

Enamul keeps Abahani going

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

A first-half strike from Enamul Haque helped Abahani maintain their hundred percent success in the Bangladesh League as the defending champions handed a lone-goal defeat to Mukti Joddha Sangsad at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

National striker Enamul headed a Sheriff Din Mohammed lob home in the 16th minute to give Abahani their fourth win in as many matches under the floodlight. Sadly there were hardly 500 spectators present to watch the match at big bowl.

The Dhanmondi-based outfit, Abahani, now lead the points table with 12 points, two points ahead of Sheikh Russell KC, who today handed a 2-0 defeat to Chittagong Abahani at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong. Hafiz Albaraka and Samir Omari scored for the winners.

The Bangladesh League, the professional football league, resumed after one-and-a-half months following the break for the SAFF Championship where hosts Bangladesh were eliminated from the semifinal putting up a frustrating performance against India.

At the BNS, both sides looked to have played the game without any purpose though Abahani came close to taking the lead in the very seventh minute when Ghanaian striker Awudu Ibrahim rattled the woodwork from outside the box.

Neither Abahani nor Mukti Joddha could assert their authority in the midfield and there was definitely a lack of rhythm in the game. With Abahani left-back Siraj nursing his injury outside the field, Mukti Joddha capitalised the gap to produce two good opportunities, but their Liberian striker Eugene Jiah Gray, despite having found Abahani goalkeeper Biplob Bhattacharjee alone, drove straight into relief of the Abahani goalkeeper, who initially looked nervous.

Picking up a ball from fellow teammate, Sherif darted in the box from the left and lobbed it for Enamul, who stabbed a glancing header home to maintain his SAFF Championship form where he struck four goals in as many matches.

Mukti Joddha Sangsad, however, found the equaliser in the 20th minute through a freekick taken by Mahmudul Hasan, but referee Azad Rahman cancelled the equaliser citing 'vision obstacle' of the Abahani goalkeeper by Gray, who rushed to rise high, but could not connect with the ball that found the far net with one bounce.

Then, Abahani striker Enamul forced Mukti goalkeeper Nizam Majumder to make a diving save on the half-hour mark while Sherif's two efforts went in vain inside one minute.

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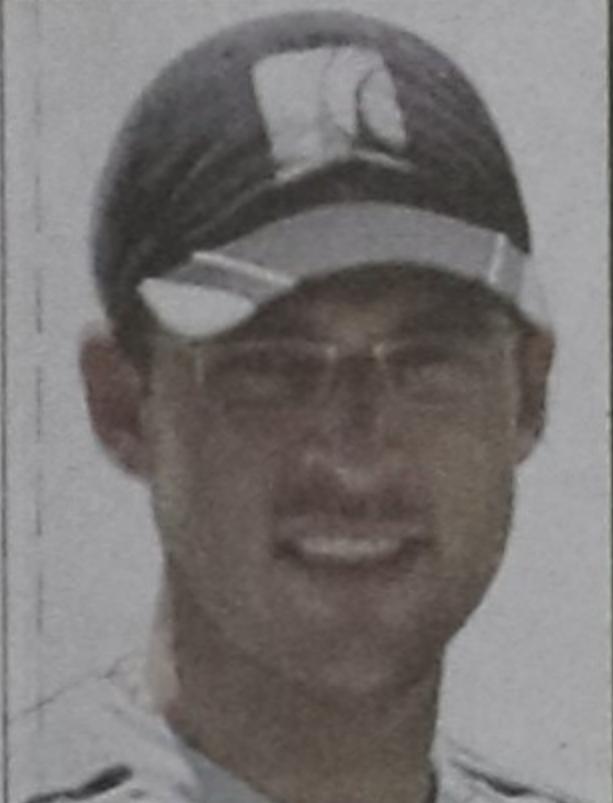


PHOTO: STAR

Abahani and national striker Enamul Haque runs for joy after scoring the all-important goal against Mukti Joddha Sangsad Krira Chakra during their Bangladesh League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.



Kolkata's Eden Gardens is the largest cricket ground in India.



Daniel Vettori
(New Zealand cricket captain)
"Dysfunctional sides at times make the best sides."

Looking at the bright side of a reported scuffle between Mohammad Aamer and Umar Gul.



STAR Cricket & SuperSport6

Australia v West Indies
Third Test, Day 5
Live from 9:30am

Ten Sports & SuperSport2

South Africa v England
First Test, Day 5
Live from 3:30pm

ESPN

English Premier League
Wolves v Burnley
Live from 8:25pm

West Ham v Chelsea
Live from 10:55pm

STAR Sports

England v Birmingham
Live from 9:55pm

SuperSport3

Primera Liga
Live from 1:00am (Monday)

Deportivo v Valencia
Live from 3:00am (Monday)

Torun avoid relegation

SPORTS REPORTER

Surjo Torun avoided complete embarrassment as the last year's runners-up made sure their place in the Premier Division Cricket League would stay by winning a do-or-die relegation battle against Khelaghara SKS by 64 runs at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The outcome on the other hand made sure that Khelaghara would join Partex Sporting Club in the First Division Cricket League next year.

