

## League service resumes

### Abahani play Brothers

SPORTS REPORTER

After a seven-week break following the Bangladesh national football team's engagement in the South Asian Games as well as AFC Challenge Cup, the third edition of Bangladesh League resumes today at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Popular Abahani, league leaders and defending champions, take on Brothers Union in the day's lone game in a bid to continue their unbeaten streak as they remain unconquered eight matches along with their rival Mohammedan Sporting Club, who will resume their campaign tomorrow with a game against Sheikh Russel KC at the same venue.

Abahani coach Amalesh Sen believes his charges will not face much trouble to overcome their opponents as the players

have been in training since the suspension of the league.

"After a long break, you can't find the rhythm what Abahani had been putting in their previous matches, but I can believe the spectators will enjoy the games as we are only thinking about the victory," said Sen before yesterday's training at the Abahani ground.

Abahani, however, is taking inspiration from their unbeaten run in the league and a friendly match against Rahmatganj where Abahani performed as expected.

Nevertheless, the return of goalkeeper Biplob Bhattacharjee, striker Enamul Haque and defender Atiqur Rahman Mishu, who all were in national duty, will boost the Sky Blues and they have also ensured the services of a trio of Ghanaian -- Sheriff Din Mohammad, Samad Yousuf and Awudu Ibrahim, for the match against Brothers, who always put up a

spirited show against the Dhanmondi-based outfit.

Brothers Union with 10 points are in the fourth position in the 13-team points table though they went down to Beanibazar SC and Mohammedan in their last two matches.

"No doubt, Abahani are the better side compared to Brothers and they have already proved it by staying on top in the points table," Brothers coach Wasim Iqbal said. "But, we will play our own game and try to snatch a point from them."

Wasim, however, was a little bit worried over the non-continuation of the training as he got the players for two to three weeks out of seven weeks for training.

The former national player is also dreaming of upsetting Abahani as he is getting the services of Ghanaian duo Enoch Benti and Steven Aboua.

## Shooters welcomed warmly

### Golden girls call for better facilities

SPORTS REPORTER

It is rare to see sports practitioners in the country receive a warm welcome on their return from a successful foreign sojourn, unless of course you are a cricketer or a footballer. So it was refreshing to see the returning shooters from the Commonwealth Shooting Championships hogging the spotlight for at least a few hours yesterday, following their successes in India.

The shooters, especially Sharmin Akhter Ratna and Syeda Sadia Sultana who together made the nation proud after grabbing a gold medal in the 10m air rifle pair event in New Delhi, were in focus as the National Shooting Federation of Bangladesh held a mini reception on their arrival at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday.

Though shooters Sabrina Sultana, Tripti Datta, Toufique Shahriar Chandan, Abdullah Hel Baki, Altamas Kabir, Iqbal Hossain and Nuruddin Selim also returned home in the same flight, golden girls Ratna and Sadia were the centre of attraction with everyone garlanding the duo.

Star shooter Asif Hossain Khan, who returned home earlier after winning

bronze in the 10m air rifle pair event along with Shovon Chowdhury, and the 2004 SA Games gold medalist Sharmin Akhter, who is now struggling with her poor form, were also present on the occasion.

A return of one gold, one silver and two bronze medals might be considered a small achievement for Bangladesh, but it shows the way forward for the shooters who demanded the continuation of training, providing standard coach as well as opportunities to go abroad for more international competitions.

"Yes, the SA Games was at a preliminary stage for us and we now passed the Commonwealth Shooting Championship, but we are looking forward to doing something better in Olympics and I will say we won't pass our exam until we get success in Olympics," said SA Games double gold medalist Ratna, who also won silver medal in the individual 10m air rifle event.

The girl from Magura, however, said that to keep the momentum they need a high-profile coach as well as create more opportunities to take part in international competitions.

"We are generally not given high profile coaches and it is not possible for the

federation to appoint a high profile coach because of financial crisis. If the government comes forward to provide us good coaches, then we will be able to make the nation proud in international competition," said Ratna adding that they also needed to participate in the international meets frequently.

"If we take part in the international meet regularly, then we can realise what is our standard and what areas we should improve. The training is a factor but you have to justify your training through participating in international competition," said Ratna.

