

'Win is for the people'

Iraq's Nashat Akram said he hopes the injury-time winner against United Arab Emirates that put his side within touching distance of the Asian Cup last eight would bring happiness to the football-mad country. "I feel so proud because I love my country and I was able to help to bring some happiness to our people who are watching us and wanting us to win the game," said the former FC Twente player.



Siddikur finishes fifth

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman finished a disappointing fifth in the Gujarat Kensville Challenge after carding a one over par fourth round at the Kensville Golf Club in Ahmedabad yesterday.

His overall score was one-under-par (287), one of only six men finishing under par in the tourney, and four shots adrift of eventual winner Gaganjeet Bhullar of India.

Siddikur had one-over-par scores in his last two rounds following a two-over-par second round. His first round was an astounding 5-under-par which had seated him on top of leaderboard for a day.

Bhullar though battled with his nerves during a closing round of 75, but his five under par aggregate total was enough to see off England's Matt Ford, who signed for a round of 70 to finish on four under par.

The 22-year old bagged 32,000 Euros from this win while Siddikur was richer by 9000 Euros.

Handball teams win in India

SPORTS REPORTER

Both men's and women's handball team of Bangladesh got off to winning start on the opening day of International Friendship Handball Tournament in Haldia in West Bengal state of India yesterday, said a press release from Bangladesh Handball Federation.

Men's team handed a 31-24 defeat to their Nepalese counterparts after leading the first half 13-7. Didar and Kamel struck five goals each for Bangladesh.

In the women's section, Bangladesh defeated their Indian counterparts 19-8 after dominating the first half 8-4 as Sahida scored six goals and Bhulu and Tripti netted four goals each.



PHOTO: STAR

Abahani's pace bowler Abul-Hasan celebrates one of his four wickets during the Premier League match against Mohammedan at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Hasan shoots Shakib down Abahani maul Mohammedan by 10 wickets

SPORTS REPORTER

In the end it was a bitter pill to swallow for Bangladesh and Mohammedan captain Shakib Al Hasan who only the day before said that his rival club Abahani has no chance in the crucial Premier League match.

But two steaming spells from the little-known Abul Hasan struck down Shakib's Mohammedan to a ten-wicket defeat yesterday and gave Abahani the bragging rights of the Dhaka derby.

The paceman tore the defending champions' middle-order in a fine display of accurate (and planned) fast bowling at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. Mohammedan were bowled out for 93 runs in a meagre 22.4 overs, a chase Abahani finished off in 17 overs.

The result and the game itself created a bizarre atmosphere to say the least, especially after the controversy with CCDM's decision to increase the quota of foreign players' registration.

But Hasan's focus seemed to be on (and just outside) the off-stump as his deliveries zeroed in, culminating in the fourth over of the innings that produced three key wickets.

Nafis Iqbal, playing his first game, was bounced once before the right-hander edged the next delivery to first slip (Farhad Hossain) for one. Next ball, Shamsur Rahman was caught behind by Anamul Haque and after Shakib Al Hasan had wafted at his first ball, Hasan threw another wide one, the Mohammedan captain also giving wicketkeeper Anamul a simple catch.

"I knew that the plan was to bowl a bit outside the off-stump (at Shakib). He missed the first one but I tried again and he edged it," said Hasan, trying hard to conceal a smile. The Abahani supporters were especially wild in celebration after Shakib's pre-match prediction that 'Abahani has no chance' of winning.

Hasan, after a short breather, was brought back immediately after Faisal Hossain walked in and the ploy worked; the left-hander badly miscued the short ball, giving skipper Mahmudullah Riyad an easy catch at mid-on.

