bracken, who has been the only exception, will be missing in Adelaide with a calf strain. Both sides are experimenting with new players, but with two matches to go it is the South Africans who feel the most comfortable.

South Africa have suffered a crucial blow with the wicketkeeper Mark Boucher out of the rest of the series with a broken toe caused by a Shaun Tait yorker. AB de Villiers will take the gloves as Boucher hopes to recover for the first Test in South Africa late next month. Jacques Kallis picked up a side strain on Friday and will continue to be monitored; his batting is fine but bowling causes discomfort. South Africa have so far resisted the move to promote Albie Morkel from No. 8, despite him bashing 91 runs from 45 balls in the three matches, but now they might not have a choice.

Ryan Harris, the Queensland fast bowler, is in the 13-man squad for Bracken, but hasn't

been able to push ahead of Ben Hilfenhaus and will watch with Nathan Hauritz, who took 2 for 60 off nine overs in Sydney, from the second over. Cameron White is back after being left out on Friday and Ricky Ponting expects him to get a decent bowl. The move to pick an extra bowler and shift Brad Haddin to No. 6, where White will bat, did not help secure a match-winning total at the SCG.

Shaun Tait is back playing an international match in front of his home crowd for the first time since December 2007 and will be desperate to impress his supporters. Despite the often lifeless surface, Tait is able to create plenty of problems with his speed and late movement. He has been troubling batsmen during the series without finding the brutal spell that will kick-start his national return.

Herschelle Gibbs struggled in the opening games after coming back into the side following his rehabilitation from an alcohol problem, but he seemed to experience a few moments of clarity in racing to 64 off 52 balls in Sydney. There were 10 fours, a six, and a huge dose of confidence. On a flat surface in Adelaide, where the square boundaries are short, he could provide more danger.

#### TEAMS

**SOUTH AFRICA (from):** Herschelle Gibbs, Hashim Amla, Jacques Kallis, AB de Villiers, JP Duminy, Neil McKenzie, Albie Morkel, Morne Morkel, Johan Botha (captain), Dale Steyn, Makhaya Ntini, Vaughn van Jaarsveld.

**AUSTRALIA (from):** Shaun Marsh, David Warner, Ricky Ponting (captain), Michael Hussey, David Hussey, Cameron White, Brad Haddin, James Hopes, Mitchell Johnson, Ben Hilfenhaus, Shaun Tait, Nathan Hauritz.

## Farashganj blank Arambagh

SPORTS REPORTER

After a barren first half Farashganj Sporting Club blanked Arambagh Krira Sangha 2-0 in a second phase match of the Citycell B. League at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

With the outcome, Farashganj improved their tally to 23 points from 16 matches to stay at sixth position in the points table while Arambagh remained at 11 points from 17 outings.

Anamul Haq broke the deadlock in the 52nd minute and Emeka Lucky doubled the margin in the 67th minute.

In the day's other match, Chittagong Mohammedan registered a 2-1 victory over their local rivals Chittagong Abahani at the MA Aziz Stadium.

Chittagong Mohammedan



Scene from the Citycell B. League encounter between Farashganj and Arambagh at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

## Women cricket's tri-series from February 6

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has released the itinerary for the upcoming women's tri-nation cricket tournament which starts from February 6.

Pakistan and Sri Lanka will be participating in this event along with hosts Bangladesh. The visiting teams will be arriving in Dhaka on February 2 and 3.

The teams will travel to Bogra and Khulna to play the league matches while the final will take place at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on February 17.

#### ITINERARY

- Feb 6: Bangladesh v Pakistan at Bogra
- Feb 7: Sri Lanka v Pakistan at Bogra
- Feb 9: Bangladesh v Sri Lanka at Bogra
- Feb 12: Sri Lanka v Pakistan at Khulna
- Feb 13: Bangladesh v Sri Lanka at Khulna
- Feb 14: Bangladesh v Pakistan at Khulna
- Feb 17: Final at Mirpur

## Kalabagan carry on

SPORTS REPORTER

Kalabagan continued their good run of form by winning their third game in a row in the First Division Twenty20 cricket tournament at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

In what will be clearly remembered as the shortest cricket game ever to have been played on the Bangladesh domestic circuit, opponents Rupali Bank batted first and made 24-7 in their allotted five overs.