Sadia also emphasised the need of good coaches as well as a continuation of training.

Chairman of the standing committee of youth and sports Jahid Ahsan Rasel promised to convey the shooters' demands to the Prime Minister, who had earlier vowed to continue the training for the athletes after the conclusion of the SA Games.

Bangladesh Olympic Association secretary general Kutubuddin Ahmed has announced that his business house, Sheltec, would provide Tk 10,000 each for gold winners each month.



PHOTO: STAR

**SMILE OF GOLD:** Bangladesh's Sharmin Akhter Ratna (L) and Syeda Sadia Sultana show off their medals they shot in the Commonwealth Shooting Championships in Delhi last week upon their arrival at the Dhaka airport yesterday afternoon.

**What to WATCH**  
ESPN  
Sportscentre India  
Sports News  
Live at 8:30pm

**DAY'S EVENT**  
National Cricket League  
(Four-Day Match, Day Two)  
Khulna v Chittagong  
Venue: Shaheed Chandu Stadium, Bogra  
Rajshahi v Dhaka  
Venue: Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium, Khulna  
Bangladesh League  
Abahani v Brothers Union  
Time: 6:00pm  
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

## THIRD AND FINAL ODI AGAINST INDIA

### Consolation win for SA

Cricket

AFP, Ahmedabad

AB de Villiers and Jacques Kallis hammered centuries to set up South Africa's consolation 90-run victory over India in the third and final one-day international on Saturday.

De Villiers cracked a quickfire 102 not out for his sixth hundred and skipper Kallis a solid unbeaten 104 for his 17th century as South Africa posted their highest one-day total of 365-2 against India.

Man-of-the-match De Villiers's century came off just 58 deliveries, the seventh fastest in one-day cricket.

India, who rested openers Sachin Tendulkar and Virender Sehwag, and pacemen Praveen Kumar and Ashish Nehra after gaining an unbeatable 2-0 lead on Wednesday, were all out for 275 in the day-night match in Ahmedabad.

"AB played a really special knock, taking the total from 300 to 360," said Kallis.

"We know we are a lot better than we have played in the series. If we play to our strength, we are a very good one-day side."

maximum damage as he finished with three wickets for 37 runs, including those of Virat Kohli (57) and skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni (nine) in one over.

Seamer Lonwabo Tsotsobe bagged three wickets, while spinners Johan Botha and Roelof van der Merwe took two wickets apiece.

The South African bowlers were superbly backed by wicketkeeper Mark Boucher, who finished with five dismissals.

Suresh Raina (49), Rohit Sharma (48) and Ravindra Jadeja (36) were the other main scorers for India.

"We have done well this season. There have been injuries and we have missed key players," said Dhoni.

"If you look at everything, we have done really well."

De Villiers and Kallis made the most of India's depleted attack, adding 173 for the unfinished third wicket with a wide range of strokes. They built on impressive efforts from openers Hashim Amla (87) and Loots Bosman (68).

Kallis hit three sixes and five fours in his 94-ball knock, reaching his hundred in the penultimate over with a six off fast bowler Shanthakumaran Sreesanth.

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHAMAN

**TERRIFIC TON:** Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal jumps for joy upon reaching his century against England in the day-night first one-day international at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Tamim hammered a 120-ball 125.

## AFC CHALLENGE CUP

### North Korea champions

SPORTS REPORTER

DPR Korea emerged champions in the AFC Challenge Cup to qualify for the AFC Asian Cup after beating Turkmenistan 5-4 in a tie-breaker at the Sugathadasa Stadium yesterday.

The match rolled into shootouts after the regulation as well as extra time ended in a 1-1 draw.

Goalkeeper Ju Kwang-min was the hero as the custodian crucially saved Arslanmyrat Amanov's sudden-death penalty as DPR Korea completed a spirited comeback after playing for just under an hour with 10-men following Ryang Myong-il's first-half dismissal.

DPR Korea's promising start was halted after the defender was sent-off in the 32nd minute before Berdy Shamuradov struck for Turkmenistan less than a minute later.

