

## AFC CHALLENGE CUP

# Booters fall to Myanmar

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh lost their second match in the AFC Challenge Cup finals as Myanmar rode on first half strikes by Tun Tun Win and Pai Soe to seal their second successive win with a 2-1 victory over their neighbours at the Sugathadasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday.

Saiful Bari Titu's charges went into the match on the back of a stunning 2-1 success against Tajikistan but Myanmar made sure that they continued their triumph against Bangladesh to all but confirm their semifinal spot with a maximum six points after outplaying hosts Sri Lanka on the opening day.

Bangladesh bounced back early in the second half when substitute winger Zahid Hossain pulled a goal back but that was all Titu's side could muster against their opponents, who are ahead of them in rankings.

Bangladesh and Tajikistan, who were back on track by winning the day's first match against Sri Lanka 3-1, are level on three points after two rounds.

The semifinal hope is still alive for Bangladesh but they must beat Sri Lanka, already out of contention for a semifinal berth, to reach the last four tomorrow and wait for the result between Myanmar and Tajikistan who

also play at the same time.

After a nervy start with both sides trying their luck without any avail, Tun Tun Win put Myanmar ahead in the 17th minute. He burst into the Bangladesh area with a long through ball during a counter attack and placed the ball past Aminul, who failed to stop the Myanmar forward despite coming out of his goal.

Bangladesh got two chances to come back but Emily mistimed his shot after meeting a cross by Enamul three minutes later while Enamul, who had scored Bangladesh's opening goal in the 2-1 victory over Tajikistan in the group opener, failed to reach a through by Shakil in the 24th minute.

Bangladesh went two down in the 33rd minute when the defence line failed to set an offside trap, allowing Pai Soe to get into the box and put a rising shot into the roof of the net.

Bangladesh came back strongly in the second half and Zahid, who replaced Komol in the first half, reduced the arrears in the 48th minute. The winger, who received a high cross from midfield with his chest, fired home from inside the box.

Emily, Enamul and Zahid all got their chances to bring Bangladesh back into the game but wasted the opportunity.

**BANGLADESH:** Aminul, Nasir, Mintu, Rezaul, Waly Faisal, Shakil, Mishu, Mamun, Komol (Zahid), Enamul (Zitu) and Emily.



Bangladesh striker Zahid Hasan Emily goes on the attack during the AFC Challenge Cup fixture against Myanmar at the Sugathadasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday. Bangladesh lost the match 1-2.

## Just a year to go

### We can progress far: Shakib

Cricket

Friday marks the one-year countdown to the start of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2011, the sport's most prestigious and eagerly awaited event.

Exactly 365 days from today, February 19, all eyes will be focused to the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur where hosts Bangladesh will be taking on neighbours and co-hosts India in the opening match of the 43-day tournament that will feature the 10 Full Members and four qualifiers, namely Ireland, Canada, the Netherlands and Kenya.

Sri Lanka are the third co-hosts of the tournament which is being staged in the subcontinent for the third time. A total of 13 venues will be used across the subcontinent and 49 matches will be played with India hosting 29 matches, including the final, a semifinal and a quarterfinal, Sri Lanka 12 matches, including a semifinal and a quarterfinal, and Bangladesh eight matches, including the opening match, and two

quarterfinals.

Captains of the subcontinent sides, Mahendra Singh Dhoni of India, Kumar Sangakkara of Sri Lanka and Shakib Al Hasan of Bangladesh are excited and upbeat about their teams' chances in the most-awaited tournament.

Bangladesh captain Shakib feels his side has come of age and is now ready to take on the best of the best. "I just get this feeling that the ICC Cricket World Cup 2011 is going to be huge for Bangladesh. When I see the kind of individual performances some of us have put up in ODIs in recent times I find genuine reasons to feel optimistic," he said.

"We will go into the World Cup knowing and believing that we can progress far. It is not like the 2007 tournament where some of us were teenagers and we did not know what to expect. Now there's more maturity and calm in the group and importantly, we are unearthing world-class performers. It won't be easy for any side to come to our backyard and get a result against us if we can put in a team performance," he said.