Amidst the chaos, Nazimuddin played some lovely shots but his attacking mindset brought about his downfall, the right-hander giving long-on Marshall Ayub a catch off left-arm spinner Saqlain Sajib. The senior left-arm, Mohammad Rafique, then polished off the tail, including the

dependable Azhar Mahmood and Khaled Mashud, both trapped leg-before. Tapash Baisya, who had earlier removed Tamim Iqbal, took out Mukhtar Ali (who got hit on the back after ducking under Hasan's beamer, that was deemed intentional and the bowler stopped from bowling straight away) to end the Black & Whites' innings for one of their lowest scores in this hotly-contested encounter.

The Abahani openers, Anamul and Rony Talukdar, took little over an hour to knock off the required runs and in only three hours and 11 minutes, the Abahani-Mohammedan match was over.

"I think they (Mohammedan) suffered from overconfidence. They said before the game that only if they played badly they would lose, and they did," said Abahani coach Khaled Mahmud.

The former national skipper also gave a firm reply to Shakib's prophecy, saying, "This is not Zimbabwwe. You have to play the match out in the field and not with words."

The No 1 all-rounder however felt confident that Mohammedan could still bounce back and regain the title. "If we win all the six Super League matches, we can still win the championship. You be sure that Abahani will

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Doleshwar pick up first win

SPORTS REPORTER

Prime Doleshwar registered their first win in this year's Premier League campaign yesterday. Sitting bottom of the table with one point, they handed Kalabagan their fourth defeat at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium, going up from their last place.

In the day's other match at BKSP, Bangladesh Biman defeated Orient Sporting Club by 12 runs.

The loss pushed Orient to the bottom of the table and the old Dhaka outfit is odds on to be relegated.

KALABAGAN-DOLESHWAR
The match was reduced to 46 overs per side due to the foggy weather. Winning the toss Kalabagan elected to bat and were in some trouble losing six wickets for just 89 runs.

Foreign recruit Wajid Ali, unbeaten on 89, helped Kalabagan reach 194 runs before they were all out in the 45th over.

Doleshwar were in some trouble as well when they were 67 for four, captain Nadif Chowdhury and Imran Ahmed then putting on a partnership of 56 runs. Qaiser Abbas then scored a quickfire 49 off 40 balls to secure the win with four wickets in hand.

Nadif, who was given run out and argued with the field umpires, was fined Tk 10,000 by the match referee.

BIMAN-ORIENT
Biman's opening pair gave them a solid start of 58 runs in less than 12 overs, though Yasir Hameed and Avishk Mitra

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Watto takes care of Eng

Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

A superb solo effort by Shane Watson with the bat enabled Australia to overcome a sloppy fielding effort and beat England in the opening one-day international at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Sunday.

One of the few Australians to emerge with his reputation intact after the Ashes disaster, Watson's brilliant unbeaten 161 enabled the home side to chase down England's imposing total of 294 from 49.4 overs with five balls to spare.

Fittingly, the right-hander hit the winning runs from the first ball of the last over, lofting Ajmal Shahzad over long-on for six to take Australia to 297-4.

He and Brad Haddin laid the foundation for the win with a 110-run partnership, although another scratchy innings by captain Michael Clarke threatened to derail the chase.

Clarke put on 103 with Watson for the second wicket, but again looked sadly out of

form and often earned ironic cheers from the crowd when he managed to score as he eked out 36 from 57 balls.

His only four came when he miscued for a single, and two fielding errors led to three overthrows.

However, Watson was not going to let his good work go unrewarded again and held the innings together in the latter overs as the tension rose.

He reached his fifth one-day century from 110 balls and went on to post a career-best innings, facing 150 deliveries in total and hitting 12 fours and four sixes.

The solo effort of Watson, dropped on 44 by Jonathan Trott from the bowling of Chris Tremlett at mid-on, spared Australian blushes after a hapless performance in the field.

Kevin Pietersen led the way for England, who won the toss and elected to bat, with 78 from 75 balls including three sixes.

It was England's highest total in a one-day international against Australia in Australia, and also their highest at the MCG.

Just over a month out from their World Cup defence, the Australians offered up

dropped catches, missed stumpings, botched run outs and wickets from no-balls, as well as 14 wides.

The rot set in early for the home side when Steve Smith and Brett Lee somehow got in each other's way at the non-striker's end to mess up an elementary run out to give opener Steve Davies (42) a life before he had scored.

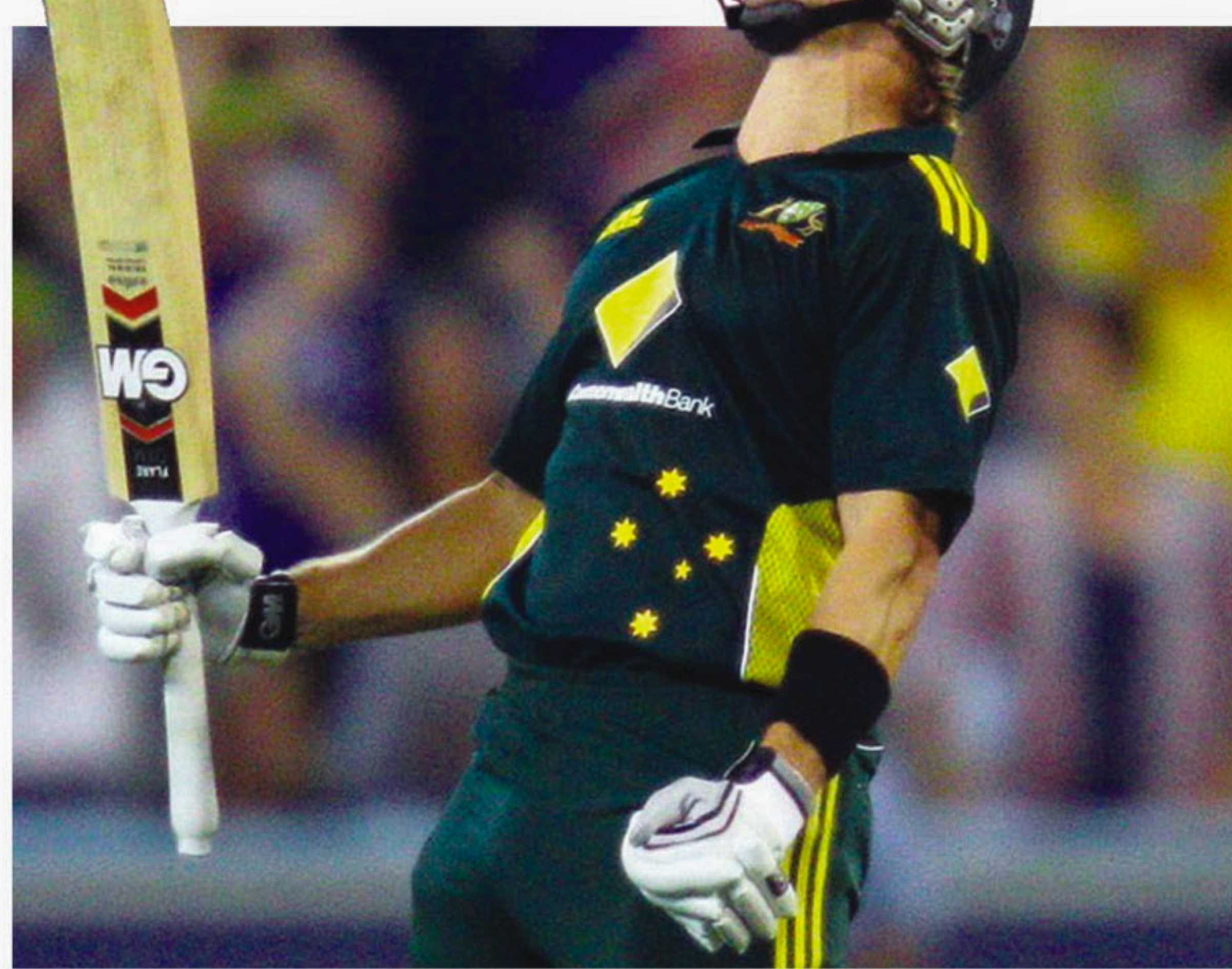
With England captain Andrew Strauss on 17, Lee thought he had the left-hander caught on the boundary, only for a review called by umpire Bruce Oxenford to show it was a clear no-ball.

To rub salt into the wound Strauss, who went on to make 63 from 65 balls, smashed the subsequent free hit for four.

Watson then grassed Davies at short cover when he was on 18 from the bowling of Lee before wicketkeeper Brad Haddin squandered the first of three missed stumpings when Davies was on 24 from the bowling of David Hussey.

The blunders enabled England

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MASTERCLASS: Australian batsman Shane Watson is ecstatic after hitting a six to secure victory against England in the first ODI at Melbourne yesterday. Watson was adjudged man-of-the-match for his unbeaten 161.

PHOTO: AFP

Asif axed from higher training

SPORTS REPORTER

Commonwealth gold medalist Asif Hossain Khan has been excluded from a four-member squad for the advanced training offered by the International Olympic Council ahead of the 2012 Olympic in London.

The executive committee of National Shooting Federation of Bangladesh has picked up promising shooter Saida Sultana, back-in-form Sharmin Akhter, Abdullah Hel Baki and Ramjan Ali but axed Asif and Armin Asha from IOC scholarship for one year.

"Considering poor performance in the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games, Asif and Armin have been excluded and those who have potential have been given chances for one-year advanced training to be provided by the International Olympic Council," said NSF general secretary Istiaq Ahmed Bablu.

Bablu informed that the names of the shooters would be sent to the IOC through Bangladesh Olympic Association and take steps as per IOC instruction.

Meanwhile, Sharmin Akhter Ranta pulled herself out of the IOC scholarship intending to learn from Slovakian coach Anthony Ballack, who will teach Sharmin through internet till June.

The meeting also approved the proposal of building two training centers at Gulshan (air rifle) and Savar (skeet) in a bid to create opportunities for general shooters.

ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP TALK

'No sweet memories'

One of the stylish batsman in recent times, Alok Kapali was in red hot form when he was picked for the 2003 World Cup. It was a poor return for the man from Sylhet but it was memorable enough to share with The Daily Star Sport.

Daily Star Sport (DSS): How did it feel when you heard that you would play the 2003 World Cup?

Alok Kapali (AK): I had a very good premier league season in 2002. Then I played for the A team and played for the national side against Sri Lanka after being taken as a stand by.

So, it was part of the process and result of a good season that I got in.

DSS: How was the team atmosphere in South Africa?

AK: The team atmosphere was fine. But you see, we played against Namibia a few practice matches before the World Cup. We won all but one match there.

That defeat, against such a weak side, was a mental setback for us.

DSS: Recall your sweetest memory.

AK: It was not a good World Cup for us. We lost all the matches including against Canada and Kenya which we should have won.

So, it's hard to find a sweet memory. If we had won, I'm sure I would have had sweet memories.

DSS: Was there frustration with your performance?

AK: Yes, personally and team wise it was frustrating. I had a target I would be the highest run-getter in the side which I did, but that wasn't enough. And unfortunately we did bad as a team so there was frustration amongst all of us.

DSS: What is your expectation from Bangladesh in this World Cup regardless of you make it or not to the final squad?

AK: I do think that Bangladesh have a good chance of reaching the semifinals this time. Mirpur is our own backyard and we always do well here. More importantly, our spinners are in great form.

If the batsmen can do their job and put on 240-260 scores, there is no reason why we would not do well.



ALOK KAPALI

SPORTS POLL

Who will win the Premier League derby on Sunday?

Mohammedan 61.2%
Abahani 38.8%

TOTAL VOTES: 152

WEEKLY QUESTION

Should Ashrafal be included in the WC squad?

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