Last year Surjo Torun, under the guidance of former national skipper Khaled Mashud, who is successfully leading Mohammadian this season to put an end to eight years of title-drought, had hogged the spotlight by achieving the runners-up position with a mediocre side.

But this season their performances have been very disappointing despite having players such as national opener Zunaed Siddiqui, Habibul Bashar, Rajin Saleh, Dhaman Ghosh

and Monjurul Islam in their ranks, though finally they have saved their skins by staying in the top flight.

"We have a good team but the problem was that we lost some close matches which made the difference. It is really disappointing that last season's runners-up team have struggled for Premier League survival, but you see Gazi Tank have also failed to reach the Super League even though they have a great team," said former national skipper Bashir.

"Our main problem was in the middle order and things could have been different if we had a good foreign recruit," he added.

Back to the match, experienced left-arm seamer Monjurul Islam bowled Surjo Torun to an easy sail as he took four wickets for 20 runs to dismiss Khelaghara for 147 runs. Ashraf Ali made 43 off 69 balls but his efforts were not good enough for Khelaghara to chase down Surjo Torun's 211 for eight.

Earlier, a 71-run opening stand between Imitiaz Hossain and Zunaed Siddiqui helped Surjo Torun to put on a decent total on the board after being sent into bat first.

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Lanka equalise

Cricket

AFP, Nagpur

Tillakaratne Dilshan hammered a second successive century to power Sri Lanka to a thrilling three-wicket victory over India in the second one-day international here on Friday.

The opener, who made 160 in the last match, cracked a rapid 123 as Sri Lanka surpassed India's 301-7 with five balls to spare in the day-night game to level the five-match series-1.

India were indebted to skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni (107) for setting a challenging target.

Left-arm seamers Zaheer Khan and Ashish Nehra raised visions of a dramatic Indian win when they reduced Sri Lanka to 285-7 from a comfortable 213-2, but injured Angelo Mathews held his nerve under pressure to see his team home.

Mathews, batting with a runner, Chamara Kapugedera, in the later part of his unbeaten 37, completed the victory with a single off spinner Ravindra Jadeja in the last over.

Zaheer grabbed three wickets, including two in one over, while Nehra got the prize wicket of Dilshan.

Sri Lanka got off to an explosive start, with Dilshan and Upul Tharanga (37) flaying the Indian attack to add 102 for the opening wicket off 14 overs.

Tharanga was caught in the

slips by Virender Sehwag off spinner Harbhajan Singh, but there was no stopping Dilshan who continued to gather runs comfortably against both pace and spin bowlers with bold

strokeplay.

Dilshan, who raced to his half-century off 31 balls, completed his fifth one-day hundred before being bowled by

