

# Mohammedan keep the Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

**Citycell FEDERATION CUP '09** Mohammedan Sporting Club retained the Federation Cup title after defeating bitter rivals Abahani 4-1 in tiebreaker in a pulsating final at the near-packed Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The Dhaka derby rolled into shootout after the regulation 90 minutes and an additional 30-minute extra time failed to produce a goal.

Although it was cruel that the game was eventually decided on penalties, Mohammedan could claim that they were the deserving victors over their perennial foes in a match where they created more chances.

The clash of two worthy opponents always evokes unbridled emotions. And it was no exception at the Big Bowl yesterday. A full house, deafening roar that can be heard from half kilometre radius, attack and counter attack, sudden burst of emotion among the players of the rival teams following a foul and an overpowering reaction from always dancing stands. The good thing of the game was that it never turned ugly, which has frequently been the case over the years.

Abahani did well to defend their fort during a packed 120-minute action. But when it came down to beat the opponent goalkeeper in a one-to-one situation they suffered from nervous breakdown.

Samad Yousuf saw his low shot parried by Mohammedan custodian James Paul. Sheriff Deen Mohammed, who had a wonderful match and had struck the cross bar in the first half, drove his spot kick miles over the bar. Striker Enamul however converted his spot kick but by that time Mohammedan had taken a 3-1 lead with Ariful, Emeka and Wali Faisal making no mistakes to find the back of the net.

The Mohammedan tent erupted into celebration when veteran defender Hasan Al Mamun made it four out of four, sending Abahani goalkeeper Biplob Bhattacharya to the wrong end.

The victory meant Mohammedan lifted the season's curtain-riser for a record tenth time, three more than Abahani. Mohammedan won the Federation Cup last year also in tie-breaker against Abahani.

For records sake it was the eighth head-to-head clash between the two popular teams in a Federation Cup final with Mohammedan taking a massive 6-2 lead.

It was also the first meeting of the two teams this season after Mohammedan's 1-0 win against Abahani in the one crore taka Super Cup final.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

**HIP, HIP, HOORAY!** Mohammedan players run towards other teammates moments after Hasan Al Mamun (not in picture) stabbed the fourth spot-kick into the Abahani net to clinch the Citycell Federation Cup title at the Bangabandhu National Stadium last night.

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## Maruful satisfied

SPORTS REPORTER

**Citycell FEDERATION CUP '09** With the clinching of the 10th crown of the Federation Cup, giants Mohammedan maintained their supremacy in the season's curtain-raising tournament as well as dashed archrivals Abahani's hopes of regaining their first Federation Cup title in nine years.

An ecstatic Mohammedan coach Maruful Haq said that discipline was behind their success.

"All credit goes to the players, who have been toiling hard in a disciplined way though some players were tagged indiscipline during the national team's camp," said Maruf, who also guided the Motijheel-based outfit to last season's Federation Cup win and one-crore-taka Super Cup and helped them to finish behind champions Abahani in the B. League.

Mohammedan coach thought they should

have won the game in regulation time, especially after the way they dominated, but the forwards failed to cash in on those opportunities and had to win the game through tie-breaker.

The Motijheel-based outfit also won the last season's Federation Cup in a shootout against old foes Abahani. Besides, it was their sixth success against Abahani in the Federation Cup final.

"During the shootout, our players were ahead psychologically compared to Abahani players and I asked them never to feel pressure as the tiebreaker can go any way and they finally came out with this achievement and I am happy to see the calmness during the shootout," said Maruf, who is still being criticised by a section of former Mohammedan players as well as officials.

Maruf, however, was not to be drawn into

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## Zimbabwe due today

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The Zimbabwe cricket team will arrive in Dhaka today to take part in the Grameenphone Cup, a five-match ODI series against Bangladesh. They are scheduled to arrive at 8:55pm local time.

The first match of the series will be played at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium on 27 October. The next match takes place on the 29th and the third on the 31st of October at the same venue. All the three matches will be day-nighters. Zimbabwe will travel to Chittagong where the last two

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## Abahani, Gazi Tank in final

SPORTS REPORTER

**TS 2009** Sahagir Hossain's ungainly nick down the thirdman boundary gave Abahani a 4-wicket victory against their fierce rivals Mohammedan in the first semifinal of the Twenty20 Premier League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium to set up the prospects of mouth-watering clash in the final against Gazi Tank, who walked away with their game against Khelaghar Samaj Kalyan Samity by 8 wickets.

Buoyed by the introduction of their ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, Abahani, the underdogs both on paper and in terms of form thus far, put on a brave effort to oust favourites Mohammedan.

Set to chase a stiff target of 165 on a good batting track, Abahani openers made their intentions clear early when opener Rony Talukder hit two boundaries in the very first over from Delwar Hossain. The other opener, Imrul Kayes though was struck on the forehead when he tried to pull a vicious short-pitch bouncer from left-arm seamer Emon Ahmed and had to leave the field for treatment, making way for Mahbubul Karim to take the charge. Karim pulled both the bowlers for sixes over mid-on that took the score to 36 for no loss after four overs. Both batsmen were intent on clearing the boundary than piling singles or doubles.

Off-spinner Mahmudullah, most success-

ful bowler in the match, was brought in to the attack by Mohammedan captain Mohammad Ashraful to thwart the run chase. He got immediate success as he made Karim to scoop one to the square-leg to find the safe hands of the captain, just after being threaded through deep square-leg for a boundary. Mohammedan got more success in the next over when Emon deceived Rony Talukder with a slower delivery to make the batsman loft it in the air and once again finding safe hands of the skipper. The score at that point was 47 for two after six powerplay overs and the match was in fine balance.

