



Abahani stalwart Asaduzzaman Chandan (3rd from L) celebrates one of his six goals with teammates during the opening match of the Club Cup hockey against Police SC at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday. Abahani won 7-1.

PCL T20 Cup Top Sports pip Ctg MSC

SPORTS REPORTER

Top Sports Club of Noakhali strolled to an eight-wicket victory over Chittagong Mohammedan Sporting Club in the opening match of the Bashundhara PCL T20 Cup at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Winning the toss, Top Sports skipper Shakib Al Hasan invited the opposition and succeeded in restricting the star-studded Mohammedan for most part of the innings. A few lusty blows from Mohammedan skipper Mohammad Ashraful and Sohrawardi Shuvo helped them put a modest total of 124 for the loss of seven wickets at the end of twenty overs.

LATEST
BIMAN: 126-9 in 20 overs.
BENGAL TIGERS: 128-3b in 16.2 overs.
Result: Tigers won by 7 wickets.

A rollicking start from Pakistani recruit Taufiq Umar and Farhad Hossain meant Top Sports were always ahead of the chase. The left-hander Taufiq played a 39-ball 47 run knock while Farhad scored 21. Left-hander Shahriar Nafees and skipper Shakib Al Hasan accelerated the charge with 20 balls to spare and eight wickets in hand.

Nafees remained unbeaten on 39 and Shakib on 14. Umar was named man-of-the-match.

Earlier, a simple ceremony marked the inauguration of the

Harbhajan fires for Mumbai

SPORTS REPORTER

Harbhajan Singh starred with both bat and ball as Mumbai Indians defeated Deccan Chargers by 41 runs in the Indian Premier League at the DY Patil Stadium in Mumbai last night.

He smashed eight boundaries and two sixes in his 18-ball 49 as Mumbai made 172-7 in 20 overs. In reply, Deccan Chargers could only muster 131 runs with the off-spinner picking up three wickets.

Harbhajan's hurricane had Mumbai amassing 72 runs from the final five overs of their innings.

Deccan started brightly but only Rohit Sharma got going, smashing 45 off 28 balls with two sixes.

Zaheer Khan and Lasith Malinga also took three wickets.

BRIEF SCORES

MUMBAI: 172-7 in 20 overs (Tendulkar 55, Harbhajan 49*, RP Singh 3-31).

DECCAN: 131-10 in 20 overs (Sharma 45, Gibbs 27, Harbhajan 3-31)

Result: Mumbai won by 41 runs.

What to WATCH

- ATN Bangla**
Port City League
Brothers v City Tigers
Live from 5:00pm
Pirates of Ctg v Tigers
Live from 8:40pm
- SuperSport2**
Indian Premier League
Delhi Daredevils v
Kolkata Knight Riders
Live from 8:30pm
New Zealand v Australia
Second Test, Day 4
Live from 3:30am (Tuesday)
- ESPN**
English Premier League
Man City v Wigan
Live from 1:30am (Tuesday)
- SuperSport7**
Primera Liga
Athletic v Racing
Live from 1:00am (Tuesday)

DAY'S EVENT

- Bangladesh League**
Feni Soccer Club v
Mohammedan
Time: 3:30pm
Venue: Feni Stadium
Shuktara v Sheikh Russel
Time: 3:30pm
Venue: Narayanganj Stadium
Beanibazar v Abahani
Time: 5:00pm
Venue: Sylhet Stadium
Muktijoddha v Brothers Union
Time: 5:00pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium
- Club Cup Hockey**
Mohammedan v Ajax
Time: 4:00pm
Venue: Maulana Bhasani National Stadium
- Port City League**
Brothers v City Tigers
Time: 5:00pm
Pirates of Ctg v Tigers
Time: 8:40pm
Venue: Sharjah Cricket Stadium

HOCKEY BACK TO PLAYING FIELD FINALLY Abahani arrest Police

SPORTS REPORTER

After almost a two-year gap the hockey season's curtain tournament, Dhaka Bank Club Cup, got underway yesterday at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium with defending champions Abahani recording a thumping 7-1 win against Police SC on the opening day.