But with DPR Korea still managing to dominate, the Turkmenistan's defence was finally breached with 14 minutes remaining as Ryang Yong-gi headed home to level the margin.

Bangladesh exited the tournament in the group stages after losing to both Sri Lanka and Myanmar, following a bright start with a win over Tajikistan.

## AFC agrees to share costs

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohamed Bin Hammam, president of the Asian Football Confederation, promised that the AFC would share the expenses of the regional federations in the quest of bringing professionalism into their administrations.

The announcement came at the executive committee meeting of the SAFF (South Asian Football Federation) held on Saturday in the Sri Lankan capital on the sidelines of the AFC Challenge Cup.

"By sharing the expenses, the AFC can ensure a professional set-up. Our financial support will contribute towards the recruitment of coaches, referees, grassroots and other professional staffs," Hammam was quoted as saying by the official website of the Asian football confederation.

Hammam was impressed with SAFF's efforts to develop the sport in the region and said

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## NATIONAL CRICKET LEAGUE

# Nadim drives Dhaka

SPORTS REPORTER

Opener Nadimuddin Mintu struck a big century to put Dhaka in a commanding position against holders Rajshahi on the opening day of the third round match of the second phase of 11th National Cricket League match at the Khulna Divisional Stadium yesterday.

Riding on Nadimuddin's 147, Dhaka raced to 330 for five at stumps with Marshal Ayub and Shuvagoto Chowdhury batting on 59 and 14 respectively.

Away at Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra, Chittagong were trailing Khulna by 158 runs with seven wickets in hand after wrapping up their opponents for 241 in the first innings, thanks to four-wicket hauls from pacer Kazi Kamrul and spinner Elias Sunny.

In Khulna, it seemed that Rajshahi's decision to send Dhaka in was right when opener Roni Talukdar was dismissed for 27 with the total reaching only 44, but other opener Nadimuddin and one-down Shamsur Rahman Shuvo proved it wrong to take Dhaka to 166 for

two in 47.1 overs.

Delwar Hossain finally separated them removing Shuvo, who made 63 off 99 balls featuring six fours and two sixes and the pacer then trapped out-of-form Mohammad Ashraf, who made a two-ball duck.

However, Nadimuddin was batting at his best and scoring fluently. His 147 came off 244 balls and was studded with 17 fours and four sixes. Finally he was bowled by Saqlain Sajib, who returned figures of two for 76. Delwar also took two wickets for 46.

At Bogra, After being put in to bat by Chittagong, Khulna fell in trouble losing opener Nazmus Sadat for a four-ball duck before Amit Talukdar and Taposh Ghosh repaired the setback.

Despite having got good starts, all Khulna batsmen failed to convert those into healthy individual innings as Amit top-scored with 42, followed by Nizamuddin's 31, Mohammad Mithun's 30, Dollar Mahmud's 29 and Sahagir Hossain's 27.

Khulna were eventually bowled out for 241

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## HOCKEY WORLD CUP

# England stun Australia

AFP, New Delhi

James Tindall scored two goals as a fired-up England stunned hot favourites Australia 3-2 in the men's field hockey World Cup on Sunday.

England's first World Cup win over the Kookaburras since 1975 gave a dramatic start to the latest edition in the Indian capital after Olympic silver-medalists Spain beat South Africa 4-2 in the opening match.

Australian captain Jamie Dwyer scored twice, including a penalty stroke, but Jason Lee's European champions played outstanding hockey to rattle their fancied opponents.

England had last beaten Australia at the 1975 World Cup in Malaysia, before losing

seven straight games in the sport's showpiece tournament.

Dwyer's stroke in the 23rd minute put Australia ahead, but England drew level two minutes later through a penalty corner by Ashley Jackson.

Tindall then scored on either side of the break as England led 3-1 till four minutes before the final whistle when Dwyer narrowed the margin with a field goal.

Australia's Glenn Turner wasted two good chances near the end, while England's protest against a penalty corner being awarded to the Kookaburras in the last minute was upheld by the video umpire.

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PHOTO: STAR

Khulna batsman Dollar Mahmud goes on the defensive during the first day's play of their National Cricket League match against Chittagong at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra yesterday.