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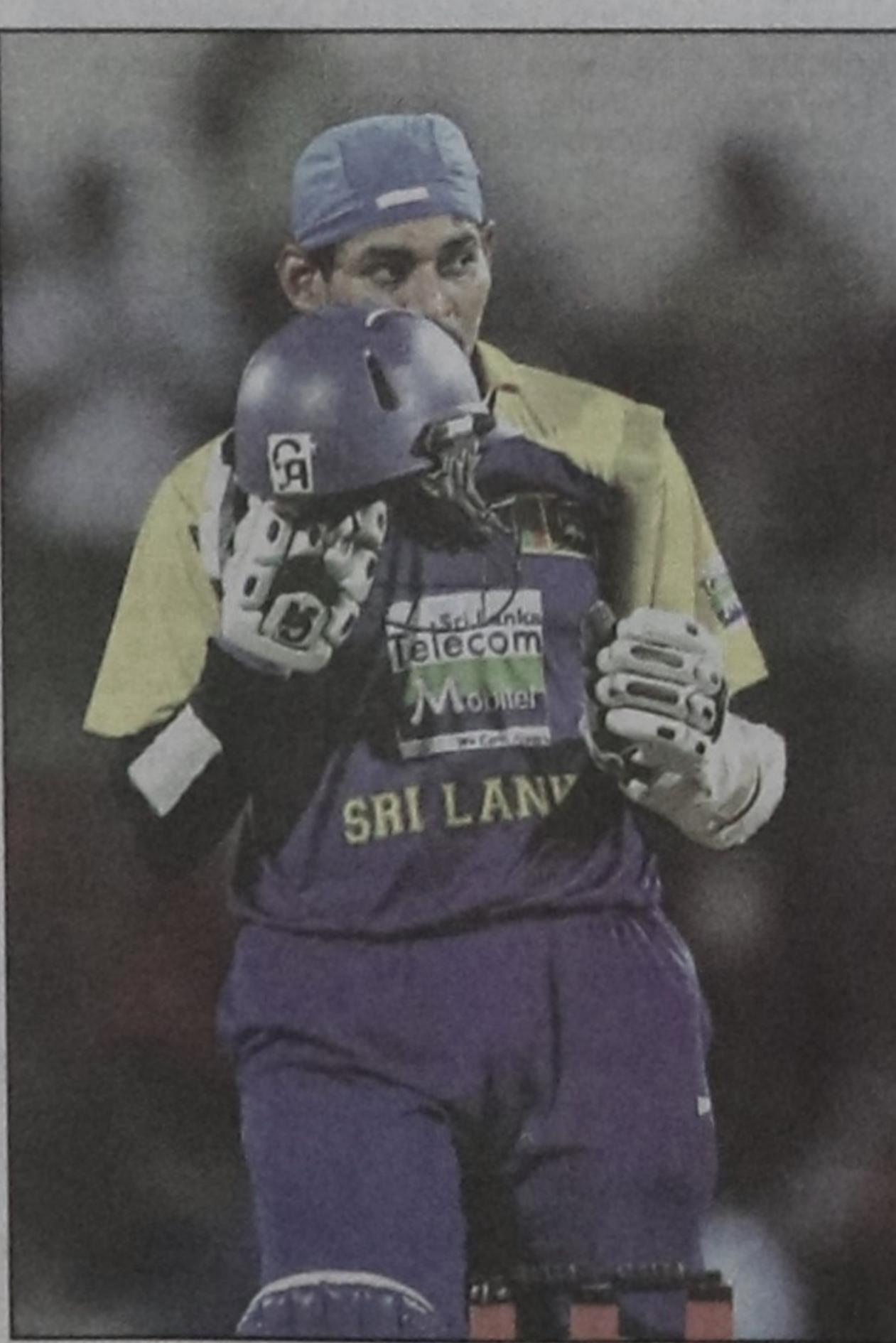


PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lanka's explosive opener Tillakaratne Dilshan kisses his helmet after scoring a back-to-back century in the second ODI against India in Nagpur on Friday.

Abahani-MSC tickets on sale

SPORTS REPORTER

The Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) has fixed the rate for Monday's title deciding Premier League match between Mohammadian and Abahani at Tk 200 for the VIP section of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Tickets will be available from 8:30am on the match day at the counters of the stadium. The other stands and enclosures and the galleries will remain opened for the general public free of cost.

The match will start at 9:40am with Ekushey Television (ETV) providing live coverage.

Sheikh Russel down Ctg Abahani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Chittagong

Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra defeated Chittagong Abahani 2-0 in their Citycell Bangladesh League clash at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

Sheikh Russel dominated the game and scored two from the handful of chances they got, one from penalty in the first half of the match.

However, the penalty created controversy and resentment among the Abahani players. Sheikh Russel Captain Aminul entered into the D-box while Abahani defender Zamir was running closely with him in the 31st minute and at one stage Aminul tripped prompting the referee Jasim Uddin to blow whistle for penalty shoot.

Though Abahani Custodian Biplob returned the first attempt from the spot from Samir Omari but he could not save the rebound from Zamir.

The first goal came in the

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Victory Day hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Police stunned Bangladesh Army 2-1 in the Victory Day Hockey tournament at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Police were 2-0 up in the first half with captain Rana and Chandan scoring one goal each. Jamal Khan reduced the margin for Army in the second half.

Sabuj soaring high

SPORTS REPORTER

Long-jumper Sajib Hossain and sprinter Shamsun Nahar Chumki sent a strong message that they were hungry for success in the coming South Asian (SA) Games to be held in Bangladesh from January 29 to February 9.

Sajib, who set a new national record in the high jump clearing 2.04 metre in the Summer Athletics meet November last, put his best-ever timing in a daylong trial at the BKSP in Savar yesterday.

He cleared the bar by 2.05 metre, an achievement that put him as a medal contender in the regional showpiece event. However, Junaid Hossain finished far behind the leader with 1.95 metre.

"I am happy after putting up my best today (Saturday) and I believe I can still clear another 15 centimeters. My focus is to keep up the momentum," said Sajib, a student from Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishabha (BKSP).

Bangladesh Athletic Federation, which is optimistic of winning the men's long-jump gold and the women's 100m hurdle from next year's SA Games, arranged the one-day meet in an effort to assess the performance of the athletes, who have been preparing for the regional extravaganza since January.