However, things did not go very smooth for the organisers to get the ball rolling on the field after the long break following a load shedding in the stadium area that resulted in delaying the opening match for over two hours.

Due to the outage, the organisers failed to make the ground wet and the match started at about 4:45pm and were forced to shift the second match between Mohammedan and Ajax SC to Monday.

Back to the day's match, Abahani this time formed a youthful side comprising all BKSP players except two national players Moshir Rahman Biplob and defender Asaduzzaman Chandan, who struck six goals including a hatrick.

Despite six goals from Chandan, all attention was on the youngsters to see how they play under the supervision of BKSP coach Kawsar Ali and whether they are able to retain the title. And they passed their first exam with a massive win, but their coach was not satisfied

with the overall performance.

"Some eight to nine players are Higher Secondary Certificate candidates, so they are not experienced enough to play at such a level, but I believe they are quite able to take the pressure and our target is to play the final of the tournament," said Kawsar after the match.

"Besides, it was the first match and they could not apply themselves to what I instructed them before the game. They should have been occupying the opponents territory, but I think they can do that as the tournament progresses," said the coach.

The Abahani coach also believed that there were virtually no difference between other players and his charges considering the fact that most of the players, except the national and BKSP players, were out of action since June 2008. But the good thing about his charges was that they have been playing and it would make the difference in the tournament in light of the new world rules of hockey which made the game more fast.

After the start of the game, Abahani went ahead in the very sixth minute when Chandan converted the second penalty corner and then he doubled the margin two minutes later also from a penalty corner and completed his

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INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE Rajasthan's 4th in a row

CRICINFO, undated

Naman Ojha's bat, Yusuf Pathan's right arm and some steady nerves from the fast bowlers proved enough to flummox Chennai Super Kings and lead Rajasthan Royals to their fourth win in a row at the Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

Ojha's first half-century of the season, and best score in the Indian Premier League, propelled Rajasthan to a formidable total of 177 before a miserly spells from Yusuf, who also effected a direct-hit run-out and held two catches, Shaun Tait and Siddharth Trivedi choked Chennai as the "home" side surged to a 17-run victory.

SCORES IN BRIEF

RAJASTHAN ROYALS: 177 for eight in 20 overs (Ojha 80, Lumb 30, Voges 20; Jakati 2/30, Morkel 2/46).

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: 160 for six in 20 overs (Vijay 42, Morkel 28, Badrinath 25, Dhoni 21; Tait 2/22).

Result: Rajasthan Royals won by 17 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Naman Ojha.

'Don't rule out Harmison'

INTERNET, undated

Durham captain Will Smith believes Steve Harmison could be pushing for another England recall in the summer.

The pace bowler's international ambitions took a blow over the winter after he was left out of the touring squads for South Africa and Bangladesh, but Smith does not think his lead seamer is ready to give up on Test cricket just yet.

"I don't know what the England situation is for him," said Smith. "They seem to have a group of fairly young bowlers and I assume they're

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NZ v AUS, 2ND TEST, HAMILTON

Taylor fights alone

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Ross Taylor raced to New Zealand's fastest Test century but the hosts failed to support their red-hot teammate and the sides finished almost level after two days. New Zealand earned a slender 33-run advantage after Taylor's 138 off 104 balls took them towards 264, a first-innings total which could have been so much stronger.

Shane Watson, who survived a reviewed lbw appeal from Brent Arnel, drove well to be 28 while Simon Katich was 6 as Australia went to stumps at 35 for 0. Bad light ended play 24 overs early and the visitors will begin day three two runs ahead.

While Taylor exploded in a jaw-dropping display, Australia were able to pick up regular breakthroughs, often through Mitchell Johnson, even though they gave Taylor three lives. Taylor reached his century in 81 deliveries, beating the 82-ball effort of Daniel Vettori against Zimbabwe, and blasted four sixes and 19 fours. He wanted to show his side would not be intimidated by Australia and he wasn't, but not many of his teammates shared the belief.