## Khulna Stadium condemned

QUAZI AMANULLAH

The Khulna Stadium building and its galleries have finally been declared as condemned and risky. Kazi Shamim Ahsan, General Secretary of the Khulna District Sports Association (KDSA) stated this information on Wednesday evening.

"We have received this information with a heavy heart as such a decision by the government came to us as a bolt from the blue. [They] declared the stadium building and its galleries as abandoned instead of going for allocation of fund for its reconstruction and renovation," said senior vice president of KDSA Ajmol Ahmed Tapan who is also panel Mayor-1 of Khulna City Corporation.

The Deputy Commissioner of Khulna district N.M. Ziaul Alam is ex-officio president of the Khulna District Sports Association.

He presided over a meeting held on November 4 last year where Executive Engineer Abu Hannan of Khulna PWD division-1 office, Addition Deputy Commissioner (Edn & Dev), Assistant engineer Anisur

## NAT'L CRICKET LEAGUE

### Khulna take Dhaka apart

SPORTS REPORTER

Robiul Islam returned with a match haul of ten wickets as Khulna posted a massive 229-run victory over Dhaka in the opening match of the second phase 11th National Cricket League at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

The young paceman took two more wickets on the last day to finish with five for 62 while his new ball partner also captured two wickets as Dhaka were bundled out for 229 runs in 65.1 overs after resuming the day on 141 for four.

Dollar gave the early breakthrough on the day by removing Nadif Chowdhury, who failed to add any runs on his overnight score of three while the other overnight batsman Shuvagoto Chowdhury, who started the day on 52, became a victim of Robiul, who also demolished Dhaka's first innings by taking five wickets. Shuvagoto made team highest 67 off 103 balls that contained eight fours and a six.

Mohammad Sharif made 30 off 56 balls with three fours and a six.

Meanwhile, Chittagong came from behind to stun

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Off-spinner Harbhajan Singh (L), who has just taken the wicket of Morne Morkel to confirm India's victory, leads the pack in celebrating the win against South Africa in the second and final Test on the fifth day in Kolkata yesterday.

## KOLKATA TEST DAY FIVE

# India exact revenge

Cricket

AFP, Kolkata

India defied an unbeaten century from Hashim Amla to crush South Africa by an innings and 57 runs in the final Test on Thursday to draw the series 1-1.

Off-spinner Harbhajan Singh claimed 5-59 as the tourists, trailing by 347 runs on the first innings, were bowled out for 290 in their second knock with just nine deliveries remaining in the match.

Amla returned unbeaten

on 123 to finish the series with an astonishing average of 490 after making 253 not out in the first Test and 114 in the opening innings of this match.

The 26-year-old from Durban battled for 394 deliveries and struck 16 boundaries in his ninth Test century, but failed to prevent his team from snatching a thrilling draw.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni's Indians, who lost the first Test in Nagpur by an innings and six runs, retained their number one Test ranking with 124 rating points.

Second-ranked South

Africa, who would have taken over from India if the match had ended in a draw, were left on 120 points.

Last man Morne Morkel (12) kept Amla company for 21.4 overs before being leg-before to Harbhajan in the penultimate over of the match in front of 40,000 relieved fans at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata.

Wayne Parnell, who put on 70 for the eighth wicket with Amla, was dismissed in the fourth over after tea for 22. He was caught at mid-on off seamer Ishant Sharma.

Sharma also had Paul Harris

caught in the slips for four, before Morkel and Amla almost pulled off a thrilling draw.

As the South Africans fought hard, India sorely missed pace spearhead Zaheer Khan, who was confined to the dressing room the entire day with a knee injury.

The overnight pair of Amla and Ashwell Price put on 47 for the fourth wicket, before Harbhajan broke through two hours after the start under bright sunshine.

The off-spinner beat Prince in the air and the miscued drive

## HAMILTON TEST DAY FOUR

# Tigers call in trouble

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh top-order once again showed lack of application and temperament to throw away the initiative they gained the previous day and the tourists now stare at defeat at 88 for five by stumps yesterday, still 316 runs away from the victory target with a full day to survive.

Earlier, New Zealand skipper Daniel Vettori declared their second innings on 258 for five, setting up Bangladesh with a daunting target of 404.