Sprinter Chumki improved her performance of the Summer meet (12 seconds) in the 100m sprint with a timing of 11.90 seconds. Iva finished behind Chumki, who, however, saw her main rival Nazmun Nahar Beauty miss the event due to a hamstring injury. Bangladesh needs a mark of improvement in the women's sprint, where the Sri Lankan and the Indian athletes are dominating.

Sumita Rani, who will be the lone competitor in the 100m hurdle following the absence of injured huddler Jasmine Akter, took the same time of 13.80 seconds she set during the Summer Athletics meet.

Golam Mortaza also maintained the same timing of the Summer Athletics meet. Mortaza from Daffodil University took 10.70 seconds to finish first, but Imran Bhuiyan, who attended an advanced training in Malaysia, frustrated all by finishing fourth in the sprint.

He however said he could run faster.

"Till today I have focused on the fitness aspects and now I will concentrate on sprint and I believe I can improve the timing by a distance," said Mortaza.

Five athletes Nazmun Nahar Beauty, Jasmine Akter, Al Amin, Afzal Hossain Surya and Emran Bhuiyan received advanced training in Malaysia for two-and-a-half months as a part of their preparation for the SA Games and the first two athletes ducked the trial due to injury.

Afzal Hossain Surya timed 54.00 seconds to finish first in the 400m hurdle while Al Amin, who has a record of jumping 7.81 metre in practice, was supposed to take part in the long-jump event.

Apart from those events, Asadul Islam finished first in 110m hurdle with a time of 14.49 seconds while Saidul Islam took 14.72 seconds to finish behind Asadul. Golam Mandal became first in the marathon, Shahin finished first in the 5000m run with a time of 16:26.55 minutes while Firoz Sarkar took 16:27.08 minutes to finish second.

Selim Mia emerged winner in 1500m run with a time of 4:15.13 minutes, Azharul Islam clinched the 400m sprint title with a timing of 49.60 seconds, Putul finished first in the 400m women's sprint clocking 58.30 seconds.

2-match ban on Dhoni

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

MS Dhoni, India's captain, has been banned for two ODIs because India maintained slow over-rate during the second match against Sri Lanka in Nagpur. The penalty is more severe than the usual monetary fines because India were found to be three overs short, which comes under the "serious over-rate offence" category. The ban is effective immediately, which means Dhoni will be unavailable for the games in Cuttack and Kolkata, returning only for the final ODI in Delhi. Virender Sehwag will captain the side in his absence.

Falling short by up to two overs in an ODI, and five in a Test day, is considered a "minor offence", and merits a ban only if the offence is repeated twice in 12 months. On Friday night, though, India finished their 50 overs about 45 minutes after the scheduled finish. That just about pushed it too far, and match referee Jeff Crowe had no choice but to impose a ban. If India repeat a serious over-rate offence in any

form of the game within the next 12 months, Dhoni could earn himself a ban of two to eight ODIs or one to four Tests.

Dhoni had been informed of the ban verbally, BCCI vice president Rajiv Shukla confirmed. The rest of the Indian players were fined 40 percent of their match fee for the offence -- 10 percent each for the first two overs of minor offence and 20 percent each for every subsequent over.

"We have received information that the match referee has put a two-ODI ban on Dhoni for slow over-rate," Ratnakar Shetty, BCCI's chief administrative officer, said. "We are waiting for a formal communication on this. We will look into details and then make further comments."

Earlier on the tour, Kumar Sangakkara too came close to getting banned when Sri Lanka were found to be two overs short during the second Twenty20 international in Mohali. Sangakkara was fined 40 percent of his match fee while the rest of the team was docked 20 percent each, but Crowe said Sangakkara escaped a much bigger penalty. "Kumar was

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PHOTO: INTERNET

Aussies a wicket away

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

West Indies had Australia shuddering for half the day but by stumps on the fourth day it was the hosts who were one wicket from cracking in a courageous chase in the series-deciding Perth Test on Saturday. Australia grabbed four breakthroughs in the last hour to be on the verge of a 2-0 series win, with Kemar Roach and Gavin Tonge needing another 51 to reach their unlikely victory target of 359.

The match seemed headed for a quick finish when West Indies were 3 for 68 at lunch -- the dangermen Chris Gayle and Deonarine Ramnarine were gone -- but Narsingh Deonarine and Brendan Nash combined in a brave partnership that gave them hope. By the scheduled end Australia needed three wickets and took the extra half hour, succeeding only in dismissing Sulieman Benn and Ravi Rampaul. Roach and Tonge not only held on, but added 29 in 30 balls to take the score to 9 for 308, extending the game into a fifth day.