

## Emeka stirs Abahani Russel bounce back

SPORTS REPORTER



Emeka Christian fired two poacher's goal to help Abahani tame a stubborn Chittagong Mohammedan 2-1 in a come-from-behind win yesterday to all but confirm a place in the Citycell Super Cup semifinal.

The visitors went ahead after 39 minutes to stun a 10,000-strong holiday crowd at the Bangabandhu National Stadium with an exquisite strike by Guinean forward Raphael Sagno but Abahani answered within five minutes through their Nigerian marksman Emeka.

Tempers flared from both sides in the second half but Abahani sealed their second win in as many matches with Emeka scoring his fourth goal of the competition just two minutes from time.

Sheikh Russel kept their hopes alive for a semifinal berth after a scrappy 1-0 win against winless Rahmatganj in the day's first match.

Abahani lead Group A with maximum six points and play Russel, on three points with this victory after a 2-0 loss to Chittagong Mohammedan, in tomorrow's group finale. The port city side, who are up against Rahmatganj tomorrow, also have three points but edge Russel in the table by virtue of better goal difference.

Abahani, who crushed Rahmatganj 3-0 in the tournament opener, did not show similar spirit as their rivals not only defended doggedly but also got the first real chance on the break in

a match where little scoring opportunities were created.

Raphael set a square pass for Nasir inside the box after 27 minutes but the retired Army striker placed his shot wide of Biplab's far post.

Ten minutes later, Abahani threatened to score for the first time when Emeka got the ball from an Abul corner but the Nigerian failed to keep his backvolley under the bar.

Two minutes later, the Sky Blues were punished for slack defending at the left as Chittagong Mohammedan's Liberian midfielder Doe drop-headed a cross by skipper Kaiser to Raphael, who sent the ball into the top far corner with a spectacular backvolley.

The joy for the tourists did not last long as defending two-time B. League champions came level on the brink of halftime.

Pranotosh drove an angled shot into the side netting from close in the 41st minute before Waly Faisal's throw-in from the left side unsettled the Chittagong Black and Whites.

Ibrahim, once again showing top form by leading most of Abahani attacks, sent the ball to Emeka inside the six-yard box and the attacking midfielder, despite being marked by two opponents, rifled into the roof of the net.

The ball remained mostly in the middle after resumption but Mohammedan's four foreigners committed too many fouls, sparking their opposition to retaliate. Ibrahim and Doe were both booked after a scuffle before Abahani veteran Joy escaped a sent-off decision for elbowing Raphael during an off-the-ball action.



Abahani players celebrate two-goal Emeka Christian's (2nd from L) winning goal against Chittagong Mohammedan in yesterday's Citycell Super Cup match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

PHOTO: STAR

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### Did U Know?

The Liberia team escaped imprisonment by holding Gambia to a goalless draw in 1980. The Liberian Head of State, Master Sergeant Samuel Doe, had threatened to jail them if they lost.



### Talk Turkey



### Dunga

(Brazil soccer coach)  
"He has the will to become the great player that he once was. He feels pleasure playing football." On Ronaldo.



### What to Watch

- BTV**  
Super Cup Football  
Mohammedan v Farashganj  
Live from 5:30pm
- Neo Cricket**  
New Zealand v India  
Fifth ODI  
Live from 7:00am
- ESPN**  
English Premier League  
Man United v Liverpool  
Live from 6:40pm
- Arsenal v Blackburn Rovers  
Live from 8:55pm
- Primera Liga**  
Athletico Bilbao v Real Madrid  
Live from 3:00am (Sunday)
- STAR Sports**  
English Premier League  
Hull City v Newcastle United  
Live from 8:55pm



- Super Cup Football**  
Brothers Union v Clg Abahani  
Time: 3:30pm  
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium, Dhaka
- Mohammedan v Farashganj  
Time: 5:30pm  
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium, Dhaka

## NZ look to boost confidence

### Fifth ODI against India today

Cricket

AFP, Auckland

New Zealand will seek a confidence-boosting victory in their fifth one-day international against India Saturday, after losing the series 3-0 this week.

New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori said Friday that his team, which starts a three-Test series against India in Hamilton Wednesday, refused to see Saturday's game in Auckland as a lost cause.

"This is a momentum game for us before the Tests -- we don't want to go down 4-0, we want to win a game and give our one-day side the credibility it deserves," Vettori told reporters.

