



Bangladesh striker Zahid Hasan Emily (L) is mobbed by teammates after scoring in their opening SAFF Championship game against Bhutan at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Abahani fall to Aftab

SPORTS REPORTER



Mohammedans fans were yesterday rejoicing as if they had won the title, after they dismissed the challenge of archrivals Abahani to keep intact their unbeaten record in the Premier Division Cricket League.

The highly anticipated clash turned into a mismatch at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur as Aftab Ahmed came up with his best during a classy unbeaten 107-run knock to script Mohammedan's six wicket victory after holders

Abahani's senseless batting on a good batting track.

With the victory, the Motijheel outfit widened the gap by four points with their nearest rivals Abahani, who suffered their second consecutive defeat after a 29-run loss against Biman, to take a big step forward on way to put an end to an eight-year title drought.

There was no special efforts from the Pakistani recruits, rather it was ICL returnee Aftab who stole the show in the low-scoring affair by playing some eye-catching shots all over the park during his maiden hundred in the league as Mohammedan overhauled Abahani's paltry total of 191 with 16.4 overs to spare.



Mohammedan batsman Aftab Ahmed winds up to hoist one over long-off during his sparkling century against arch-rivals Abahani in their Premier Division Cricket League at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Biman, K'bagan in super league

SPORTS REPORTER



Kalabagan and Biman have booked their places in the super league stage of the Ispanhi Tea Premier Division Cricket as they booted out Surjo Torun and Khelaghari in their respective matches yesterday.

The two teams stand joint third on fourteen points from their ten matches with one round still to go. Surjo Torun have six points while Khelaghari have four, and both are out of contention for super league berth.

At Fatullah, Kalabagan rode on a brilliant 92-run knock from Mohammad Zahid to beat Surjo Torun by 56 runs. Zahid defied an amazing bowling display

from Surjo Torun pacer Sanjamul Islam help his side amass 212 runs in 49.3 overs. Zahid, batting at number three held things at one end as Sanjamul tore through the batting order taking six wickets in his 10 overs conceding 31 runs. Zahid's 92-run innings consisted of three sixes and six boundaries, and was complemented by Jubair Ahmed's 37 and Rasel Mamun's 27.

Surjo Torun started their reply in rolling style as their openers scored at ten-runs an over for the first eight overs. Openers Imtiaz Hossain and Zunaed Siddiqui were most severe on the team's pacer Shahadat Hossain as they plundered forty runs from his three overs. Imtiaz Hossain (38) was the first to fall with the score on 86 after 8.5 overs, and that started the rot. Zunaed and the next one in left for the same score. Only

Hannan Sarker (24) and Sanjamul Islam (20) stayed there for some time in the middle, but could not evade yet another hapless collapse that saw Surjo Torun bundled out for 154 in 28.3 overs.

It was a similar story in BK too, where Biman got a 64-run win over Khelaghari. Biman built their innings around a 121-run opening stand between openers Elias Sunny (75) and Zahurul Islam (57) to post 217 runs before being all out in 46 overs. Khelaghari pacer Monowar Hossain was the best on show with figures of 4 for 39 in his 10 overs. In their innings, Khelaghari lost their first three batsmen to the pace of Shaiful Islam as they trotted to 36 in 9 overs.

Ashraf Ali (24) and Ashraful Nabi (41) put on some resistance, but not enough as they skittled out for 153 in 43.1 overs.

MSC allege wrong treatment for Tamim

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammedan cricket officials on Friday brought a serious allegation against national team physiotherapist Michael Henry as they claimed that left-handed opener Tamim Iqbal got wrong treatment after he had suffered injury on the top of his hand during last one-day match against Zimbabwe at Chittagong last month.

Aftab however showed character as the right-hander built up his innings first by milking the singles and then going for the kill. The Chittagonian, who had four fifties in the earlier nine games, struck 15 boundaries and two over boundaries and he completed his hundred in grand style by whacking pacer Rabiul Islam Shibli over the square leg rope in an over where he also hit three boundaries.

Earlier the job was half done by the spinners after captain Khaled Mashud won the much-needed toss to invite their opponents to bat first. Almost all of Abahani's top order batsmen got the start but could not convert it into a big one to put up a challenging total on the board.

Pakistani pacer Rana Navedul Hasan provided the first breakthrough by removing Imrul Kayes (15), who hit a big six over midwicket against the same bowler in the very first over. Mashud then had a brilliant stumping after missing an easy catch behind chance to send Rony Talukdar back to the pavilion.

Nafid Chowdhury (32) and Nasir Hossain (4) threw away their wickets in the crucial stage while Abul Razzaq might have made the difference but he was bowled by left-arm spinner Saqlain Sajib, who took revenge after conceding 17 runs in an over.

The turning point was however the dismissal of Shakib who played brilliantly to settle down the Abahani innings before he fell victim of a run out for 25. Shakib went

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SL steal dramatic win

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangabandhu Sixes SAFF Championship got off to a dramatic start as nine-man Sri Lanka survived a late onslaught to hand a lone-goal defeat to Pakistan in the opening match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Chathura Gunaratne struck the all-important goal converting a spot kick in the first half to give Sri Lanka the full three points.

Sri Lanka were reduced to nine men, five minutes from time with Dumindu Hettiarachi and Pradeep Kumara picking up their second yellow cards inside one minute that also awarded a penalty shot to Pakistan.

But they squandered the sitter to deprive themselves of a certain point against Sri Lanka, who had earlier beaten them 7-1 in the AFC Challenge Cup qualifiers in April last.

Sri Lanka, the semifinalists of the last edition, were lucky to win the match against a spirited Pakistan, who also rattled the woodwork once and missed at least a couple of sitters to equalise in the second half.

Boosted with five UK-based players, Pakistan started cautiously with a 4-4-2 though the ball was mostly confined to the midfield. Pakistan gradually gained the

confidence to control the midfield before launching the first attack from the left with captain Muhammad Essa whipping a cross for forward

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PHOTO: STAR
Sri Lanka's Chathura Gunaratne celebrates after scoring the only goal of the game through a penalty during their SAFF Championship match against Pakistan at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

India pile on the runs Sehwag misses out on triple ton

Cricket

AFP, Mumbai

Ruthless India left Sri Lanka fighting for survival in the final Test here on Friday after Virender Sehwag missed a world record third triple-century by seven runs.

Sehwag's 293, a robust 100 not out from skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni and a string of half-centuries by the middle order fired the hosts to their highest ever total of 726-9 declared in reply to Sri Lanka's 393.

The tourists, trailing by 33 runs on the first innings, were 11-0 in their second knock at stumps on the third day on a wearing track at the Brabourne stadium.

Tharanga Paranavita and Tillakaratne Dilshan survived three overs of spin before close, but Sri Lanka face a daunting task to avoid defeat over the next two days.

India's total surpassed their previous best of 705-7 declared against Australia at the Sydney cricket ground in January, 2004.

Sehwag had moved from his overnight score of 284 to 293 when he tapped a flighted ball from Muttiah Muralidaran

back to the bowler who took the catch on second attempt.

A hush descended at the stadium where some 15,000 home fans had packed the

stands anticipating a world record by the swashbuckling opener.

Sehwag returned to a warm

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PHOTO: AFP
India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni watches the ball after hitting it for a six during his unbeaten hundred on the third day of the third and final Test against Sri Lanka at the Brabourne Stadium in Mumbai yesterday.