The Bangladeshi batsmen, all five of them to fall so far, were guilty of throwing their wickets away under pressure on a wicket that still was a very good one for batting on the fourth day of the one-off Test in Hamilton.

Tamim Iqbal gave them the opening, slogging to long off where a back-pedaling Daryl Tuffey took an important catch. The remainder of the top-order folded feebly under pressure, with New Zealand hot on attack in the final session.

Skipper Shakib Al Hasan and wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim have barely arrived at the crease, and the next man in is Mahmudullah Riyad, centurion of the first innings. Barring the possibility of a rain, Bangladesh will need something miraculous from these three to avoid defeat on the final day.

Cricinfo adds: a sedate second innings from New Zealand saw the hosts ambling to 228 for 5 at tea before a four over post-break burst from Brendon McCullum brought about the declaration, with his side 403 runs in the clear. It capped a strong finish to the innings that was initially tied down by Shafiqul Islam and Shahadat Hossain, who choked the overnight pair of Peter Ingram and Tim McIntosh at the start of the day. Both batsmen seemed nervy under the pressure exerted, which eventually brought about the debutant's dismissal, run out, backing up too far for an attritional 13.

Shakib employed sweepers and a fine leg for most of the day, intent on keeping boundaries to a bare minimum. He

was largely successful, with only nine fours coming in the morning session, a rare sedate passage of play that stood out in a match that had until then featured an assortment of stunning strokeplay.

Runs were easier to come by after lunch for the hosts, but only marginally so. Tim McIntosh and Martin Guptill exploited the gaps in the infield to keep the scoreboard ticking, occasionally springing to life to loft bad deliveries for six.

Bangladesh had a mixed day in the field, effecting two run outs and defending the boundaries energetically, but were woeful with their catching, spilling two chances off McIntosh and one off Guptill who remained unbeaten. Guptill's knock summed up the afternoon quite nicely for New Zealand, with thirty-two singles, three twos and three sixes making up his 56. McCullum hustled a quick 19 after tea, taking New Zealand to 258 for 5 before Vettori called the innings to a close.

Tamim played as he has for much of the tour, attacking without reservation. The



Bangladesh batsman Aftab Ahmed (R) falls short of his ground on a throw by New Zealand's Jeetan Patel (not in picture) on the fourth day of the one-off Test in Hamilton yesterday.

## We have to reassess Ashraful: Siddons

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Jamie Siddons, the Bangladesh coach, was critical of his team's performance after the top-order collapsed once again, on the fourth evening in Hamilton on Thursday to leave the hosts in sight of victory.

"The game got away from us in the 25 or so overs of terrible batting. Our aim was to get through today and regroup for tomorrow [Friday]. I'm not sure what went wrong, whether the boys felt the pressure of the big occasion or if they thought they could go out and actually get the runs but it was certainly not in the plan, the way Tamim [Iqbal] played," Siddons said.

He was however quick to defend the Bangladesh opener's aggressive approach. "That's just the way he plays. He bats in the same way as [India's Virender] Sehwag. We all loved it when he got 68 in the first innings and 150 odd against India. But the other boys have to realise that just like it's not all about [Mohammad] Ashraful, it's not all about Tamim. They have to stand up and perform."

Siddons hinted that the Bangladesh cricket establishment's patience for Ashraful may have reached its end. "[He] had a terrible tour and he kept making the same bad decisions. We might have to reassess Ashraful when we get back," Siddons said.

Siddons also tried to remain upbeat about the looming final day of the match. "We have three guys there who are all capable of making Test centuries and we need at least two of those guys to make big scores for us to have a chance."

"We have to keep picking ourselves up after games like this. I've said it before and I'll say it again, this is a young team and that's part of the reason we keep failing under pressure. I think our opponents know that and believe that they have what it takes to get the better of us," Siddons said.

Tim McIntosh, who top-scored with 89 for the hosts, felt that the disappointment of missing a hundred was compensated by the fact that his knock had put his side on course for a win. "It was a bit disappointing not to get to three figures but I am happy to



England cricketers go through routines during a training session at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium yesterday. The English are now in the emirate for the World Cup T20 Challenge against Pakistan. England, led by Alastair Cook, arrive in Bangladesh for three ODIs and two Tests on Sunday.