"We've played well for a while now, though in this series we haven't showed that against a team that's been a lot better than us in most disciplines," he said.

New Zealand's chances of drawing the one-day series disappeared in Wednesday's rain-disrupted match in Hamilton, which India won by 84 runs under the Duckworth-Lewis system after scoring 201-0.

In a team stacked with batting stars, India's opener Virender Sehwag is New Zealand's enemy number one after he plundered an

unbeaten 125 from 74 balls in Hamilton. He reached three figures in 60 balls, the seventh fastest one-day century of all time and the quickest by an Indian player.

So far in the one-day series he has hit 259 runs at an average of 86.33, with a strike rate of more than a run and a half from each ball faced. New Zealand's bowlers have appeared powerless to contain Sehwag, but Vettori says the 30-year-old batsman is not invincible.

"If we get it in the right areas, we can trouble him and we can stop him from scoring," Vettori said. "We keep imploring the bowlers to make sure they hit the right areas, and if they do, then good things happen."

New Zealand have named the same 12 players for the Auckland game but India may give a chance to some squad members who have missed out on the action.

Left-arm spinner Pragnan Ohja may be included for the first time, along with pace bowler Irfan Pathan, who has not played since last month's Twenty20 matches.

Batting star Sachin Tendulkar is again unlikely to play Saturday, after aggravating a bruised abdomen which forced him to retire hurt after scoring 163 in the third one-dayer in Christchurch.

However, the "Little Master" is expected to be fit again when the teams return to Hamilton Wednesday for the first of the three Tests.

## Ponting fears for Tests

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The Australia captain Ricky Ponting has warned of a "really dangerous" future for Test cricket. "I gave the Bradman Oration last year and I stated that what I want for the next generation of Australians is to do what I've done: play 150 Tests and represent their country for a long time," Ponting told the Wisden Cricketer. "But something in the back of my head says that their focus could switch from that to being attracted by the glitz and glamour of Twenty20 and the money that might be around."

A survey conducted by the Australian Cricketers' Association found that the majority of centrally contracted players were not convinced that representing Australia will be the pinnacle of their sport in a decade. The results appeared to confirm Ponting's statements.

Though Ponting had already decided not to turn out for Kolkata Knight Riders in the forthcoming IPL season due to his Australian commitments, many of his teammates are expected to take part, even as doubts persist over player security and the tournament schedule. Ponting was also alarmed about the lack of concern shown by the top executives of world cricket, who he believed did not

understand the impact of playerworkloads.

"Administrators just don't see burn out," he said. "Players are the only ones who know when they can get themselves up to 100%. As an international sportsman you don't want to be playing when you're not at your absolute best."

"In the last few months quite a few of our players have been on the edge of not being

able to get themselves up to 100% all the time. Someone like Mike Hussey would have played as much as anybody around, I reckon." Australia had 17 Tests, 18 ODIs and two Twenty20 internationals in 2008, and the count already stands at three Tests, 10 ODIs and three Twenty20 internationals in a little over three months in 2009.

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India bowler Irfan Pathan sends down a delivery during training in Auckland yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Kalabagan abuse to win

SPORTS REPORTER

Muscles were flexed to influence the result of a First Division Cricket League match between Indira Road and Kalabagan at the Dhaka University ground yesterday.

Ugly scenes returned to the cricket field when a few Kalabagan officials hurled abuse towards match officials and intimidated them to raise their fingers in favour of their players' repeated appeals.

It was learnt that the match was even stopped for a while following chaos by the Kalabagan's rowdy officials after 30 overs when Indira Road were 103 for three in reply to 186. Left-arm spinner Mohammad Isam was the pick of Indira attack taking 4-30.

Kalabagan finally won the match by two runs to secure 10 points from seven matches while Indira also have same points from same number of games.

"I rushed to the ground once I heard about the incident and also called security personnel to tackle the situation. What I learnt is that Kalabagan officials used abusive language towards the match officials," Mostafa Kabir, member secretary of the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM), told over phone.

"We are waiting for the match referee's report. We will definitely take stern action against the culprits. We will not tolerate this kind of behaviour in the cricket field," he added.