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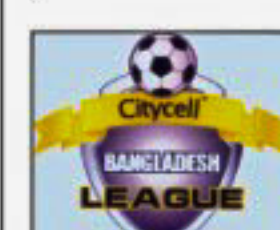


PHOTO: INTERNET

New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor drives the ball on way to an aggressive 138 on the second day of the second Test against Australia in Hamilton yesterday.

2nd phase from today

SPORTS REPORTER



The second-leg of the Bangladesh League begins today with titans Abahani and Mohammedan SC starting their campaigns with parallel goals of clinching the country's most coveted title.

Two-time champions Abahani lead the way having secured 34 points from their allotted 12 matches after the end of the first leg and they are seemingly in an advantageous position on way to a hatrick of title triumph compared to their perennial foes Mohammedan, who trail by four with 30 points from 12 matches.

The recent statistics show the title race in country's top level football competition is mainly confined to two or three teams and they are obviously archrivals Abahani and Mohammedan and either Brothers Union or Muktijoddha Sangsad subject to budgets behind the team formation and evidently the latter two teams are not in the race leaving a two-way tie between Abahani and Mohammedan though new powerhouse, Sheikh Russel KC, are also

breathing down their necks having collected 27 points from 12 matches.

"We are looking forward to keeping our unbeaten run when we start our second-phase taking on Beanibazar SC tomorrow (Monday)," Abahani coach Amalesh Sen told The Daily Star before the start of practice at the Sylhet Stadium yesterday.

Sen believes the team spirit is Abahani's main strength and if the players can play their natural game in the second leg they will not face any trouble to touch the unique feat of a hatrick of professional league titles.

The former national player, however, admitted that the attraction of the league has been reduced more because of the frequent breaks of the league, which also diminished the claws of the minnow sides.

Sen also believes the sub-standard foreign recruits in the other teams was also another reason behind the lack of upsets in the ongoing league.

Sen's counterpart Mohammedan coach Maruful Haque is also determined not to lose

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MAN UNITED STILL TOP Seventh heaven for Chelsea

AFP, London



Champions Manchester United restored their one-point lead at the top of the English Premier League with a 4-0 win at Bolton on Saturday, responding perfectly to Chelsea's 7-1 mauling of Aston Villa.

It took United, without injured star striker Wayne Rooney, 38 minutes to go ahead through a Jiloy Samuel own goal at the Reebok Stadium.

And it wasn't until 21 minutes from time that United added a second when Dimitar Berbatov, leading the line in Rooney's absence, scored the first of his two goals before substitute Darron Gibson added a fourth in the 82nd minute.

But, either side of Samuel's own-goal, United goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar made important saves from Johan Elmander and Fabrice Muamba.

"They were absolutely magnificent saves," said United manager Sir Alex Ferguson.

"The second one, in particular, I think was a match-winning save."

Earlier, Frank Lampard took his goal tally for the season to 21 as Chelsea briefly deposed United at the top with a 7-1 thrashing of Villa at Stamford Bridge.

"It (the team's performance) was absolutely outstanding," said Chelsea assistant manager Ray Wilkins.

beaten by a fine side. We stopped competing at 3-1 and that's unforgivable."

Arsenal stayed third after dropping points in a 1-1 draw away to Birmingham.

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RESULTS	
Birmingham 1 (Phillips 90)	Arsenal 1 (Nasri 81)
Bolton 0	Man Utd 4 (Samuel 38-og, Berbatov 69, 78, Gibson 82)
Chelsea 7 (Lampard 15, 44-pen, 62-pen, 90, Malouda 57, 68, Kalou 83)	Aston Villa 1 (Carew 29)
Hull 2 (Bullard 16-pen, Fagan 48)	Fulham 0
Tottenham 2 (Crouch 27, Kranjcar 41)	Portsmouth 0
West Ham 0	Stoke 1 (Fuller 69)
Wolves 0	Everton 0



Chelsea midfielder Frank Lampard (L) hammers home his first penalty kick past the despairing dive of Aston Villa goalkeeper Brad Friedel in their Premier League match at Stamford Bridge in London on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP