

## Sampdoria to sack Cassano

Sampdoria have asked Italian League authorities for permission to terminate the contract of Italy striker Antonio Cassano with immediate effect, local press reports. Cassano did not turn up to Sampdoria's training on Saturday morning and has allegedly been suspended by the club. The sanctions brought against the 28-year-old relate to a spat with club president Riccardo Garrone on Tuesday, during which time Cassano is supposed to have insulted the official. Although he apologised during a meeting with Garrone on Thursday, coach Domenico Di Carlo on Friday omitted Cassano from the match-day squad for Sunday's



## 16TH ASIAN GAMES Ahad urges for best showing

SPORTS REPORTER

State Minister for Youth and Sports Ahad Ali Sarker urged the athletes to put their best to bring laurels to the country in the upcoming 16th Asian Games to be held in Guangzhou in China from November 12 to 27.

The sports minister made the request at the introducing ceremony with the players, coaches and officials ahead of the departure of Bangladesh's 235-member contingent at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday. The Bangladesh contingent will start leaving the country from November 1.

With 476 golds in 42 disciplines up for grabs, Bangladesh will take part in 16 disciplines athletics, weightlifting, karate, taekwondo, boxing, kabaddi, archery, swimming, shooting, cricket, football, hockey, golf, wushu, chess and billiards.

Ahad promised to launch a talent-hunt programme in every discipline from next year and then promised to provide proper training for those talented athletes.

Bangladesh Olympic Association president and Army chief General Abdul Mubeen, secretary general Kutubuddin Ahmed, Jahid Hasan Rassel, the chairman of standing committee on Youth and Sports, Sports secretary Mahub Ahmed and deputy chef de mission of the contingent Abdul Awal Majnu were among others present.

### SPORTS POLL

#### TODAY'S QUESTION

Do you think the rewards given to the Tigers are over the top?

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**TICKER TAPE CELEBRATIONS:** Jubilant Abahani members party with the Federation Cup on the podium. (Inset) Abahani's hatrick hero Awudu Ibrahim (2nd from R) goes on a celebratory lap after hitting his third goal at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

# Fed Cup Abahani's

ATIQUÉ ANAM



Abahani lifted the trophy of the season's curtain-raising tournament Grameen-phone Federation Cup for the eighth time as they beat a star-studded Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club 5-3 in the final at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

Abahani's Ghanaian recruit Awudu Ibrahim scored a brilliant hatrick and his compatriots Twum Frank and Yussif Aminu scored one each while Enamul Haque scored two for Sheikh Jamal while Mamunul Islam scored the other. The score at regulation time was tied 3-3.

The match lived up to the billing as the two clubs fought out a thoroughly entertaining battle in front of a full-house. The sides battled neck and neck for the ninety minutes and were squared off at full time in a thrilling 3-3 tie.

However, the difference was probably made in extra time after the Sheikh Jamal defender Rezaul Karim saw red for a second bookable offence. Abahani strikers pounced on the feeble Sheikh Jamal backline late in the game and scored two more goals to snatch victory.

This win broke a 10-year jinx for the Sky Blues as the defending professional league champions' last triumph in the tournament came way back in 2000.

Abahani fielded the same eleven that won against Brothers Union in the semifinal, while Jamal brought three changes to their starting line up from the semifinal eleven against Muktijoddha Sangsad. They started with their favoured formation of 4-2-3-1 with out-of-touch striker Zahid Hasan Emily once again starting as the lone man up front, while behind him the attacking trio of Zahid, Enamul, and Kamol operated.

In the early exchanges, Abahani made more of an impression with their possession game and created more chances with good buildup and movement from midfield to attack.

First to strike though were Sheikh Jamal on the half-hour mark and against the run of play. Abdul Baten Kamol made a dummy inside the box on a Zahid Hassan square-pass to let it reach poacher Enamul Haque inside the edge of the box. The former Abahani striker finished with a fierce left footer to give the new powerhouse of local football the lead.

But it took the Sky Blues only a minute to strike back and draw level. It resulted from a fumble from Rezaul that allowed an unmarked Awudu to pounce on and finish with a clinical effort.

Two minutes after the breather, Sheikh Jamal were back in the lead and once again

through the best striker of the country, Enamul. His strike partner Emily, who had an otherwise mute evening and was later substituted, floated a cross for Enamul who saw the goalkeeper advancing and calmly headed the ball inside the far post.

Just like the first goal, Abahani hit back again within a minute and this time it came from another defensive error from Sheikh Jamal. The clumsy hands of Zahid Hossain inside the box gifted Abahani with a penalty and their Ghanaian striker Frank sent Aminul the wrong way to bring the Sky Blues level.

Abahani then went in front in the 80th minute with Awudu hitting his second of the night. He was left unmarked on the end of an inviting cross from the right and beat Aminul from close range.

But just when it looked like their experience would see the game through, Abahani conceded. Sheikh Jamal's equaliser seven minutes later came from Mamunul Islam and what a goal it was. The midfielder unleashed a sublime left-footer from the edge of the box giving no time for Abahani custodian Zia to react and take the game into extra-time.

Sheikh Jamal had an even later chance to win the game but substitute Shakil Ahmed missed an easy chance right before the final whistle and he might rue that opportunity for a long time.

The ball had fallen kindly to the substitute after a fumble from Siraji at the Abahani backline, and an advancing keeper presented Shakil with the goal almost at his mercy. But to the frustration of the Sheikh Jamal faithful, he put the ball sailing over the bar.

Sheikh Jamal were dealt a fatal blow in the 14th minute of extra time when Rezaul was sent-off for callously putting the ball out of play even after the whistle had gone.

Abahani made full use of the extra man and found the back of the net again with nine minutes remaining to the final whistle. This time the third of Abahani's three Ghanaian recruits, Yussif Aminu scored, beating Aminul from a goalmouth melee. The keeper of the national side got his hand on to the ball, but could not stop the ball from rolling into the back of the net.

Awudu Ibrahim put the final nail on the Sheikh Jamal coffin and completed a well-deserved hatrick with a clinical finish on the stroke of the end of extra time. Amit Khan Shuvro, who had been on the field for hardly two minutes, played a lob from midfield that found Awudu on the end of it. The predator from Ghana received the ball with his left foot, turned back and unleashed an exquisite volley with his right, giving a hapless Aminul no time to react.

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# Awudu's dream

ANISUR RAHMAN



Dhanmondi Club yesterday.

"It was my dream to see Abahani become champions in the Federation Cup and my dream came true today in my sixth season. I am very excited," was the reaction of an ecstatic Awudu Ibrahim after the final between Abahani and Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club yesterday.

ROLE OF HONOUR		
Season	Champions	Runners-up
2001	Muktijoddha	Arambagh
2002-03	Mohammedan	Muktijoddha
2003-04	Muktijoddha	Mohammedan
2004-05	Brothers	Muktijoddha
2008	Mohammedan	Abahani
2009	Mohammedan	Abahani
2010	Abahani	Sheikh Jamal

Awudu has been a member of the Sky Blues contingent since the 2002-03 season, two years after Abahani had won their last Federation Cup.

Although, he had been a key member of the Sky Blues side that have won three consecutive Bangladesh League titles, yesterday was Awudu's first Federation Cup victory. And the victory was all the more sweeter since he had come close twice before; they had perished in the final to archrivals Mohammedan Sporting Club in the past two seasons.

But Awudu was not up to mark before the final as he fired blanks in the four Federation Cup matches he played so far this season and the players and officials were expecting something from him and his striking partner Twum Frank in the final.

Both returned the faith shown by their teammates and officials sharing four of the five goals between them.

"I have been struggling with an injury, but I

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## NAT'L SWIMMING

### Ansar leading the way

UNB, Dhaka

Three more national records were set on the third day of the Walton National Swimming Championships at the National Swimming Complex at Mirpur yesterday.

In the 200 meter women's backstroke event, Dolly Akhter of Bangladesh Ansar clinched the gold, setting the new national mark of 2:56.57 to improve upon the previous timing of 3:00.22.

In the 50 meter women's butterfly, Sonia Akter of Bangladesh Ansar won the gold with new national record of 00:32.18 bettering the previous mark of 00:33.65.

In the 4x200 men's freestyle relay, Mahfizur, Kamal, Rafiq and Rezaul of Bangladesh Army set the new national mark of 8:19.61 eclipsing the old mark of 8:27.77.

After the third day of the competition, Bangladesh Ansar secured 13 gold medals, Bangladesh Army collected seven gold, Bangladesh Navy bagged five gold, BKSP got two gold and Chittagong University one gold medal.

# Siddikur keeps soaring



PHOTO: AFP  
Siddikur Rahman plays a shot on to the 18th hole during the third round of the CIMB Asia Pacific Classic in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

## Golf

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Siddikur Rahman's fantastic form continued in the six million dollar CIMB Asia Pacific Classic in Malaysia, hitting a sizzling six birdies yesterday.

The country's first professional golfer, who went round in 65 and was 11 under for the tournament, is now eighth in the leaderboard. Ben Crane, Carl Pettersson and five others with twelve under par are ahead of Siddikur.

The 26-year old said he enjoyed playing along PGA tour players like two-time US Open champion Retief Goosen but was never intimidated by their hitting.

"I am just enjoying the tournament. I am not scared. I feel like I'm playing with my friends," he told reporters.

Siddikur, who is the only direct entry from the sub-continent, attributed his strong finish ahead of Sunday's finals to his "extremely good drives, putting and chipping".

"I started good, par, par, birdie. My rhythm was good this morning. My driver was special today, hit it extremely good which helped me shoot six under," he added.

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# Butt, Aamer at hearing

## Cricket

AFP, Dubai

Pakistan cricketers Salman Butt and Mohammad Aamer arrived at the Dubai headquarters of the International Cricket Council (ICC) on Saturday for a hearing into their suspension on charges of spot-fixing, an AFP reporter witnessed.

The two, along with fast bowler Mohammad Asif, were provisionally suspended by the ICC over allegations they were involved in spot-fixing during Pakistan's summer tour of England.

All three appealed, but Asif later withdrew his application.

lawyers -- Salman with Khalid Ranjha, a former law minister, and Aftab Gul, a former Pakistan player, and Aamer with his lawyer Shahid Karim.

Both Salman and Aamer, wearing casual shirts and trousers, waved to the media but did not speak as they entered the ICC headquarters.

The scandal broke after a report by British tabloid The News of the World prompted Scotland Yard to launch an investigation into allegations of spot-fixing during the Lord's Test against England in August.

Police raided the team's hotel in London and questioned Salman, Aamer, Asif and bowler Wahab Riaz, but they have yet to formally level any charges.

Owing to their suspensions, the trio

have been excluded from Pakistan's current tour of the United Arab Emirates, where they are playing South Africa.

Michael Beloff QC, chairman of the ICC's code of conduct commission, will hear the appeal against the provisional suspensions and has the power to overturn them. The hearing will continue on Sunday.

Salman and Aamer have vowed to clear their names.

"I am confident that I will be cleared and will be available to play for Pakistan soon. We have committed no mistake and the sting operation of the News of the World has flaws," Salman told AFP last week.

According to the ICC process, the matter of the players' code of conduct violation

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