Kalabagan rammed onto their target in the 3rd over without losing a wicket, recording their second ten-wicket victory in three wins.

At the same venue, Dhanmondi Club (144-7) defeated Lalmaia Club (118-8) by 26 runs to secure their second victory of the tournament.

At the Dhaka University Ground, Bangladesh Boys recorded their second victory when they beat Uttara SC by seven wickets. Uttara made 86 for 6 in the curtailed match of 13-over-a-side, which was chased down by Bangladesh

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

## Indian women booters beat Munshiganj

UNB, Dhaka

Visiting Indian women's football team blanked Munshiganj women's team 3-0 in an exhibition match at Munshiganj Stadium yesterday.

Rozina Khatun, Sujata Kar and Nasaba Alam scored the goals for the touring side.

The visitors will play the second match against Bangladesh Ansar and VDP women's team at Safipur Ansar Academy today and the third and last match against Dhaka Metropolitan Women's Football XI at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Tuesday.



Second seed Roger Federer of Switzerland is exultant after winning a point during his fourth round victory over Tomas Berdych of Czech Republic at the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday.

## Federer shaken

### Top seed Jankovic crashes out

AFP, Melbourne



The Australian Open was blown wide open Sunday when top seed Jelena Jankovic crashed out while Roger Federer was forced to mount a memorable comeback to beat Tomas Berdych.

The Serb's crushing 6-1, 6-4 defeat to French 16th seed Marion Bartoli put her alongside Ana Ivanovic and Venus Williams as high-profile early round casualties, raising further questions about her world number one status.

Federer looked like he could join Jankovic after losing the first two sets to Czech Berdych, battling back to win 4-6, 6-7, 6-4, 6-4, 6-2 and stay on course for a record-equalling 14th Grand Slam title.

It was the first time Federer has come from two sets down since Miami in 2005, and he sees it as a good omen.

"Tomas did so well and he pushed me to the limit," said the Swiss three-time champion.

"I enjoy those kinds of fights because they don't happen very often, especially on Rod Laver Arena. I hope it is a good omen."

"I feel in great shape, I feel like I could go another two sets."

His next opponent is Argentina's Juan Martin del Potro, who recovered from a set down to grind out a 5-7, 6-4, 6-4, 6-2 win over fellow young gun Marin Cilic.

There was also safe passage to the quarterfinals for American Andy Roddick, who

will play defending champion Novak Djokovic. Djokovic held off 2006 runner-up Marcos Baghdatis 6-1, 7-6, 6-7-2 in a match that started at 11:10 pm and finished at 2:26 am.

With Jankovic, Ivanovic and Williams now gone, the first Grand Slam of the season has become one of the most open ever with Bartoli into a quarter-final against Russia's Vera Zvonareva, who beat countrywoman Nadia Petrova 7-5, 6-4.

"It's obviously disappointing. Nobody likes to lose," said Jankovic, who looked lethargic as she tried to play her way into the match.

"It was a tough day for me. You know, I had a slow start. I let my opponent completely come on top of me and play her game."

She is now likely to lose her top ranking, but insisted it was not important.

"It doesn't matter because it's just the beginning of the year, and there is many more tournaments to play," she said.

Bartoli was ecstatic at the upset but said she always felt she could win.

"I knew I could beat Jelena on a good day, it was just a matter of executing it, playing the right shot at the right time and not making too many mistakes," said the Frenchwoman, who made the Wimbledon final in 2007.

Russian third seed Dinara Safina survived two match points to beat France's Alize Cornet 6-2, 2-6, 7-5 and will play Australian wildcard Jelena Dokic whose fairytale run continued with 7-5, 5-7, 8-6 win over Russia's Alisia Kleybanova.

Safina appeared certain to follow Jankovic out when Cornet was serving for the match at 5-

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1



**Did U Know?**

American tennis ace Jim Courier won back-to-back men's singles titles at the Australian Open in 1992 and 1993.



**Andrew Symonds**  
(Star Australia all-rounder)

"That's not Australian to me. Is that what New South Wales cricket is having to do? I am trying to understand the modern world."

On the signing of New Zealand's Brendon McCullum to play for New South Wales.



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