## Thrilling win for Partex

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Partex thrived on half centuries by Mushfiqur Rahim and Tariq Ahmed to manage a two-wicket victory over Old DOHS in the Premier Division Cricket League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

After an impressive start in the competition, DOHS continued their poor showing as they lost five games in nine matches to stay on eight points while Partex improved their tally to 10 to keep their Super League hopes alive.

Away at the Fatullah Stadium, Elias Sunny missed a hundred by eight runs but his effort gave Cricket Coaching School (CCS) an emphatic 85-run victory over Victoria.

CCS raised their collection to eight points and Victoria remained on four after nine rounds.

Young Pegasus defeated winless City Club in the day's other match by 74 runs at BKSP. Pegasus have five points.

DOHS-PARTEX

Partex recovered from a precarious 61 for five to overtake DOHS's 220 in the last over as Mushfiqur slammed 78 and Tariq remained not out on 77 that featured four boundaries and two sixes in 127-ball.

Tigers' wicketkeeper-cum-batsman Mushfiq smote eight boundaries during his 96-ball knock as Partex posted to 222-8 in 49.2 overs. Abul Hasan claimed three wickets for 43 runs.

Earlier, Mohammad Azim caused the initial

damage in the DOHS innings by taking three wickets but they repaired the damage from 48 for four to put up a decent total on board with handsome contributions from the tail.

Captain Mehrab Hossain top scored 42 off 55 deliveries with three boundaries.

CCS-VICTORIA

Opener Sunny hit 92 off 119 balls with eight fours and Nazmul Hossain smashed an unbeaten 67 off 48 balls that contained five fours and three sixes as CCS piled up 269 for five in their share of 50 overs.

Taposh Ghosh captured three wickets for 43 runs.

In reply, Victoria lost wickets at regular intervals before being bundled out for 184 runs.

Number nine batsman Arafat Salahuddin scored team highest 51 off 88 balls including four boundaries.

Bishwajit Halder took three wickets while Syed Rasel returned to action after recovering from injury to take two wickets and Sunny also claimed two.

PEGASUS-CITY

Faisal Javed and Jupiter Ghosh got off to a good start and then Humayun Kabir took the charge as Pegasus scored 251 for eight after deciding to bat first.

Faisal made 57 off 65 balls with ten fours while Jupiter added 66 off 96 balls with four boundaries and a six. Kabir was not out on 60 off 65 balls and hit four boundaries and a six.

In reply, City also made a bright start but they lost the way once a 60-run opening stand between Rasel Al Mamun and Mayshequr

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## IPL in jeopardy

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

The Indian Premier League was thrown into turmoil Friday when the government refused to accept the revised schedule submitted by the organisers on security grounds.

State police chiefs told a

high-level meeting chaired by federal home minister P Chidambaram it would be difficult to provide adequate security for the IPL during parliamentary elections.

The Press Trust of India quoted unnamed home ministry officials as saying it "may not be feasible" to hold IPL matches as per the revised schedule.

"IPL organisers have been advised to draw up a fresh schedule to accommodate the concerns of state governments," the agency reported.

The world's top cricketers, including the newly-recruited England stars Kevin Pietersen and Andrew Flintoff, are due to take part in the multi-million dollar Twenty20 tournament across the country.

But less than a month before the April 10 opening of the IPL's second season, tournament officials returned to the drawing board to rework the schedule for the 59-match event that is due to conclude on May 24.

"A new schedule will be announced soon," IPL commissioner Lalit Modi told the CNN-IBN news channel.

Chidambaram had said earlier that central paramilitary forces may not be available to guard the popular tournament since its dates overlapped with the parliamentary elections from April 16-May 13.

Security concerns were heightened following the

deadly assault on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Pakistan on March 3, which injured seven players and an assistant coach and killed eight other people.

Home ministry officials said the eight states where IPL matches will be held were not willing to take a chance during the elections and demanded central forces to help out in providing security cover to the tournament.

The IPL has hired a private South African security firm Nicholls-Steyn to liaise with local authorities, but police and paramilitary forces will still be required to protect the cricketers, officials and fans.

Nicholls-Steyn also supervises security at all International Cricket Council tournaments like the World Cup and Champions Trophy.

## Ramdin to lead WI in T20

INTERNET, undated

Captain Chris Gayle was ruled out injured for this weekend's one-off Twenty20 match against England with wicketkeeper Denesh Ramdin taking over West Indies.

Ramdin, who celebrates his 24th birthday on Friday, was Gayle's vice captain during

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