At that important juncture, strode in Shakib, the world's best all-rounder to stamp his authority and give the match a definite direction. Surviving a close leg-before shout against Emon, he hit two huge sixes off successive deliveries in the next over from spinner Nabil Samad with his favourite pull-shot. He played one shot too many when holed out at the boundary to Delwar Hossain off the bowling of Aftab, but not before playing a cameo of 28 in 15 balls which took the score to 76 within nine overs. His departure didn't seem have an impact on the scoring as Imrul Kayes, with-stitches-on-forehead appeared again and continued in the vein of Shakib. He scored more than a run-a-ball and ably supported by Nadif Chowdhury, they made sure Abahani kept ahead of the chase. Nadif Chowdhury fell with his team needing 52 runs in 5.2 overs.

Imrul kept playing his shots, and with Nasir Hossain in partner, almost saw his side home. When the win seemed almost a formality in the 19th over, Kayes gave his wicket away to Mahmudullah. And the other batsman Nasir followed in the same fashion to make things a bit more exciting

for the players and spectators. Twelve runs were required at this stage from 9 balls, with four wickets remaining. Sahagir powerfully despatched Mahmudullah in facing his second ball over the mid-on boundary. And his nick down the third man

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PHOTO: STAR

**THE LUCKY CHARM:** Star Abahani all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who did not take part in the Premier Twenty20 League until yesterday due to injury, goes for a pull during his knock of 28 off 15 balls in the semifinal against Mohammedan at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.



PHOTO: STAR

**A GOOD SIGHT:** The Bangabandhu National Stadium did not have an inch left empty during the Federation Cup final between Mohammedan and Abahani yesterday.

## Biplob, Carin crowned again

SPORTS REPORTER

Biplob Ram once again proved his dominance over Rustom Ali with a 2-6, 7-6, 6-4 victory in the final of the BKSP ATF under-14 Tennis Tournament at BKSP yesterday. Biplob had defeated the same opponent last week to win the Prime Bank ATF under-14 tournament in Dhaka, which was a three setter too. And as in Dhaka, Biplob yet again staged a fightback after he had lost the first set 6-2. The second set went to a tie-break which Biplob eventually took

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## Australia in India

**Cricket**

AFP, Mumbai

Ricky Ponting's world champion Australian side flew into India on Tuesday to play a seven-match one-day series against the hosts.

Ponting's men go into the series fresh from a 6-1 drubbing of England in September and victory in the Champions Trophy one-day tournament in South Africa earlier this month.

India, ranked number two behind Australia, crashed out in the first round of the Champions Trophy.

Ponting and coach Tim Nielsen will hold a pre-series media conference here on Wednesday.

The first one-dayer will be played in the western city of Vadodara on Sunday.

### SQUAD

Ricky Ponting (captain), Michael Hussey (vice-captain), Doug Bollinger, Nathan Hauritz, Jon Holland, Ben Hilfenhaus, James Hopes, Mitchell Johnson, Brett Lee, Shaun Marsh, Tim Paine, Peter Siddie, Adam Voges, Shane Watson, Cameron White.

### SCHEDULE

Oct 25 1st ODI, Vadodara

Oct 28 2nd ODI, Nagpur  
Oct 31 3rd ODI, New Delhi  
Nov 2 4th ODI, Mohali  
Nov 5 5th ODI, Hyderabad  
Nov 8 6th ODI, Guwahati  
Nov 11 7th ODI, Mumbai



### Desh TV

Premier Div T20 Cricket Final  
Abahani v Gazi Tank  
Live from 6:30pm

### STAR Cricket

Champions League T20  
First Semifinal  
New South Wales v Victoria  
Live from 9:30pm

### SuperSport3

UEFA Champions League  
CSKA Moscow v Man United  
Live from 11:30pm  
Real Madrid v AC Milan  
Live from 1:45am (Thursday)

### SuperSport7

UEFA Champions League  
Chelsea v Atletico Madrid  
Live from 1:45am (Thursday)

## Younus ready again

**Cricket**

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan skipper Younus Khan on Tuesday said he was ready to lead the team again after the country's cricket chief rejected his resignation, saying he had been heartened by shows of support.

"I am very happy right now. The faith that the chairman and the board has placed in me again, it's good to know. The support that I have received from the board and the country through this time has been fantastic," Younus told Cricinfo website.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Ijaz Butt on Monday rejected Younus's resignation, saying he should lead the team until the 2011 World Cup as long as he retains form and fitness.

Younus, who replaced Shoaib Malik in January following Pakistan's home defeat in a one-day series against Sri Lanka, had tendered his resignation over a lawmaker's allegations of match-fixing in the recent Champions Trophy.

The captain received strong support from

fans, who staged street protests while a parliamentary committee said the match-fixing claims were groundless.

Younus said he had resigned because he was hurt over allegations in connection with defeats against Australia and New Zealand in the Champions Trophy held in South Africa in September-October, but he was now much happier.

"The environment is good right now and I am very happy with it. All that has happened over the last eight months, all the effort is worthwhile now," he said.

However, his task could be made more difficult by dressing room unrest with the Pakistan media reporting that there had been serious differences between Younus and his teammates.

Pakistan's next international assignment will see the team take on New Zealand in three one-day internationals and two Twenty20 matches in Abu Dhabi and Dubai early next month.

The matches are officially home games, with Pakistan forced to play all their games abroad following the March gun and grenade attack on the Sri Lankan team in Lahore.